

The Kosher Koala

Newsletter of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc P.O. Box 42, Lane Cove NSW 1595, Sydney, Australia Phone: 61-2 9427 6075 or Email: society@ajgs.org.au Web site: www.ajgs.org.au

Volume 13 No 2

ISSN 1322-6401

June 2006

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WORKSHOP DATES

Sunday, June 4 from 9.30 a.m.

Monday, June 19 from 10 a.m.

Sunday, July 2 from 9.30 a.m. A Trip to Lithuania and Poland

Monday, July 10 from 10 a.m.

Sunday, August 6 from 9.30 a.m.

Sunday, Sept 3 from 9.30 a.m. *Report on the New York Conference*

Sunday afternoon June 18, at 2 p.m. in the Rev Katz Library, Lindfield

NAVIGATING THE LONDON JEWISH CHRONICLE WEBSITE (see page 9)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Rieke Nash

At the Annual General Meeting in March all the committee was re-elected to their previous positions. Everyone who attended enjoyed the presentations by members who are volunteers on genealogical research projects and offers of help were much appreciated by the convenors of some of these projects.

The membership renewals have been gratifying and so far this year we have welcomed a number of new members.

We welcomed a visitor from Canada, Ed Goldberg, at our May workshop. Originally from Rhodesia he has enjoyed meeting many of his family who migrated to Australia from Southern Africa. He was very impressed with the range of resources in our library and the informal format of the monthly workshop.

We are continuing our new initiative of scheduling a few Monday morning workshops for those members who can't make the Sunday mornings.

The back page Kosher Koala feature, Australian Jewish Genealogical Society Database has been a productive means for publicising our members' research interests and there have been some worthwhile connections from the last editions. All members are encouraged to send in their information.

The most exciting recent news has been the possibility of the release of the International Red Cross archives located in Arolsen, Germany. Also known as the International Tracing Service, the archive holds around 30 to 40 million post-war records including Nazi records for deportations, concentration and slave labour camps, requests for family information and information on the post-war location of displaced persons. Until recent years it was a major source for tracing lost Holocaust families when the work-load stretched the response time to years. (Yad Vashem in Jerusalem has microfilms of some of these records).

In 1994 at Yad Vashem I found on one of these microfilms the registration notice that my husband Peter's father had submitted. It listed their relocations, originally from Berlin, through Shanghai during the War years and eventually their contact address in Sydney, Australia. What a valuable addition to our research possibilities!

Rieke Nash President president@ajgs.org.au

EDITORIAL

By Miriam Shifreen

In 1861 Jacob Marks in London wrote to his cousin Maurice Alexander in Sydney, *I called on your mother*. (Susan Alexander née Levy), *She is well and preparing for the Passover. She is very frum*, (keeps a Kosher home) *so much so, I know she will hardly eat out of my house.*

With one sentence, Susan, ceases to be just a name on a family tree and becomes a real person, someone we can imagine and identify with. Breathe life into the names on <u>your</u> family tree! How to start?

Bob Beecher has just completed the second version of the Becher/Beecher Family History Tree Book. He urges us all to write down those family anecdotes and stories. Whenever you recall something about your family don't leave it until you have time to write that witty page about your grandpa. **Put it down now!** Don't worry about spelling, logical sequence, grammar, sentence structure, etc. Just type.

Later instead of facing a blank page and wondering where to start, you will only need to select, put together and edit. If you have been putting off this important activity, read Bob's article beginning on page 3.

As usual, this *Kosher Koala* is full of stories, book reviews and research avenues to keep you busy during our winter months. Read about *Our Ten Year Members:* Alison Ryan's research is on page 7 and Matthew Israelson's story on page 8.

If you have any English connections then there is some vital news for you on page 9. *The Jewish Chronicle* has gone online allowing research of personal advertisements as well as stories.

Our Northern Territory member, David Nicholls' story is on page 10. This year is Census Year in Australia. I urge you all to read about two very special clauses that will appear in Census 2006. See page 10 and play your part.

Judith Romney Wegner writes about a little known but interesting topic *Jewish Illegitimacy Laws* on page 11.

There are four books you will certainly want to consult after reading the book reviews on pages 12 and 13. New Websites and other News appears on page 14 and do consult page 16 to see if anyone else is researching the same family tree as you are.

Miriam Shifreen, Editor editor@ajgs.org.au

CONSTRUCTING MY FAMILY HISTORY BOOK

By Bob Beecher

This is NOT about my family history. It is about the process of getting the information and putting a family history book together.

Recently, I have completed the *second edition* of *Becher-Beecher* a book about my father's family, learning quite a bit in the process. Hopefully, I can pass on some ideas and hints to help readers who are doing their own family's history.

I started to gather information about our family around 1950 when I was in my late twenties but it only became a serious hobby when I retired about 1985. Most people involved in their family history seem to be about 60 years old or older. By that time the previous generation is usually gone. For this reason it is <u>so</u> important to obtain all you can from older people as soon as possible.

Information sources

I was lucky to have an early interest in family history. I made a family tree while I was still in school and this required me to ask my parents about grandparents, uncles and aunts. I even persuaded my parents to write down quite a bit about their parents and their early life.

Another source of family information was to take a small dictaphone along when I travelled overseas. I found that it is not easy to get people to talk about their early days by just asking direct questions. It is necessary to be patient and listen to a lot of irrelevant bits and pieces which may or may not include what you are looking for. Of course, you can steer the conversation quite a bit with pointed comments which relate to what has been said and get closer to what you want. When I got home I transcribed the mini tapes to a normal tape recorder and made written records or just notes.

Another stroke of luck was that in our family it was normal to type letters to relatives overseas, putting in carbon paper so that we had copies which I kept. And later on I inherited the copies of my parents' letters as well as some of the replies. In time, these bits of paper occupied almost a whole shelf of manila folders. When I was well into genealogy I realised that this material would never be of use to anyone in its present form. I therefore culled it quite ruthlessly, cut and pasted (real scissors and paste – not the computer ones) and created twelve albums with dates and names covering over sixty years. In its present format this will be easy to index and I intend to do that. In the meantime I extracted a lot of relevant news about peoples' lives. These letters were a great source of information coming from people actually living at the time and writing about their own lives. I could also ask questions about other relatives.

Finally, I decided to file any documents, reports and similar material in my *archives*. They are stored in plastic pocket folders in a filing cabinet, sorted by person or family branch and indexed. They include originals of birth, marriage, and death certificates, passports, old letters, school and university reports, and copies of documents, etc.

