



KOSHER KOALA

30th Anniversary Edition



First Jewish genealogical society launched

THE Australian Jewish Genealogical Society — believed to be the first of its kind in the country — will be launched in Sydney next month.

Ms Caplan expects the first Australian meeting on November 14 will attract people from all over the country. A Victorian Jewish genealogical society will also be set up later this year. The societies will be the first of their kind in Australia.

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Sunny Gold and Jeanette Tsoulos (NSW)



Robyn Dryen and Daniela Torsh (NSW)



Frank Atkinson, A.C.T. historian answered questions about the old Jewish Cemetery at Goulburn in N.S.W., during breaks at the Conference.



Kim Phillips, Roke Nean (Vic) and Lionel Sharpe (Vic)



Joe Satreen and Cecily Parms (NSW)



P.A. Sarah Vorstheimer and Michael Taub (NSW)



Sunny Gold and Miriam Shire



Terri Buch, Margot Schwab and Ewie Katz (Vic)

SPRING/ NOVEMBER 2021

AJGS

L'dor V'dor



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

THE AJGS AGM WAS HELD ON 31ST OCTOBER 2021

As I end my 1st year as President, I want to sincerely thank previous Presidents **Robyn Dryen**, **Jeannette Tsoulos** and **Sunny Gold** for their help and support over the past year. Every year has its challenges, and this year has been no exception. Covid and the Delta variant helped us to look for creative ways to connect with our members online.

Milestones:

- Subscribing to Zoom (a new word we all learnt) allowed us to have regular online meetings which could include members from outside Sydney and around the world.
- Paying Membership Fees and Donations by Credit Card and Direct Debit online.
- The Society's 2013 Accounting Package was no longer supported and was upgraded.
- The Society website needed updating to allow some new features to be added. This also gave us access to new AJGS email accounts.
- The Society's library books have been scanned and placed in a searchable file on the AJGS website. (A few without ISBN numbers still need to be added.)
- All *Kosher Koala* copies from the last 29 years are now searchable online. (KK 1st Edition was in September 1993)

This year IAJGS (International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies) awarded *Kosher Koala* the '**Outstanding Publication for 2021**'. Our congratulations to **Dani Haski** as the current editor of this publication for being honoured on a world stage, and also to all previous editors.



Kosher Koala editor Dani Haski with the IAJGS Award.

The Society initiated a monthly **Newsletter** which lists upcoming events and provides links to previous events that were recorded. The Newsletter also advises about upcoming conferences (mostly online till now) and provides other Society newsletters.

The following events were held during the year — some in person before lockdown and some online:

- in February **Peter Philippsohn** spoke about the Australian Jewish Historical Society AJHS website and the work being done to digitise Australian Jewish records of Deaths, Marriages and Military as well as preserving records from many Jewish organisations around Australia
- in March we held a morning tea at Lindfield to honour **Jeannette Tsoulos** and **Sunny Gold**. Both were made Life Members of the Society. *(a good turnout despite really bad weather)*
- in April **Dani Haski** presented 'Making the most of My Heritage' at Waverley Library
- in May and June several members came to Lindfield for the workshop *(although in May there was very bad weather, and it was Mother's Day)*
- in June **Dani Haski** presented 'Help me find my Jewish Ancestors' at Limmud Oz in Sydney
- in July **Robyn Dryen & Dani Haski** presented 'Fabulous Freebies' online
- in August **Sunny Gold, Peter Allen, Terry Newman** and **Dianne Johnstone** were invited to 'Come and Tell Your Stories' online, and
- in October **Debra Brunner** presented The Together Plan, live from London.

Several of these presentations are available for viewing on the [AJGS website](#).

The Society has collected a lot of material over the past 30 years, and it was felt the Society should work to preserve its own history. With the help of the Australian Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) we had their President and Archivist evaluate what should be preserved.

AJHS has a collection of cassettes which contain lectures that had been held at the Society over many years. These lectures need to be preserved as the cassettes themselves are deteriorating. Some of them have now been digitised and will

soon be available on the AJGS website and linked through AJHS. We have permission from the people who gave these talks. It is wonderful to have these talks preserved and we have a list of all the cassettes that were found.

We were very sad to hear that our member **Loreen Stanhope OAM** died in June. She and husband John have been members of this Society since March 1993. We were so pleased that John and Loreen were able to attend the morning tea to honour Jeannette and Sunny.

In a couple of weeks, the Society will mark the occasion of the Society's 30th Anniversary online. Sydney is opening after several months of lockdown and COVID restrictions. We hope that we can have an in-person event early next year.

It has been an honour to serve as President this past year and I thank you for your patience and understanding as we travel a new road together through this pandemic and still manage to learn something new and have fun.

YOUR NEW COMMITTEE ELECTED 31ST OCTOBER 31, 2021

President: Barbara Simon



Treasurer: Dennis Levy
Vice President: Dani Haski



Secretary: Kym Morris
Committee: Elizabeth Suggit



Committee: Rob Schey
Committee: Gloria Allen



THE FUTURE OF AJGS

It is an honour to take up the position as President for a second year. Thank you to the incoming committee, I look forward to working with you. I want to welcome **Gloria Allen** to our committee and look forward to her contribution.

