



KOSHER KOALA



The Synagogue Square Memorial the Jurbakas Jewish Community (See story page 8)

Photo: Ana Zundelovitch

SPRING 2019

AJGS
L'dor V'dor

FEATURES

AJGS 2019 AGM

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

With the change in financial year reporting at the 2018 AGM AJGS members received an extra 6 months membership during the 2018/2019 financial year. Membership renewals were sent out in June for 2019/2020. If you have still not renewed your membership please do so to continue receiving Kosher Koala. The skills and experience of our long time members is one of AJGS' most valuable resources and it is hugely appreciated. Details for renewing membership are available on our [Membership Page](#)

The AGJS held its AGM at North Shore Synagogue on Sunday October 13, 2019. Attendance was low compared to previous years, which may have been due to the AGM's proximity to the major Jewish festival season and school holidays. President Sunny Gold was absent due to ill health. The meeting was subsequently chaired by past president Jeannette Tsoulos. Jeannette conveyed the president's report to the meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

SUNNY GOLD

It gives me great pleasure, to present my first President's Report.

As an inexperienced President, it has been a challenging year, but also an interesting one. I have certainly been conscious of our Society's primary role, that being, to assist and encourage those with Jewish ancestry, to research their family histories.

Our current membership stands at 67 financial members

In this respect, I wish to welcome these new members: Dr. Peter Cowie, Judith McDonald, Elizabeth Cameron and Felipe Rocha de Souza

Over this past year, eleven Sunday workshops and four Monday workshops were held, here in Lindfield. Waverley Library was the venue for the four Eastern Suburbs workshops during that period. These took the form of presentations by Robyn Dryen and Dani Haski. I take this opportunity to encourage more of you, to consider future attendance at these interesting and educative sessions. (Robyn Dryen, Dani Haski, Evelyn Frybort, [David Laufer] and Jeannette Tsoulos have regularly attended these workshops.)

The AJGS received a request from a new member, seeking support for an application for Spanish citizenship, for Sephardic Jews under the Jewish law of return. Consequently, I wrote a letter to the Spanish Government confirming that person's membership. The Society intends to publish guidelines for other members, applying for citizenship of overseas countries.

A donation was made to North Shore Synagogue, in appreciation of the services it has provided our Society.

This year we sadly lost Lionel Sharpe, past Honorary Secretary of AJGS Victoria. Lionel was a most esteemed and very popular colleague and a good friend of ours, over many years.

I wish to acknowledge and thank the following people:

My committee, composed of Vice-President, Kim Phillips; Treasurer and Minutes Secretary, Kym Morris; Membership Chair, Nigel Meinrath; and committee members Evelyn Frybort, Jeannette Tsoulos and Annette Winter for their work for the benefit of the Society. (Unfortunately, Nigel had to step down during the year, due to health issues.)

I have appreciated Annette Winter's continued kind offer to host our committee meetings.

Robyn Dryen also deserves my appreciation, as she has spent many hours, responding to research enquiries.

I wish to make a very special mention of Dani Haski, the editor of the *Kosher Koala*, for her production of such brilliant publications, and for taking on numerous other tasks.

I can't conclude my report without mentioning and acknowledging the following people, for their assistance, throughout the past year:

Paul Winter, our Honorary Auditor.

The Rabbi, President and staff at the North Shore Synagogue.

Ingrid Grace at the Waverley Library.

Bill Bowes, the Society's System Administrator, who acts pro bono.

And finally, I wish to thank you, and all our members, for your support of, and loyalty to, the Society.

It has been a privilege to serve you, as President, for the past year.

COMMITTEE ELECTION

With Sunny in hospital the meeting made the decision to hold the position of president open until such time as Sunny is well enough to accept or decline her nomination to the position.

We welcome a new face to the committee. Barbara Simon has stepped up to become treasurer, taking over from Kym Morris who has shepherded the society through a period of huge change in that portfolio.

The committee elected for the 2019/20 financial year is:

President: position held open

Vice President/ Secretary: Kym Morris

Treasurer: Barbara Simons

Committee members: Jeannette Tsoulos, Annette Winter, Dani Haski, Evelyn Frybort

LIFE MEMBERSHIP: KIM PHILLIPS

ROBYN DRYEN

Kim Phillips (SocId.22), joined AJGS on 1 January 1993. As the records show she joined 5 weeks prior to the No.1 member, I think it safe to say she has been a part of our organisation since its very earliest days. She joined the AJGS committee in 1999.

In her capacity as Vice President of AJGS Kim has served as a loyal deputy to four Presidents: Rieke Nash, Jeannette Tsoulos, myself, Robyn Dryen, and Sunny Gold. Never one to seek the limelight, Kim became a guiding hand and steadying influence as Jeannette, myself and most recently, Sunny honed our skills.

Without doubt, the first Australian national conference on Jewish genealogy in Canberra in 2008 would not have happened without the fantastic logistical management that Kim provided. My first encounter with the formidable Kim, was while she attempted to co-ordinate the undecided and frequently changing transport requests for conference excursions. That the conference was such a success was in no small measure, due to Kims effort.

Kim was the Project Co-ordinator for the CD: *Jewish Cemeteries of Australia Old Jewish Section, Rookwood*, an invaluable resource for those of us researching relatives who were buried in the old sections at Rookwood. With the folding of the old Jewish Cemetery Trust database into the new Rookwood-Everafer website, I imagine this CD will become increasingly valuable.

Kim also played a significant role in indexing *Kosher Koala* and preparing the CDs of early issues painstaking work in days prior to modern media publishing with built-in automatic indexing.

It is no surprise then, that Kim's magnum opus: *The Spirits of Gallipoli*, displays gold-standard genealogical research with attention to detail and compassionate sharing of information with the descendants of WW1 casualties of the Gallipoli campaign.

Kim is now President of the Ryde District Historical Society, and has stepped down from the AJGS executive and committee. AJGS acknowledges her many years of service and thanks her by conferring Honorary Life Membership.

AJGS AGM – VISIONS OF THE FUTURE

DANI HASKI

Following general business Ilona Lee from +61J facilitated a session for members to discuss the future of our organisation. We broke into small groups and discussed a range of questions to identify issues and explore new ideas for the society.

We discussed what members expect their society to offer, how we might raise our profile appeal to new members and what kind of digital services we might like to use. The issue of digital literacy highlighted an interesting inversion of experience evident in our membership. We have a large pool of members with deep experience in researching particular subject and geographical areas, but less confidence with the digital resources available today. Conversely we have a few younger members with advanced digital skills but less experience with traditional archives and resources. Bridging this divide is one of the challenges we face. Insights from this ongoing conversation will be subject of a feature article in the next *Kosher Koala*.



