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The Kosher Koala

Newsletter of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc

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WORKSHOP DATES 2008

**Sunday, April 6
from 9.30 a.m.**

**Monday, April 14
from 10.00 a.m.**

**Sunday, May 4
from 9.30 a.m.**

**Monday, May 12
from 10.00 a.m.**

**Sunday, June 1
from 9.30 a.m.**

*Report on visit to the
Red Cross International
Tracing Service at
Bad Arolsen*

**Monday, June 16
from 10.00 a.m.**

**Sunday, June 22
COA, Bondi Junction
2.30 p.m.**

*Gael Hammer
Organising a Family
Reunion –
The Blashki Experience*

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT AT THE 16 TH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY, Inc. on March 16, 2008
held at the North Shore Synagogue,
Lindfield at 2.30 p.m.**

By Rieke Nash

Last year was another satisfying and enjoyable one, focussing on our aim to *encourage and assist those with Jewish ancestry to research their family histories*.

Membership grew with many members continuing to support us (even though they may not be currently researching a family history), volunteering for projects and responsibilities and supporting our finances with donations. While other Family History Societies are complaining about falling membership we are thrilled that not only do new people join, but that our old ones are staying with us. From the 15 who attended our first AGM in 1993, 10 are still members.

At Sunday and Monday morning workshops held once a month, researchers have been able to access websites online using the Society's computer, consult other members and use the library.

At the last AGM we enjoyed the presentation of Rabbi John Levi and congratulated him on his newest publication, *These Are The Names*. Other talks this year have covered topics such as Genetic Diseases in the Jewish Community and Czech and Vienna research.

A group from the Society of Australian Genealogists visited our library and were delighted with Rabbi Lewin's informative tour of the synagogue.

Members of the Society have given talks to other organisations on Jewish genealogy, with Kim Phillips' presentation on Gallipoli for NAJEX on Remembrance Day being outstanding.

This year the Society produced a Privacy Statement which can be read on our website.

Kosher Koala

Again, four editions of the newsletter were published with members supplying interesting and entertaining articles which were well received. Thank you for your participation.

Resources

An updated CD of the Society's resources was created for members. The library continues to grow particularly with publications not available online.

(continued on page 13)

EDITORIAL

By Miriam Shifreen

Lionel Sharpe, editor of *Jewish Genealogy Downunder*, the Newsletter of the AJGS (Vic) Inc. played an important role in the SBS feature program, *Who Do You Think You Are?* which featured the Jewish ancestry of Ita Buttrose, the well known Australian publisher.

I do hope you took my advice (in the December Editorial) and have been watching this very special and enthralling SBS series. The first programme in the next British series *Who Do You Think You Are?* in the same SBS timeslot featured comedian, writer, and performer David Baddiel who has written a novel based loosely on his Jewish maternal grandparents who fled from the Holocaust.

As usual this edition of the Kosher Koala is filled with wonderful stories and news events.

Peter Arnold wonders in *Who Do I Think I Am?* on page 3, how far back can we trace our ancestors?

We have been very lucky to have three special visitors recently. Rabbi Raymond Apple who has written about *The Famous Joseph Joachim*, on page 4, gave a talk to our society on *Biography as a Key to Jewish History*. A report of this is on page 11 followed by a review of his latest book, *The Great Synagogue - History of Sydney's Big Shule*. I was pleased my father-in-law, Louis Shifreen was mentioned as one of the early Choir Masters at *The Great*.

Peter Nash writes about his latest amazing discovery - his mother's lost German passport in *My German Passport Found In Shanghai*. Peter's stories always give us the urge to keep on with our wonderful and absorbing hobby. See page 5.

Stuck for new research ideas for your Dutch ancestors, then you'll find *Dutch Jewish Genealogy - One Hundred Years In Twenty Minutes*, on page 7 by Glenda Goldberg will give you some new ideas.

English researchers for the Levy and Michaels surnames will want to read about *A Visit From Kathryn Michael*, our second visitor, and congratulations to those of our members who have received *Awards And Honours In 2008* Both these stories are on page 9.

George Rigal, our third visitor, spoke about English *Fire Insurance Records at the Guildhall Library*. Information about this appears on page 10.

My special thanks to our President Rieke Nash who has put this edition of the KK together for me.

Miriam Shifreen,
Editor

ed@ajgs.org.au

WHO DO I THINK I AM?

By Peter Arnold

The fact that I exist means that there is a long line of ancestors behind me. There's nothing special about that - we must all have ancestors going back to prehistory. But what if I can actually demonstrate that line? Is it possible? How far back can one go and still tell a credible story?

Those of us interested in genealogy can, with luck and, if tracing an unusual name, go back a few hundred years. Most Jews had no surnames until recent times, so our hunting tends to fizzle out quite quickly.

But what if an unusual surname takes its origin from a place, a town for instance? What if that town has a known history and if historical events actually fit with what is known, in general, of the migration of the Jews?

Can we indulge our imaginations a little and go back to Biblical times, where they correspond with the historical record? Can we go back to the millennia *before* Abraham, before there *were* any Jews? Far-fetched? No, because that is where DNA studies take us.

A journey in my time machine

Would you like to keep me company as I go back in time and place, from Australia to South Africa, to Lithuania, to Persia, to the Kingdom of Judah and the destruction of the first temple, and then back further still, following my DNA chain to the area now known as Pakistan? We would have travelled back 20,000 years.

Of course, you can now say, "Stop! This is nonsense, it is conjecture, it is speculation, it is fanciful." Yes, it is all of that, but there is one very large BUT! Put very simply, I exist, and that means that there are, indeed, some thousands of generations who have, in fact, preceded me. If they hadn't, I wouldn't be here, and nor would my children and grandchildren.

So let's change our thinking cap. Let's accept that my ancestors must have existed, somewhere, sometime. This story is an attempt to find out where and when.

The genealogical timespan

Thanks to the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and contributors to the Litvak Special Interest Group at <http://www.jewishgen.org>, many thousands of Russian census and other records have been translated into English and uploaded to the Internet. My father's family name has some 200 entries. This is fortunate, because common names (my mother's included) have thousands of entries, which makes for difficult research.

