



KOSHER KOALA

וְכָל הָעַם רוֹאִים אֶת הַקּוֹלוֹת אֲנָרִים לְקַבֵּל חַמּוּדוֹת
וְקִלוֹת לְבַטַח הוֹשִׁיבֶם עוֹשֶׂה גְדוֹלוֹת כִּן יִפְרוֹס שְׁלוֹמוֹ
עַל כָּל מַקְהִילוֹת בְּרַ אֶת פֹּרֵס כּוֹפֵת שְׁלוֹם
עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל יְרֻעַ



אֲמֵנוּ אֲמֵנוּ אֲמֵנוּ אֲמֵנוּ אֲמֵנוּ אֲמֵנוּ אֲמֵנוּ אֲמֵנוּ
בִּינְיָן בְּעַרְכּוֹ בִּי עֵץ יְצוּרְכּוֹ בְּשַׁעֲשׁוּעֵי בְּתוֹ רֵאשִׁית הַרְפֵּי
גִשְׁתִּי לְרַגְלֵיךָ גִּרְתִּי בִּינְיָלֵיךָ גַּעְעוּ עֵינַי עָלֶיךָ קֹדֶם מִפְּעֻלּוֹת
הַתּוֹתֵי עֵינֶיךָ הוֹדִי לְהוֹעִילֶךָ הַעֵת הַנְּעִילֶךָ מֵאֵז מִעוֹלָם
הַגִּנִּי לְאֵרוֹשׁ הַמְזוּקָה לְפָרוֹשׁ הַנְּפִלָא לְרֵדֶשׁ נִכְסֵי מֵרֵאשׁ
וְאֶחֱיָה בְּעַרְצֵךָ וְשַׁעֲשׁוּעֵי יָרֵךְ וְקִרְמֵנִי בְּמֵרֵץ מִקְדָּמֵי אֶרֶץ
זוֹהַר נְכַלְלָתִי זִכְיוֹת נְכַלְלָתִי זֹאת עַתְהָלְלָתִי מֵאֵז תְּהוֹמֵי חוֹלְלֵי
חֶקֶר עוֹנֹת חֶלֶל וּמַעֲוֹנוֹת חֶקֶבֶי עֵינֵינוֹת בְּאֵז מִעֵינוֹת
טַחְחֵי שׁוּמִיִּם טַחְחֵי אֵשׁ וּמִיִּם טוֹרְמֵנֵי יוֹמִיִּם נִכְפְּרֵי מִיִּם

SUMMER/ FEBRUARY 2021

AJGS
L'dor V'dor

FEATURES

CZECH ARCHIVAL STAR LENKA MATUŠIKOVÁ RETIRES

DANIELA TORSH

In this era of celebrity, Lenka Matušiková is not a name that is immediately recognisable. But it ought to be, especially in genealogy circles. Czech Jews especially may know her name. And most likely have had her help in finding ancestors.

Lenka was formerly the Deputy Director of the [Czech National Archives](#) and has recently announced she is retiring. This is quite an historic moment as she has worked in the Archives for 46 years and helped so many families search through genealogical data that sometimes feels like looking for a needle in a haystack. She knows where the haystacks are, each strand of hay and where to find the needle.



Lenka Matušiková in the archives, 2006
(Photo: Daniela Torsh)

This will be her second and “real” retirement.

She officially retired around 2015 and the Archive published a *Festschrift*, a book of her own writing about the history of the Jews in the Czech lands, together with sincere tributes from colleagues and researchers like me. The fact the Archives published this book is a real mark of respect and well deserved. But it was a sort of faux retirement as she actually continued working at the Archives up until this year. The Czech Republic allows workers to retire, collect a pension and then continue to work and be paid. Like everything in the country of my birth, it’s very different to our Australian system.

Lenka initiated some major projects relating to Jewish Genealogy at the Archives, like digitising much of its Jewish records and making them available on the internet. She and the Czech Archives pioneered this not only in Eastern Europe, but the whole of Europe, although some Archives in Central Europe are yet to digitise their collections. The records can be found at [HERE](#) and [HERE](#). She won European Union funding for the project in recognition of its significance.

This effort meant that one could finally forgo travelling physically to the archive and search the collection online from anywhere in the world. It was a huge advance in the genealogy world, speeding up research immeasurably. I would dub it revolutionary in its effect on research and scholarship. It took a multilingual archivist to manage this work.

The Canadian researcher Alex Woodle says, “*Her dedication to protecting the Jewish vital records is monumental and heroic*”. (*Festschrift*, p.15) Records cover important census data, as well as the vital records of births, deaths and marriages and books relating to the restrictive Austro-Hungarian *Familianten* laws that prevented Jews from marrying and living freely for hundreds of years.

Lenka spent the last 3 weeks of 2020 clearing out her office and leaving the building. But she says she will continue working on her own projects in future, though she hasn't revealed to me what they are yet. COVID has closed the Archives and she has been working from home. The Czech Republic has been severely affected by the virus with 11,000 deaths in its small population of only just under 11 million people.

Her colleagues at the Archives will continue to help researchers in future. I don't know whether her actual position as Deputy Director will be filled nor by whom. Not only did Lenka direct the preservation of Jewish records 1784-1949 held in the National Archives, she did the same for the other major religious groups in the Czech Republic, the Catholics and Protestants, too. So the National Archives are losing her massive expertise on a daily basis. However, she says she's still available for consultations and advice.

The *Festschrift* I mentioned earlier has tributes from Randy Schoenberg (yes, he's related to Arnold the famous Viennese composer) who is a co-ordinator for the Special Interest Group (known as the SIG) for Austria and the Czech Republic on the JewishGen website. Randy writes he first met Lenka in 1996 in Prague. He decided to invite her to attend the IAJGS conference in Chicago where she spoke about the less well-known holdings for genealogical research in the Czech



National Archives of the Czech Republic, Prague

Archives such as manorial records, police records, and lists of Familiants, Jews who were permitted to reside and work in various towns and cities and more.

More tributes came from Alex Woodle, a Canadian filmmaker and researcher. He writes that he went to the National Archives to film a story about his Bohemian roots for the Ellis Island Foundation based in New York City. *“Lenka has always been extremely co-operative to individuals or groups”*.



Lenka & with Michal Ďurovič in 2011, (Photo: Daniela Torsh)

The Cambridge scholar, Sheilagh Ogilvie wrote a beautiful, touching article about working with Lenka on academic projects and a more personal relationship where they taught each other Czech and English. Part of the interchange was Lenka teaching Sheilagh how to make Czech dumplings called *knedliky*. My mother made them as I grew up in Sydney and I have very happy memories of eating too many. Sheilagh tells of Lenka taking her to collect mushrooms in the woods and working together on a joint venture between Czech and

Austrian archivists and historians about the history of the Bohemian Jews. Through Sheilagh, Lenka was invited to work on a British Library project of endangered and lost archives. Lenka visited Cambridge University where Sheilagh worked and explored the fens nearby.

The *Festschrift* contains two major lectures which Lenka presented to the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) at their 2008 conference in Chicago and the 2013 one in Boston. By then Lenka was fluent in English and was able to provide the insight and knowledge of her many years of study and work both in the Czech Republic and internationally. There is a bibliography of her published articles on the Jews of Czechoslovakia as well as other historical and archival subjects (p 407, *Festschrift*). In my tribute I wrote that Lenka had changed my life by helping me find the scattered remnants of my family. This must have been repeated in many families all over the world where the Czech Jewish diaspora was scattered.