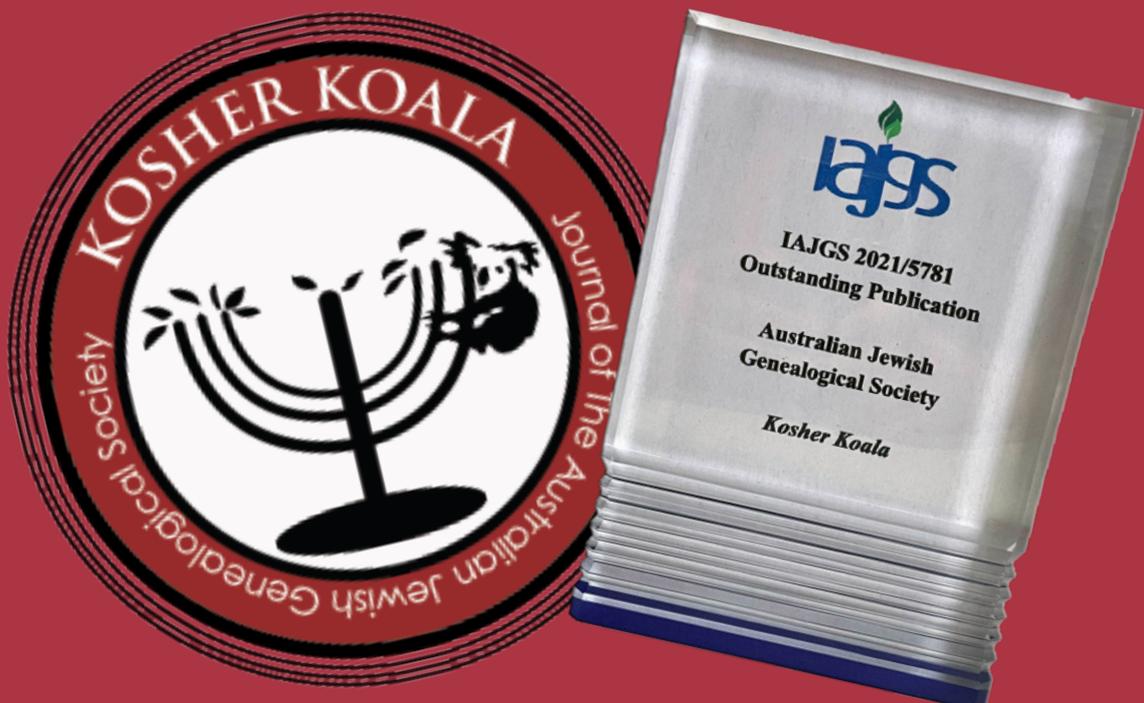
No society is defined by its committee. It is defined by its members and their involvement and participation. Without your engagement this Society cannot survive. Membership numbers have been decreasing over the past years.

We need your help in

- seeking new members
- looking for exciting speakers for next year
- developing/ revising country resources, with links and text, to assist people with their research
- seeking new locations to run workshops e.g. Limmud, other Jewish organisations
- producing the Newsletter each month — do you have a contribution about an event that we should share?
- publishing the quarterly *Kosher Koala*. What can you contribute?

I would like to challenge each one of you to help to make this Society a vibrant group that has fun and enjoys engaging with other likeminded people. Let us all play a part. We all have something to contribute. How can you help?

I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you again for giving me the honour of serving this Society.



FEATURES

A LOOK BACK - 30 YEARS OF AJGS

DANI HASKI

One afternoon, in the spring of 1991, a small group of people met to create a support group for others like them — people obsessed with researching their family histories. Sophie Caplan is often credited as the progenitor of this idea, and she was certainly an enthusiastic champion of it long before the group came to be. But like many good ideas, several other people had had the same thought and were searching for fellow travellers to share their journey.



Sophie Caplan & Rieke Nash were the engine room of the society.

Many of us remember Sophie as a force of nature, and the credit she receives for the establishment of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society is well deserved. But like all creation stories, there are several versions, and many people were involved in those early days, working alongside her to create our organisation, now celebrating its 30th year of incorporation. People such as Rieke Nash, Terry Newman, David Laufer, Nigel Meinrath, David Grosz and Gary Luke, just to name a few.

The establishment of the society was announced with great fanfare in the *Australian Jewish News* on 25th October, 1991. In 1992 AJGS advertised a 5-part seminar series, “How to research your family History”, in conjunction with the Great Synagogue, convened by Sophie, Gayle Hammer and Terry Newman. The society subsequently ran several iterations of this beginner’s course.

Australian Jewish News (Sydney, NSW : 1990 - 2008), Friday 25 October 1991, page 6

First Jewish genealogical society launched

THE Australian Jewish Genealogical Society — believed to be the first of its kind in the country — will be launched in Sydney next month.

The foundation committee meeting will be convened by historian Sophie Caplan.

A lecturer in Holocaust Studies

international Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies.

A Victorian Jewish genealogical society will also be set up later this year. “The societies will join, but will remain autonomous,” Ms Caplan said.

Aubrey Schwartz and Joe Stosser will convene the Mel-

Ms Caplan expects the inaugural meeting on November 4 to attract people who wish to research their family histories. The organisation will be open to non-Jews. “Of the pre-World War II Anglo or Celtic population in Australia, perhaps up to a third had Jewish ancestors,” she

of the first Australian Jews to take advantage of the extensive microfilm recordings lodged by the Mormons in Salt Lake City, Utah.

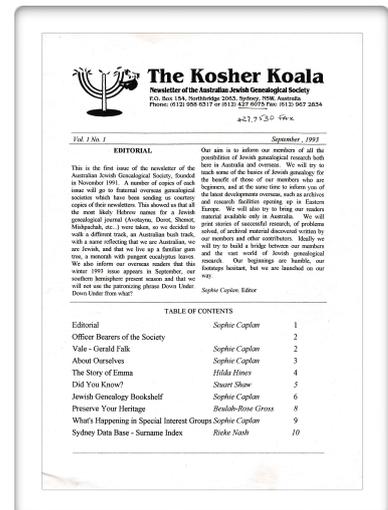
She has arranged for the North Shore Synagogue library to provide facilities.