In addition, the records of some of the shipping companies which took some three million Jews from the Pale of Settlement to the west during the latter half of the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries have also been photographed and uploaded to the Internet. So, too, have the records in London of the Poor Jews' Hostel

www.chrysalis.its.uct.ac.za/shelter/shelter.htm

where Jews were lodged before continuing their migration to Ireland, the Americas, Africa and Australasia. While their genealogical value is somewhat limited, they add colour and spice to the lives of our grandparents and great-grandparents.

I have made one major assumption in this story. I suggest that, like so many Jews who took a surname from the name of their town (Moskowsky, Gorodetsky, Warshawski etc.) one of my ancestors (and, indeed, other unrelated Jews who had originated in the same place) took the name of the town whence the family had migrated, and added -sky. So where is this place Amol, which, I hypothesise, gave rise to the surname AMOLSKY? It is a city, once a capital city, in northern Persia, on the silk road to China.

The historical timespan

The Jews of Persia, many of them merchants and traders, fled or were expelled during the virulently antisemitic Islamic and Mongol regimes of the 13th and 14th centuries. Some fled east, through what is now Turkmenistan and Pakistan and then into India. Others, perhaps aware that the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas was welcoming Jews into his country because of their literacy and numeracy, moved northwest, through what is now Azerbaijan and Georgia, through the Ukraine and Belarus, into Lithuania.

The biblical timespan

The Jews of Persia were descended from those who had been taken away by Nebuchadnezzar II following his destruction of Jerusalem and the first temple in 587 BCE. Many did not take advantage of Cyrus's offer in 539 BCE to return to the Kingdom of Judah, but remained in Persia.

Cyrus (580 - 529 BCE) was succeeded by Darius (522 - 486 BCE) and he, in turn by Xerxes (520 - 465 BCE) known to Jews as Ahasverosh. Purim is, therefore, a special time for me, my relatives and my descendants to rejoice. Had Esther not succeeded, we would not be here today.

The prehistoric timespan

In my genealogical hunt for my AMOLSKY family, I found some other AMOLSKYs. I traced two American family trees, each with over 100 people and contacted many of them. One of my New York contacts, a true scientist (nuclear medicine) suggested that he, another AMOLSKY in

Massachusetts and I all have our Y-chromosome DNA tested.

The Y-chromosome is what makes men male. It is transmitted, almost unchanged, from father to son throughout the generations. The best known Y-chromosome today is the COHEN chromosome, where the chromosome travels with the surname. You're Jewish if your mother is, but you're only a COHEN if your father is. In fact, the Y-chromosome does change a little through the generations, but very little. The extent of the change can be correlated with the passage of time.

Unfortunately, my Y-chromosome was not the same as that of either the New York or the Massachusetts AMOLSKY, but theirs were identical. They are descended from an AMOLSKY family who lived in the city of *Kovno* (Kaunas, Lithuania's second city) prior to migrating to the new world. My family were *shtetl* people, from *Shadowe* (Saduwe), in the Kaunas province (the *Kovno guberniya*, when under Russian rule).

But my Y-chromosome revealed more than this non-relationship. It (what is called my haplotype - G5) showed that I was descended from a man who had lived in the region around what is now Pakistan, 20,000 years ago.

And, at that point, my tale has its tail. I hope that you've enjoyed it.

Peter Arnold is a member of the Society and co-authored the book Worlds Apart, the experiences of Jewish South Africans migrating to Australia.

THE FAMOUS JOSEPH JOACHIM

By Rabbi Raymond Apple AO RFD

My maternal grandparents were Joseph and Charlotte (nee Cohen) Joachim, both born in Australia. Joseph's parents were Abraham and Reyna (nee Ottolangi) Joachim. Abraham's background was in Central Europe. It has intrigued me all my life whether the famous violinist Joseph Joachim (1831-1907) was related to the Australian Joachims, but so far no-one has been able to confirm it either way.

Born to Jewish parents near Bratislava, Joachim – he was often referred to simply by his surname – was recognised as a violin prodigy long before he was 13. At first a supporter of the Wagner-Liszt school of music, he fitted in more naturally to the more classical-romantic school of Mendelssohn, Schumann and Brahms.

His talents brought him admirers everywhere, especially in Berlin, where, apart from various official positions including the training of music

students, he led the Joachim Quartet for over 30 years from 1869 and appeared all over Europe. His visits to England began with a highly praised Beethoven performance in 1844 and by the early 20th century no musical event was more acclaimed than the annual recitals by the Joachim Quartet.

Living in a time of great technological development, he was probably the first violinist to have made gramophone recordings, which cover Bach, Brahms and even his own works.

As a performer he was renowned for both “great technical skill and deep interpretative insight” (Percy A. Scholes, *Oxford Companion to Music*). He was also a composer whose works deserve to be better known.

The centenary of his birth was commemorated in London in 1931 by a concert at the Queen's Hall at which two great-nieces played his compositions and a granddaughter, Gabriele Joachim, sang.

He was not a particularly practising Jew though in 1865 he issued a strong protest when the King of Hanover penalised an orchestral player because of the latter's Jewish birth – an expression of the “new” antisemitism that brought such tragedy to European Jewry.

Is there any significance in the fact that in Melbourne, Australia, Abraham and Reyna Joachim called their son Joseph?

The Australian Joseph Joachim died in the 1930s before I was born, so I had no way of ever asking him about his lineage. His wife Charlotte might have known, but when she died in 1941 I was a little boy who had no idea that history even existed.

Rabbi Raymond Apple is the Emeritus Rabbi of the Great Synagogue, Sydney, was President of the Australian Jewish Historical Society for many years and is a member of our Society. He is a teacher, writer and historian. His latest achievement is the publication of the History of the Great Synagogue which is reviewed on page 11. His recent talk to our Society has been summarised also on page 11.

CONDOLENCE

The Society extends our sympathy to Leslie and Ruth Burnett and daughter, Debbie, on the very tragic loss of their son and brother, David, from an accident at the Petra site in Jordan.

Leslie and Ruth were among the first speakers for our Society. In 1995 they spoke on Genes and Genealogy, describing the Tay-Sachs Disease Epic.