NEWS AND VIEWS

CLEVELAND CONFERENCE AWARDS



The 2019 IAJGS conference has wrapped up in Cleveland, Ohio. More than 1000 delegates from 16 countries attended.

At the Gala Banquet IAJGS President Ken Bravo announced several awards:

The Lifetime Achievement Award – Karen Franklin.

The award recognises Karen for her “tireless efforts and remarkable achievements on behalf of the world of Jewish genealogy. Karen is the Renaissance woman of Jewish genealogy, having advanced the genealogical enterprise in countless ways over more than thirty years, in roles of both professional and volunteer.”

Her volunteer work includes being President of the IAJGS; Founder and Co-coordinator of German SIG; Member of the Executive Council of the JGS of New York and Co-Chair of the Board of Governors of JewishGen. Professionally, Karen currently serves as Director of Family Research at the Leo Baeck Institute. She was previously Director of the Judaica Museum in Riverdale, and Guest Curator and Exhibit Researcher for the New York Museum of Jewish Heritage..

Other awards were:

- Volunteer of the Year Award – Judi Gyory Missel
- Outstanding Publication Award – *DOROT*, Journal of JGS of New York.
- The Outstanding Project Award – B & F Jewish Genealogy and More – Philip Trauring creator and administrator of the website Blood and Frogs
- The Rabbi Malcolm Stern Grant – IGRA (Israel Genealogy Research Association) for its Mediterranean Basin Project
- The John Stedman Memorial Grant – New York Historical Synagogue Websites Map – Center for Jewish History
- Rosemary Eshel received a special Salute.

JewishGen also awarded the Susan E King Volunteer of the Year award to Chuck Weinstein. Chuck’s contribution to JewishGen can be viewed in [a video shown at the conference and now available on YouTube](#).



SAVE THE DATE - SAN DIEGO, USA, 9-14 AUGUST 2020

The IAJGs 40th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy will be held in San Diego, California, from **9-14 August 2020**, at the Sheraton Hotel & Marina. As details of the conference become available, they will be posted to the [website](#). The [Facebook community](#) for the conference is also now being administered by the San Diego team.

JEWISHGEN LAUNCHES NEW HOMEPAGE



During the IAJGS conference JewishGen's Executive Director Avraham Groll announced that the JewishGen website would undergo a thorough review of its underlying functionality and design. This decision came out of an acknowledgement that the site was beginning to look antiquated and was not facilitating engagement with critical stakeholders such as volunteers and donors.

During the JewishGen Annual Meeting discussion revealed:

While there were approximately 1 million unique visitors to the JewishGen site last year, only 30,000 of them actually registered. Of this group, internal reporting shows that just a fraction became regular users, and nearly none of them signed up for core features, such as the JewishGen Family Finder... or the Discussion Forums/Social Media pages.

The first step in the refreshment strategy is the launch of a new homepage. This new landing page takes advantage of new trends in web design such as parallax graphics – where an image is static behind the scrolling foreground – and bold elements to direct people to key areas of the site.

In his Facebook post announcing the launch of the new landing page Groll stated:

The [new] site is built on a modern, secure platform, which is beneficial for a number of reasons, including:

- it's mobile-responsive
- it has an intuitive design and
- it's a platform that many people are familiar with, thus making it easier for us to find qualified consultants/contractors and volunteers to help us in the future.

Specifically, we hope the new landing page will help guide researchers to:

- search the online collection
- locate ancestral communities
- explore life in their ancestral communities
- join our discussion groups
- volunteer and
- donate.

At this stage the big, bold buttons take users to the old familiar pages of the JewishGen site. Groll stresses that this is just the beginning of the process, and that the JewishGen site will be subject to a top-to-bottom review of both the user interface and the underlying infrastructure and databases.

Users are invited to provide [feedback and suggestions](#) to inform the development of the new and improved JewishGen.



FIND YOUR WAY AROUND ROOKWOOD



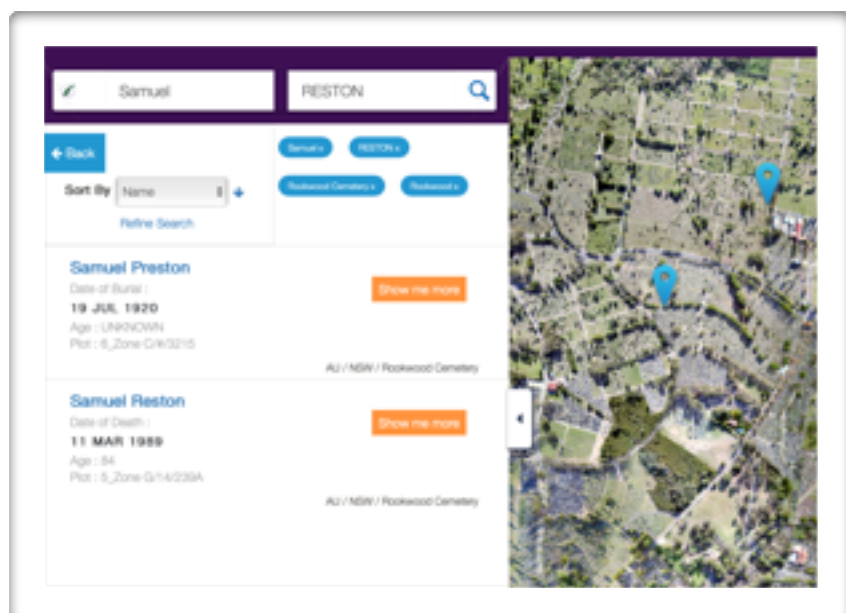
In July [Rookwood](#) quietly launched its [new website](#) and with it, a new finding aid which integrates with Google maps. The new search engine is powered by a company called Everafter. Every plot in the cemetery has been precisely mapped and its GPS coordinates recorded. They have a simple search box to start the process and when you find your relative you click on the SHOW MORE box to view details. The first time you do this you will have to sign up to Everafter to access the information but this creates an account and allows you to save the files of all your relatives to your profile. At the moment the file has Date of Birth (if known), Date of Death, Hebrew name and Hebrew date of death for Jewish graves and, if they have one, a photograph. There is also a plot number –this is a key number that includes the section number, the zone and the grave number and beside that a link to get directions to the plot.

When you click on the Get Directions button, the GPS coordinates are sent directly to Google Maps. This allows you to set driving, public transport and/or walking directions to the plot. This is particularly handy when you are in the cemetery itself as the walking directions will help you navigate all the way to the individual plot, not just the general section.