I first met Lenka through a fateful introduction by the Chief Rabbi of Prague, Karel Sidon, a former dissident poet. Sidon was an old film school friend of my fixer Jarka Hybšová when I filmed in Prague for SBS TV's Dateline programme where I worked. I told her about the trouble I had finding the Archives and Jarka

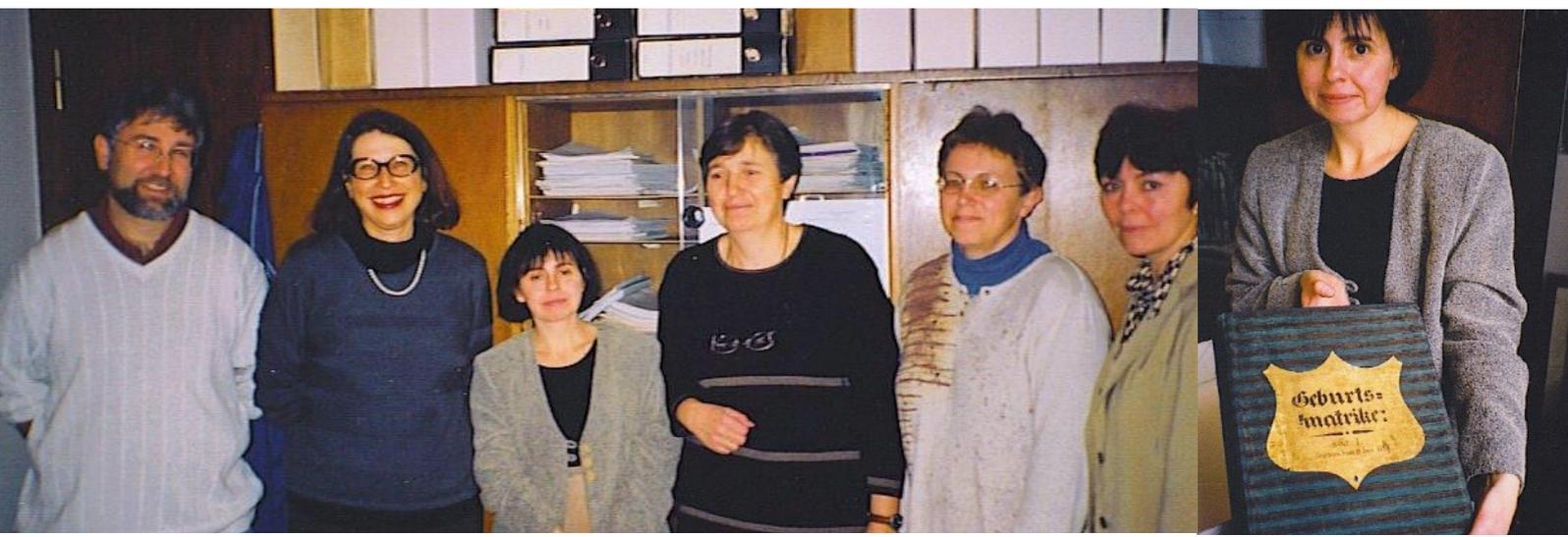
immediately picked up the phone and spoke to Karel on my behalf. That was in the Prague winter of late 1994.

Lenka and I met the next morning at her office. I was due back at work the next day in Sydney. It was awkward as my Czech and her English were non-existent and my German was poor. It was also the early post-communist days as Prague was shifting quickly from Communism to Capitalism. After years of searching, it was a revelation to discover the building I sought was just up the road from my family's restituted apartment, a few minutes ride on the number 26 tram on Milady Horakové.

Since that first meeting, Lenka has been a huge boon in my personal research and become a good friend. She showed me how the Archive preserved their *Matriky* (registers) collection of around 4,000 books of Jewish births, deaths and marriages. Schoenberg says they contained a quarter of a million pages! (*Festschrift*, p 14) It was a revelation to see pages brought back to life. And it gave me a lot of respect for the work done in Archives behind the scenes.

Back home I initiated a project in 2006 to fund the restoration of more than 20 *Matriky* which Lenka selected as being in the worst condition. She used the Archive's own conservators as well as some private ones and even students from the college where conservators trained. The newly restored *Matriky* were incredible. I'll never forget handling an 11th Century Christian illuminated bible I was allowed to look at with white gloves in the conservation laboratory. The cover was studded with huge glittering jewels and the pages bound in leather had illuminated golden paintings alongside the Gothic hand lettering in heavy black ink.

LEFT: Celebrating the restoration of *Matriky* in 2007; Lenka is centre, in the black jumper. Daniela is second from the left, next to Michal Ďurovič, head of the conservation lab. Also present is Lenka's boss Dr Eva Drašarova (on the right) and some of the private conservators who participated in the restoration project. RIGHT: One of the restored volumes held by a private conservator.



After that I also helped establish funding from the JewishGen SIG to digitise the thousands of *Matriky*. Randy Schoenberg actively supported this valuable project. Many Australian SIG members and genealogists made donations and I was very proud to announce the project when I gave a talk in Canberra in November 2010, at the synagogue centre near Parliament House.

I have also been very impressed by the relationship Lenka developed with the Jewish Community in Prague over the years. Despite the terrible history of the destruction of the Jews in Czechoslovakia, the Jewish Community in Prague clearly respected her and was happy to work with her as a State employee. She has been on the Editorial Board of the Jewish Museum's scholarly publication *Judaica Bohemiae* and she helped establish the Terezín Institute, which is based at the former concentration camp and ghetto.

Lenka would like people to know that if they need any assistance, for example an official document like a birth or death certificate, they can [write to the Archives](#).

If (post Covid) you visit Prague and would like to work in their Reading Room, you need to make an appointment before you visit. The building is easy to find, in the suburb of Dejvice and near the Hradcanska metro station.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Archivní 2257/4, 149 00 Praha 4

Phone: +420 974 847 240

E-mail: posta@nacr.cz

Website: www.nacr.cz/en/

A detailed list of contacts is available [HERE](#)



References

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Matušíková L. "K dejinam Zidu v ceskych zemich", (On the history of the Jews in the Czech lands) *Narodni Archiv*, 2015, Prague. (I have called this *Festschrift* in the text.)

Matušíková L. "Czech archival sources on the history of the Jews in the Czech lands", p94 of above

Matušíková L. "Registry districts of the Jewish religious communities of Bohemia Moravia and the Czech part of Silesia", p 118, *ibid*.

Peter Nash is a life member of AJGS. This article first appeared in AVOTAYNU, the International Review of Jewish Genealogy, Vol.X, Fall 2020.

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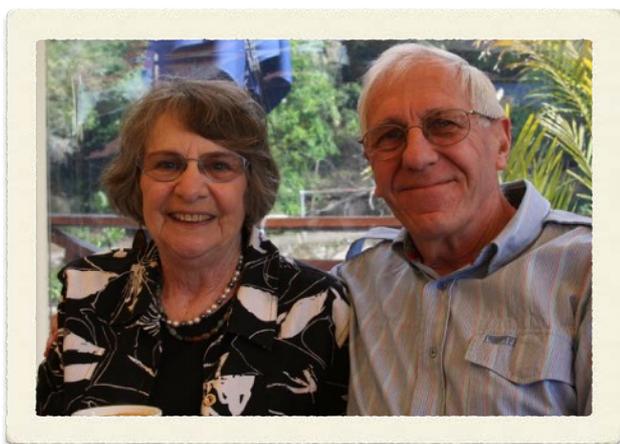
Peter with his parents on the wharf in Colombo, 1939 (Photo: Peter Nash)

I was born in Germany in 1935, an only child with no first cousins. My parents married a month before Adolf Hitler came to power. Failed attempts to get entry to Australia, USA and Argentina ended in getting entry to Shanghai, China, in May 1939 as Entry Visas were not required. Despite China being under Japan's control, about 18,000 Jews entered Shanghai.

We escaped WW2 in Europe but were caught up in the Pacific War when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941. After Japan surrendered in August 1945, Jews – also other non-Asians all over China – had to plan to leave because the takeover by the Communist Chinese was inevitable. My parents and I finally obtained entry to Australia.

We settled in Sydney from March 1949. We were lucky that English was the business and school language in Shanghai. My birth name was Peter Nacheinstein, difficult for most people to pronounce and spell. Also pre- and post-WW2 Australia accepted many migrants and feelings from many existing Aussies turned anti-migrant – not anti-Semitic. So my family name was changed to Nash when I was 17 – which I chose being familiar with the “Nash Rambler” car.

I met and married a Jewish girl, Rieke Isenberg. Soon after, we had two sons and a daughter. Rieke's father's parents came from Poland but migrated to England where they had ten children and then came to Australia in 1913. Her mother also came from Poland to Australia in 1929. Rieke had two siblings and many cousins. She was an avid reader and very interested in her family history. My parents were ageing so she encouraged me to ask them to tell me as much as possible about their parents, grandparents, etc. I was lucky also that my father was a ‘hoarder’ of



Rieke & Peter Nash (Photo: Peter Nash)

letters and documents, which he not only brought from Germany but also from Shanghai. As I was a Holocaust Survivor I submitted 50 Pages of Testimony to Yad Vashem. From my close family over 40 perished and only three survived.

We belonged to a Synagogue nearby where Rieke took part in a monthly Library meeting. One evening, Sophie

Caplan appeared at their meeting to announce that she was starting a genealogy group and was looking for anyone interested. Rieke immediately put her hand up.

The first Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (AJGS) started in Sydney in November 1991 – before the overwhelming Internet. Soon the members of the AJGS grew and two monthly workshops were held at the Synagogue - with Rieke in control at each, and I also took part. A newsletter, titled *The Kosher Koala* was provided to each member four times a year and members also contributed to *Avotaynu*.