MY GERMAN PASSPORT FOUND IN SHANGHAI

By Peter Nash

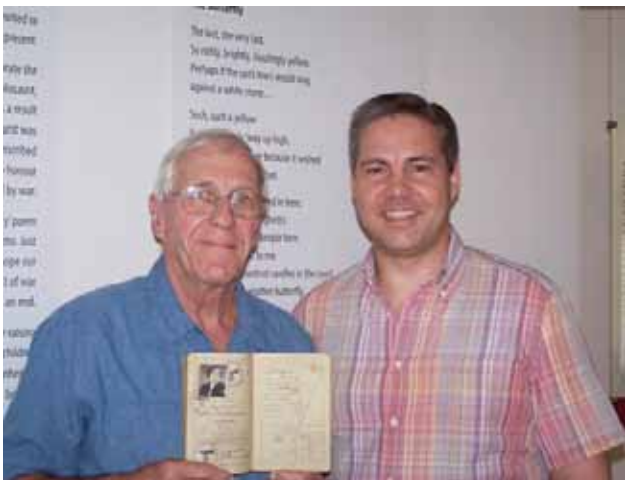
Sitting at the computer my wife Rieke knew something special had come into the 'inbox' and called me immediately. The unknown sender titled the Subject: "Lost Passport in Shanghai" – a topic with which I was familiar as I had initiated connections to owners of two German Passports a few years earlier. [See Kosher Koala Vol 12 No 3, September 2005]

However, this time there was an attachment labeled Ingeborg Nachemstein – my mother's unmistakable name. This was a scan of a section inside a passport, showing the name (Ingeborg Sara Nachemstein), date and place of birth and some other personal details as well as a photo. But it also revealed that the passport holder had a child listing date of birth and name: Peter – ME!

I was absolutely amazed if not completely surprised. Ever since I heard of the two old German passports turning up at a Shanghai 'flea market', I have thought – "so how many others are there to be found?"

The sender of the message was Thomas Dorn, a German citizen, living and working in Shanghai already for 6 years, having worked in various parts of Asia for many years. In his leisure time, Thomas' hobby is to roam around Shanghai looking for historical posters and other curios from China's evolution in recent decades. On that particular weekend, he had ended up at a shop cum museum of Chinese propaganda posters. A fluent Chinese speaker, Thomas engaged in conversation with the museum owner/collector.

After a short while of getting to know each other better and after realizing Thomas' origins, the owner,



Peter Nash and Thomas Dorn at the Sydney Jewish Museum with the passport

Mr. Yang Pei Ming, produced a box containing 19 German passports. From the Eagle and *Hakenkreuz* (Swastika) on the cover, Thomas immediately realized their significance and, having lived in Shanghai for a number of years, was also aware of the story of the thousands of German, Austrian and other European Jews who fled the Nazi era and found a haven in Shanghai. As he slowly turned the pages of several passports his "hair stood on end", realizing the pain, Sblood and tears that these passport holders had endured through their long journey to Shanghai, the displacement and loss of family as well as the hardships of refugee life.

Instinctively drawn to the need to somehow find the owners or a descendant, Thomas was galvanized into action. Gathering his thoughts, he used his mobile phone to take photos of those passports listing children, hoping some might still be alive and that he could trace them. The first passport he photographed and subsequently did searches on was that of my mother and me. On returning to his computer he 'Googled' my name – my birth name – and, within 0.16 seconds, found more than ten 'hits' for me, resulting from my previous publications and lectures I have held on the Jews of Shanghai. Not only did the first link he opened list my adopted name in addition to my birth name, it also gave an email address.

Within 60 seconds of receiving Thomas' email I called him in Shanghai, taking advantage of the relatively small time difference. It was my turn to startle him! Not expecting such a quick response, he thought it was his boss calling from Germany. Although his English is fluent, we spoke mostly in German in which I am also still fluent. I was naturally curious how Mr. Yang came into possession of such a large number of passports. According to Mr. Yang there are around 100 passports of German-Jewish refugees to China circulating at the moment – another known lot of 5 passports, plus Mr. Yang's 19, mean there may be another 75 still waiting to be discovered.

How these passports came to be left behind in Shanghai has so far not been uncovered. The Nazi-issued passports did not serve any further purpose when World War 2 ended but many of the refugees came away with their original passports. Indeed I have in my possession the passport of my mother's sister and her husband and I know the one belonging to my mother's sister-in-law exists. One theory is that the passports may have been collected from certain groups of stateless refugees during their post-war emigration and replaced by other qualifying documents for entry to the country of migration.



The 1939 German Passport issued to Peter's mother. Note: Peter's entry in the lower right

As to how these documents have survived and under what circumstances they recently surfaced, there is as yet no definitive answer. In the late 1950s, not long before the start of the Cultural Revolution under Chairman Mao, there was mass 'dumping' of records and paraphernalia relating to Shanghai's Western population. It appears that peddlers, sorting through the rubbish for recyclables and items of value, picked out these documents and sold them to curio-stall owners rather than as waste paper to be pulped. Thus the passports may well have spent many years in a dusty corner of one of Shanghai's many flea market stalls.

Other items have surfaced in similar fashion. An example are the recently found Jewish tombstones, some complete, some partial, so far numbering over 80. It is known that the tombstones of the four Jewish cemeteries in Shanghai, numbering about 3500, were pulled up and re-interred outside of Shanghai in 1958. Later they were again pulled out and many broken up or used as paving stones or for other building works.

What to do with these items remains controversial. Apparently some of the passports have been sold. In fact in 2001, while leading a tour of German medical students, Prof. Paul Unschuld came across a stall holder outside of Shanghai who possessed two

passports. He bought them and later proceeded to find the owners and their families.

Both Thomas and I agreed that money should not change hands for the return of my mother's passport. We explored the possibilities of having it returned and I decided to contact Mr. Yang directly. His response gave me hope that I may get it from him. Thomas has since visited Sydney and brought our passport with him. He handed the passport over to me - 'on loan' from Mr. Yang, at the Sydney Jewish Museum. In the presence of Mariela Sztrum (Education Officer) and Roslyn Sugarman (Curator) we recounted how he came across the 19 passports and our correspondence since. This again gave me the feeling of trust that Mr. Yang will do the 'right thing' and return our passport. A planned Reunion of ex-Shanghaianders in June 2008 in Shanghai may be the right forum for the handover of some of the passports to their owners, surviving family members or the Shanghai Jewish refugee museum.