Sydney, Terry Newman

The first AJGS AGM was held at North Shore Synagogue on the 14th of March 1993, at 7:30 pm, with 15 people present. Four people on that sign in sheet — David Laufer, John Stanhope, Peter Nash and Terry Newman — are still members to this day and one — David Grosz — recently re-joined the organisation after many years.

The first issue of *Kosher Koala* was published in November 1993. In describing the aims of the society, Sophie wrote:

The Australian Jewish Genealogical Society was founded for the pursuit of Jewish genealogy and Jewish family history research, and all our activities seek to further those aims. ... We welcome members who are not Jewish providing their interest derives from a personal motive such as research into a Jewish ancestor, or a genuine scholarly interest.



30 years later, AJGS continues to champion this mission.

In the inaugural *Kosher Koala* editorial Sophie explained the genesis of the journal's name:

...all the most likely Hebrew names for a Jewish genealogical journal (Avotaynu, Dorot, Shemot, Mishpachah, etc...) were taken, so we decided to walk a different track, an Australian bush track, with a name reflecting that we are Australian, we are Jewish, and that we live up a familiar gum tree, a menorah with pungent eucalyptus leaves.

And rather combatively informed her readers that:

...this winter 1993 issue appears in September, our southern hemisphere present season and we will not use the patronising phrase 'Down Under'. Down Under from what?

As mentioned, one of the early initiatives developed by the Society were beginner's seminars. These were jointly planned by Rieke Nash and David Laufer, with the day's educational activities led by Gael Hammer. David and Rieke

organised members and others, with skills in the various areas of genealogy, to pass on practical knowledge to less experienced researchers.

At the turn of the millennium, in 2000, Gary Luke established an online discussion group for Australian Jewish genealogists. The group was set up as a meeting place for Australian researchers to help each other with access to records in other states, allow exchange of hints about overseas archives, and assist overseas researchers with Australian connections. Initially established at a site called zeta.org.au, an ISP, the group eventually moved to the Yahoo Groups Platform. This service shut down late last year, but Gary has moved the forum to groups.io, so it's still running with a small but active group of participants.

In 2004, Life Member Kim Phillips was the driving force behind a CD-ROM database of burials in the old Jewish section of Rookwood Cemetery. She was ably assisted by Michael Taub, Gary Luke and Terry Newman. It took over a year to put together, building on more than three decades of work collecting details of each headstone. The CD contained photographs of every headstone, transcriptions of the epitaphs, translations of the Hebrew inscriptions, details from the Burial Registers where available and copies of newspaper death notices, if they could be found. The newspaper notices contained vast genealogical data including married names of daughters and location of family members. The CD also contains photographs of some headstones, taken in the 1960s, which proved invaluable as some of the stones had subsequently been replaced or destroyed altogether.

The section was mapped, and Synagogue records were cross-checked with known burials. This helped locate some 600 burials where no headstones have been erected. In many cases, current family were unaware of where these relatives' remains lay.

Of course, this resource has now been superseded by the AJHS Burials database, which incorporated information and



From top: Gary Luke, Kim Phillips, The CD Rom Team: Michael Taub, Gary Luke, Kim Phillips & Terry Newman; a shattered matzevah.

photographs from this valuable CD into its dataset, and Trove, where personal notices such as death notices can be found. However, the work done by Kim and other members of the AJGS family produced an extremely valuable resource for many researchers. We still hold copies of the CD in our resources archive.

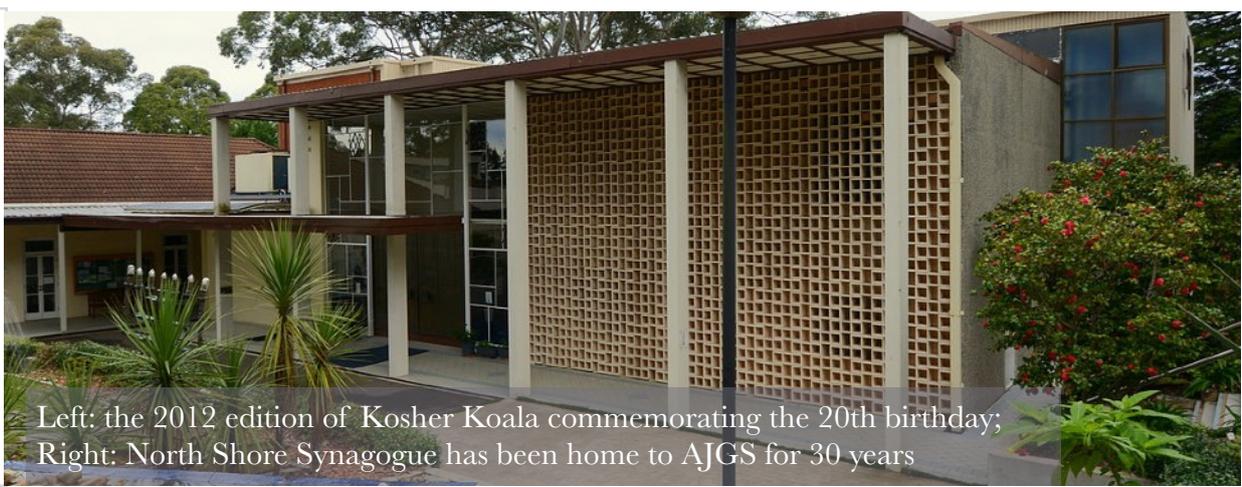
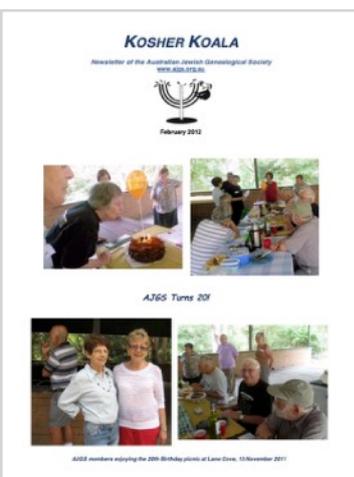
Also in 2004, on 13th November, AJGS held an imaginative event to celebrate the 13th birthday of its establishment... a Bar mitzvah!!