The advantage of the information obtained directly from family members is that it is personal and includes many little stories about events which reveal the personalities of the people involved. Unfortunately the information obtained from *official* sources, while vital for establishing relationships and dates, is cold and lifeless; a bit boring though essential.

When I first started on my family history I wrote letters to archives, sometimes paid money, waited for ages and finally received very little useful information. I also visited a Mormon centre and ordered some microfilms which I thought might be useful. Admittedly I was very inexperienced at that time and it was not successful (I will do better in the future!). I have also subscribed to the International Jewish Genealogy Journal *Avotaynu* since its inception, I am a member of Gesher Galicia, the Special Interest Group (SIG) for Galicia where both my parents' families came from and, of course, I enjoy *The Kosher Koala*.

I also decided to become computer literate, got a computer and discovered the JewishGen website and never looked back. This was certainly a turning point. From Jewish Records Indexing-Poland (JRI) for Kolomyya (Kolomea), where my father's family came from, I located 140 relatives! This still needed some detective work which I will describe below, but it led to other names, more research and emails to new people. This process is still going on and will probably never finish.

The computer also allowed me to access other genealogical websites, though with nothing like the results from JewishGen. By having my name in JewishGen's systems people round the world know the names I am interested in and I get the occasional email. Usually there is no family connection but I always answer. I think genealogists have to sift through a lot of chaff to get a few grains and need to be encouraged.

Interpretation

When considering the information gathered I found it useful to remember that elderly relatives do not have accurate memories about people and events from around 100 years ago. Names are often wrong or nearly right, the name given to one cousin may belong to another cousin and some family members may be completely forgotten. In my case my father often spoke of his grandfather being one of five brothers. The five brothers are correct but there was also a sister. My father never mentioned a sister. I have no idea why and I will probably never know if there was a scandal or just a trick of memory.

The information from *official* sources also needs to be considered with care. First of all the original entry may have been wrong. Galicia was a very poor region in the nineteenth century. People were not very educated. The records transcribed by Jewish Records Indexing-Poland (JRI-Poland) from Polish archives (AGAD) were the records of the Austrian or Polish governments. Jewish people considered this a nuisance imposed on them – the rabbi kept the *real* records. As a result, many people only bothered to get recorded when it was necessary – to get some official document, such as a passport when emigrating. People were married by the rabbi and many years later, after lots of children, they needed the official registration.

Another problem was spelling. When transcribing Jewish names into Polish or German there were many versions. For example I have relatives named Moses but spelled Mojesz, Mojzesz, Mojzez. There was a similar casualness about spelling surnames, such as Spriller for Spritzler, Koerber for Koerner, Recher for Becher. Unfortunately using the *sounds like* option instead of *is exactly* in the JRI records produces a huge number of totally unrelated names which take a lot of research time.

Finally, there are many instances where only the mother's name or only the father's name is shown in the records. In other cases only the first name is shown and the family name needs to be deduced from other information, such as parents' names or places. Another way of deducing a non-relationship is to check ages. For example if a mother's name and a newborn child's name look correct this is negated if the mother was 55 years old at the time.

It is helpful if your ancestor had an uncommon name. One of my great grand-uncles named Kopel is easy to trace. Not so, for the many persons named Dawid, Chaim, Jakob, Ester, or Josef.

Because these common first names occur in the same family it is vital to identify individuals in some way. In my family there are 8 Chaim Bechers, 5 David Bechers, 6 Esters, 4 Josefs and 10 Moses! I adopted an identification system of two letters and a number such as GA5, GC2 etc. to identify each person. I have *Excel* on the computer to make lists

of all these persons sorted by ID number as well as by first name so that individuals can be found.

The JRI-Poland website, www.jri-poland.org, provides names and dates. The dates cover birth, marriage and death where available. Ages at the time of marriage for bride and groom yield their dates of birth and age is often given for a death.

These records provide an insight into conditions in Galicia in the 19th century. Where 45% of all the Bechers born in Kolomea between 1865 and 1901 died before the age of five! Most people seem to have died before reaching 60 and quite a few died aged under 40. So much for the *good old days*.

Writing the book

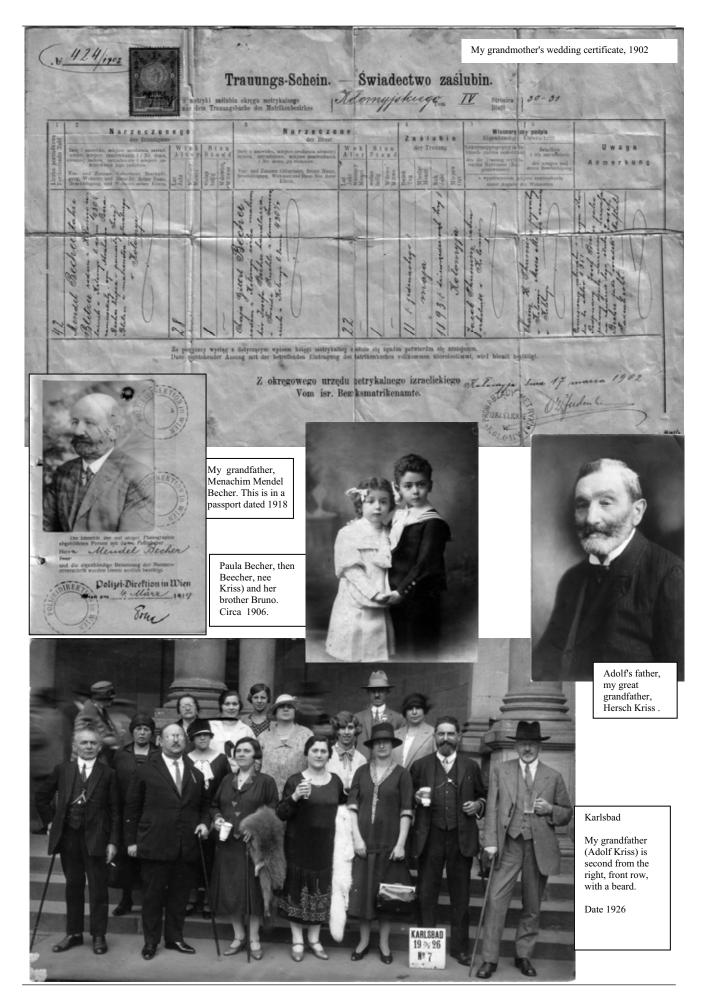
I found it important to think about why I did this and for whom. Obviously, it was largely for myself but also for my children and grandchildren when they are older and I am no longer around. At present they are too busy to be very interested. All the detail would be of little interest to most readers but I hope that someone in future generations will be interested and will take this story further. So, I needed something which is completely thorough, contains all the information for some future genealogist AND at the same time I wanted to create something of interest to a non-genealogist.