While these features enhance the visiting Rookwood experience, the new search function is severely deficient for research purposes. Type in a surname and you get a list of everyone buried in Rookwood with a surname that contains that sequence of letters e.g. search for Reston returns 189

names only 6 of which are Reston - the remainder are Preston. If you choose to refine your search to "precise surname", you still get 189 results as Preston contains Reston precisely! You can only see 10 results at a time, so this means scrolling through 19 clicks to find the 6 Restons buried in the Jewish Section - bizarrely, "sort by name" does not sort by surname but by first name so the Restons are in amongst the Prestons! There is no reverse sort order, no ability to jump to the last page of results (or any other), nor the ability to change the number of results displayed at one time.

When you click on Samuel Reston, the visual locator will show that Marjorie Reston is located in the adjoining grave. However, if you click on the text "others in this plot" the answer is that there are no others. Technically



correct, but totally unhelpful. Whereas once we were able to look at a list of surnames and see Hebrew names for most, you now have to go and click on "Show me more" and view each individually to see the Hebrew name. This is a painstaking process if you are looking for possible siblings of a known person.

There are only 6 Restons buried in the Jewish sections of Rookwood - good luck if you are trying to locate a Cohen - there are 698 of them ...

It's early days for the system and they say they will roll out more functionality in the future.



The Australian Jewish Historical Society [AGM](#) will be at the Sydney Jewish Museum on November 3rd. After business has concluded Stephe Jitts will launch his new book *The Moses Family in Yass 1837-1878*, which charts the fortunes of Moses Moses and 54 of his family members – a fascinating tale of "determination, honour and simple intestinal fortitude".

22 years ago Stephe, a retired audiologist, stumbled over Old Linton, a semi-derelict mansion, sprawling over some 45 rooms, in Yass, south of Sydney. The core of the home was built in the late 1850s by Moses Moses. Stephe eventually purchased the building and undertook the daunting task of restoring it to something of its former glory. The ballroom and gardens are now open to the public as a cafe/restaurant and function venue as well as Air BNB accommodation.

AGM: Sunday 3 Nov, 2pm SJM



IRELAND'S OLDEST JEWISH CEMETERY SAVED



[The Irish Times](#) reports that Ireland's oldest Jewish cemetery has been acquired by Dublin City Council and will be refurbished and opened to the public. The cemetery has fallen into a state of severe disrepair after the local Jewish community, under the auspices of the Dublin Jewish Board of Guardians, could no longer afford to maintain it.

The cemetery was established in 1718 and a recent report commissioned by the council recommended the site be considered for National Monument status.

A mortuary house was built in 1857 and until recently was the residence of an onsite caretaker. Home to about 200 graves, the cemetery has almost 150 headstones with inscriptions in both Hebrew and English. Officially in use up until the end of the 19th century, when a new cemetery was consecrated near Dolphin's Barn, a handful of burials took place in Fairview in the early years of the 20th century. The last interment at Fairview Cemetery occurred in 1958. It officially closed in 1978. Indexed records of Fairview Cemetery burials are held within the [JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry](#) (Search town: Dublin).



NEW MEMORIAL DEDICATED TO JURBAKAS COMMUNITY



A remarkable new memorial to the now extinct Jewish community of Jurbakas, formerly known as Yurburg, in Western Lithuania was unveiled in July. Called *The Synagogue Square Memorial*, it was created by an Israeli creative team comprising two generations of the Zundelovitch family – renowned sculptor David Zundelovitch designed the memorial space, his son, Gregory served as art director, and his daughter Anna was architect and designer. A third generation of the family attended the unveiling and sang the national anthems of Lithuania and Israel. The Zundelovitch ancestors came from Yurburg and the family is the principal force behind CAN, the New Artists Collegium.



They were commissioned by the Mayor of Jurbakas, Skirmantas Mockevicius, to create a memorial that went beyond commemoration of the Holocaust to encompass the 400 year history of the Jewish community in the town.

Jews settled in Yurburg sometime during the 17th Century. By 1714, there were almost 2500 Jewish residents, some of whom held highly prestigious positions including as tax collectors for the government. By the 20th century Jews comprised over a third of the town's population. Sadly, as with communities across Europe, the community was completely destroyed during the Holocaust. However, unlike other towns and cities in Lithuania, the population of modern day Jurbakas has not shied away from its tragic history. Instead they are committed to preserving the memory of their lost neighbours.

In creating the memorial Zundelovitch states on the [CAN website](#):

The importance of the "Synagogue Square Memorial" transcends the Jewish themed memorial narrative... this memorial is not about the Holocaust tragedy, this monument is dedicated to many generations of the Jewish people living in this town and the tragic end of this community. Also, this monument is dedicated to those who saved Jews, and thus this memorial is tightly connected to the Litvak history as a whole.

Clockwise from bottom left: Yurburg/Jurbaka wooden synagogue [CC]; Views of the memorial. Photos: Anna Zundelovitch and Oleg Bousys

Alongside the Israeli creatives, a Lithuanian team was integral to the creation of the memorial. Grazina Gadliauskiene, Jurbarkas town architect was assigned as the project's chief Lithuanian architect, and visual artist Rasa Grybaite, director of Vincas Grybas museum in Jurbarkas and a prominent cultural activist, was put in charge of communal projects and educational programs associated with the Synagogue Square Memorial Project. Grybaite is the granddaughter of Lithuania's first monumental sculptor Vincas Grybas, who was executed by the Nazis together with the heads of the Jewish community at the first 'action' in town.

The monument itself delineates an architectural space. It contains symbols of both the Jewish community and the Lithuanian town. Invoking the Neman River that flows through the district, stone “waves” are inscribed with almost 2000 surnames of Yurbark Jews, written in both English and Yiddish. The names of Lithuanian Righteous Among The Nations are also recorded.

To us, the creators of this memorial, it is important that every person of Jurbarkas and every visitor should know the names of the real heroes of this town.

In the middle of the square is a composition of basalt columns designed to represent the synagogue that used to sit across the road from the square. The Wooden Synagogue of Jurbarkas, completed in 1790, was considered one of the most beautiful in Eastern Europe, attracting visitors from far and wide. It was 6 stories high with rich baroque decoration and many unique architectural elements.