In any case, this is an extraordinary instance in a chapter of Holocaust survivor history that in most cases had a fortunate ending.

Peter Nash has been a member of the Society since 1991, a committee member and a frequent contributor to Kosher Koala.

DUTCH JEWISH GENEALOGY – ONE HUNDRED YEARS IN TWENTY MINUTES

By Glenda Goldberg

So there I was, convinced I had reached a dead end with my research, when I decided to Google “Dutch Jewish Genealogy” and stumbled across the website of the Israeli organisation, *Akevoth*, www.dutchjewry.org/begin.htm which specialises in research on the family origins and heritage of Dutch Jewry. I knew that my JOSEPH forebears of Sunderland, England, had come from Holland and at an AJGS workshop about 12 months ago I had actually found my great-great-grandfather, Lyonel JOSEPH, and his brother, David JOSEPH, listed in *Circumcisions and Births in Amsterdam 1697 to 1811*.

The Dutch resources held by the Society are extensive (see full list in *Kosher Koala* Vol 12 No 4 December 2005 p.17) but they don't readily enable you to work backwards in time from known events. What I found on *Akevoth* was a database called *Ashkenazi Amsterdam in the 18th Century* <http://shum.huji.ac.il/~dutchjew/genealog/ashkenazi/index.htm> which has made this much easier. It pools the data from the same AJGS resources for marriage, circumcision and cemetery records etc to arrive at detailed information on entire families. Thus, in a 20 minute search of the database, I discovered a lineage stretching back a hundred years in Amsterdam.

The database took me back 4 generations along multiple branches of the family to 1690, providing detailed information on JOSEPH, LISSA, LEVIE, De VRIES and TROMPETTER family members I was not previously aware of. I could not help but feel sadness for the couple delivered of 7 stillborn children and for another family where both young parents and a newborn died within a year, survived by 2 toddlers. My subsequent reading about 18th century Amsterdam suggests that the wretched poverty of the Ashkenazi community may have contributed to these events.

The *Ashkenazi Amsterdam in the 18th Century* database has a rider on it to the effect that certain assumptions have been made about family relationships. However, it has given me leads to follow-up in the marriage, circumcision, cemetery records etc. held by the Society.

In searching those records to satisfy myself about the database's assumed family relationships I have come across additional information not included in the database.

I recommend *Akevoth* to those researching 19th century English families and other Jews who originated in Holland. Apart from databases relevant to the Ashkenazi community, the website includes background information on various Dutch Jewish communities and searchable databases relevant to the Sephardi community, the Holocaust and places other than Amsterdam. My heartfelt thanks go to the Dutch genealogists who originally compiled the records and to those who established and maintain the databases. Special thanks also to those who have donated to AJGS towards the cost of purchasing most of the material that forms the Dutch resources, in particular Martyn Prins and Sophie Caplan.

Glenda Goldberg has been a member of the Society for many years.

MARRIAGE RECORDS FROM THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE, LONDON

I am delighted to be able to let you know that I had a very encouraging meeting at the United Synagogue regarding the collaborative project between the United Synagogue (US) and the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain (JGSGB). The United Synagogue was formed in Great Britain in 1870.

Then and now no person can be married in an Orthodox Synagogue which is part of the United Synagogue without receiving a marriage authorisation from them. For more information please go to www.jgsgb.org.uk/Marriage_Authorisations.shtml

The first 3,277 marriage authorisation records that I indexed for the years 1880 to 1885 inclusive, are expected to be available on joint US/JGSGB web pages around April, 2008.

The indexed records will contain the volume number, certificate number, bride and groom English and Hebrew names and the date and place of marriage.

A full certificate will be able to be ordered and paid for online. As yet the price of this has not been finalised but there will be a discount for JGSGB members.

As I complete each year of indexing, the new records will be uploaded thus the database will be constantly updated.

It is really exciting that after so long this project is going to be unveiled in the very near future and open to genealogists worldwide.

Louise Messik
JGSGB Member of Council

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE
CANBERRA
OCTOBER, 2008**

***JEWISH GENEALOGY
IN THE 21ST CENTURY***

is being organized by the

ACT JEWISH COMMUNITY,

**AUSTRALIAN JEWISH
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY, SYDNEY**

and the

**AUSTRALIAN JEWISH
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY (VIC)**

A varied programme combining a mixture of lectures, seminars and panel inputs, together with visits to National Institutions and genealogical resources is being planned.

The opportunity to meet in person other enthusiastic researchers will be an occasion not to be missed.

On Sunday 26 – Monday 27 October, 2008

There will be lectures, presentations, panel discussions, Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings, a project planning session and the Conference Dinner.

Registrations will open around June-July with more details of the programme and requests for your areas of interest.

The registration fee will be \$120 for these two days. This covers lunches, morning and afternoon teas and conference handouts.

The Dinner is optional and will cost \$80 per person. All food and wine will be kosher.

From Tuesday 28 October

There will be a less formal programme with research activities and trips.

The accommodation options (not included in the registration fee) close to the Conference Centre can be viewed on the Conference website.

For further information visit

www.ajgs.org.au/conf08/index.htm

**REPORT ON PLANNING FOR THE
CONFERENCE**

Kim Phillips, Convenor

Organisation for *Jewish Genealogy in the 21st Century*, is well under way. The conference will be held in Canberra from 26 to 29 October this year.

For more information, the conference website is regularly being updated. For example, the accommodation list is now available. (We advise participants to book early as there is an International Rugby League friendly match being held that weekend in Canberra).

Below is a list of the tasks that have been identified to date, together with the names of those people who have volunteered to lead with organising the tasks.

Can you help??

Is there a task that interests you and that you could assist with? Maybe you would be happy to help during the conference.

This is going to be a terrific event; one that will be enjoyed by all who attend. You'll want to be involved in helping make this happen.

Please send an email to

conf2008@ajgs.org.au

listing the task that interests you.