As reported in *Kosher Koala*:

... With over sixty members and friends attending this event at the North Shore Synagogue we celebrated the thirteen years since foundation in fine style. About eighteen people were experiencing their first orthodox Shabbat service and reported that they had enjoyed and appreciated this opportunity. Members of our past and current committees participated in the service with an impressive Haftorah from David Landor. Other founding committee members, Terry Newman and David Laufer, past committee member Philip Baynash and members of our current committee, Steve Traurig, Ken Lipworth and Peter Nash were called up.

On 13th November 2011, AJGS celebrated its 20th Anniversary with a picnic at Lane Cove National Park. Pictures of the day adorned the front cover of the following issue of *Kosher Koala* and many members who had been with the society since its inception were present.

Sadly, as we celebrate our 30th Anniversary, founders such as Sophie and Rieke are no longer with us, but they live on in our memories. And just as their familial descendants carry their biological genes, their society descendants, those of us gifted with their experience, knowledge and generosity, carry on the work they started to maintain and develop AJGS, so it is fit for another 30 years of helping members discover and research their Australian Jewish heritage.



Left: the 2012 edition of Kosher Koala commemorating the 20th birthday;
Right: North Shore Synagogue has been home to AJGS for 30 years

REFLECTIONS & RECOLLECTIONS

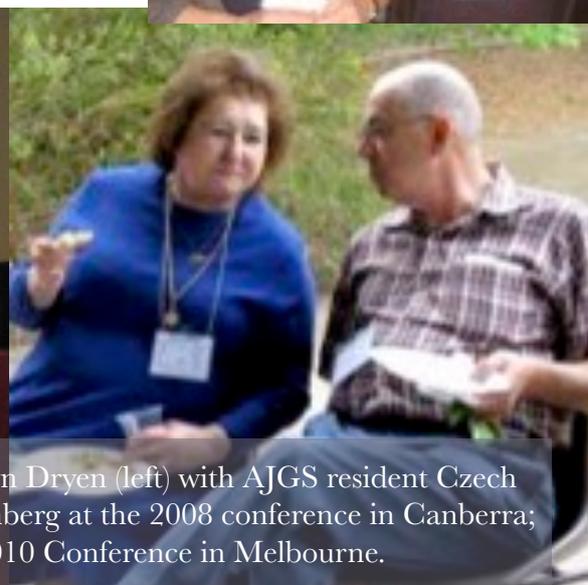
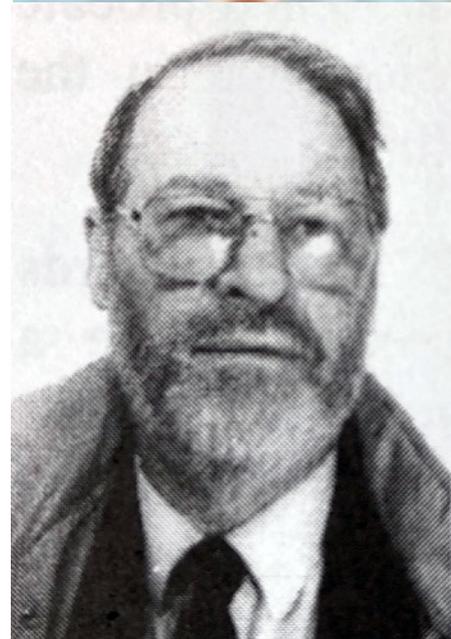
Terry Lyons, Townsville, QLD – Member since 1991

As someone who joined the Society in 1991, when I had just discovered my Jewish ancestry, I have always found the Society, especially Sophie Caplan, most encouraging and supportive. It gave me a reference group to send my little work on my Jewish ancestors to.

Dr Anthony Joseph – London, UK – Member since 1992

My interest in genealogy commenced when I was about ten after seeing a history book about English Royalty and with a frontispiece of a family tree from Hengist and Horsa to the then Monarch (George V1). I was immediately “hooked” and asked my dad about OUR family tree. He was astonished and said, “Royalty is one thing but we are immigrant Jews and there is nothing”! I vowed to prove him wrong... For the record my personal family tree has about twenty thousand names on it and can be taken back to the mid 17th Century through one strand of gentile ancestry. My predominantly Ashkenazi Anglo-Jewish forebears can be traced on some sides back to the late 17th century which is quite unusual.

When I came to work in Australia as a young doctor in 1963, I joined the Australian Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) and I am still a member. I have contributed several items of genealogical “colour” to their Journal and so of course when the AJGS was created naturally I wanted to join it!



Clockwise from top: Terry Lyons; Dr Anthony Joseph; past president Robyn Dryen (left) with AJGS resident Czech expert Daniela Torsh (right); Sophie Caplan lunching with Vernon Cronenberg at the 2008 conference in Canberra; Schelly Talalay Dardashti & Sally Ann Sack with with Gary Luke at the 2010 Conference in Melbourne.



Dr Anthony Joseph continued...

Of course, the Internet and digitising resources has transformed how genealogy is done through official sources and in many other ways but basic principles of speaking to people for their memories etc. are still relevant. So too private documents of pictures etc. Also visiting sites such as cemeteries may reveal the odd nugget that has been overlooked. Re-checking sources and not taking someone else's work as "gospel" that can never be wrong is an appropriate attitude to adopt.



Miriam Pollak, Werribee, VIC – Member since 1995

The AJGS has given me much pleasure and support over the years. I've been able to inform members of my continued work at Plashet Cemetery in London, and members have been able to write to me asking questions, which I hope I've been able to answer. I now know that I am not alone in my fascination about the past, especially our Jewish past.