To cover both aspects I have made the book very reader friendly with suggestions as to what could be of interest to a reader and where to find it. I used appendices where a section was self-contained and included charts and photos.

Introduction and Charts

After an introduction and suggestions on *how to read this book* there is a table of contents and all the charts. Family tree charts seem essential to show the relationship between people. Some people have a problem following charts so I explained the symbols used. There is an *overview* showing an outline, and a chart showing connections between known living relatives. (Readers are likely to be alive!) In an earlier version of the book I interleaved the charts with the text covering the people on each chart. This made it difficult to refer to a particular chart and I decided to put all the charts together.

After some trial and error I decided to put all the charts on A4 sheets for easy copying and printing, in date order starting with my great greatgrandparents who were born around 1800. That is the furthest back I have found. I limited most charts to only 2 or 3 generations. At the bottom of each chart is a link to the following chart(s) such as *see ga2*. At the top of the following chart is the link *see ga1* and the names of parents are repeated.



This duplication makes it easy for the reader. The disadvantage is that you need to remember to enter any amendments in two places. Each chart is identified in bold lower case letters, such as ga2.

For each person the chart shows year of birth and death (where available), ID code, data from the JRI records (where available) such as B(641), D(489), M(37) referring to the birth, death or marriage record in the *Akt* column of the JRI record.

My computer skills are not up to creating complete charts. I used *Word* for each document calling for some patience to get each name and associated data in the right spot on the page. I found that it helped to tell *page set up* that the A4 page was much wider than it really was so that I could use the full width of the paper in the *landscape* format.

Horizontal lines above siblings and vertical lines from parents to these horizontal lines were drawn in ink. Although this can be done by computer it is beyond me at present.

Background and text

The next section includes the background about Jewish names, civil marriages and about Galicia and the town of Kolomea, the name Becher, its meaning, occurrence in the bible and how it is written in Hebrew and Yiddish.

The main text covers twelve pages about the people on each chart, mostly birth, marriage and death details, but it also includes stories I have obtained or remembered, information from letters and documents. Longer biographies are in appendices.

Appendices

The eleven appendices take up about three times the space of the parts described above. This makes the need for appendices obvious.

Appendix A and B cover maps to show the place of Austria Hungary in Europe before World War I, a map of Galicia and the Kolomea area. There are old photos of Kolomea, mostly from the internet).

Appendix C lists all persons in ID sequence, names, ID, *tribe*, dates and reference numbers to JRI are shown with archive reference where this applies. I have used *tribe* to assist in placing each person. My great grandfather was one of six children. I have therefore given each of their descendants their ancestor's name as their *tribe*.

Appendix D lists the same persons but in first name sequence. This is very valuable in tracing people's relationships when the JRI records only show the first name and you suspect that they may be related.

A list of all surnames found is in Appendix J. I have used this to search places other than Kolomea for possible relatives.

Appendices E, F, G, and H cover biographies of my parents, my grandmother and myself. These are probably most important for my descendants because a lot of this information would be lost once I am gone. I found it very illuminating to write systematically about my parents using a combination of what I remembered and what I found in documents and letters. Writing about myself was difficult but I owed this to my children.

Appendix I contains a selection of copies of photos of people mentioned in the book, Naturally, most photos are less than 60 years old but I found some of my grandparents and of my father's early days. (My mother and her parents are in another book). The photos are black and white because colour is expensive when making several copies of the book.

Appendix K contains copies of the JRI (AGAD) records. I added a number of items, handwritten to show clearly that they are my additions and not in AGAD. There is the ID code for every person, the first and/or surname where these are missing and some corrections where the names were mispelled. On the practical side, it was necessary to cut and paste these records when only one or two names on a page were relevant to my family.

Conclusion

My first *Becher Book* was dated December 2003. More new information kept coming in so that it was not until March 2006 that I could get the second edition printed, the result of the great increase in information on the internet as well as the snowballing effect of making contact with *new* relatives. Printing was done at one of the copy/print shops. I provided the original printed on my computer. Photos were copied by them from original photos to get best results.

The work of getting this book out was very enjoyable and finding a new link is always a thrill. It also resulted in some new contacts with whom I now have frequent email exchanges.

A copy of the book has been placed in the AJGS library. Another copy will be sent to the International Institute for Jewish Genealogy. Copies have been sent to local family members as well as to overseas relatives. One copy of the book has been marked *master copy* and after only a few weeks I already have a number of additions and corrections for the next edition.

I guess this will go on for the rest of my life.

Bob Beecher has been a member of our Society for 14 years. Read more about him in KK Vol 11 No 1 March, 2004 and inspect his Becher-Beecher Family Tree Book, Second Edition, in our Library. (See review on page 12).

OUR TEN-YEAR MEMBERS

Alison Ryan

Some time before my father died in 1970 he had mentioned his ancestors were Jewish. I commenced researching my family history in 1981 with varied success on most of my lines. Until 10 years ago it was my maiden name Marks which caused me the most frustration as there were no living relatives known to me to discuss this with and no family legends had been passed on to me.

For some years I had in my possession a couple of clues which I disregarded as only coincidences, but by following them up in 1996 I was elated to find an article in the Australian Jewish Historical Society's. Journal, *Genealogy of an Australian Jewish family*, which even mentioned the birth of my great grandfather Joseph Marks whose birth certificate I had already obtained from London. It

seems for some reasons bestknown to him and now lost to posterity he did not embrace the Jewish religion and traditions. So for all those vears I did not turn my attention Jewish to research.



I can only remember seeing my grandfather

Joseph Marks

Samuel when I was about six years old and again just before he died in 1944 after he had a stroke. My grandparents lived in Sydney and we moved about the country on farms, although they used to visit us on the north coast when I was too young to remember. I had never met any of Samuel's siblings although I had heard my parents speak of Aunty Vi and Aunty Jess and had been told that I looked much like them.

But quite early in my research, I had obtained Samuel's birth certificate and it confirmed that his father Joseph, whom I now know was the youngest of nine children, was born in London.

Eventually I obtained Joseph's Marriage Certificate (the only document I have to prove my lineage) which showed his parents to have been Mark Marks hat maker; and Julia Collins.