Tasks:

The following is a list of those who are responsible for the planning and organisation for each of the tasks.

Budget – Lionel Sharpe
Conference Dinner – Kim Phillips
Conference Facility Requirements
– Vernon Kronenberg
Conference Handout Pack – Sunny Gold
Conference Tours – Vernon Kronenberg
Equipment - Vernon Kronenberg
Post Conference Tours – Kim Phillips
Program development – Peter Nash
Publicity – Gary Luke
Registration – Sunny Gold
Resources – Jeannette Tsoulos
Web site – Kim Phillips

A VISIT FROM KATHRYN MICHAEL

In January, members of the Society were delighted to meet UK researcher, Kathryn Michael, who had been touring Australia, catching up with relatives, friends and genealogy groups around the country.

At one of our regular Monday morning workshops, Kathryn described some of her genealogical projects that have kept her busy in recent times.

Of great interest to many of the members present was her collection of LEVY and MICHAELS families, dating from the 1780s. Kathryn is able to connect many of these English families and has been able to help researchers with common roots contact each other.

A similar project involves entries in Doreen Berger's books, *The Jewish Victorian*, covering the years 1861 to 1880. These indices to the Jewish Chronicle and other early Jewish newspapers have been a valuable resource for those with an interest in this period. Kathryn discussed how she matches up claimed descendants of the names cited so that they may make contact with each other.

If you are researching any of these topics, Kathryn can be contacted at kathrynwithakanday@googlemail.com

AWARDS AND HONOURS IN 2008

We congratulate these friends and members for recognition of their achievements.

Associate Professor *Suzanne Rutland*, long-time supporter of AJGS, has been awarded an OAM for service to Jewish education and history through a range of higher education development roles, as an author and academic, and to the promotion of inter-faith relations.

Beverley Bos, a valued member of AJGS since 1992, received an OAM for her services to swimming at the state, national and international swimming level since 1990.

And *Jo Harris*, one of our new members, was awarded the Ku-ring-gai Citizen of the Year for 60 years of volunteer work for Girl Guides and the Ku-Ring-Gai Historical Society and for helping adventurer Dick Smith.

Diana Laufer, wife of former Committee member, David, has been elected to the position of President of the B'nai B'rith NSW, Inc.



Terry Newman, Kim Phillips, Peter Nash, Kathryn Michael, Rieke Nash and our Queensland representative, Vivien Solo.

RECENT SOCIETY EVENTS

George Rigal Fire Insurance Records At Guildhall Library

George Rigal, visiting Australia from England, introduced us to a fascinating set of records at an entertaining talk on Sunday evening 24th February - the insurance policy registers held at the Guildhall Library in London. George is a founding member and a former vice-president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain. During the past decade he has been indexing thousands of the policies taken out by Jews, interspersed with busy work on a number of other genealogical projects.

The registers span from the 1690s to the 1860s, a time period when the Jewish population of England increased from a few hundred families to over 40,000. The earliest Jews in England were mainly Sephardic traders from Amsterdam arriving after the 1660s, possibly importing the practice of insurance. Ashkenazim with smaller businesses became the majority during and after the first half of the 1700s. For the first century of the insurance records there are not many other record types available for genealogy. The Bevis Marks registers are probably the only records easily accessed. Registers of the Ashkanazi Synagogues of London begin in the 1790s, and commercial directories which began around the same time do not have many Jewish businesses until a few decades into the 1800s.

George estimates that about 10% of Jewish businesses took out insurance policies. Identifying family by names can be a problem. It was the period when Hebrew patronymic names using combinations of only about a dozen biblical names were being supplanted by fixed surnames for general civic use. In England, unlike parts of continental Europe, there was no legislation enforcing fixed surnames, so there are no lists of new surnames taken on in a specific year. An insurance policy is one record which can fill this gap. The policies include the holders' trade and address so individuals can often be cross-referenced with details from later address and details in the Synagogue registers, directories or censuses.

The earlier policies were for amounts of £500 or more, gradually reducing to £100 or £50 in later years, due to both the changes in types of trade being insured and the increasing popularity of insurance. Endorsements were submitted showing changes in address or policy holder. Through these Endorsements one can track a business being

passed to a widow, then following a re-marriage, to the second husband, and later to a child. Business and domestic items are listed in various categories on the policies depending on the risk of loss by fire.

Buildings were not insured by Jews until very late in the period. Until legislation in the mid-1800s Jewish-owned real estate passed to the crown on death, so could not be inherited, even if nominated in a will. Jews mainly lived in rented accommodation in London so this legislation had very little effect on most. George had an interesting anecdote, among the many which punctuated his talk, related to the property for the Bevis Marks Synagogue. It was purchased under the name of the youngest child in the congregation. I hope he lived a healthy and long life.

Insured goods and trades include a few items not known by the same name today. Slops were ready-made clothing. Toymakers were makers of cheap jewellery baubles. Marine merchants were traders in rag, bottle and scrap iron. We have retained that term in colloquial Australian slang for empty beer bottles, known as "dead marines". Upholders were upholsterers as George first suggested. His alternate suggestion that it was an early name for auctioneers, who held up items on sale, is not so. Some insured goods never hit the shores of England, being shipped between foreign ports. A number of jewellers and other tradesmen living in the port towns of England appear in policies as naval agents. Jewish dealers had an advantage in trading with foreign ships as they spoke a number of languages, and could exchange goods received for goods in kind, instead of money in a British currency which could cause difficulties for a seaman in foreign ports.

When the index is complete it will be lodged with JGSGB and placed online on their web site. In the meantime there are a few resources we can use from Australia. A description of the registers is online at www.history.ac.uk/gh/fire.htm

Volunteers have indexed the Sun Insurance registers from 1811 to 1835, which are online at www.a2a.org.uk and are included among other indexed records of London residents.