According to Anna Zundelovitch the destruction of the Synagogue during WWII was particularly cruel. Not wanting to waste the precious resource of the wood, Lithuanian collaborators in Jurbarkas gathered up all the Jews who remained in the area after the first ‘action’, about 2000 people, and crowded them into the "Ezrat nashim", the upper gallery of the Synagogue. They forced everyone to jump up and down until the supporting columns collapsed, dragging the huge roof and walls down with them. Those who survived were dragged to the river and murdered. The number of people still buried under the site is unknown. Local residents collected the wooden beams and columns serve as firewood for the coming winter.

In a [YouTube video](#) the project's proponents outline the history of the area, including some wonderful pre-war film footage of the world they are commemorating. They present a 3D flyover of the memorial and photos of the stonework under construction. The video has English subtitles.

PRESERVING THE MEMORIES OF THE JEWS OF WALES



[The Jewish History Association of South Wales](#) (JHASW) has crowdfunded £3,000 to put towards the preservation of the history of the Jewish community of the region. At its height there were more than 6000 Jews resident in the region. Today there are a few hundred, mostly elderly, Welsh Jews.

JHASW currently has a mobile exhibition of oral histories and photographs travelling around Wales. Their hopes of establishing a permanent Museum were boosted recently with the [announcement](#) that The [Foundation for Jewish Heritage](#) has purchased the derelict synagogue in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales and plans to transform it into a Welsh Jewish Heritage Centre. The heritage listed Synagogue, which sits at the top of a hill, operated between 1895 and 1978. Jews first settled in Wales during the 18th century and the community grew with



an influx of eastern European workers to factories in the area during the rise of industrialisation.

According to a [report by Neil Pryor on the BBC website](#):

By the late 19th Century there were also thriving communities in Merthyr Tydfil, Brynmawr, Aberdare and Pontypridd. In the 1940s, so many Jewish workers had flocked to support the war effort that the predominant languages heard on Treforest Industrial Estate, Rhondda Cynon Taff, were Polish, German and Czech. Jewish businesses in Pontypridd became so successful that the town's high street was colloquially known as "Jewish Street".

As heavy industry declined and subsequent generations attained higher educational qualifications and moved away, the community shrank. George Black, reputed to be "The Last Jew in Merthyr", died in 1999.

Klavidija Erzan, from JHASW told the BBC

We have managed to collect memories from non-Jewish people too, telling us what the communities and businesses meant to them... It would be easy to dwell on the stories of anti-Semitism, but I think that would overlook the many hundreds of positive experiences, and the immense Jewish contribution to Welsh culture, sport, enterprise and life in general.

The project does not have a website yet but if you have a connection with South Wales and would like to contribute to the project please **contact Klavidija Erzen**.

CAN WE HELP JOHN FIND HIS AUSSIE RELATIVES?

John Minkes, a trustee of the Jewish History Association of South Wales, says his family story graphically illustrates the decline of the Welsh Jewish community. He has also asked AJGS members if we could help him find some lost cousins, who he believes may have migrated to Australia.

John's great grandfather, Moses Jonas Clompus (c1846-1919), migrated from Palanga in Lithuania to Swansea in Wales around 1890. He became a UK citizen in the late 1890's. Moses married twice. His first wife, Pere Haya, died in Lithuania; his second, Rosa Reva nee Shatz, followed him to Swansea.

Moses fathered at least 11 children with both Pere and Rosa, most of whom migrated and lived with him in Swansea. They were Leah, Joseph, Harry, Sidney, Sam, Freda, Rachel, Sophia and Josephine. Sadly today there are only two descendants of Moses Clompus living in Wales, John and his second cousin.

John is trying to find descendants of his grandfather's older sister's family – his great aunt Freda (pictured with her daughter Lily). Freda Clompus married Isaac Freedman in Swansea in 1887.

John is particularly searching for the descendants of Freda's son Lionel (B 1900). Lionel and his siblings – Hyam, Alfred, Reuben, Lilly and Harold – were raised in Pontycymmer near Bridgend, where their father had a furniture shop.

Lionel married a woman named Gladys. Unfortunately John has been unable to learn Gladys's maiden name or the names of Lionel and Gladys's sons, who he believes migrated to Australia and may have changed their surname to FREEMAN.

If any of the details above are familiar to you please [contact John via Klavidija Erzen](#) at the Jewish History Association of South Wales.



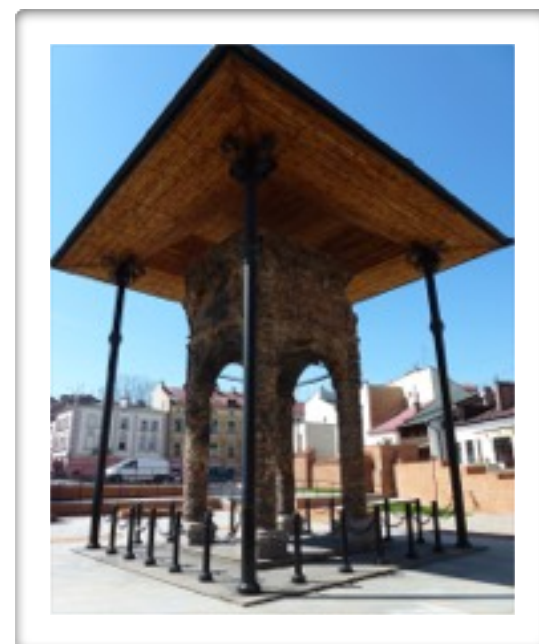


[Jewish Heritage Europe reports](#) on the culmination of a two year project to restore the historic Jewish cemetery in Tarnów. The driving force behind the project was Adam Bartosz, retired director of the Regional Museum in Tarnów and an expert in Roma and Jewish history. Bartosz has worked tirelessly with the all-volunteer *Committee for Protection of Jewish Heritage* (an organisation he established 30 years ago) to preserve Jewish heritage in the area. He was also awarded the [2019 Irena Sendler Memorial Award](#), presented annually by the San

Francisco-based Taube Foundation.

Jews are known to have been living in Tarnów since the mid-15th century. As in other parts of Poland, the Jewish section of the city grew off the Rynek, or central market square, and was called Zydowska — Jewish — street. By 1939 Jews made up approximately 45% of the population, numbering around 25,000 people.

When the Nazis occupied Poland many of the Jews living in Tarnów were drafted into forced labor camps. In time, Jews from other areas were transported to the ghetto in Tarnow. In September 1943 the ghetto was liquidated and the remaining 10,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz and Plaszow. As many as 40 local synagogues, including the 17th century Old Synagogue were destroyed. All that remains are the 4 pillars of the bimah, which now serves as a memorial.



The Tarnów Cemetery Restoration project is estimated to have cost around €700,000. Described as “the largest cooperative public-private single Jewish cemetery restoration effort conducted in Poland...” funding came from the EU, and state, regional and local authorities, as well as private donors.