From the mid-1980s Rieke and I mailed letters around the world, each of us seeking family information. We also became members of *JewishGen* not long after it was available. We travelled a lot and widely. My first breakthrough came from a scrap of paper from my father on which he scribbled the name Nathan Nachemstein, who went to New York. The AJGS acquired *Jewish Genealogy Beginner's Guide* and I used it for contact details, such as the New York branch of the US National Archives. . Of course, at that time all was by post-mail. The response was prompt: Nathan Nachemstein's arrival was August 1869, he lived in New York and his occupation was: *junkman* - which was common in the Nachemstein family back in Europe.

Rieke and I travelled many times to the United States, especially to Salt Lake City, Utah, for research at *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Mormons). Since 1894 they have collected family records especially from Europe. Our timing on six occasions was also to participate in Gary Mokotoff's Workshops. Rieke participated in nine IAJGS Conferences in the US, Israel, Paris and London – and I in seven. We made many close and lifelong friends at the conferences.

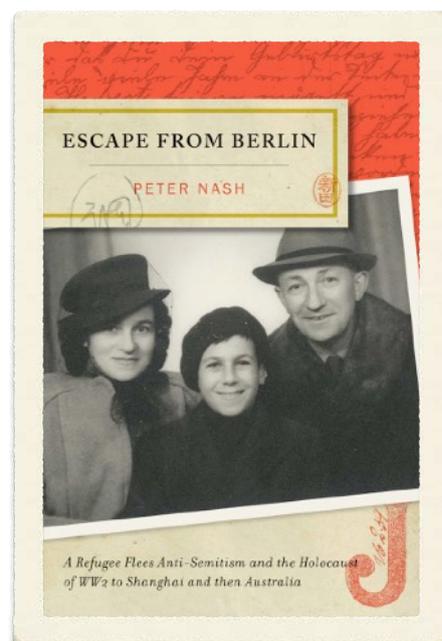
After the Paris Conference in 1997 we participated in a Guided Tour in Warsaw, Poland, led by Gary Mokotoff. We stayed on in Poland and went to towns from where Rieke's families came and had successful research. After Stanley Diamond initiated JRI-Poland, Rieke became the go-to person for the area in Poland where her families came from. It was also the start of our long friendship with Stanley.

In 2008 we heard of a planned visit to the International Tracing Service (now Arolsen Archives) in Bad Arolsen, Germany. We immediately registered and came together with 40 others. It was wonderful being part of the first group to have access to their collection of WW2 records for the Jewish victims of the Nazi regime.

Our AJGS (Sydney), also the AJGS (Melbourne) were very excited when Sallyann Sack came to Australia in 2010 to give talks and also do some family research in Perth. When I told her I still could not break through a long-standing "Brick Wall" finding someone in my family in the US, she gave me another clue - which I pursued - and finally cracked the wall.

As well as my family history research I was also known as a collector of records connected to the Jews who escaped to Shanghai. I helped many reunite with family members or old friends. I also went to Shanghai Reunions which were mostly held in the US. I was also invited to come back to Shanghai to give a talk, ironically, by the German Consulate in Shanghai.

Our genealogical journey enriched our sense of family history immeasurably. We did this for our children, their partners and our grandchildren and the families that follow on. Sadly, the worst possible event was when my inspiration and long-standing partner, Rieke, passed away in 2015. To help overcome this tragedy, I wrote and published the story of both our lives, entitled *Escape From Berlin*.



In March 2019, Michelle Urban OAM, Vice-President of the Jewish Historical and Genealogical Society of Western Australia (JHGSA), received an enquiry from Professor Susanne Zeller in Berlin, Germany. Included in Susanne's message was a copy of her research for a book titled, 'A German Captain as Escape Helper for Polish Jews'. In reading Professor Zeller's research, Rose Raymon was reminded of the time Australian author Thomas Keneally stumbled upon the Oskar Schindler story. This is just such a story. Historian Susanne Zeller has kindly granted the Jewish Historical and Genealogical Society of WA and AJGS, permission to reproduce an abridged version based on her research.

And so we must know these good people who helped Jews during the Holocaust. We must learn from them, and in gratitude and hope, we must remember them.

ELIE WIESEL

The story unfolds in the former German ports of Danzig and Gdingen (today Gdansk and Gdynia, Poland). Born in Bellin, Pomerania, on 15 September 1893, Gustav Pietsch served in the German Navy in World War I and received his master's certificate. On 22 January 1918, Gustav Otto Heinrich Pietsch, married Gertrude Agnes Behnke and the couple settled in the small Baltic Sea town of Glettkau (today Jelitkowo, Poland). Gustav and Gertrude had three children, Heinz Otto Hermann, Karl Eberhard Franz and Ursula Elisabeth Gertrude.

Pietsch was a member of the German Merchant Navy Officer's Association and the Association of Combat Veterans, closely affiliated to the German National People's Party (DNVP). Gertrude Pietsch was active in the female section of the Combat Veterans' Association. In early 1933, the Nazis joined the government of the Free City of Danzig and introduced several anti-Semitic laws. Jews were dismissed from all public offices and the Combat Veterans were urged to do the same. Pietsch became the Chairman of the Danzig branch of the Association and



opposed any discrimination of Jewish veterans, which resulted in his first arrest.

In 1935, he organised 150 non-Jewish veterans to join a commemoration in the Great Synagogue of Danzig to protect the service against Nazi attacks. Gustav's actions led to a boycott of his business and when Gertrude opened a pastry shop the exterior was smeared with anti-Semitic slogans and boycotted. In 1935 the City's administration revoked the shop's licence without an explanation.

Gustav Pietsch worked as an instructor at the *Ma'apilim-Gordonia* Zionist naval school, providing lessons to members of the *Zebulun* Zionist Maritime Youth Movement and assisting with their escape by smuggling them onboard foreign ships. In 1935, Pietsch dared to run as an independent candidate in the last free parliamentary election in Danzig. He was arrested several times by the Danzig police and badly beaten by street thugs, who attacked him with iron bars, shoving him into the path of an oncoming tram.

On 24 December 1938, Pietsch and his family fled Danzig, emigrating to Palestine. He arrived on 10 January 1939 and was one of the founders of the village of *Neve-Yam* in Northern Israel (later Kibbutz Neve-Yam), where he continued to work as a nautical and fishery instructor.

At the outbreak of World War II, Pietsch was arrested by the British as an 'enemy alien' but released in February 1940. After the founding of the State of Israel he moved to the port of Eilat, working as a port director. However, health concerns and difficulty in adapting to the local climate led to him and his family relocating to *Moshav Nahalat Yehuda*, near Rishon LeZion.

Right from top: Gustav Pietsch, 1936 passport, Free City of Danzig (Source: State Office for Citizenship and Regulatory Affairs (LABO), Berlin); Captain Gustav Pietsch, *Neve-Yam*, Israel, circa 1939 (Source: JNF archive); Official identity card for those persecuted politically, racially or religiously under National Socialism. (Source: State Office for Citizenship and Regulatory Affairs (LABO), Berlin)

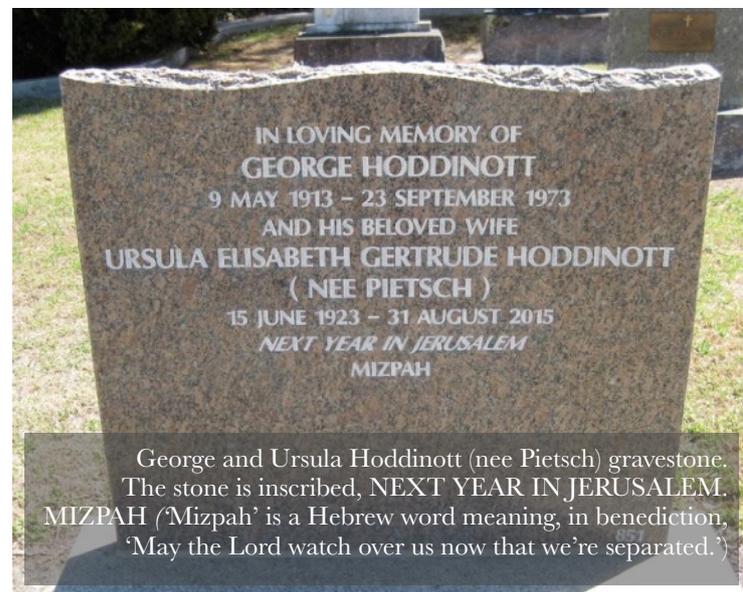


In 1958, the Pietsches returned to Germany with a view to applying for their pension and compensation owed for the loss of their property during the Nazi regime. Gustav and Gertrude lived in a small one room apartment in Berlin in a Germany that was foreign to them. In 1960, they were officially recognised as persons persecuted by the National Socialist regime.