Sunny Gold, Sydney NSW – Member since 1995

I have been an enthusiastic member of the AJGS since 1995. At a workshop around November, 1999, I made a very enlightening discovery, when I picked up two books, entitled *The Scattered Seed*.

Their author happened to be a distant cousin of mine, George Sackheim, who lived in Illinois, USA. Leafing through them, I came across the name, Lazar Kaganovich, who was recorded in history, as having been one of Stalin's henchmen. It was under Stalin, that Kaganovich was known to have been heavily involved in the persecution of the Russian peasants, in the early 19th Century.

I already knew that the birth name of my maternal grandmother was also Kaganovich, but I was unaware of her connection to Lazar.



From top: Dani Haski helps her cousin Francene explore their shared family tree; Miriam Pollak; past presidents Jeannette Tsoulos (left) & Sunny Gold (right); Peter Nash.

I wrote to George and here was his reply:

Dear Cousin, your grandmother was Sarah and her father's name was Mordechai Cohen. He was a brother to Lazar Kaganovich's father, Meshulam Zalman Cohen. Meshulam changed the name to Kaganovich.

Thus, this information proved that my grandmother was a first cousin to Lazar. Little did I know about this relationship to the infamous villain, Lazar Kaganovich.

Peter Nash, Sydney NSW, member since 1995

AMONG my father's documents I found a scrap of paper on which he wrote two names and some details (in German):

Nathan Nacheinstein; brother of grandfather.
born in Lessen around 1846; 2-3 sons, 1 daughter; New York.

Anny Lay; maiden name Julius; daughter of grandfather's sister, father's cousin; from Osterode, East Prussia.
Chicago (transportation business 20 years ago).

I guessed the note was written around 1946 when we were in Shanghai, because on the back of it was our Shanghai address in my youthful handwriting. Although my father could not remember the note or why he had written it, I believe he was thinking of possible sponsors for immigration to the United States. The names were a tantalising genealogical discovery. I followed up on Nathan Nacheinstein first.

The Australian Jewish Genealogical Society acquired the *Jewish Genealogy Beginner's Guide*, which was orientated mainly to United States research. It gave contact details of the US National Archives in New York, so I requested information on the naturalisation of Nathan Nacheinstein. Their prompt reply enclosed a copy of a Naturalisation Index Card spelling Nathan's surname as Nacheinstein, not Nacheinstein. His arrival in the United States was August 1869, naturalisation 9 May 1890 and he lived at 294 Cherry Street in Manhattan, New York. His occupation was junk man- the family birthmark! I had found my great-grandfather's brother and was overjoyed!

Extract from Peter's memoir Escape From Berlin (Impact Press, 2017)

Dianne Johnstone has been an AJGS member since 2002.

The Post Adoption Resource Centre (PARC) was established by Australia's oldest charity, The Benevolent Society, to provide information, advice, support and counselling to adopted people, birth parents and adoptive parents.

The year 1991 proved to be a significant year in my life.

In 1990, the NSW Adoption Information Act was passed, enabling adopted children and their birth parents to make contact if they so wished.



Dianne at 12 weeks old with Adoptive parents, Valerie and Leslie Johnstone

I didn't confirm I was adopted until I was almost 50 years old. My parents never told me, even though all the family knew. From an early age, I asked questions about the family and my place in it, but these questions were either not fully answered or not answered at all. I had a distinct feeling that I was different, but I couldn't actually verbalise it.

As the years went by, thoughts of adoption continued to cross my mind. Regardless, I had a very happy childhood, with a loving and supportive family. So I stopped asking difficult questions as I thought it might hurt my mum and dad.

Mum passed away in 1986 and Dad survived her until 1998. In the same year, just two months before Dad passed away, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I came through treatment successfully and was with my father in his last days. He was relieved to know that I was OK. But if he had a secret about me, he didn't divulge it.

With Mum and Dad gone, those questions about my origins started to surface again, so I decided to find out once and for all if I had actually been adopted. The answer could no longer upset my parents.

In 1999, I sought the assistance of The Benevolent Society and the Post Adoption Resource Centre. The answers to all my questions came in a large brown envelope: Yes, I had been adopted when I was six weeks old. I was also sent my birth mother's name. She was alive and well, and lived on the Central Coast.

The Benevolent Society and PARC played a huge role navigating this uncharted territory of my origins. They gave me wonderful support and understanding,

helping me to cope with this discovery, which had come quite late in my life: I was by now 55 years old!

A counsellor assisted me in writing my first letter to my birth mother. Now the next question was would she want to see me? The answer was yes, absolutely!

There followed a wonderful reconciliation. I found a whole new family, which continues to grow as I trace more relations through the remarkable tool of DNA.

The other reason 1991 was significant is because it was the year the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (AJGS) was established. Why was this a turning point in my life? Well, my birth mother revealed that her mother's maternal family were Jewish. This meant that I was Jewish. So not only had I found my birth family but I discovered I had a Jewish heritage as well.

In 2002, I was introduced to AJGS stalwarts Rieke Nash and David Laufer, and became a member of the society. Over the last 20 years, I have had help and support in tracing my Jewish family and their heritage all the way back to the 1830s.

I have learnt about Jewish beliefs and customs, and have been deeply touched by invitations to participate in religious festivals during the year. Most importantly, I have experienced wonderful support and encouragement from society members, each of whom is continuing the search into their own family histories. I have made firm friends for life.

So this month, November 2021, celebrates the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of two important institutions: the Post Adoption Resource Centre and AJGS. Both celebrations give me cause to reflect on the past thirty years, and I am so very thankful for the enormous contribution each has made to my life.



Dianne (centre) with Jeannette (left) and Rieke (right)
at the 2008 AJGS Conference.