Restoration work (done under the supervision of the Chief Rabbinate of Poland) has included rebuilding the walls of the cemetery, installing sidewalks, cleaning away decades of brush and vegetation, restoring many toppled and eroded tombstones and a Shoah (Holocaust) monument, converting the former Bet Taharah (funeral preparation room) into a mini-museum, and indexing thousands of tombstones in the cemetery to preserve those records on-line for access in posterity.



The project included the development of a free smartphone and tablet app, Kirkut Tarnów – available for both [IOS](#) and [Android](#) platforms – which has a GPS-guided map and information on key sites within the cemetery.

The official ceremony to rededicate the cemetery was held in late June, during the annual [Jewish Culture Festival](#). It was attended by VIPs, local residents, visiting Rabbis and descendants of Tarnow’s Jews from around the world. The main event was complemented by a walking tour of Tarnów and a guided tour of the cemetery, a photographic exhibition and a concert.

The cemetery itself covers more than 3 hectares and holds over 3000 gravestones, the oldest dated 1688. It was registered as a national landmark in 1976.

An indexed, searchable list of headstones with images can be found on the [Database for Jewish Cemeteries in Poland](#).

SLEDGEHAMMER

STORIES OF BRICK-WALL BREAKTHROUGHS

Sledgehammer is a column where you can share how you managed to break through a brick wall. A brick wall is a seemingly insurmountable barrier in your research that seems to be unbreakable. By sharing your demolition story I hope other members will be inspired to try different tactics to knock holes in their own walls and move their research forward. Have you broken through a brick wall lately? Share your story! Email it to ed@ajgs.org.au

IDENTIFYING LOST FAMILY

DANI HASKI

The very first Sledgehammer column detailed how I managed to track down a long lost cousin connected to my Lithuanian/ Latvian family. For this column I'd like to step back a couple of generations in that same family. I recently broke down a brick wall that had been stubbornly difficult to demolish for several years.

I found this beautiful old family photograph at my cousin's house.



Family Schmuljan

*Standing Left to Right: Aaron-Moisey, Izak-Zissel, Zira Milla, Boruch Leib (Leopold), Scholom
Seated: Yossel Zalman, Haja Zlate, Beila Rivke, Zelik.*

It took a while but I eventually identified the family as that of my great grandmother's older sister, Beila Schmuljan nee Dimant.

When I traveled to Latvia in 2010 I engaged the services of Aleksandre Feigmanis (balticgen.com). Aleks delved deep into the Latvian archives with the scant information I was able to give him at the time and managed to unearth a treasure trove of documents and photographs, including passports and university ID photographs. This allowed me to identify each individual.

I was then able to trace the fate of almost everyone. Sadly I was stuck on the fate of the youngest child, Haya Zlata. In revisiting this family and going back into the Latvian Names Project website and the Yad Vashem Names database I was finally able to break down that wall. The key was the addition of passport data to the Yad Vashem collection.

When I searched SCHMULJAN in the [Latvian Names db](http://LatvianNamesdb) and noticed Haja MISROCH born in 1901 in the list. I saw her place of birth was Wolmar but her parent's were not named. I cross referenced this information with the Yad Vashem Database and found a passport for Haja MISROCH. As soon as I saw the photo I knew it was her. I then saw that the passport had in fact been issued to her before she was married and that there was a page that seemed to indicate a name change. Bingo!! There was the evidence.

Here is the story of the family Schmuljan.

THE SCHMULJAN FAMILY

The Schmuljan family was an established, wealthy family in Latvia.



Beila (Bertha) Rivke Dimant (B 1 June 1866, Zagare, Lithuania) married **Yossel Zalman Schmuljan** (B 1853, Kuršėnai, Lithuania) in Riga in 1888. The Schmuljan family originated in Lithuania and the family were quite prominent in Riga.

Beila and Yossel had seven children – Izak, Boruch-Leib, Aron-Moisey, Scholom, Cira-Mila, Zelik and Haya Zlate. The family is registered in a 1910 draft list (on JewishGen) in Šiauliai, Lithuania although it seems they most likely lived in Latvian territory. There are strong indications the family lived in St Petersburg during or just after the Bolshevik Revolution. In the 1920s they lived in an area of Riga that is today protected by a UNESCO heritage order as the streets contain some of the best examples of Art Nouveau architecture in Europe.

Yossel died November 10, 1926 in Riga. Beila's last known address is the Riga Ghetto. The Ghetto was liquidated in two actions in late November/ early December 1941. If she did not die in the ghetto prior to the actions she is most likely buried in a mass grave in Rumbula Forest.

Izak Zissel was born February 25, 1889 in the district of Kaugershof, near Wolmar (today Valmeira) in north-east Latvia. He married Paulina Lurje. In 1941 Isak-Zissel was captured by the Nazis and interned in the notorious Riga Central prison. According to the registers the Nazis confiscated *“one port-cigar of white metal, 1 pocket watch of yellow metal with chain of white metal, 1 marriage ring of yellow metal.”* Most of the prisoners from Riga Central Prison were shot by the Nazis in Bikernieki Forest in 1941.



Boruch-Leib/ Leopold was born in Wolmar on July 8, 1890. He did not marry. Like his brother, Isak, he was imprisoned by the Nazis in 1941. From him they confiscated *“1 pocket watch of white metal.”* He is presumed shot.

Aron-Moisey (right) was born March 8, 1892. He married his cousin, Ella Dimant, in Riga in 1914. They had two daughters – Basja Lea in 1922 and Yoa/ Josephina in 1929. At the outset of WWII the family fled to Tashkent in Uzbekistan. They returned to Riga after the war. Aaron Moisey died in 1950.



Scholom (left) was born September 8, 1893. He trained as a dentist and married Ester Krotman. They had one child, Doris (Sorkin). Scholom died in the Central Prison in 1941. In 1989 Doris submitted a page of testimony to Yad Vashem. At the time she was resident in Tartu, Estonia. Doris had one daughter, Renata. Renata married Salco de Winter and moved to the Netherlands. They have two children, Naomi and Avi



Cira-Mila was born May 5, 1895. She married Moisej Grajevsky on May 16, 1921. Cira and Moisey are recorded as being in the Riga Ghetto in 1944. No record of their survival has been found.



Zelik was born November 2, 1896 in Wolmar. He went to school in Berlin and Estonia and graduated as a medical doctor from Berlin University. In 1924 he applied to have his qualifications recognised in Latvia however, as he was not fluent in Latvian, he postponed his examination. In 1926 he finally succeeded and obtained his Latvian Medical Diploma.