On 1 February 1961, the Berlin Senator Joachim Lipschitz, presented Gustav and Gertrude with a 'Certificate of Honour' as 'Unsung Heroes' for their selfless rescue missions. The son of a Jewish physician, Lipschitz was arrested by the Nazis when he was 18 and drafted into the German army. He lost his right arm fighting in the Russian campaign. As a Senator, Lipschitz was in charge of the West Berlin police and in that capacity directed police raids against anti-Semites and neo-Nazis in 1960.

The Pietsches strongly disapproved of the political situation in postwar Germany and decided to leave the country again, joining their daughter Ursula Hoddinott, in Western Australia on 26 May 1961.

Gertrude Pietsch died on 10 May 1973 aged 79 years and Gustav died two years later, on 17 May 1975 aged 81 years. They are buried side by side at the Allambie Park Cemetery in Albany, Western Australia.



NEWS & VIEWS

AJGS LIBRARY NOW SEARCHABLE ONLINE



AJGS has made the catalogue of our resources library available to search online. The *AJGS Resources Library* has an index of titles held by the society. AJGS member Liz Suggit has been diligently tagging the entries to enhance searchability.

AJGS has over 400 books in our resource library. These include how-to guides, vital record indexes and personal family histories. Some of these books are limited editions, are self-published or out of print. In some cases, the information may be accessible online. Nevertheless, these books provide a useful and valuable resource for researchers.

Unfortunately, at this stage, these books are not available to borrow but you are welcome to come to North Shore Synagogue by appointment to review publications. Access to the Reverend Katz Library, where our collection is housed, is still restricted. If you would like access to any of the books in the AJGS collection please contact Society President Barbara Simon to arrange an appointment.

CONGRATULATIONS LIZ JAMES, OAM



Melbourne genealogy stalwart, Liz James was recognised in the Australia Day Honours list with an OAM in the General Division of the Order of Australia for her service to the Jewish community of Victoria. Liz began her genealogical journey over 20 years ago progressively plastering the walls of the family home with family tree charts until it became wallpaper.

My interest in Jewish genealogy and history began when I discovered my ancestors came from a connecting network of multiple Rabbinical family trees whose names included and counted amongst the oldest Jewish settlers in Germany who founded the Ashkenazi Jewish community'.

Liz subsequently traced her family back over 1000 years, and discovered a world full of cousins. As an active member of AJGS (Vic) Liz has helped hundreds of people solve their family history mysteries and introduced countless children to the joys of genealogical research, volunteering with the School Roots Program.



Liz James OAM (Photo: Liz James)

She says:

Assisting and guiding members of the community in discovering the history of their forebears and understanding the challenges they faced, is an important way of sharing my research skills and ensuring memories of the past are kept alive throughout the generations.

NEW HOLOCAUST MUSEUM FOR CANBERRA



To coincide with Holocaust Remembrance Day 2021, on the eve of the 76th anniversary of the liberation of Bergen Belson, Federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg announced federal funding towards the establishment of a new Holocaust memorial and museum in the nation's capital. The Federal government has committed \$750,000 towards the museum and education centre to ensure Australians can learn about and understand the truth about this pivotal chapter in world history.

The new museum will be an extension of the National Jewish Memorial Centre. It houses many items with a Jewish connection given to former prime ministers by foreign dignitaries and subsequently gifted to the community by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

In interviews on the ABC, Mr Fydenberg, who lost family members in the Holocaust, said

It doesn't matter if you're Jewish or non-Jewish, understanding the Holocaust and learning lessons of the past is critical to a better future for all of us.

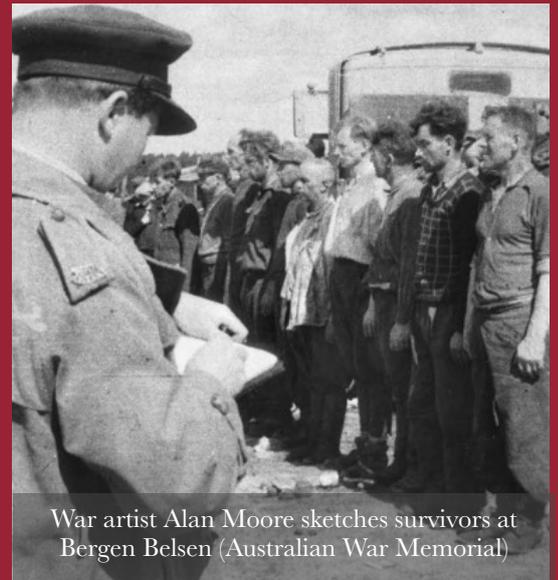
ACT Jewish Community President Veronica Leydman told *Kosher Koala* there are currently seven Holocaust survivors living in the ACT region, all now in their 90s.

She hopes to record their stories for the new memorial but plans for the development are still in their very early stages. The volunteer led National Jewish Memorial Centre already hosts school children from the local region, educating them on the Holocaust and other aspects of Jewish history and life. Developing a more extensive educational program had been a dream for a long time.

Holocaust Witnesses and Survivors at the Australian War Memorial

The day that I entered Belsen I didn't expect anything like it. I forgot about doing anything that the army told me that I had to do ... I just went quite crazy, I wanted to try and put everything down as well as I could ... drawing madly all the time. I wanted to show what it was, what was going on.

This is how Australian official war artist Alan Moore, pictured right with his sketchbook, described his reaction upon entering Bergen Belsen with British troops as they liberated the camp. The drawings and paintings he created form part of the *Australian War Memorial's Holocaust Witnesses and Survivors* exhibition in the Second World War Gallery, alongside testimonies from Australian journalists, soldiers and medical staff who swiftly followed and survivors who subsequently migrated to Australia.



War artist Alan Moore sketches survivors at Bergen Belsen (Australian War Memorial)

FAMILYTREEDNA MERGES WITH AUSTRALIAN GENOMICS COMPANY



FamilyTreeDNA and their parent company, Gene by Gene, have announced a merger with myDNA, an Australian genomics company.

In an email to customers, FTDNA said:

The innovative merger of myDNA and Gene by Gene is built on a set of shared beliefs that genetic information has a tremendous potential to give us an understanding about ourselves that we would not otherwise have.

According to the statement, FamilyTreeDNA will continue their longstanding work in the field of genetic genealogy, their original business, and maintain their existing privacy rules and terms of service.

Launching in 2000, FamilyTreeDNA was the first company in the U.S to offer direct-to-consumer DNA testing for genealogical research. Founded in 2007, myDNA's stated mission is to help people make better health, wellness and



lifestyle decisions. They are working to revolutionise the fields of pharmacogenomics, personalised medicine and nutrigenomics, to deliver personalised nutrition, fitness and skincare recommendations.

Dr. Lior Rauchberger, currently CEO of myDNA, was formerly an M.D., practicing medicine for nine years before developing a keen interest in the intersection of medicine and technology and the potential of personalised medicine. He will step into the role of CEO of the merged companies. Gene by Gene co-founders Bennett Greenspan and Max Blankfeld will join the Board of Directors.

ROOTSTECH SHAPING UP TO BE A RECORD BREAKER



As we noted in the last issue of *Kosher Koala*, RootsTech, the annual genealogy tech conference, is going online this year between February 25-27. This year the organisers made the decision to not charge a registration fee. As a result, almost 200,000 delegates have registered to attend online!!

Several keynote speakers have been announced already, hailing from all over the world. RootsTech usually concentrates more on process and technology of genealogy, but the site does say that there will be a range of cultural activities such as cooking demonstrations, yoga and musical experiences; classes in multiple languages and a virtual marketplace will replace the regular market hall.

Information on the actual program is scarce at this stage so it's difficult to ascertain if there will be sessions or speakers dealing specifically with Jewish genealogical subject areas. IAJGS will have a significant presence there this year, with a booth in the virtual marketplace. IAJGS have reached out to affiliate societies calling for videos, documents and products relevant to Jewish genealogy. They will also have volunteers available to answer questions on Jewish genealogical subjects in the chat function of the conference platform.

Registrations are still open on the RootsTech website. Conference videos will be available on demand after the conference.

1700 YEARS OF GERMAN SPEAKING JEWISH HERITAGE



In the year 321 CE Constantine the Great, Emperor of Rome from 306-337 CE, issued an edict. His statement, recorded in the *Codex Theodosianus*, confirmed that Jews played a significant

role in the social structure and municipal life in Cologne and other communities.