Joseph lived for fifty to sixty years at Forbes and Grenfell in New South Wales so I perused *The*

Grenfell Record at The National Library in Canberra and found his and other obituaries. As well, there were letters Joseph had written to the newspaper and articles he had been asked to write about *Those Early Days* etc. One in particular published 20 February, 1917 stated that Joseph had traveled from Melbourne to Sydney on the *Wonga Wonga* in 1858 and then traveled first by train to Campbelltown and then by coach pulled by six horses and driven by Harry Moses to Goulburn. Calculating his age from when he died in 1921 he would have been only 15 when he came from England, likely on his own.

Joseph's father, Mark Marks' ancestry is from Amsterdam. The 1851 English Census shows his mother, Julia (Juliet) Collins, was also from Holland.

Interestingly, in certain places earlier spelling for Collins are: Collan, Kollum, Kallam, etc. And according to the article in the A.J.H.S. Journal when Juliet's brother, Abraham presented a Haggadah to her the inscription in English with a Yiddish version reads, *I give this Hagoda to My sister for a Present; it Belonged to our late Father, God Rest His soul.*

In the Yiddish translation his sister's name is given as Gitla. It is signed and dated in Hebrew: *Abraham, son of Zanvill, the memory of the righteous is for a blessing from Holleschau, Monday, 17th Sivan 5595;* and in English: *A. Collins 15th June 1835.* (See M Rosenbaum, Genealogy of an Australian Jewish Family, AJHS 1950.) Holleschau, is now *Holesov, Moravia.* So is there someone with a Czechoslovakian connection who can add to this line of my research?

In October 1996 I went with my niece and her husband to the Goulburn Jewish Cemetery. It was neatly fenced with two strong iron gates and looked like it was regularly mown, so that the garden tools we had taken along with us were not needed.

Unfortunately there is an anomaly concerning Julia (Collins) Marks. On the birth certificate of her three children born after 1837 she is shown as *Juliet Marks formerly Hymans* on Joseph's and Isaac's birth certificate, and *formerly Hyam* on John's. Can anyone solve this enigma?

After many years of constant wondering and researching, in recent years I have made contact with descendants of four of Joseph's siblings in Australia, New Zealand, America and England and I'm very grateful to Dr Anthony Joseph for the help he has given me in relation to my research.

MATTHEW ISRAELSON

By Jeannette Tsoulos

Our 10-year member, Matthew Israelson, was born in Cape Town and emigrated to Australia with his wife Lovelle in 1989. They settled in St Ives. They have two sons and two daughters, all married with families – one son lives in Israel and a daughter remains in South Africa. A son and a daughter live in Sydney. Matthew and Lovelle have nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Both Matthew's parents had interesting stories to tell of their past life, but it was his father's odyssey which prompted him to become an interested member of our Society. Without the aid of the internet he has compiled the family tree back to his great-great grandfather Hirsch Israelson in Latvia in the 18th century.

In 1893 Matthew's grandfather Matthys was dying of consumption in Bauska, Latvia, and the area was beset with pogroms. Desperate to save his children. he bribed a sea-captain, and his 16 year old son, Moses Joel, known as Morris, sailed for Britain with his five younger sisters, where they settled in Pontypridd or Merthyr Tidwell, Wales. Morris (Matthew's father) married off his sisters, the eldest to a South African, which led to his decision to seek his fortune in South Africa. Arriving in 1913, he opened a store in the Transkei area and in due course met and married Rebecca Klugman, an immigrant from Memel, Lithuania. They suffered the tragic loss of their first child in 1921 after a harrowing 100-mile journey to the nearest hospital in Grahamstown. Eventually the family moved to Cape Town, where Matthew and his siblings were born.

Morris's health was ruined in 1935 while working as a traveller for a produce firm, when his car collided with a train at a level crossing. A move to Johannesburg and a drier climate was helpful, but he died in 1946. Morris was the proud possessor of a lily-white complexion, the result of daily bathing in Jeyes fluid, a disinfectant used in cattle dips. Those were the days before Dettol.

Matthew's mother was another fund of stories, and recalled emigrating from Lithuania via London by sea, able only to eat from a sack of potatoes as there was no kosher food aboard the *Garth Castle*.

She remembered the primitive conditions greeting her family on their arrival at the turn of the century in their new country, and their numerous moves, each new situation an improvement on the last. She had fond memories of the Yiddish Society in Cape Town where she used to perform.



Matthew's occupation was perhaps unusual for a Jewish lad. He founded a wooden box factory and sawmill, supplying every type of wooden box to the soft-drink, liquor, commercial and agricultural trades. His firm, "Boxes and Timber Products," was situated in Parow, one of Cape Town's northern suburbs, near the native and coloured locations of labour. Among Matthew's many stories of his 36 years in business was the day a worker walked in with a matchbox and asked him what he should do with Lewis's thumb. Another unusual request, from Cape Town Museum for a Japanese importer, was to crate a stuffed ostrich.

Matthew was President of his shul in Muizenberg, a renowned seaside resort, for a number of years, and his wife was Chairlady of the Ladies' Guild.

Coming to Australia, Matthew found his line of work was no longer an option as wooden boxes had been replaced by plastic. He accepted a job in a dress factory and remained there for 10 years until ill health forced him to retire. His wife Lovelle joined the Montefiore Home as a community visitor and gave them 11 years' devoted service.

Matthew in retirement enjoys the luxury of his home swimming pool and, health permitting, goes every morning to Masada Shul. He and Lovelle have kept up the Latvian/Lithuanian kosher traditions, exemplified by culinary dishes such as cholent and teigels.

This story was written by Jeannette Tsoulos, our Vice president and Resources librarian. Jeannette is also Hon Secretary of the Australian Jewish Historical Society and answers Australian genealogical queries for both Societies She has written a number of articles and Book Reviews for the Kosher Koala.

THE LONDON *JEWISH CHRONICLE* ARCHIVES ONLINE www.thejc.com

By Rieke Nash

Another outstanding resource has just become available to researchers. The *Jewish Chronicle*, the newspaper of the Anglo-Jewish Community, published in London since 1841 is now online. From the website, www.thejc.com, click on the Archives box. It is possible to restrict the year(s) to search and the word format can be varied.

Every page of every edition up to 2006 has been scanned and Optical Character Read (OCR), a process that allows the pages to be searched for a specific word. The result is far from perfect as the process often misreads the printed characters and hence the words can be garbled. When this happens the reference can be missed. This is a major problem with the site and hopefully it will be improved over time.