During the war Zelik was living in the Ghetto with his family. According to his cousin, Zelik Dimant, while living in the ghetto he met and married Sophie Stern, a widow from Austria.

At some stage later Zelik was hidden by Zanis Lipke, a Latvian recognised as righteous amongst the nations. He hid Zelik in an underground cellar on a farm. When the daughter of the head of the Parish, and a supporter of Lipke's, Pagasta Vecakais, became ill, Zelik went to treat her. Unfortunately he was discovered by a group of forest brothers, Latvian partisans who supported Nazis. He died around October-November 1944.

Haya Zlate was born in 1901. She went to school in St Petersburg and to a Russian school in Riga. In 1920 she was enrolled in the History and Philology Department of Latvia University. She married Israel Misroch in 1932 and both perished during the Holocaust. Haya's last known address was the Riga Ghetto.



Top: Haya Zlata Schmuljan from childhood to her final passport photo. Bottom left: a wall of the Riga Ghetto Centre left: The Rambula Forest memorial entrance Bottom Right: the Rambula Forest Memorial at the site of the mass grave where Haya Zlata and her mother may be buried.





Despite living on the opposite side of the world Etty, Beila and her sister Ettie (my great grandmother) kept in touch. Ettie visited them in Latvia at least once as an adult and I have been told that she tried desperately to organise visas for them all to come to Australia on the eve of WWII. Sadly they did not take her up on this offer.

Top: Ettie Eizenberg (2nd from left seated) visiting the Schmuljan family in Riga circa 1920s. Left: Haja Zlata and Beilah Schmuljan "taking the waters" in Marienbad, a famous health retreat. Bottom Left: Cira Milla (nee Schmuljan) and her husband Moses Grajevsjy Bottom Right: Ettie (centre) with (L>R) her brother Jeizel Movsha, his wife, Sarah, Beilah and Jossel Schmuljan in Latvia.



LINKS & WEBSITES

JCR-UK UPDATES CEMETERY RECORDS



JCR-UK recently announced updates to records in the burial databases hosted on JewishGen for Sunderland Cemetery, New Southgate Cemetery and Elswick and Heaton Cemeteries, Newcastle upon Tyne.

[The Sunderland \(Bishopwearmouth\) Jewish Cemetery Database](#) contains records of nearly 1,500 burials, including over 1,260 photographs of headstones, with GPS coordinates for each individual grave (accurate to approximately one metre) together with access to Google satellite image of the cemetery showing the location of the grave.

[Records of burials at the New Southgate Cemetery](#) of the former Hendon Reform Synagogue (now merged into the Edgware & Hendon Reform Synagogue) are now available. The 1,156 records (including 323 photographs of headstones) cover the period 1968 through 2016 and include records of cremations recorded in the Synagogue's burial register.

Newly transcribed burial records from Elswick and Heaton Cemeteries, Newcastle upon Tyne, comprise 743 records with 567 headstone photographs for Elswick Cemetery and 404 records with 376 headstone photographs for Heaton Cemetery.

All these records may be searched through JCR-UK's [All-UK Database](#) or JewishGen's [JOWBR](#).



NSW STATE RECORDS SEARCH OVERHAULED



[NSW state archives has given its websearch](#) a major overhaul. There is now a single search-bar to search the entire collection. To narrow your search to a single type of record, click on the dropdown to the right. Results are returned quickly and can be refined by clicking on filters in the right-hand column.

Online Indexes can still be searched individually and you can now download your search results. KeyName search, a popular website feature, has been incorporated into the new Collection Search, which searches across all indexes at once. For more information and to search [NSW State Archives visit the website](#).

A JEWISH BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY



The romantically named Bohemia refers to a historical district on the western side of modern day Czechia. Jewish communities thrived in the region for more than 1000 years, with Prague becoming a renowned centre for learning, art and culture in the Jewish World. Today, defying the legacy of the Holocaust, Prague has a thriving Jewish community with several Synagogues and Jewish Day Schools in operation. Prague has also become a bit of a tourist hot spot for Jewish travellers.

The Czech government has good information resources on their website to help travellers with an interest in the Jewish history of the region make the most of their time. These include a guide to sites in [Prague, Mikulov and Boskovice](#). You can also **[download a pdf brochure](#)** full of beautiful colour photographs. These resources mostly cover the Eastern and Western regions of the country.

The South Bohemia Regional Tourism Authority has recently launched a site covering their patch, and it includes a specific webpage for [Jewish Heritage Sites in South Bohemia](#). Covering 48 villages from [Babčice](#) to [Zběšičky](#) the guides give a brief history of the Jewish presence in the town, information about the Synagogue and cemetery and sometimes a small tit-bit of trivia about the site.

THE PRESENCE OF THEIR ABSENCE



A film that explores the intergenerational trauma of the Holocaust is now available to purchase and view online via [iTunes](#), [Amazon](#) and [Vimeo On Demand \(rent USD4.99/ Buy USD12.99\)](#).

The Presence of Their Absence, follows Fred Zaidman, a child of Holocaust survivors from Radomsko, Poland, as he uncovers the truth of his parent's experiences during the war and discovers the fate of family members he never knew existed.

As the [website for the film](#) explains:

Fred Zaidman's mother Renate spoke often of her pain but without full facts. His father Wolf virtually shut down. From the contradictions of too much emotional information and only scant clues, Fred lost a sense of belonging that disassociated him from his present.

With help from people in Poland, Israel and Germany, and the unlikely assistance of a Baptist minister from Atlanta, Fred reconstructs his family's story, plumbs the depths of his own pain and finds answers to the questions he was never able to ask. Directed by Donna Kanter, Yad Vashem has called it "a film for the ages".

View the trailer [HERE](#).



A VIRTUAL TOUR OF BRODY CEMETERY



The Internet allows us to access records, information and far flung locations that were once inaccessible without travelling. YouTube is a little used resource by genealogists, but it can allow us to travel to the lands of our ancestors without leaving our lounge-rooms. One such example of this is [Brody—the most beautiful cemetery in the world](#). Set to a haunting soundtrack, this almost 9 minute video combines drone footage of Brody cemetery with shots of individual headstones to create a virtual tour of this large Jewish cemetery in Ukraine.

HELP SEARCHING FOR ISRAELI GRAVEZ



The Israeli Chevra Kadisha forum has launched a website and app called [Gravez](#) that facilitates searching Israeli cemeteries. The site includes data from 1.3M graves covering 28 cemeteries and 30 Chevrat Kadisha (burial societies).