NEWS & VIEWS

AJGS & AJHS JOURNAL ON TROVE



Back issues of *Kosher Koala* have been keyword searchable on the AJGS website for a while, but now you can browse past editions on Trove as well! AJGS has uploaded almost all back issues to the National e-deposit scheme.

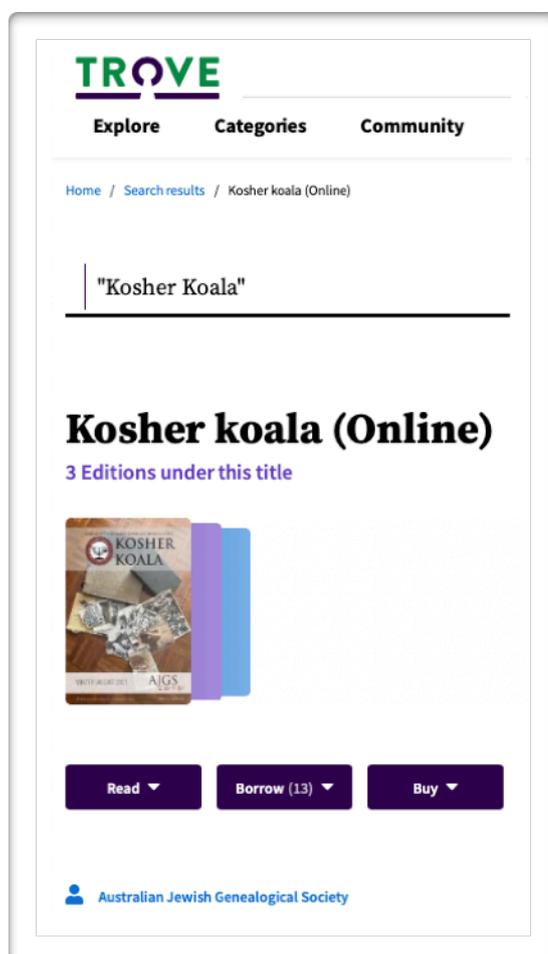
To access *Kosher Koala* on Trove:

- Search "*Kosher Koala*" (with inverted commas) in the main search bar
- Scroll down the Category results to *Books & Libraries*
- Select *Kosher Koala (Online)*
- Select the *READ* tab
- Click on *National edeposit*

A browse window will display up to 20 editions at a time. Unfortunately, there is no way to search or sort them at this stage but don't forget all issues remain keyword searchable on our website.

Individual *Australian Jewish Historical Society (AJHS) Journal* articles can also be accessed via Trove, after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Library of Australia (NLA). This functionality is the culmination of months of technical work between Anthony Perl and his team at CommTogether and the staff of Trove. So now, when you search Trove, articles with relevant content from AJHS Journals will appear in the *Books and Libraries* category, with a direct link to the article on the AJHS website.

[Click HERE](#) to view a demonstration of how it works.



MY HERITAGE ENHANCES THEIR FRENCH CONNECTIONS



In August MyHeritage announced it was acquiring [Filae.com](#), a major French genealogy site. Founded in 1994, the company was previously known as [NotreFamille.com](#) and then [Genealogie.com](#). It was rebranded as [Filae.com](#) in 2016. In October, MyHeritage added 463M historical records from 5 French collections: birth, marriage, death, and two censuses.

These collections provide comprehensive coverage of vital records from France in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries and the offering includes an index of the transcribed records and digital images of the original documents.

They subsequently added another 22 million census, military, and burial records, that cover centuries of French history. These include an index of enlistment and conscription of soldiers in the French department of Nord from 1865 to 1932 and an index of French prisoners of war captured by German forces during WWII; a compendium of census records from the departments of Hérault in the Occitanie region of Southern France from 1836 to 1936 and Côtes-d'Armor from 1872 to 1906; and an index of individuals buried in Paris from 1804 and 1968 with images

You can read more and access the individual collections from the [MyHeritage Blog](#).

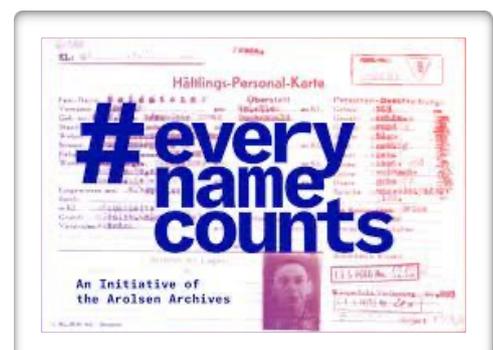
AROLSEN ADDS HALF A MILLION NAMES



Arolsen Archives has added another 500,000 names to their database. The names were collated and digitised by a dedicated group of volunteers from around the world taking part in the [#everynamecounts](#) crowdsourcing initiative.

In a press release, Arolsen Archives describes the process:

The volunteers process documents ... on an internet platform so they can be searched for references to specific names, places of residence, places of detention, or other details. The documents they have been working on include questionnaires that prisoners had to answer upon arrival at a concentration camp.



With this latest update, the Archives provide online access to 28 million documents about the victims and survivors of Nazi persecution. Arolsen Archives aim to put most of their collections online by 2025.

Floriane Azoulay (pictured below), the Director of the Arolsen Archives praised the volunteer effort, saying:



The hard work that our volunteers have put into #everynamecounts is now visible in our online archive for all to see... Thanks to their help, the world's largest digital memorial to victims of Nazi persecution is growing larger every day.

Arolsen Archives also published the final part of their online [e-Guide](#), an important tool to contextualise the documents in their collection.