Further the complete text is not available in the free search facility. Each hit has just a fragment of the announcement and it takes a while to adjust to this format. To gain access to the complete text it is necessary to subscribe to the newspaper for the cost of GBP40 for a six month period. This gives the information only on screen. There is an additional cost for downloading the reference.

Despite these restrictions, with patience, it is still possible to make important discoveries without paying the subscription costs. For example, in a specific personal announcement the first occurrence of a surname might be garbled but the second might be transcribed correctly

As every page has been scanned the site includes all personal announcements, every news item, all business advertisements, New Year greetings and regional news items which often include the officebearers' names in Jewish organizations around the country.

Many of our members have made significant progress not only for their English research. Announcements often state 'Australian, South African or American papers please copy' and this can give clues to other relatives or previous countries of residence of the deceased.

It is not uncommon to find clues to the adopted names of a family. A death notice for a parent can be in the original European name with the childrens' current surnames being an Anglicised version for a son or the married name of a daughter. Sometimes it is possible to trace the variable use of these name changes. The challenge is to use a variety of ideas and techniques to extract the crucial information. Many announcements included the family's residential address. I searched for the address given by an informant on a Death Certificate to discover more about a particular family with a very common name. This use of addresses in notices also helps to confirm that the reference is for the correct family.

There seems to be a trend for announcing engagements rather than weddings which can be a trap as sometimes the couple didn't marry. Another custom appears to have been the announcement for the consecration of a tombstone even if there had not been an announcement for the death. This event, often around one year after the death, indicates the place of burial, a piece of information often difficult to find.

Some families were considered too poor to pay for an announcement but the site should still be checked. While there may be no birth notices for their children, some of these children may have an engagement notice. With subsequent announcements by the family it is sometimes possible to identify a year of death where a parent is now 'the late ...'.

I found two examples of entries that are missing. Miriam Pollak's indexing project produced a birth notice that I could not retrieve from the Archive. Miriam checked it and found that the page had been omitted from the website. Another example that I could not find was a search item that I had placed in the paper in 1997.

Apart from paying for a subscription, there are a number of ways for viewing the original reference. Our member Miriam Pollak's detailed CD covers the years 1900-1909 and the books by Doreen Berger, *The Jewish Victorian* cover 1861-1870 and 1871-1880. These resources can be searched in the Society's library.

While the National Library in Canberra has the complete set of Jewish Chronicles, the State Library of New South Wales' collection is limited to the years 1871-72, 1908-1922 and 1963-1971.

On Sunday afternoon, 18th June, at 2 p.m. the Society will be holding a special session in the Rev Katz Library, North Shore Synagogue, to assist members with navigating this very valuable site. Miriam Pollak who has had extensive experience with this resource will demonstrate techniques to maximise success using an on-line facility.

Despite the major drawbacks, this is a fabulous site and will break down many of the brick-walls that have been frustrating some of our members with their English research.

MY STORY

By David Nicholls

My birth name was David James CORTISSOS. Born in Sydney on 31 December, 1963, I was adopted out to the Irish-Scottish Nicholls family who moved to Darwin in 1964 and then to Adelaide River, 100 kilometres South of Darwin, in 1968. From 1975 to 1979 I attended a Catholic Boarding School in Charters Towers and have now lived in Darwin for 26 years, having spent the last forty years in the Northern Territory.

In 1992 I found out that I was Jewish when I contacted my birth mother, Rebecca Cortissos of Melbourne. Rebecca was one of eleven children, the daughter of Benjamin Gladstone CORTISSOS

and granddaughter of Elias, a Sephardic family. Her mother was Rachel CAPUA and her grandmother was Julia LAZARUS.

I started tracing this Spanish-Italian ancestry in 1997 and have found genealogy fascinating. It has helped me define an additional identity after my adopted identity had been of such supreme importance to me and how I have lived my life until then.



I have paranoid schizophrenia which I have had since birth but last June, I found out, through an iron studies blood test that I have Alpha-Thalassemia, a blood disease common to people from Mediterranean countries. I now eat lots of red meat and iron rich foods and am feeling much better.

I thought that I had found my birth father in 2005 when he contacted me and we both had DNA tests. However the tests proved that there was no relationship.

I joined the Society in 1998 and genealogy has given me a good sense of identity, confidence and foundation. I would like to thank Sophie Caplan from the Australian Jewish Genealogy Society for all the information she sent me. I finally got around to studying it. The Kosher Koala is a good read and I love it.

Ciao and Adios from David in the Northern Territory. He can be contacted through the Society.

THE 2006 AUSTRALIAN CENSUS

By Miriam Shifreen

On the night of Tuesday 8 August 2006 the Australian Census will take place at the cost of 300 million dollars. It will contain 61 questions. And the only two questions that are not compulsory are the very two questions that we should be sure to answer: religion (Question 19) and census retention (Question 60).

Religion Question 19

There is no box you can tick marked: "Jewish". So, Australian Jews will need to write the word "Jewish" in the appropriate box for all people in your household who are Jewish as it is our main source of information about the size and characteristics of the Jewish community. It affects allocation by Government of resources to assist our community in areas such as education, welfare and aged care. The Jewish community also depends on the census for many planning decisions.

Census Retention Question 60

Well known Australian genealogist Nick Vine Hall, says *Tell 10 of your friends to tell 10 of their friends to tick "YES" to Question 60:*

"Does each person in this household agree to his/her name and address and other information on this form being kept by the National Archives of Australia and then made publicly available after 99 years?"

Retention only applies to information supplied by those households that provide explicit consent on the census form.

Some 51 percent of Australians answered "YES" to the retention of their forms in the 2001 census survey. During the 99 year period, the name identified information will not be released by the National Archives under any circumstances.

But, unless you answer YES your census form will not be retained in the archives and none of the information will be retained for future family history.

Prior to 2001, no census survey of national coverage in Australia has survived since 1828.

And of course all genealogists completing the census forms will remember to make copies for their families' archives.

JEWISH ILLEGITIMACY LAWS

By Judith Romney Wegner

In a recent message on the Jewish Genalogical Society of Great Britain Discussion Forum concerning men or women listed in the Great Synagogue marriage register or on a ketubbah as So-and-So ben (or bat) Avraham Avinu (meaning, "son" or "daughter" of our patriarch Abraham), a correspondent wrote:

"I seem to remember being told that such an entry on a Ketubah implied the person was illegitimate (On reflection I suppose that from an Orthodox point of view if their parents were not married according to Jewish Law then they would be regarded as such)."