Searches must be made using the Hebrew alphabet and the results are returned in Hebrew. You can use the [Stephen P. Morse site](#) to transliterate from the Roman alphabet to Hebrew, and [back again](#), but a working understanding of Hebrew is an advantage as some letters have different sounds. If you visit the cemetery and use the app, it will navigate you to the exact location of the grave. (from *Nu? What's New?*)

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF SOUTH AFRICA LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE



Saul Issroff reports that the [National Archives of South Africa](#) has a new website. [The old site](#) is still active but only the [new site](#) will be updated. The [new search page](#) gives the option to search for all, any or none of the search words. The “none” option is a bit curious and not recommended. One would think that to exclude a single search term would then return almost the entire collection as a result. (from *Nu? What's New?*)

1.5 BILLION FRENCH NAMES



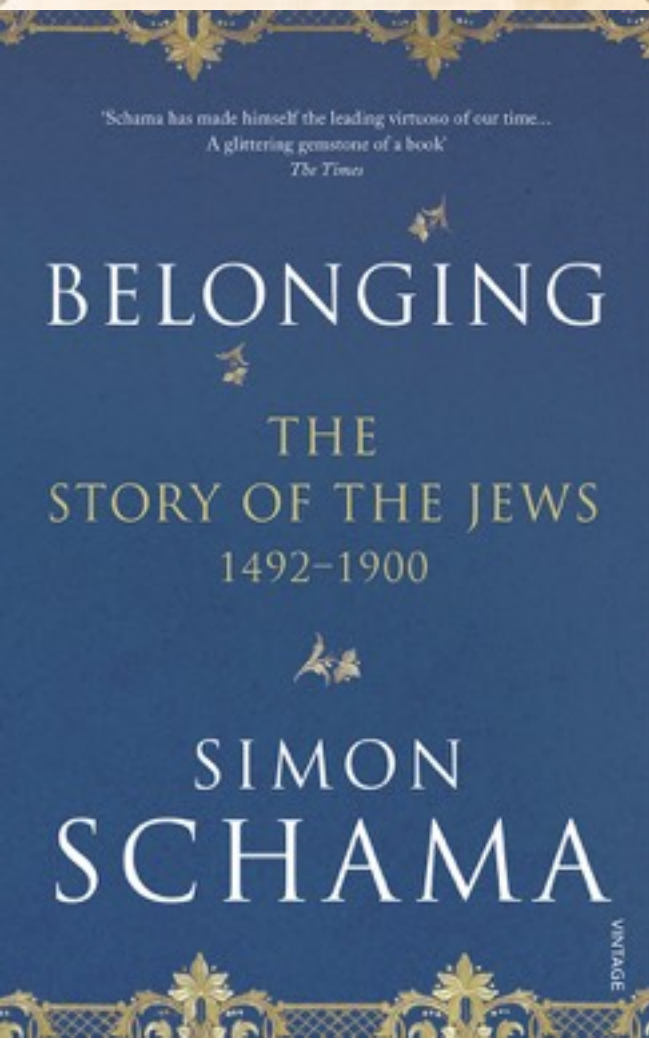
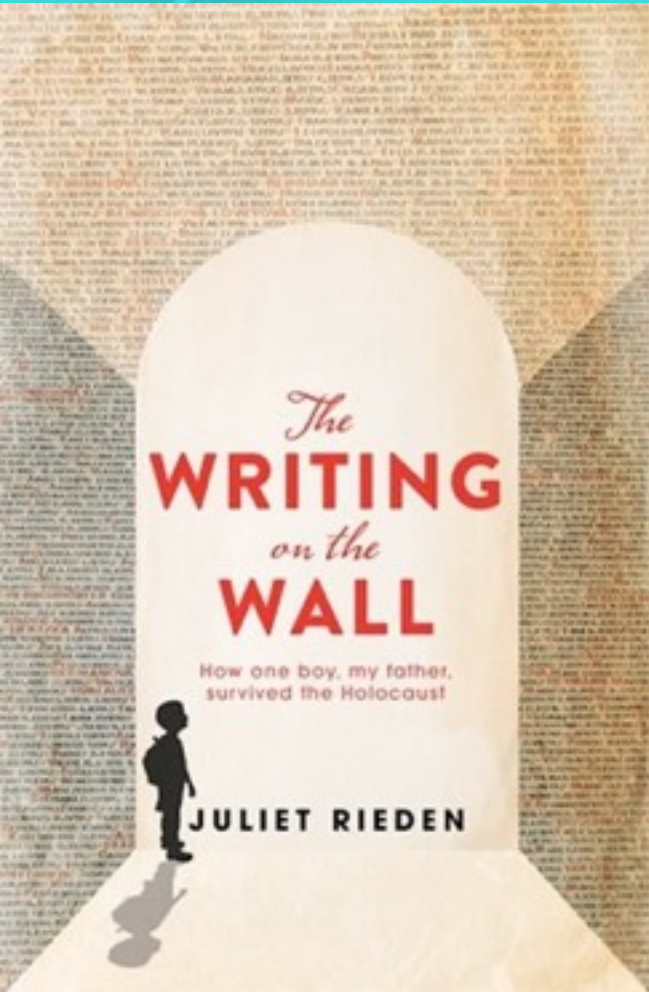
[filae.com](#) is a French genealogy site containing 1.5 billion names from French records. The collection features parish registers, civil records, census and vital records, passenger lists, military records (Napoleonic wars, WWI, WWII), indexes provided by French societies, directories and many other historical records (French revolution, etc.). The site also accommodates family trees.

There are both French and English options (click on the flag icon in the top right corner to select your language of choice). Subscription costs to access data start at €9.90 for a one-month subscription, with discounts for six-month and annual subscriptions. You can search the site at no charge, but a subscription is required to access the records. (From *Nu? What's New?*)

FASCINATING CONVERSATIONS



Richard Fidler's ABC podcast [Conversations](#) has a range of guests with compelling personal stories. On [Wednesday October 16](#), journalist Juliet Rieden recounted the story of her father, who as a child was sent from Czechoslovakia to England by his parents in the care of the Barbican



Mission to the Jews. This little-known proselytising group airlifted scores of Jewish children out of Europe, prior to the more famous Kindertransport.

Bewilderingly, when the war ended Juliet's grandparents, who had survived Theresienstadt, left her father in England. He never saw his father again.

Juliet grew up with little knowledge of her Jewish family but after a visit to Pinkas Synagogue in Prague, where she saw her family name printed repeatedly on the wall, she pursued their stories, uncovering the fates of 19 members of her extended family who passed through Theresienstadt and Auschwitz.