According to Dr. Thomas Otten (MiQua – LVR-Jüdisches Museum im Archäologischen Quartier Köln)

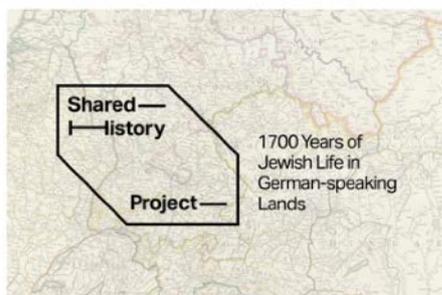
Constantine's decree from 321 CE constitutes the earliest surviving written source confirming the presence of Jews in Central and Northern Europe. Due to its evidentiary nature, the decree has a special value for Jewish life in Germany. It demonstrates that Jews have lived in the area now known as Germany since ancient times, and they have participated in social, cultural, economic, and scientific life there for 17 centuries.

A copy of the codex, contained in a 6th century manuscript held by the Vatican, is the first object displayed in an innovative new virtual exhibition project created by The Leo Baeck Institute to commemorate over 1700 years of Jewish life in the Germanic territories.

Called the *Shared History Project*, and due to launch late February, the exhibition will slowly unveil 58 objects which tell the 1700-year story of the Jewish presence in Central Europe. As their website explains:

From the earliest evidence of a Jewish presence in the Roman provinces of the Rhineland to contemporary Germany and Austria, the project tells the story of the complex coexistence of Jews and non-Jews in German-speaking lands over 1,700 years. Each object will illustrate the ways in which Jewish history and everyday life was and

PROJECTS
SHARED HISTORY
| 1700 Years of Jewish Life in German-speaking Lands



still is deeply interwoven with the peoples, regions, and countries of Central Europe.

Once an object is revealed along with its provenance, historical essay, and personal story, it is accessible on the website through a timeline, a map, and a simulated exhibit that allows the user to explore the exhibit in a virtual, three-dimensional space.

The virtual exhibition space is due to launch in late February, but there are already several exquisite and fascinating objects available to view.

Besides the aforementioned *Edict of Constantine*, there are two other 4th century artefacts - an oil lamp found in Trier in the Rhineland and a signet ring unearthed in Augst, in modern-day Switzerland, both of which are decorated with menorahs.

The oil lamp's provenance text states:

...it was probably imported to the city. The workshop that produced this lamp was in North Africa. ... In fact, the source of the lamp can be narrowed down to the pottery



workshops that once operated in and around Carthage, the ancient metropolis that was situated near the modern Tunisian city of Tunis. ... These types of lamps were extremely widespread throughout the Western Roman Empire during the 4th and 5th centuries CE. Thus, they also found their way to Trier, which in those days was known as Treveris or Augusta Treverorum and served as an official residential seat of the Emperor.

The signet ring has been dated to the 4th century CE and is made of alloyed copper. It was found during an archaeological dig in Kaiseraugst, Switzerland (Canton of Aargau) in 2001 and is currently on loan to the Jewish Museum of Switzerland in Basel.

All objects are visible on the [Objects page](#), with the most recently released visible at the top. A new object is released each week, with one exception. To pay appropriate tribute to the horrifying events of Holocaust, the *Shared History Project* has prepared narratives for 7 objects. Starting on November 7, 2021 they will be presenting one object each day for the entire week.

The *Shared History Project* is in its final stages of preparation. You can [sign up](#) to be kept up to date with the launch schedule and object roll out. Registered users will be able to bookmark their favourite objects and download the informative essays that will accompany them.

We all have everyday objects passed down through time that tell our unique family stories. Like this exhibition, we strive to record those stories to preserve the memories for future generations.

DO YOU HAVE A TREASURE HIDING IN YOUR COLLECTION?

It could be an object, a document, a photograph or painting or even a list... something passed down through your family, or that you've collected during your research.

We'd love to hear from you about it. Send your story and a photo (if possible) the [Editor](#).

Object 46 ◯ Nov 8, 2021  MS St. Louis Captain's Hat To be published Nov 8, 2021	Object 47 ◯ Nov 9, 2021  Factory-made Judenstern To be published Nov 9, 2021	Object 48 ◯ Nov 10, 2021  Oskar Rosenfeld's Diary fro... To be published Nov 10, 2021	Object 49 ◯ Nov 11, 2021  Portrait of Beethoven by Fri... To be published Nov 11, 2021	Object 50 ◯ Nov 12, 2021  Prayer Room in the Theresi... To be published Nov 12, 2021	Object 51 ◯ Nov 13, 2021  Pendant Found at the Sobib... To be published Nov 13, 2021	Object 52 ◯ Nov 14, 2021  Sharit Ha-Platah—The Save... To be published Nov 14, 2021
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NATIONAL ARCHIVES TO DIGITISE ALL WWII SERVICE RECORDS



The National Archives of Australia has signed contracts to digitise Second World War service records, more than 650,000 records in all.

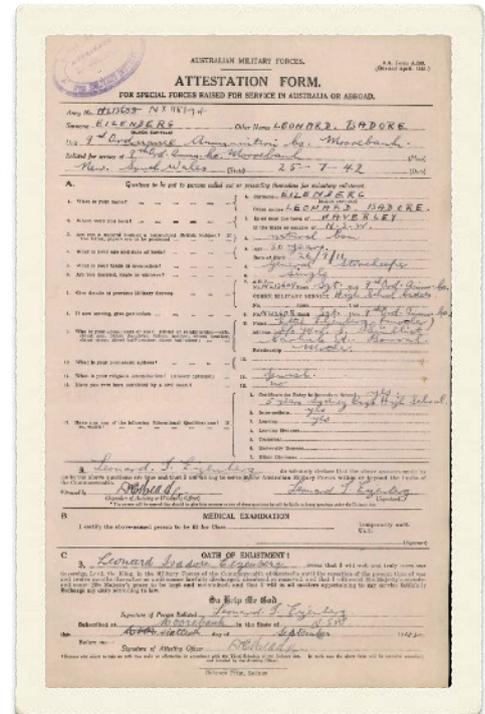
Two private companies will bulk

digitise the two largest Second World War series held by the National Archives – B883 (Personnel services records for the Second Australian Imperial Force 1939-47) and B884 (Personnel service records for Citizen Military Forces 1937-47) - with the task due to be finished by mid-2023.

More than 220,000 Second World War service records have already been digitised on request. The records digitised under this project will be released progressively via the National Archives website.

Speaking on the eve of Remembrance Day in November 2020, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester told the media:

The Australian Government committed \$10 million to this vital project that will enable current and future generations to learn about their family's military history and the role our nation played in the largest global conflict of the 20th century... This builds on the already digitised records of those who served in the First World War and will ensure families, historians, academics and students will have free and ready access to these historical records.



Front page of WWII service record for Lenard Isidore Eizenberg (AWM)

ANCESTRY SUED OVER YEARBOOK COLLECTION



Commercial genealogy sites such as Ancestry and My Heritage sell access to enormous databases of information and images. But what rights do individuals have to their own information and likenesses in publicly available sources? A class action recently filed in California may end up answering that question.

The Legal Genealogist, Judy G. Russell, JD, CG, CGL, reports that a class action has been filed against Ancestry in San Francisco, over their use of school yearbook photos and data. The [U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900-1999 collection](#) is an indexed collection of middle school, junior high, high school, and college yearbooks from across the United States.

According to the collection description:

Yearbooks are one of those home sources, usually found in an attic or basement, which many people don't think of as a family history source. While yearbooks may not provide information about the vital events that are usually associated with genealogical research, they do provide other information about individuals' lives. This information helps place people in historical context as well as providing detail that helps turn individuals, sometimes only known by names and dates, into actual people.

Here are some examples of how yearbooks may help you in your family history:

- Pinpoints an individual in a particular time and place
- Class lists usually include a photo (See what grandpa looked like as a freshman in high school)
- Interests and hobbies (What activities, sports, and clubs did grandma participate in?)
- Family linkage (Some yearbooks feature siblings at the same school. If not, look for other students with the same last name in other grades – they could be related.)

U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900-1999



Search

Match all terms exactly

First & Middle Name(s)

Last Name

Year

Location

Birth

Lived In

City, County, State, Country

Yearbooks never forget.

Find out what your relatives were really like in high school and college with our newly-expanded Yearbooks

collection. With more than 450,000 yearbooks and more than 62 million pages



Yearbooks may also contextualise the social landscape of the time, helping researchers understand the specific environment in which their relative was living.

But given this collection includes the names, photographs and details of living people, some individuals are upset that their information is being used to generate profits for a private corporation.

The case charges Ancestry with:

...knowingly misappropriating the photographs, likenesses, names, and identities of Plaintiffs and the class; knowingly using those photographs, likenesses, names, and identities for the commercial purpose of selling access to them in Ancestry products and services; and knowingly using those photographs, likenesses, names, and identities to advertise, sell, and solicit purchases of Ancestry services and products; without obtaining prior consent from Plaintiffs and the class.