Actually that is not necessarily the case. A child born to two Jews who at the time of its conception were free to marry each other is considered "legitimate" in Jewish law whether the couple are actually married or not. This is true regardless of whether the couple had participated in any kind of marriage ceremony - Jewish, civil or both. That is because Jewish law technically recognizes the validity of what we would call "common-law marriage" -- in which a couple set up home together and cohabit on an ongoing basis without benefit of a marriage ceremony. Of course, if the couple had never had either a state-recognized Jewish ceremony or a civil ceremony, their children would until recent times have been branded illegitimate in English law or whatever civil law was involved, even if legitimate in Jewish law.

In Jewish law, the term "illegitimate" (loosely but misleadingly used to translate the Hebrew term mamzer) means something completely different from its meaning in English law or in civil law systems generally. In Jewish law, "illegitimacy" (mamzerut) means that at the time the child was conceived the parties were not free to marry in Jewish law. That can happen either because the parties are within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, or (far more commonly) because the woman is already married to a Jewish man from whom she has not received the requisite Jewish divorce -- often because the husband is withholding this for reasons of blackmail or just pure spite. (In Jewish law only the husband, and not the wife or the Jewish court, can issue a writ of divorce). Sometimes remarriage is impossible because the woman's husband has disappeared without trace; and in the absence of witnesses, the husband cannot be presumed dead in Jewish law even if he has been declared so in civil law. (In Jewish law, most situations require two witnesses, but Mishnaic law

decreed a "humane" exception in the case of a woman who was the sole witness to her husband's death in a foreign country, making her testimony valid and sufficient. But if there were no witnesses at all, she is not free to remarry).

However, there is an important exception to all of the above. If the child's father was an unconverted gentile, then even though Jewish law does not recognize a marriage between him and the Jewish mother, the laws of *mamzerut* are considered inapplicable. Thus even where the mother lacks a Jewish divorce (having simply obtained a civil divorce and then contracted a civil marriage to a gentile -- a not uncommon scenario) any child of the second marriage (a) would be considered halakhically Jewish (because Jewish law on this point, though originally patrilineal, has been matrilineal for roughly the past 1500 years) and (b) would not be classified as a *mamzer*, because the laws of *mamzerut* do not apply to a child resulting from intercourse between a Jewish woman and a gentile man.

In the case of remarriage after civil divorce, a civil divorce alone does not "count" in Jewish law; it frees the mother to remarry only in civil law, not in Jewish law. So, bottom line, the term *mamzer* does not mean simply a child born out of wedlock; it means a child born to a man and woman who in Jewish law were not free to marry at the time of the child's conception.

Note that in speaking of freedom to remarry, I said only "the mother." I did not mention "the father." In Jewish law, "not free to remarry" does not apply to a married Jewish man because Jewish law to this day remains theoretically polygymous, just as in biblical and talmudic times; it permits a man to take more than one wife (even though the actual practice itself has been banned for Ashkenazic Jews by rabbinic decree for the past 1,000 years). So the fact that a Jewish man is already married does not technically preclude his taking another wife or having sex with another woman (provided the second woman is not already married, of course). But Jewish law has never been polyandrous; women were never allowed more than one husband at the same time, because Jewish law -- like all patriarchal systems throughout history -- abhors the notion of a woman having relations with more than one man and thus obscuring the paternity of the offspring. That's why Judaism is not now and never has been egalitarian when it comes to divorce, which can be given only unilaterally by the man -just as in Islam. Incidentally, about 90% of the marriage and divorce laws in Judaism and Islam are virtually identical to this day!

BOOK REVIEWS

THE BECHER/BEECHER FAMILY TREE

Book, Sydney, Australia, 2003-2005, approximately 80 pages.

Reviewed by Sophie Caplan

This is a family tree book by ROBERT BEECHER covering the nineteenth and twentieth century history of the Becher family from Kolomea in Eastern Galicia now Kolomyya, Western Ukraine The parents of Georg Becher, later George Beecher immigrated to Vienna in 1898 when he was five years old and lived there until 1939. The author has previously researched a family tree book on the extended family of his mother, Paula Kriss, who also came from Vienna. Robert and his older brother Fred were born in Vienna and immigrated to Australia in 1939 with their parents, followed by their grandmother.

The book has maps of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, of the Kolomea region, and 1914 Europe, as well as numerous sections of the Becher extended family tree, family heirloom photographs. and individual life histories of Georg Becher, Paula Kriss Becher, Chaje Gittel and Menachem Mendel Becher, Fred and Robert Beecher.

The family tree section includes many surnames of those who intermarried with the Becher/Beecher clan including Ascheim, Bernhaut, Bruestiger, Egra, Fernbach, Fuchs, Landwehr, Loew, Pelzel, Richter, Sadaguski, Sender, Spritzler, and others.

Copies of the book are in the International Institute for Jewish Genealogy collection in Jerusalem and in the library of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society, Sydney.

This was written for the rubric *New Family Histories In Print* Winter 2007 issue of *Avotaynu*.

(See Bob Beecher's article on page 3 of this edition of Kosher Koala).

THE JEWS IN AUSTRALIA By Suzanne D. Rutland

Published by Cambridge University Press Port Melbourne, VIC, 2005

Reviewed by Evelynn Collyer

This is a fascinating text, documenting the Australian community's history and unique characteristics.

From 1788 when the first fleet arrived in Australia with a dozen Jewish convicts on board, up until present times, the author outlines and often details the story of the Jews in Australia. There are chapters on early settlement and migration patterns,

and how the Jews forged their place in Australian society.

The watershed years, commencing with the refugee flight from Nazism, then survivor emigration after World War II are discussed, along with an anti-Semitic cartoon published in 1946.

Religious, Zionist, cultural and ethnic forms of Jewish identification and the diversity of these organisations are elaborated on, emphasising the vitality of these structures. Australian Jewry's connection to Israel and support of Zionism is explained. Of particular interest is how this support has waxed and waned over time, also the political implications of Australia-Israel relations.

One chapter is dedicated to Jewish women and their achievements, including their prominence outside the community. There is a lovely photo of Dr. Fanny Reading at her graduation, in 1921. Australian Jewry's role in the business world is extremely interesting and touches on Melbourne's Flinders Lane rag trade and Westfield's Frank Lowy. Many of our outstanding academics and professionals are listed, along with snippets of their achievements – quite frankly, it is a breathtaking list. Suzanne Rutland states As Jews suffered persecution and expulsions, they held to the sense that intellect and knowledge were always portable. Jews in the armed forces and political life are discussed, additionally the Jewish impact on the arts, restaurants and food. In the final chapter recent immigration is highlighted, this includes Russian, Israeli and South African immigrants and how they have woven in to the fabric of Australian Jewry.