Juliet's book, [*The Writing on the Wall*](#), published by Macmillan, pieces together first-hand testimonials, letters, official records, and dogged investigation, to reveal stories of heartbreak; strange, conditional charity; kindness and bravery. The book is available in print, as an audio-book and in kindle format from your favourite bookseller.

Also of interest, ABC *Big Ideas* featured ***Simon Schama in conversation with Paul Holdengräber*** at the 2019 Sydney Writers Festival. Schama is University Professor of Art History and History at Columbia University and author of *Belonging: The Story of the Jews 1492-1900*. While not technically a genealogical story Schama discusses his own childhood and talks about the development of Jewish identity, especially in light of the regular upheavals experienced by communities across several millennia.

It's a funny, fascinating and story-filled hour.



Paul Holdengräber in conversation with Simon Schama at the 2019 Sydney Writers Festival. Photo: Prudence Upton/ SWF

EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

Jewish International Festival Film

JIFF Film festival is back. This year there are two films that deal directly with family history.

MAN ON THE BUS Melbourne documentary filmmaker Eve Ash (*Undercurrent, Shadow of Doubt*) delves into her mother's mysterious past. Eve's mother Martha, a Holocaust survivor who emigrated from Poland to Australia, kept many details of her early life secret. Over the course of a decade Eva doggedly pursued the truth, and through interviews, old recordings and home movies, she reveals a portrait of her

late mother that is a far cry from the carefully cultivated image Martha worked hard to maintain. This is a tale of suspicion, omission and a mysterious man on a bus.

There will be a Q & A with Director Eva Ash after selected screenings. [VIEW THE TRAILER](#)

DAYAN: THE FIRST FAMILY This 4-part documentary series will be screened in full with an interval. Directed by Anat Goren, it charts the rise and rise of the most influential family dynasty in Israel, the Dayan Family. Five generations woven into the very fabric of the state of Israel: from the Yishuv and the establishment of the state to military victories and political defeats. [VIEW THE TRAILER](#)

There are several other films that may interest genealogists including three compelling documentaries:

BEYOND THE BOLEX is the story of inventor of the revolutionary Bolex camera, Jacques Bolsey. Introduced in 1927, the Bolex camera opened the gates for ordinary people to create and experiment with film. Jacques's legacy was forgotten by history until his personal belongings were discovered in 2004 by his great-granddaughter Alyssa, then a young filmmaker. Using footage from Jacques' personal archives of over forty films dating back to the 1920s Bolsley brings her ancestors spirit back to life.

OF ANIMALS & MEN presents the reality behind the story of Jan and Antonina Zabinski, whose story was dramatised in the 2017 feature film *The Zookeeper's Wife*. As director of the renowned Warsaw Zoo, Zabinski and his family are credited with saving more than 300 people from the Nazis by hiding them in their home and the zoo itself. Featuring interviews with the Zabinskis' children and people they saved, this is the story of fierce humanitarianism and resistance that remains an example for people everywhere.

WHAT WILL BECOME OF US is an intimate look at the life of our own Frank Lowy, founder of the global shopping mall giant Westfield. Starting in 1959 with one store in Blacktown, the Westfield empire grew into a global, billion dollar enterprise. As the prospects of a merger and retirement loomed, Frank allowed Oscar-nominated documentarian Steven Cantor to follow him as he reflected on his life: from 1930s Czechoslovakia to his success in Australia.





JIFF also features a selection of fascinating biographies including:

ASK DR. RUTH The life story of Ruth Westheimer, whose candid discussions of sexuality took 1980's America by storm.

LOVE, ANTOSHA A tribute to actor Anton Yelchin (Star Trek), whose career had only just begun to take off when he tragically died in a freak accident in 2016, aged 27..

MRS G The story of Lea Gottlieb, the legendary designer, founder and owner of the Gottex Israeli swimwear empire; and

GOLDA A portrait of controversial Zionist icon Golda Meir, "Israel's Iron Lady", the first and only female Prime Minister of Israel, forty years after her death.

JIFF will be screening in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane and Canberra late October/ early November.

For tickets and screening information in your area go to the [JIFF website](#).

*Previous page: (L to R) Man on the bus–Martha & Felix Ash; Moshe Dayan; Beyond the Bolex–Wim Wenders; What Will Become of Us–Leon Moralić
This page: Clockwise from left: Golda–Levy David; Love Antosha; Mrs G; Ask Dr Ruth. Photos: JIFF.*

EASTERN SUBURBS WORKSHOP

I THOUGHT MY FAMILY WERE POLISH JEWS... RUSSIAN, AUSTRIAN AND GALICIAN NATIONALITY IN CONTEXT

Come and learn about the changing borders in Eastern Europe and how to find useful records for researching your family's Polish Jewish roots. We'll explore databases including: Jewish Records Indexing Poland (JRI-Pol); the JewishGen databases for Poland, Lithuania, and Austria/Hungary; Gesher Galicia; the Polish State Archives and Familysearch.

We will also learn about useful tools for narrowing the search when you don't know the town of origin.

All welcome but please RSVP to society@ajgs.org.au by 14 November.

SUNDAY 17 NOVEMBER

DOORS: 2.00PM

TALK BEGINS 2:30PM

**A Q&A WILL FOLLOW AND YOU
WILL HAVE ACCESS TO
RESOURCES.**

Waverley Library Theatre

32-48 Denison St, Bondi Junction



UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

AJGS runs regular workshops where you can access resources, websites and the knowledge of other members.

Monthly Sunday and quarterly Monday workshops are held at The Rev Katz Library, North Shore Synagogue, Treatts Road, Lindfield. Quarterly Sunday workshops are also held at Waverley Library, 48 Denison St, Bondi Junction.

Check out **The Calendar on the AJGS website** for details or see below for dates, times and locations.

DAY	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
SUNDAY	NOVEMBER 3	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	NOVEMBER 17	1400-1700	WAVERLEY LIBRARY
MONDAY	NOVEMBER 18	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	DECEMBER 1	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	JANUARY 12	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	FEBRUARY 2	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	FEBRUARY 16	1400-1700	WAVERLEY LIBRARY
MONDAY	FEBRUARY 17	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	MARCH 1	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	APRIL 5	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	MAY 3	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	MAY 17	1400-1700	WAVERLEY LIBRARY
MONDAY	MAY 18	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE
SUNDAY	JUNE 14	1000-1300	NORTH SHORE SYNAGOGUE

(NB: As workshop dates and times may change, please consult **the website calendar** in the week prior to the workshop.)