The *Horwood Map of London, 1799: Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster the Borough of Southwark, and parts adjoining showing every house*, published by Richard Horwood is an accurate survey of the extremities of metropolitan London. Commissioned by the Phoenix Company as a large-scale fire insurance plan, it comprises 32 sheets at a scale of 26 inches to a mile. The map identifies by street number every dwelling and commercial structure then standing. It is online at -

www.motco.com/map/81005/imageone-a-main.asp?Picno=81005000

Similar detailed plans were produced by insurance companies in Australia. The Sydney City Archives has Fire Insurance plans (1916-1940s) showing every building in the city area, block by block. They include notes about potentially inflammable material and their position in the building, and were constantly updated as the business activity changed at the address. For Melbourne, the Baillieu Library has similar plans on microfilm from the Sanborn insurance company. The Noel Butlin Archives of Business in Canberra holds records of a few insurance companies but it is not known if they include policy holders.

Talk reviewed by Gary Luke

Rabbi Raymond Apple Biography as a Key to Jewish History

On Thursday, 21 February 2008, a large group was privileged to have our member, Rabbi Raymond Apple, address our meeting at the Jewish Centre On Ageing in Bondi Junction, Sydney, with a most thought-provoking and enjoyable presentation.

Rabbi Apple retired from the Great Synagogue a few years ago and now spends most of his time in Israel where he enjoys his grandchildren and has been very productive, researching and writing.

His topic at our meeting, *Biography as a Key to Jewish History*, covered a number of interesting areas of importance to researchers.

Initially, he emphasized that a major part of biographical writings should include what human beings have done with their lives and not just be a description of their family trees. As well, it is not the role of the writer to be judgemental and critical of the subject of the biography but rather the task is to document as objectively as possible; neither whitewashing nor embellishing the story.

For a biography to have colour, drama and action, access to research papers, especially correspondence and personal papers is required, particularly if the subject is deceased. Rabbi was very concerned that with the current technology being used for communications, the research material for future biographies may no longer exist. He described the extensive use of correspondence that he used in his research into the lives of the important rabbis in England and Australia such as the Adlers, Berlin, Brodie, Danglow and A.B. Davis.

The worth of biographical writing to Jewish history

is to document the inter-relationships of a Jewish life covering the events within the Jewish community as well as those outside of the community. Of interest should be events that influenced the *fate*, history of the Jewish people, as well as the *faith*, Judaism.

Finally what makes a biography a Jewish one? He believes that there needs to have been a Jewish influence in the subject's life.

(See page 4 for Rabbi's short article on the famous Joseph Joachim).

BOOK REVIEW

THE GREAT SYNAGOGUE

A History of Sydney's Big Shule, By Rabbi Raymond Apple Published by University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2008. ISBN: 9780868409276.

This welcome addition to the Sydney Jewish community's historical record is a wonderful read. Each aspect of the Shule's 130 years has been described in a most readable and entertaining fashion.

Many members of the congregation have added to Rabbi Apple's scholarship with content covering the architecture, the historical background, the Rabbis, Ministers and Lay Leaders as well as describing the cultural and social activities of the congregation.

While the content of the book is detailed and extensive, it is the presentation of the book which is quite remarkable. A beautiful synagogue has been commemorated with a beautifully designed volume. The background to text uses a watermark technique that highlights images of the distinctive architectural and decorative features of the Shule in a most creative manner.

The photographs not only illustrate this historic Sydney building but also document the personnel and activities of the Shule community over the years.

A detailed index will help researchers find references to family members (including our editor whose father-in-law, Louis Shifreen, is listed).

Everyone who has ever had a connection with 'the Great' will find much to remind them of days past and others will enjoy the story of a community institution with all its triumphs and woes.

Mazel tov to Rabbi, to the current Great Synagogue administrator, Susan Bures, and to all the contributors and helpers for achieving this truly memorable documentation of a loved institution.

NEWS OF INDEXING PROJECTS

Indexing Lodz Ghetto Work Id Cards

We are engaged in indexing the Lodz Ghetto Work ID Cards that were created in January 1943. Everyone, from the youngest child to the elderly, needed to work to survive. These workers obtained Identification Work Cards.

Richard J. Astor, generously funded this significant project to honour the memory of his father, Alec Astor, who was born in Lodz in 1915, lived through the Holocaust and died in London 2006. The announcement and a photo of Alec Astor can also be viewed on the Lodz ShtetLinks website:

www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Lodz/index.htm

There are between 800 to 1200 frames on each of the 23 reels of microfilms. The majority of the films have already been indexed by Nolan Altman's dedicated team of data entry volunteers. We need more volunteers help us proofread the entries.

This involves reviewing the entries in a completed Excel file and checking them with the data listed on the images of the ID Cards. The images are accessible on-line on a site set up for this purpose.

You will need to have two windows open on your screen to compare the image with the entered data in Excel. You will also be provided with lists of German enterprises in the Lodz Ghetto, the German names of the streets with their abbreviations, a partial list of transport dates, and access to names of occupations in German.

These lists will help you decipher the sometimes hard to read data on the ID Cards. You may also have to switch some data from one column to another where it is misplaced. It is not as straightforward as entering data from already indexed vital records. Some of the cards are very legible and then the process of proofreading is fast and easy. Other times you will need to cross-check with the above-mentioned lists to be as accurate as possible. For example if only a few of the letters of an occupation are legible, one can often figure out what is written on the card by checking the list of occupations provided.

The results will become a searchable database in the Holocaust Database on JewishGen at www.jewishgen.org/databases/Holocaust.

With the ID number and/or worker name, researchers will be able to request a copy of the ID Card. It is important to note that not all the work passes of everyone who worked in the ghetto will be in this collection. Some cards were taken after the war or are missing for other unknown reasons,

and we assume some ghetto inhabitants continued to use the work passes they obtained before these were distributed in January 1943.

Please consider helping with this important project.

Roni Seibel Liebowitz
Lodz Archive Coordinator,
Jewish Records Indexing-Poland
roni19@optonline.net

News For Mir Researchers

The All Belarus Database has just been updated to include four Revision Lists (Reviska Skazka) for the town of Mir which was located in Novogrudok Uyezd, Minsk Gubernia. Though Mir was a small town with a small Jewish population, Mir was known throughout the Jewish world for its Yeshiva and the many famous Rabbis who learned there.