My initial plan was to read the text quickly, but this proved impossible for each fascinating chapter captivated me. Many Australian Jews were not educated in this country and their knowledge of the Jews in Australia may be fragmented. Suzanne Rutland's carefully researched book is the perfect vehicle for their educational journey. In fact, all readers will derive immense benefit from *The Jews in Australia*.

Evelynn Collyer has recently joined our Society.

AN EXCITING EVENT FOR YOUR DIARY

Sallyann Amdur Sack, Founder and Editor of the Publishing Organisation, *Avotaynu*, will be visiting Sydney next October. On Tuesday morning, 17 October, 2006 she will be speaking at the Society of Australian Genealogists in Kent Street.

Further information about Sallyann's visit will be published in the next Kosher Koala.

JEWISH ANCESTORS? A Guide to Jewish Genealogy in the United Kingdom. Contributing Editor, Rosemary Wenzerul

Published by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, 2006.

Reviewed by Miriam Shifreen

This is an updated and enlarged version of the Beginners Guide published in 2001. There are 244 pages to the old version's 79 pages where the information has been expanded and upgraded.

While the older version now seems simplistic in many ways, real beginners to Jewish Genealogy will find it easier to follow. So, don't throw away the old version. Keep it as a companion and supplement to the new one, as it contains maps, how to read Hebrew headstones, draw a family tree for those not on the computer, translates Yiddish terms and more, for those just starting out.

The new edition contains very valuable and detailed information, ideas, addresses, web sites, censuses, yizkor books and much more and while advanced researchers will find it more useful, it is helpful for all levels of researcher including the beginner. It is town and area specific for cemeteries, libraries, synagogues, co-op societies and Vital Record Offices throughout the United Kingdom covering resources town by town.

This publication, as well as others in the series, can be purchased from the Sydney Jewish Museum, 148 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst. Tel: 02-9360-7999

IN SEARCH OF MY FATHER By Paul Drexler

Reviewed by Peter Nash

Published May 2006, it is one of an increasing number of memoirs and family stories being published under the "Communities Stories" Project at the Sydney Jewish Museum.

Paul was born in rural Slovakia where his early years were happy ones. He was the only surviving child born into an observant Jewish family with a doting mother and a caring father whom he adored. The war and the Germans impacted their lives only from 1943. After several re-locations in late 1944 his father never returned from a forced labour assignment. Paul and his mother were eventually transported to the Theresienstadt concentration camp, north of Prague. They both survived and were liberated in May 1945. Nothing was ever heard of his father again. They migrated to Australia in 1947. As with so many other Holocaust child survivors whose early childhood was traumatic and drastically disrupted, for many years Paul was unable to talk openly about his Holocaust experiences until a request came to speak to his granddaughter's Year 8 class on this distressing topic.

He felt 'good' as he had broken his silence of 50 years, but the emotional release caused hidden memories to flood back. Paul then developed an unrelenting urge to write his story and to find the exact burial place of his father. In so doing he became more conscious of the devastating effect his father's absence had on their lives from camp survival to their re-settlement in Australia.

His research on the historical events that impacted on their lives in the period of imprisonment also involved travel to Slovakia and Theresienstadt. Telling his story, not only led to amazing connected outcomes, but unexpectedly also led to genealogical connections with other living cousins, even in Australia. The goal of "closure" in finding his father's burial ground was finally achieved.

Paul does not hold back on his inner conflicts, the isolation he suffered as his mother tried to make 'ends meet' and the difficulties of acceptance as a "reffo" or "New Australian". His style is easy to read. The strength of his family support in his quest shines throughout the book.

In Search of My Father can be purchased from the Sydney Jewish Museum.

Paul Drexler is a member of our Society.

A FAMILIAR DILEMMA

By Lucille Nicholson

From the Genealogists' Magazine, Vol 28 No 9 March 2006 page 416, with permission from the Society of Genealogists (U.K.)

> 'Genealogy has been likened to many things: detection, jigsaw puzzles, an obsessive hobby to name some. But to me it is more like the art of an Australian aboriginal tracker who moves through his terrain alert to every footprint, every broken twig and leaf. Well and good until he reaches a river. Then he has to find his trail on the further bank. My 'river' is the Irish Sea.'

Lucille Nicholson, Brighton, VIC is researching her MANNING family in Ireland and Kent.

WEBSITES TO EXPLORE

Check out the Links page on the AJGS website at www.ajgs.org.au

and don't forget to surf www.cyndislist.com for new genealogy sites.

Another site to regularly check out for its expanding list of search aids is Stephen Morse's site at:

www.stevemorse.org

Well known for its Ellis Island and USA Census site, new additions include aids for the 1901 UK Census and an aid for searching for Brides and Grooms in New York through the Italian Genealogical Society site at: www.italiangen.org.

AUSTRALIAN ARRIVALS 1926-1947

Arrivals in Fremantle of all passengers who may have travelled on to Melbourne or Sydney for the period January, 1926 to August 1947, can be found on the National Archives site. Go to RecordSearch and then Passenger Index.

www.naa.gov.au/the collection/recordsearch.html

BREMEN PASSENGER LISTS 1920-1939

Search by destinations for all passengers who boarded in Bremen, Germany www.schiffslisten.de/index en.html

IMMIGRANT ARRIVALS IN BRAZIL, 1890 TO 1923

Search on Sobrenome (surname) and click "Bruscar (Search). Click on the first name (in red) to request a copy of the immigrant's papers. For help with the Portuguese language, contact our Society. www.memorialdoimigrante.sp.gov.br

NETHERLANDS TO AUSTRALIA 1946-1991

www.nationaalarchief.nl/emigranten/en/ and another interesting Dutch site (although it is in Dutch) is

http://d-compu.dyndns.org/Passagiers/default.asp

THE STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

has an extensive Genealogy database at: www.vicnet.net.au/family/genealogy/

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY HAS DIGITISED

NEWSPAPERS from the 1840s from NSW, Vic, Tas, SA & London at

www.nla.gov.au/ferg/browselist.html including the Voice of Jacob (Sydney 1842) www.nla.gov.au/ferg/issn/1440334X.html

NSW BDM FREE SITE

Births 1788-1905 Deaths 1788-1975 Marriages 1788-1955 Search and order certificates online.