(Complaint, *Callahan et al. v. Ancestry*, Case no. 3:20-cv-8437, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California, filed 30 Nov 2020)

It alleges that Ancestry violates a whole bunch of California statutes and that:

Ancestry did not and does not seek consent from, give notice to, or provide compensation to Plaintiffs and the class before placing their personal information in its Ancestry Yearbook Database, selling that information as part of its subscription products, and using that information to sell, advertise, and solicit the purchase of its subscription products.

There are currently only two plaintiffs in the case, but since it has been filed as a prospective class action it means, if the court permits it, these two plaintiffs will be allowed to represent the entire class of people – i.e. California residents included in the database who did not give explicit permission for their images and information to be included. The relief sought is a permanent order barring the use of the images plus damages and attorneys' fees.

So what is the likely outcome of this case? Ms Russel isn't sure.

According to her post:

The dividing line between the right of personal privacy for living people and access to information that is generally available is

fuzzy at best, and a constantly moving target as online access to data and information continues to grow and expand.

Given that these yearbooks are freely available to view and even copy in school and local libraries, does the law give rights to individuals if that book is also digitised and made available online, even for a fee?

...the case offers the first real opportunity to see where the line will be drawn — at least under the generally more-restrictive privacy laws of California — and whether those California laws will control access to information beyond California's borders.

Judy G. Russell, "[Ancestry sued for yearbooks.](https://www.legalgenealogist.com/blog)" *The Legal Genealogist* (https://www.legalgenealogist.com/blog : posted 2 Dec 2020).

This is definitely one to watch!

RENEWED PUSH TO CONSERVE HAWKESBURY RIVER DISASTER MEMORIAL



On 18th October 1936 12 people lost their lives when a boat capsized on the Hawkesbury river. 10 of the victims were members of the Sydney Jewish community. The 1936 Hawkesbury River disaster featured recently on the history page of *The Daily Telegraph* (Saturday 6th February, 2021, page 57). This publicity has led to a renewed effort to repair and conserve the graves and memorial of the Jewish victims in Rookwood Cemetery.

This tragedy had particular resonance for the late Rieke Nash, founding member and past president of AJGS, as several of the victims were her aunt and uncles.



Volunteers including Rieke Nash and Rochelle Franks cleaning the Hawkesbury Memorial in 2011. (Photo: Dani Haski)

In 2011 Rieke, with a group of other descendants and AJGS volunteers spent a day cleaning up the graves of victims. There was also a concerted effort to raise funds for further work, but when the Jewish Cemetery Trust dissolved, the small amount of money raised, along with a larger fund dedicated to preservation which was subsumed by the Rookwood Cemetery Trust.

Rookwood Cemetery Trust has now offered to support a renewed effort to stabilise, repair and conserve the memorial and gravesite. A fundraising campaign is being established to raise money towards this effort. If you would like to donate please email Dani Haski for details.

The disaster was a devastating blow to the affected families and the community as a whole. Members of the Kalenstein, Isenberg, Penn and Klarnett families lost all loved ones. While there are no direct descendants of the victims, the memory of the disaster is still keenly felt by the families, including great nephews and nieces. You can read more about the 1936 Hawkesbury River disaster in the [October 2011 edition](#) of *Kosher Koala*.



Front page of The Sun newspaper Monday October 19, 1936 (Trove)

REGISTRATIONS IMMINENT FOR 41st ANNUAL IAJGS CONFERENCE



The 41st *IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy*, due to take place in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from August 2–5, 2021, will be a scaled down affair compared to previous years. Scheduled to run over 4 days, organisers sincerely hope to be able to offer an in-person conference, as well as an online offering. The conference committee is closely monitoring local health guidelines to evaluate the conference's path.

Registration opens on 1st March 2021; Early Bird registration will be \$350; Partner/Spouse Early Bird registration will be \$250. The program is scheduled to go public by the end of February.

SLEDGEHAMMER

FROM EDELWEISS TO FLANNEL FLOWER:
The Journey to Discover and Research my Family History

MONICA PERROT

In the last issue of Koshers Koala we were delighted to report on how members David Laufer and Monica Perrot broke through a significant brick wall in Monica's research as a result of our Genealogical Detective Agency online workshop. In this issue Monica tells us her family's remarkable story in her own words.

As a child I knew that my family came from Vienna Austria. But I did not know that my family was Jewish. This I did not discover till I went to University in 1966 when I was studying Modern History, one part of which was WWII.

Talking with my mother about the horrors of the War in Europe, she revealed that her family was Jewish. She described in chilling detail what they had endured at the hands of the Nazis after the Anschluss of Austria on 12 March 1938. Jewish children were forced to join the Hitler Youth. After the horrors of *Kristallnacht* on the night of 9-10 November 1938, Jewish families were forced to leave their homes and to leave much of what they owned behind. The Jewish families were sent to live in allocated districts of Vienna.

My mother's family was forced to leave Persian carpets, monogrammed linen, silver cutlery sets, dinner sets and much, much more. On 13 September 1938 my grandmother had her three daughters baptised Church of England by an Anglican Minister in Vienna, who wanted to help get Jewish children to safety. Mum was one of the lucky ones. At the end of March 1939, as one of the Kinder Transport, she boarded the train to take her to freedom as a foster child in England. As the train crossed the border to Belgium on 28 March 1939 my mother turned 17. The cut-off age for the Kinder Transport was 16. Mum made it to freedom by one day.

My granny managed to escape to Sweden on 14 July 1941. My mother's sister, Marianne, had followed her boyfriend Reibu to Sweden in 1939, where he was studying Law at the Upsala University. A Professor there was able to get the

necessary papers to enable my Granny and her sister Helene to escape from Vienna on the last plane that took Jewish Refugees to freedom in Sweden. Helene decided to stay in Vienna. Her fate was death at Auschwitz. Mum's oldest sister Alice went to England and safety in March 1939 as a domestic servant. All the Blum family girls were safe.

That was the introduction to my heritage. Being acutely aware of the pain these memories caused my mother I very rarely asked questions. She did tell me some facts over the years. All her father's family – 9

in all – perished in the Holocaust. She told me my father was also born Jewish and had escaped to

England in July 1939. Part of his family also perished in the Holocaust. But Dad refused to speak of his background and family till very late in his life. If I tried to ask questions I was very quickly and angrily rebuffed. I knew not to ask again. I knew my parents met and married in Hawick, Scotland but the following information I did not learn about until my father's death in September 1997 when I was writing his Eulogy. Mum presented me with a sheaf of papers and records from which I gleaned the information which follows here. Included in the papers were my father's Soldier's Book from the British Army, his Army discharge papers, references, letters and particularly the letter that was dated 7 June 1943 from the Pioneer Corps Record Office, that changed my father's name from his birth name, Otto Max Fillenz, to Peter Fraser as he was known for the rest of his life.

My mother had moved to Hawick in July 1940 to join her Aunt Hilde who had also escaped the Nazis. Both Aunt Hilde and my mother worked for Pringles Knitwear. My father was interned on the Isle of Man as a Friendly Alien in June 1940. As more British men went to fight, labour was required for the farms. The British Army formed the Pioneer Corps to provide this needed labour force. My father served as a lorry driver and farm worker in the Pioneer Corps from 14 December 1940 to 15 December 1943. He was posted to Hawick but I do not have the exact date.



Author's grandparents Friederike Grossmann & Ludwig Blum before their marriage (Photo: Monica Perrot)



The author's parents Lucy Fraser nee Blum and Peter Fraser, formerly Otto Fillenz, with her grandmother's sister Hilde Grossmann. (Photo: Monica Perrot)

It was in Hawick at a local dance that he met my mother in September 1941. They married on 29 December 1941. It was a marriage that lasted till dad's death aged 78 on 4 September 1997. My father transferred to the Royal Armoured Corps on 16 December 1943 where he served till the 17 September 1946 with a period from 12 April 1945 to 29 September 1945 with the Royal Tank Regiment. From September 1945 to 24 June 1946 my father was attached to the Canadian Provost Corps as an Interpreter. He would sit in on interviews with the German Prisoners of War to interpret the German they spoke.

After my father's discharge from the army my parents settled in Whitehaven NW England. Dad worked as a Commercial Traveller for Marchon Products, which was a chemical company. It was here I was born in 1947, their little English girl. My Granny came from Sweden to live with us when I was 6 weeks old. In February 1951 we all emigrated from England to Melbourne to join my Granny's brother Otto Grossmann and Aunt Hilde, who had emigrated in 1948. So our Australian life began. Being Jewish was never a part of our life.

My interest in my family history was sparked in 1989, when after 50 years my father finally agreed to take my mother back to Vienna. Previously he had always steadfastly refused, as his memories of a mostly unhappy childhood, the Holocaust, and the treatment of Jews were so ingrained and vivid he never wanted to return to his birthplace.