MH EXTRACTS ALMOST 1 BILLION NAMES FROM NEWSPAPERS



MyHeritage has created an indexed collection using machine learning to extract just short of a billion names from US and Canadian newspapers. In a blog post on their effort MH describes this new collection:

Records in the index include a person's name, a snippet of text mentioning them in the newspaper, and the newspaper's publication title, date, and place of publication. Each record includes a scanned image of the original newspaper article. Some records will also include additional searchable information such as the name of a spouse and the place of residence based on the information extracted by the machine learning algorithms.

The names were extracted from U.S. and Canadian newspaper collections already hosted on MyHeritage. The text is generated from the scanned images using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology, which converts images into text. However, as with Trove here in Australia, quite often contextual data is overlooked when searching OCR text.

Newspaper Name Index, USA and Canada

1,057,276,078 records

This collection is a structured name index extracted from existing free-text U.S. and Canadian newspaper collections on MyHeritage. Records will typically include a person's name, a snippet of text mentioning them in the newspaper, the newspaper publication title, date, and place of publication. Some records will also include additional searchable information such as the name of a spouse and the place of residence. Year range and place coverage in this collection vary greatly. ⓘ



As MyHeritage explains, using the old process:

If you were looking for an ancestor with the first name of William, it would not have found newspaper articles where your ancestor was mentioned as Bill or Willie. And it would have returned irrelevant articles about people with the surname William.

Using this AI enhanced extraction process, the new name index is a *structured collection*, which fully supports synonyms in searches, and can differentiate between first and last names. The index even includes relationships between people, and addresses, if these could be extracted.

For example, a newspaper article mentioning “William and Roberta Miller” contributes to the structured index records for both William Miller and Roberta Miller, who are assumed to be spouses, and can be matched automatically to family trees using MyHeritage’s Record Matching technology.

The Newspaper Name Index employs Global Name Translation™ ... that automatically translates names between languages. This means searching for names in a foreign alphabet such as Hebrew or Cyrillic will return search results from newspapers in English.

So far only half the newspapers currently hosted by MyHeritage have been indexed in this way. The other half of the collection is currently being analysed, so another one billion records will be added to the index very soon.

For more information on this index visit the [MyHeritage Blog](#)

FAMILYSEARCH ANNOUNCES MICROFILM MILESTONE



FamilySearch is without doubt one of the greatest genealogical resources available for researchers with European or American heritage. FamilySearch began microfilming records in 1938, as the Genealogical Society of Utah. Until 2017, copies of major collections on microfilm were accessible through FamilySearch Family History Centres almost anywhere in the world.

Now, in a milestone described as “83 years in the making” FamilySearch has announced that its entire collection of microfilm, containing 11.5 billion individual records, has been fully digitised. Many of the records are now available, for free, via the FamilySearch website, although some still have access limitations, governed by contractual agreements or other restraints.

In an extensive media release, FamilySearch International CEO Steve Rockwood said:

"We hope that all those who contributed to this milestone in the last 80 years feel a sense of humble accomplishment today, ... And we hope the millions of individuals who will discover, gather, and connect generation upon generation of their family members for years to come because of these efforts will have a deep sense of gratitude for the many unheralded contributors who made those discoveries possible."

Over 200 localities and more than 100 languages are represented in the digitised documents and FamilySearch continues to digitise records around the world through its own digital operations and strategic partnerships. The next project is to begin digitising the 335,000 microfiches in its collections.

The complete announcement can be found at [the FamilySearch website](#).

NLI PURCHASES RARE HUNGARIAN REGISTERS



Rare and genealogically significant artefacts occasionally surface at auction houses around the world. In September, *Times of Israel* reported on the withdrawal from sale of seven rare ledgers containing communal vital records from six communities decimated by the Holocaust, in a region that is now part of Hungary. In a win for genealogists who have roots in this area, the books were jointly purchased by the Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives (HJMA) and the National Library of Israel (NLI).

The ToI report states:

Among the documents are thousands of birth, death, marriage and other communal records from six different Jewish communities, many of them from the Holocaust era, which have not yet been digitised.

The ledgers hold information such as marriage records from the city of Miskolc going back to the 1850s and burial society logs from the town of Satoraljaujhely dated between 1942 and 1946. At the turn of the 20th century, almost one third of the 4,500 Satoraljaujhely residents were Jewish.

Auctions of important pre-holocaust communal records such as this are causing controversy in Israel and around the world:

...activists say the records contain priceless historic information and should be safeguarded in public institutions. Private collectors often maintain that they are saving the manuscripts from destruction or obscurity, and auction houses have claimed that by drawing attention to such materials, they are alerting owners of the documents to the monetary value these documents possess, thus saving them from possibly being mishandled or discarded altogether.

Dr. Yoel Finkelman, curator of the NLI's Haim and Hanna Solomon Judaica Collection, told *Times of Israel*:

There has been a very significant shift over the course of the last year regarding the treatment of Central and East European Jewish heritage documents. There's been a good and valuable call by genealogists and activists to get these materials to the public eye, and there has been an unfortunate trend toward doing so by force... Some people saw this as a victory because you are taking material out of the hands of private collectors... But the unintended consequence is that a lot of this material that's in private hands, once there's a fear of seizure, it's going to go underground and will never be seen again. We would be missing genealogical information and historical documents that can teach us about the functioning of local Jewish communities and their interactions with local non-Jewish authorities...

The Hungarian ledgers will be kept at the NLI in Jerusalem and in future may also be exhibited at the HJMA, located in Budapest's Dohany Street Synagogue complex.

AN ALTERNATIVE USE FOR QR CODES



Covid check-ins revived the humble QR code from obscurity and finally trained all of us to scan them with our phones. In Austria, QR codes are now being put to a novel use to help visitors translate Hebrew tombstone inscriptions and learn more about the people interred in two old Jewish cemeteries.