The Revision Lists were a type of census that was conducted in Czarist Russia in the 18th and 19th Century. They enumerated only those individuals subject to taxation. The data was also utilized for identifying men to draft into the army. There were 10 known major Reviska Skazka taken. The four Revision Lists that have been added to JewishGen's All Belarus Database are 1795, 1816, 1834 and 1858.

The 1795 Revision List was microfilmed by the LDS and is in the Polish Language. There are no surnames listed in the Revision List and therefore each head of household is identified by their patronymic. Surnames can be derived for many individuals by comparing the information (i.e. age, father's name, spouse name, and children's name) from the later Revision Lists.

The 1816 Revision list was also microfilmed by the LDS and was indexed several years ago and is now on the All Belarus Database today.

The 1834 and 1858 Revision Lists are available in the Minsk Archives.

A surname list from the Mir Revision lists has been compiled and can be found at [//uoregon.edu/~rkimble/Mirweb/SurnamesfromRecords.html](http://uoregon.edu/~rkimble/Mirweb/SurnamesfromRecords.html)

There are several other Revision Lists (i.e. 1806, 1811, and 1874) that are available but have not been indexed yet due to lack of funding.

Your monetary support is required to continue this indexing project. Donations can easily be made by going to the JewishGen-erosity - Belarus SIG Projects. Make your generous donation to the Mir Revision Lists and Metrical Records Project.

Hadassah Lipsius

WROCLAW (BRESLAU) JEWISH RECORDS

If your family was from Wroclaw, I have some important and exciting news to share with you about the Jewish vital records of Wroclaw, formerly Breslau.

I am creating a mailing list of those researchers with an interest in Wroclaw, so that I can provide you with detailed information about a new Wroclaw project and keep you up to date on the associated activities.

There is no obligation to be on this Wroclaw e-mail list. However, if you are interested, please send me your name and contact information. Thank you.

Stephen Falk, Wroclaw Town Leader JRI-Poland
sfalk81162@aol.com

VIENNA TURKISH (SEPHARDIC) COMMUNITY BIRTH REGISTER

I am very pleased to inform you that the Birth Register of the Vienna Turkish (Sephardic) Community has been completely indexed and is now online.

The data includes:

1. the register page & register row number
2. the birth dates
3. the newborn's surname and given names
4. the sex of the newborn
5. one child birth or twins
6. the surnames and given names of the fathers and the mothers
7. the date and place of birth of the mothers
8. the midwives' full names and the mohalim (circumcisers) full names.

There are 1440 newborns between 1832 and 1938, a total of nearly 4,750 persons. Many Sephardic surnames found in the Vienna Turkish Community had their origins in the Ottoman Empire territories, but especially in Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece. A part of the Community members were Ashkenazim. The searchable database is located at: www.sephardicgen.com/databases/viennaBirthsSrchFrm.html

Finally I would like to sincerely thank Dr. Jeffrey Malka who took on himself to scan the register for me from the Mormons microfilms. Once the indexing was finished, he created a search engine (thanks to Steve Morse's tools) and added this database to the others found on his own website: www.sephardicgen.com/databases/databases.html

Very soon the Marriage register of the Turkish Community of Vienna will be online.

Mathilde A. Tagger
tagger@actcom.co.il

AGM REPORT (continued from page 2)

Equipment

Presentations have been enhanced with the purchase of a data projector allowing speakers to illustrate their talks with PowerPoint presentations.

AJGen

The Society's discussion group, AJGen, continues to be a useful way for researchers, here and overseas, to get help with their Australian research. (See our website for details).

We wish to thank:-

Rabbi Paul Lewin, President Ken Wolfsohn and Maish Grauman of the North Shore Synagogue for their continued hospitality,
The Society Committee,
Greta James, Treasurer
Jeannette Tsoulos, Vice-President and Resource Librarian
Sunny Gold, Secretary and Minutes Secretary
Miriam Shifreen, Editor of Kosher Koala
Ken Lipworth, Kosher Koala Photo Editor
Peter Nash, Publicity and Programmes
Kim Phillips, Conference Convenor
Nigel Meinrath, Kym Morris and Annette Winter our representative to the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, *Paul Winter* and others who have supported us with our website, *Steve Traurig* and *Summit Internet*.

In particular, the meetings we have had at the Jewish Centre on Ageing at Bondi Junction have enabled those in the Eastern Suburbs to more easily attend some of our events and we thank the COA for their interest and support.

In October, 2008 our first National Conference is being planned and will take place in Canberra. The ACT Jewish Community has kindly offered to host the event and together with AJGS (Vic) we decided to at last stage it. With a number of enthusiastic volunteers, we are looking forward to expanding our knowledge, networking and generally enjoying our family research activities. We hope that many of you will be able to come. (See details on page 8).

Whether you are documenting your family for your grandchildren, replacing records of family lost in the Shoah, discovering unexpected relatives and artefacts or volunteering for projects, being involved in the search is uniquely satisfying.

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

Rieke Nash
President

USEFUL WEBSITES

National Archives of Australia

www.naa.gov.au

Requests for copies of records held by the National Archives of Australia in Canberra can be accessed through RecordSearch and ordered online for a cost of \$16.50 (under 100 pages) or \$38.50 (more than 100 pages). Images of the pages will be added to their website so that they can be viewed online and printed off when required.

German Gedenkbuch

www.bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch/directory.html

Even though the site is in German, it is still easy to search this database. Based on the original two volume listing of the 125,000 German Jews who died in the Shoah, the site now includes Jews from East Germany and Jewish Poles living in Germany who were deported and has approximately 160,000 victims. The information includes, where known, data and place of birth, street and town of residence, deportation date and destination and estimated date and place of death.

German Jewish Cemetery Database Project

www.jcdp.de

This is a database of Jewish cemeteries and their gravestones in Germany. To register on the login-page and for site security you need to provide your chosen User Name and Password. The website is moderated by Norbert Heyeckhaus and at present has 34 cemeteries with nearly 18,500 records. Amongst the more well-known towns are Koeln (Cologne), Wiesbaden and Frankfurt am Main, the latter with several cemeteries. The database is steadily growing.

Four languages can be chosen: English, French, German or Hebrew. Choosing English does not convert from the defaulting German entirely but it is enough to decipher all the given personal details, such as, dates of death, birth, maiden names, etc. It is always possible to email the moderator or the Jewish Community administrator for additional explanation or information.