Fearing the emotional trauma he might suffer, and concerned with what my mother may have had to deal with, I borrowed the money to go with them. This was my chance to experience beautiful Vienna with my parents. My mother's sister Marianne and her husband Reibu, with their children and their families, also lived in Vienna.

It was a marvellous family reunion. It was also the door opening to learning a great deal about our family. My being there enabled my father to open up and tell us about his childhood; to take us to the part of Vienna where he had lived – the district of Meidling. His childhood home was still there. The café and ice-cream shop his father had taken him to was still there, so we enjoyed morning tea there,

together. The stories dad told were incredible. All those bottled up memories – good and bad – tumbled out as we wandered Vienna. These were stories my mother had never heard in 48 years of marriage. My mother also took me to see where she had lived. Her former home was still there too, in the lovely district of Döbling. There was so much for me to absorb and learn.

Mum noticed on one of the name plates for a flat that it was still in the name of Jockl. I asked what did that mean. Apparently the Jockl family had been the neighbours of my mother's family. Mum rang the buzzer. A voice answered. In reply my mother said, "My name is Lucy Fraser. I used to be Lucy Blum." An excited voice answered in German. "Meine Lucie, meine kleine Lucie." The door opened and we went up to be greeted by Frau Jockl, 87 years old, the Blum family's former neighbour. What a joyous reunion. My Granny and Frau Jockl had been close friends and until her death in 1954 they had exchanged letters and photos. On the following weekend we had a very special afternoon tea with Frau Jockl and her two daughters and her son, who had been my mother's childhood friends. It was quite surreal and wonderful. The Jockl family were Catholic so had survived the War.

When we returned home to Sydney Mum showed me all the family documents that had been carefully filed away. These included Birth Certificates, Marriage Certificates and Death Certificates of many family members from both my mother's and father's families. These were all written in German so Mum translated them to English for me. It was from these documents that I started to glean the pieces of our family history jigsaw puzzle. So, I began accumulating the information for the Family Tree. For many years this was an erratic project as I was a working Mum with little spare time. Every now and then I would delve a little more.

In 2000 I joined the AJGS and since that time have found the *Kosher Koala* invaluable, interesting and helpful. I joined JewishGen, GenTeam, Family Search and sporadically delved into the family history finding more valuable little bits of information to add to my accumulating family story.

It was in 2011 that I read in the *Kosher Koala* that the digitised records of the *Birth Death and Marriage Records for the Jewish Communities of Bohemia and Moravia*, which were deposited in the National Czech Archives would be available on-line. As a researcher in Sydney this was a goldmine indeed, enabling me to access the documents of the towns of my ancestors – Velke Mezerici Moravia for my mother's family and Dambořice Moravia for my father's family.

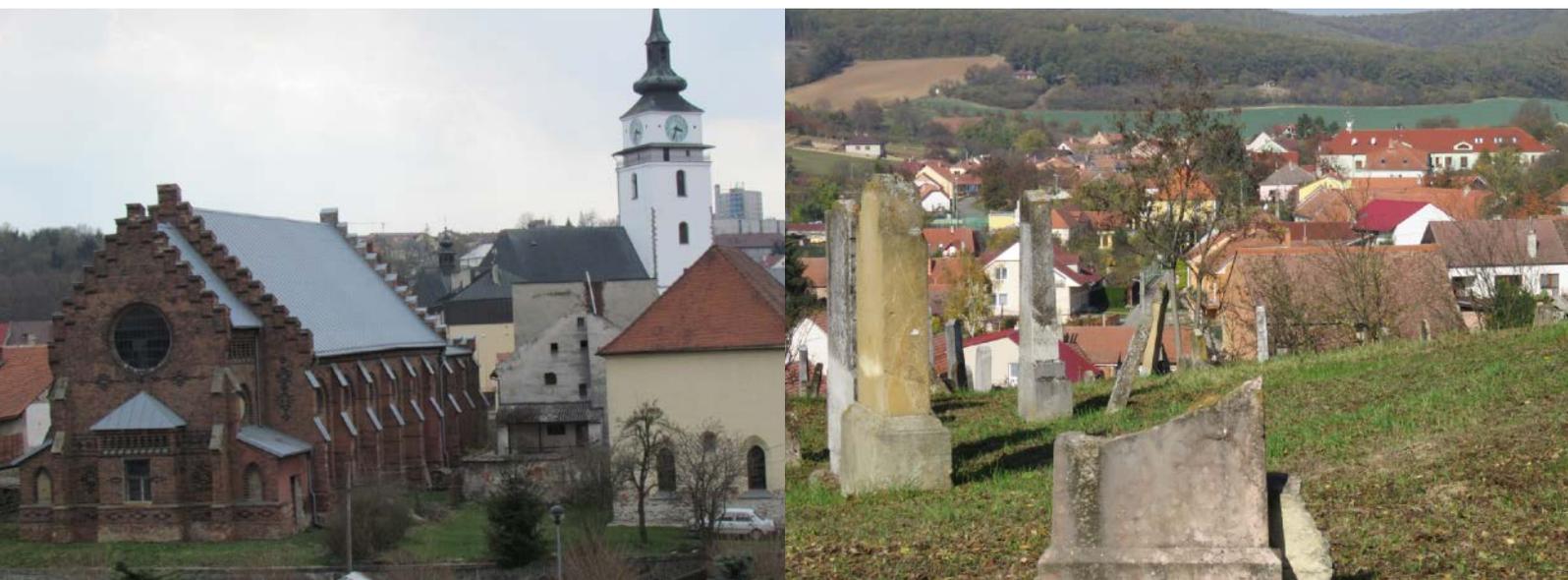
I was now retired, so this became my project. I put the Family Tree on My Heritage in December 2012 and started to expand it as I found new information. Hour upon hour I spent poring over these Jewish Registers, slowly finding more and more pieces of the family jigsaw. Having only learnt German as a rudimentary, auditory language it was quite a test. With the German dictionary at hand I deciphered as best I could the at-times appalling handwriting, to extract the valuable facts.

My Family Tree grew as I found the family connections in these Jewish Registers. In May 2013, I was invited by Randy Schoenberg to put my Family Tree on Geni, which I did. Through both My Heritage and Geni, valuable new information regarding my family was found in other Family Trees. But where I found the most wonderful, valuable information was in the *Familiaten Records*, which came on line in July 2014. It was here I was able to search the *Familiaten Buch* for Velke Mezerici. Over many, many months of searching I was able to grow my Family Tree back six generations from my mother, my maternal Grandparents to my Great Great Great Great Grandparents, taking me back to about 1730. The *Familiaten Buch* was a treasure trove of information connecting the family branches.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to locate a *Familiaten Buch* for Damborice. Through much trawling of the Jewish Birth Death and Marriage Records for Damborice I have also been able to grow this part of the Family Tree from my father, my paternal Grandparents to my Great Great Great Great Grandparents in Damborice, again about 1730.

My cousin in Vienna also provided research details about the family members who were Holocaust victims. On my visit to Vienna in 2012 my cousin took me to the *Documentation Centre of the Austrian Resistance*, where we had an

Left: The new & old synagogue in Velke Mezerici Czech Republic formerly Moravia in 2012
Right: Jewish Cemetery Damborice Czech Republic formerly Moravia 2019 (Photos: Monica Perrot)



appointment. The very helpful archivist looked up my father's family. There were the *Declarations of Death in the Holocaust* of my father's Uncle Isidor, his wife Irma and their son Karl.



Imagine my incredulous surprise when a *Declaration of Death* for my father, Otto Max Fillenz, was also recorded. It was made by his cousin and his mother in 1950. Yet according to letters between my father and lawyers in Vienna both his cousin Katherina Turek and his mother Paula Fritz both knew my father was alive and living in England. My father was claiming Restitution for the family company Fillenz Brothers plus the considerable property the family had owned pre WWII. Unfortunately, his cousin was successful in accessing Restitution before my father, who only received a small settlement 17 years later.

As is the case with putting together the jigsaw of the family history there are always dead-ends that seem impossible to break through. For years I tried to solve one of these blocks. My maternal Great Grandfather, Heinrich Grossmann, was recorded as born in Visoka Hungary on my Grandmother's original Birth Certificate. I searched and searched for the town of Visoka with no luck. I searched Hungarian Jewish Birth Records with no luck, plus all the other sources I thought would be helpful, again with no luck.

Neither could I find record of Heinrich Grossman's marriage to my Great Grandmother Johanna Gruner. My cousin discovered they were married in Malacky, Hungary on 17 June 1888. No amount of searching enabled us to find the actual Marriage Certificate. I knew who my Great Grandmother's parents were, as I have her original Birth Certificate. But without a Birth Certificate or Marriage Certificate for Heinrich I did not have the names of his parents.