There are some transcription errors. One entry had the first name listed as 'Louise' instead of 'Louis'. www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/familyHistory/search.htm

FIRST AMERICAN JEWISH FAMILIES

From Malcolm Stern's book on families who arrived in the USA before 1840 and their descendants.

www.americanjewisharchives.org/aja/FAJF/ intro.html

LIEPAJA JEWISH CEMETERY 1905 1914 www.liepajajews.org/cem/1905 14.htm

THE DATABASE FOR THE AUSCHWITZ-**BIRKENAU MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM** This site is now available in English. www.auschwitz.org.pl

USING THE YAD VASHEM DATABASE

www.yadvashem.org

To date Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes Remembrance Authority, has computerized 3.2 million names of Holocaust victims, compiled from approximately 2 million submitted Pages of Testimony and various other lists. Yad Vashem's goal is to have the names of the 6 million victims on their database.

The database has proven to be extremely valuable as totally unexpected connections have resulted. The ability to search by different parameters, such as town, maiden name, submitter's name, etc, achieves a variety of outcomes.

For example, a letter I received recently had the writer's submitted Page of Testimony together with one of mine. Despite the fact that I submitted the wrong family name (the only one of fifty!) there was enough data on my Page (first and maiden names, place of birth, husband's name) to suggest a possible connection - which there was.

Pages of Testimony can be submitted online. If you haven't already done, so please treat this as **URGENT!** Peter Nash

TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN HEBREW **AND YIDDISH**

Yiddish uses Y eiyn (ayin) and ℵ aleph as vowels, whereas Hebrew does not. So if you see any sentences written with frequent alephs and eivns within the words, the language would be Yiddish.

From Martha Lev-Zion, Israel

And don't forget to check out the JewishGen website especially the Jewish Genealogical Family Finder (JGFF) and update your research interests and contact information. www.jewishgen.org

The Australian Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc.

Our aim is to encourage and assist those with Jewish ancestry to research their family histories

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SYDNEY WORKSHOPS

Queensland Representative

All workshops are usually held at the Rev Katz Library, North Shore Synagogue, Treatts Road, Lindfield, once a month on Sunday mornings, from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. See front page for dates.

The Editor has the right to accept or reject or publish in revised form as might be appropriate.

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P.O. Box 42 Lane Cove NSW 1595, Australia or by email: editor@ajgs.org.au

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS New South Wales Jaye and Barry Barker Eva Browne Daniela Torsh United States Frances Unger

Annual Membership \$Aust 35.00 Family Membership \$Aust 40.00 Pensioner or Student \$Aust 20.00 Annual Overseas Subscription \$Aust 45.00 Please send your cheque to: A.J.G.S. PO Box 185 Erskineville NSW 2043

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FUTURE IAJGS CONFERENCE DATES

26th IAJGS Conference, New York August 13 – 18, 2006

All researchers, even though you may not be attending this event, should look at this website for an awareness of the latest in Jewish genealogical research and for valuable leads.

www.jgsny2006.org

If you will be there, please let us know on president@ajgs.org.au

Salt Lake City - 15 to 19 July, 2007

Chicago - 2008

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY DATABASE

Names being researched by our new members Old name of Current name of

June, 2006

| | Old hame of Current hame of | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|------------|------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| Id | Surname | Town | Town | District | Country | Dates |
| 588 | ADLER | | BOSKOVICE | | CZECH REP | 1700-1890s |
| 588 | BRAND | | BOSKOVICE | | CZECH REP | 1700-1890s |
| 475 | CAPUA | | | | ENGLAND | 1805-1856 |
| 589 | COHEN | | BALLARAT | | AUSTRALIA | 1800s |
| 475 | CORTISSOS | | | KENT | ENGLAND | 1800-1830 |
| 589 | CORTISSOS | | BALLARAT | | AUSTRALIA | 1850 + |
| 475 | DAVIS | | NEWINGTON | SURREY | ENGLAND | 1800-1848 |
| 589 | DAVIS | | GOULBURN | | AUSTRALIA | 1800s |
| 587 | DEUTSCH | NIKOLSBURG | MIKULOV | | CZECH REP | Up to 1901 |
| 587 | EHRLICH | LVOV | L'VIV | | UKRAINE | Up to 1878 |
| 585 | FRUMAR | | VILNIUS | | LITHUANIA | |
| 585 | GOLDBERG | | VILNIUS | | LITHUANIA | |
| 585 | GOLDBERG | | LIDA | | BELARUS | |
| 588 | HANAK | | BOSKOVICE | | CZECH REP | 1700-1890s |
| 588 | JEITELES | | STRAZNICE | | CZECH REP | 1700s-1800s |
| 588 | LEDERER | | CHOTOVINY | | CZECH REP | 1700s-1800s |
| 588 | LEDERER | U TABORA | | | CZECH REP | 1700s-1800s |
| 475 | LEVEY | | LONDON | | ENGLAND | 1790 |
| 475 | LEVEY | | | | AUSTRALIA | |
| 588 | LOEBL | | MOST | | CZECH REP | 1700s-1800s |
| 588 | LOEBL | | BRUEX | | CZECH REP | 1700s-1800s |
| 587 | NEUMANN | KOSTEL | PODIVIN | | CZECH REP | Up to 1901 |
| 587 | NEUSPIEL | EISGRUB | LEDNICE | | CZECH REP | Up to 1850 |
| 588 | POLLAK | | HOROVICE | | CZECH REP | 1700s-1800s |
| 589 | RADEY | | ORANGE | | AUSTRALIA | 1880 |
| 587 | REICHER | | WIEN | | AUSTRIA | Up to 1879 |
| 475 | SOLOMON | | | | ENGLAND | 1817-1860 |
| 475 | SOLOMON | | | | AUSTRALIA | |
| 588 | TORSH | | BOSKOVICE | | CZECH REP | 1700-1890s |
| 588 | TORZ | | BOSKOVICE | | CZECH REP | 1700-1890s |
| 587 | TRAU | | PRZEMYSL | | POLAND | Up to 1860 |
| 587 | WEINREB | | WIEN | | AUSTRIA | Up to 1879 |
| 588 | WINTER | | UHERSKE HRADISTE | | CZECH REP | 1800s |
| 588 | WINTER | | UHERSKY OSTROH | | CZECH REP | 1800s |
| 587 | ZANK | ROHATYN | ROGATIN | | UKRAINE | Up to 1892 |
| | | | | | | |

2006 AUSTRALIAN CENSUS

Tuesday night, August 8 Please read the explanations on page 10 with notes about the following questions

Question 19 – Religion

Question 60 – Retain your form