Cemeteries are identified by an ID number, location, full address and contact details including email address. Also provided are a photo of the cemetery entrance, a location map, row layout and the website for the responsible administrative Jewish Community. Gravestones and their known details can be viewed by a click. This is a "work-in-progress" but can be of great benefit to German Jewish researchers.

Steve Morse's One-Step Site

www.stevemorse.org

It's always worthwhile checking out Steve Morse's site for new additions, such as a DNA section and even an ebay item.

Rootsweb Site

www.rootsweb.com

The RootsWeb site is worth a browse as it has an amazing collection of unusual sites even though many of the references have no Jewish content. The MetaSearch function includes the US Social Security Death Index (SSDI), FreeBMD for English records and some Australia - New Zealand sites. By browsing other databases and websites, maps and references specific to a subject area can be discovered. For example, there is an interesting reference www.rootsweb.com/~lvawgw/ for Latvia.

Litvak SIG

www.jewishgen.org/litvak.

Included in the extensive collection are the All Lithuania Database, Shtetls of Lithuania, online journals and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

Jewish Populations and Histories

[www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/jewpop.html)

[jewpop.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/jewpop.html) This is a quick lookup for statistics and information about countries where Jews are living.

FOR YOUR DIARY

70th Anniversary of the Australian Jewish Historical Society

On behalf of the committee and members of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Inc., in NSW, I would like to invite you, your committee and your members to the luncheon we are planning to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the inauguration of the Society in Sydney in 1938.

The luncheon will be held on Sunday, 7 September 2008 from 12.30 pm to 4 p.m. in the Israel Green Centre of the Great Synagogue, entrance via 166 Castlereagh Street. The lunch will be strictly kosher. Dress code lounge suits and day dresses.

Our main speaker and guest of honour will be Dr Anthony Joseph, President of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain, who will attend with his wife Helene.

We are not yet in a position to indicate the price of the luncheon, but we intend to keep it as reasonable as possible. We hope that a number of your members would be interested in attending.

Please publicize this event among your members.

Sophie Caplan, President

Australian Jewish Historical Society, Inc., NSW

**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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**The Editor:
P.O. Box 42 Lane Cove NSW 1595, Australia
or by email: ed@ajgs.org.au**

SYDNEY WORKSHOPS

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.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

New South Wales

Lorraine Emerson	Sandra Kay
Peter Lion	Ross Martin
Linda Rector	Gordon & Flora Rich
Chaim & Jan Shedlezki	Judith Spielman

United States

Todd Knowles

Annual Membership \$Aust 35.00
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IAJGS CONFERENCE DATES

2008 Chicago 17 - 22 August

The Chicago Marriott Downtown, the Magnificent
Mile Hotel, is the wonderful location of the 2008
conference. The room rate will be single and double
\$US199 (plus tax) and an additional person is
\$US30 (plus tax). For more details, visit
www.chicago2008.org and for information about
researching in Chicago look at
www.jewishgen.org/InfoFiles/Chicago

2009 Philadelphia 2 – 7 August

The Sheraton Philadelphia City Center Hotel will
be the venue for the 2009 IAJGS Conference
organised by the IAJGS and the JGS of Greater
Philadelphia.

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY DATABASE

Update of the Surnames being researched by our members

March, 2008

Id	Surname	Old name of Town	Current name of Town	Country	Dates
623	AARONS		LONDON	ENGLAND	1859-1909
615	BARNETT		SYDNEY	AUSTRALIA	1820s+
623	BAROLSKI	SKOPISHOK	SKAPISKIS	LITHUANIA	1827-1890s
627	BARUCH		GVUL MUSRARA	ISRAEL	
627	BARUCH		TEL AVIV	ISRAEL	Up to 1953
623	BENJAMIN		LONDON	ENGLAND	1860s-1908/9
623	BRIKMAN		AKNISTE	LATVIA	
623	BRIKMAN	ROKISHOK	ROKISKIS	LITHUANIA	
626	DAVIS		SYDNEY	AUSTRALIA	1900s
623	FELDMAN		LONDON	ENGLAND	1840s-1920
623	FELDMAN			AUSTRALIA	1882-1932
627	GORETSKI	GRODNO	HRODNA	BELARUS	Up to 1900
623	ISRAEL		LONDON	ENGLAND	1860s-1909
605	KARTON		VIEKSNIAI	LITHUANIA	
605	LEVY		SIAULIAI	LITHUANIA	1880-1900
631	LION		WILLICH	GERMANY	
623	POPLIAK	SUBAT	SUBATE	LATVIA	1820-1903
623	POPLYAK	DVINSK	DAUGAVPILS	LATVIA	1845-1886
627	REZNICK		BIALYSTOK	POLAND	Up to 1896
631	ROSENSTOCK		GLEICHERWIESEN	GERMANY	
631	ROSENTHAL		GLEICHERWIESEN	GERMANY	
631	SAMSON		AURACH	GERMANY	
623	WARTSKI		LONDON	ENGLAND	mid1800s-1913
623	ZEFFERT		LONDON	ENGLAND	mid1800s-1900

16th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SUNDAY AFTERNOON 16 March, 2008 at 2.30 p.m.

North Shore Synagogue, Treatts Road, Lindfield

**Our guest speaker, LIONEL SHARPE, will present
"A WISH LIST FOR AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGY"**

Lionel Sharpe began a serious interest in genealogy soon after the founding of a branch of the AJGS in 1995 in Victoria. He soon assumed the role of President, then Honorary Secretary, when the branch incorporated in 1998. He edits the Victorian Newsletter, 'Jewish Genealogy Downunder' and has attended a number of IAJGS conferences. He is one of a group of five AJGS members visiting the Red Cross International Tracing Service at Bad Arolsen, Germany, in May.

He is an Honorary Research Associate in the School of Historical Studies and co-ordinates the subject "Australian Jewry: History and Society" offered by the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation at Monash University. He retired as a senior lecturer in Social Work at RMIT in 1996 and continues his involvement in the inclusive education program offered at the Jewish day schools of Melbourne.