In 2019 when I was in Vienna I had an appointment with an Archivist at the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde. There on the bottom of a couple of Birth Certificates of my Grandmother's siblings was recorded the actual reference to the marriage in Malacky. But where this record was held was the question. I

Author's family - from top: grandmother Paula Fritz formerly Fillenz; grandfather Hermann Fillenz; Great grandmother Marie Fillenz (Photos: Monica Perrot)

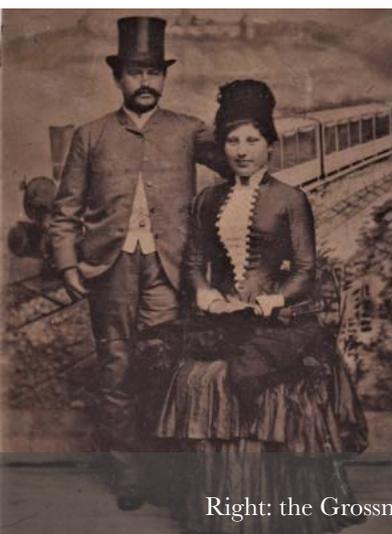
did not get the answer.

In August 2020 AJGS held a detective workshop in which I participated, having asked for help to discover both the Birth Certificate for Heinrich Grossmann and his Marriage Certificate. The wonderful help of David Laufer led me in the right direction. He found the name of Heinrich Grossman's birth town was Vysoka nad Kysucou, which is now Slovakia, and was formerly in Hungary pre-WW1. He suggested I e-mail the Archives in Bratislava with all the information I had, which I did. In two days, I received an e-mail with Heinrich Grossman's birth details, but the name of his father was not clear. I applied for a copy of the Birth Record which duly arrived by Registered Post providing the names of his parents and his father's occupation, which was a Merchant and a man of Independent Means. I used Google Translate to translate the Slovakian to English which was easy as the Birth Certificate was all typed not handwritten.

Two days after receiving the e-mail with the Birth Record another e-mail arrived with the very detailed Marriage Record of Heinrich Grossmann and Johanna Gruner. It was hand written in Hungarian. Again, I asked for help from AJGS. It was suggested I use the ViewMate facility in JewishGen. I put the Marriage Certificate on ViewMate and within a day I had the document translated for me by wonderful volunteers.

At last years and years of searching were successful. I now had the names of all of my Great Great Grandparents plus more valuable information. I was thrilled. Being part of AJGS has been so very helpful and so very much appreciated.

The many years of research, all carefully kept chronologically in large folders as well as on the computer, has enabled me to write my Family History, *From Edelweiss to Flannel Flower* specifically for my children, grandchildren and for my cousin Tony in Vienna. I hope it will enlighten my family about my background and childhood culture.



Left: The author's great grandparents Heinrich & Johanna Grossman;
Right: the Grossmann family. The author's grandmother is at the back with her mother Johanna & her siblings

FILM FESTIVAL

Jewish International Festival Film

JIFF returns for another year of spectacular Jewish cinema from around the world, with screenings in all major capital cities between February 17 - March 24. There will be star-studded features, gripping historical dramas, and stories of iconic Jewish trailblazers and innovators. Many of the films will be of

interest to family historians, offering intimate glimpses into the worlds of our ancestors. Of particular interest to AJGS members may be:

Jez: A Letter for Life – Jeremy Spinak AM was the youngest elected President of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies. Following a terminal cancer diagnosis and with five months left to live, Jeremy set out to document for his children who he is, what he has achieved, and what has given his life meaning. Directed by AACTA-nominee, Mitzi Goldman (*A Common Purpose*), a short version of the film screened on ABC Compass in 2020. JIFF



will premiere the feature-length version. Through slice-of-life footage and interviews with friends and family, Jez paints a portrait of a man beloved by his family, friends, and colleagues. Jeremy Spinak AM passed away in 2018.

When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit, the story of a Jewish family forced to flee Berlin from the Nazis to Zurich, Paris, and then London in the early 1930s, told through the innocent eyes of nine-year-old Anna.

Directed by Academy Award winning director, Caroline Link (*Nowhere in Africa*) the film is based on the bestselling, semi-autobiographical novel by Judith Kerr, part of a trilogy made for children, to teach them the history of the Holocaust and WWII.





Love, it was not is a feature-length continuation of director Maya Sarfaty's film, *The Most Beautiful Woman*, for which she won *Best Foreign Documentary* at the Student Academy Awards. The film explores the taboo relationship between Jewish prisoner, Helena Citron, and SS Officer, Franz

Wunsch, at Auschwitz. After the war, Citron was summoned to provide evidence in Wunsch's case – and was caught between possibly saving the man who protected her, or testifying against him. The film features a mixture of interviews with Auschwitz survivors, Citron and her sister, and Wunsch, as well as animated photo collages and diary excerpts.

A Starry Sky Above the Roman Ghetto, directed by multi award-winner, Giulio Base (*Crack*), follows the journey of a group of Christian and Jewish students in search of the truth, after a girl finds an old picture of a Jewish child in her attic in Rome and learns that the family were killed by the Nazis in WWII. Their journey reveals a painful past, such as the memory of a raid on the Jewish ghetto of Rome.



The Mystery of the Black Book - In October 1947, the 'Black Book' was to be published in Moscow. It was a collection of testimonies and articles about the murder of over two million Jews under Nazi occupation in the Soviet Union. But the book was shelved by the authorities, as if the Holocaust of Soviet Jews

had never occurred at all. Mixing animation, archival footage and contemporary interviews, *The Mystery of the Black Book* considers the history of Soviet Jewry, and the legacy of Stalin's decision to hide documented evidence of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union.

JIFF will have screenings between February 17 and March 24 in all capital cities. For full program and venue details, and to purchase tickets, visit the [JIFF Website](#).

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

AJGS is partnering with AJGS (Vic) and the Australian Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) to arrange our calendars for the year so we can attend each other's events. Keep an eye out for our monthly newsletters for the latest information.

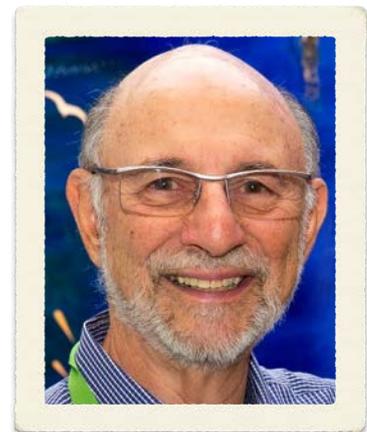
WEBSITE MYSTERY TOUR - AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY (AJHS)

Sunday February 14 2021

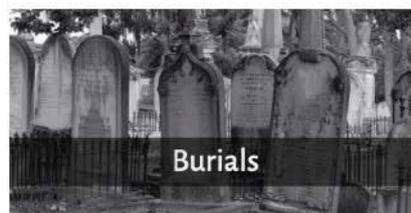
This talk will be available to view on the [AJGS YouTube channel](#) soon.

Speaker: Peter Philippsohn OAM – President AJHS

- Are you already a member of the AJHS?
- Are you making the most of your membership?
- Have you ever visited the AJHS website?
- Do you know what this website has to offer your genealogical research?
- Are there questions you always wanted to ask?
- Would you like to know more?



AJGS is giving you the chance to quiz the President of AJHS as he shows us the many new features of their comprehensive website.



HONOURING JEANNETTE TSOULOS & SUNNY GOLD

Sunday March 14 2021 10:00am – 1:00pm

North Shore Synagogue, Treatts Rd Lindfield



Jeannette & Sunny have dedicated many years of service to this Society both as committee members and Presidents of this Society.

We will honour them at a members' morning tea and hope you will be able to join us. It is essential you RSVP by Sunday 7 March so that we can

ensure we have the regulation space and enough cake and coffee for everyone. This will be a Covid safe event.

NB: This event will be subject to change if there are any NSW Health alerts issued at the time.

EASTERN SUBURBS WORKSHOP: MAKING THE MOST OF MY HERITAGE

Sunday April 18, 2021 - 2:00pm - 4:45pm

Waverley Library and via Zoom (details TBA)



MyHeritage

- Do you use My Heritage to house your online family tree?
- Are you familiar with all the features & services available?
- Do you know how to get the most out of your subscription?

This workshop will be held at Waverley Library in Bondi Junction, as well as on Zoom. There will be ample opportunities for participants to ask questions.



Home

Family tree

Discoveries

DNA

Health

Research

Search historical records

Explore your family history in MyHeritage's database of 13.1 billion historical records



ADD DETAILS