Jewish Heritage Europe has reported on a program in Eisenstadt, Austria, where Johannes Reiss, Director of the Austrian Jewish Museum, has painstakingly attached stickers with QR codes to every matzevah in the city's two Jewish cemeteries, enabling anyone with a mobile phone to connect with an online database and access a translation of the epitaph. QR Codes have also been attached to several medieval matzevot located in a special section of the Jewish cemetery in nearby Wiener Neustadt.

Reiss presented his work at the 2019 IAJGS conference. His presentation, titled *Help, I don't speak Hebrew... ..Yet I Need Hebrew Sources for My Genealogical Research* is available to read (in English) on the Austrian Jewish Museum website.

In his presentation Reiss explains that:

Eisenstadt was the centre of the so-called “Seven Communities”, - in Hebrew “Sheva Kehillot” - in other words, seven holy Jewish communities in what at the time was western Hungary, today it is part of Burgenland in Austria. ... The communities were settled at the end of the 17th century. ...



Top row: L to R: A QR Code fixed to a grave; a man scans a QR code, grave of Gottlieb Fischer who died in 1895, in the younger cemetery; grave of Naftali Hirz ben Abraham ha-Levi Kamen, who died 23rd Tammuz 439 (3rd July 1679), in the older cemetery; Museum director Johannes Reiss.
Bottom row: the two cemeteries in Eisenstadt; The older on the left, the Younger on the right.

Today in Burgenland there are no more Jewish communities and only a dozen Jews. In the 14 Jewish cemeteries in Burgenland there are about 8,000 gravestones, all of which (practically without exception) have Hebrew gravestone inscriptions. ... The oldest gravestone goes back to the year 1679. The cemetery was used until the summer of 1875. The younger Jewish cemetery was established in fall of 1875 ... and was used until 1938.

The older Jewish cemetery of Eisenstadt, ... has 1085 gravestones with exclusively Hebrew inscriptions. ... Both Jewish cemeteries have been comprehensively documented, digitalised and placed online in the blog of the Austrian Jewish Museum ... The following things can now be consulted: a photo of each gravestone, the map of the cemetery, the script of the gravestone inscription, painstakingly transcribed in line-by-line registers, the translation and commentaries of the Hebrew inscription, genealogical data and links to the graves of relatives buried in these two cemeteries. For all interested parties, ... there is a QR-Code on every grave in both cemeteries which leads to the URL of the gravestone, including photo, inscription, links to relatives and a map of the cemetery.

FAMILY FOUND

*John Minkes is a trustee of the Jewish Genealogical Society of South Wales. His article appealing for help featured in the Spring 2009 issue of *Kosher Koala*.*

I'd like to thank *Kosher Koala* for helping me to find my long-lost cousins.

It took a while after my appeal was published in 2019 but I was contacted by my cousin David Freeman whose granddaughter Tash had seen it. David grew up in London and remembered visiting his grandmother in Pontycymmer but had lost touch with the Clompus family. It turns out that only one of the Free(d)man brothers emigrated while the other remained in London, so I am now looking forward to connecting with my London cousins as well as Tash, who plans to visit the UK in 2022. Thank you again for helping me fill the gap in my family tree.

SLEDGEHAMMER

ONE DOOR OPENS; ANOTHER IS LEFT AJAR

HILARY MAY BLACK

Hilary May Black joined AJGS in 2020, although she has been actively researching her family history for several years.

My maternal great-grandparents Adolphe Grunstein and Debora Mendelovici were married at the East London Synagogue (now merged into Hackney & East London Synagogue) on 25 September 1902. I knew both came from Romania but I was particularly keen to find information which would confirm their birthplaces so I could try to find their birth certificates.



Adolph & Debora Grunstein

The all-important “hometown”



Vintage Postcard: Iasi Romania

Family stories suggested that my great-grandfather had probably come from Yassy (Iasi) in Eastern Romania, part of the historical region of Moldavia. In 1901, prior to his marriage, a postcard he wrote to an aunt in Bârlad, Romania, some 120 kms to the south, also suggested a connection with that town. His was a marriage arranged through family “back home”. Was it possible Debora was known to

Adolphe through shared family in Bârlad?

I already “knew” from their civil marriage registration that Debora’s father was “Eleazer”, deceased at the time of the marriage in 1902. Adolphe’s father, “Aaron Moses”, a musician, had also died by that time.

I applied to the United Synagogues of the United Kingdom for their Marriage Authorisation. I was delighted when it arrived by email just a few days later.

The Authorisation certificate provided a wealth of information and a valuable confirmation of other sources, the “gold-standard” for an accurate family history.

No. 423
Date of Application Sept. 24 1902
Date of Marriage (אב תרס"ב) 5662
Sept. 25 1902
התן אדולף גרונשטיין
Address 51 Elgin Avenue, Manchester
Native of Yassy Certificate "A. E."
Married before? No Related to Bride? No
Brothers (if any) יהודה
Will attend Wedding לא
כלה דבורה מנדלוביץ
Address Anabon
Native of Babel (Rumani) Certificate "A"
Synagogue A. E.
Place of Celebration
Hour
Name of Celebrant
* Special Remark
Signature

Marriage Authorisation for Adolph Grunstein and Deborah Mendelovitch

I was interested to see my great-grandmother listed as Deborah Mendelovitch (a variation of her surname I had seen in documents related to other potential family members). In Hebrew she is, as can be expected, “Dvora”, daughter of Eliezer “from the Women’s House” (confirming that her father had died at the time of the wedding). If her father had been living it would have stated (in Hebrew) “from her Father’s House”.

Most importantly, for the purposes of my search, she is listed as a “Native of”, none other than Bârlad, (the English handwriting is as difficult to decipher as the Hebrew script!) This helpfully opened up the possibility of finding her birth certificate and more information about her origins there.

Adolphe’s Hebrew name. Avraham, son of Aharon Moshe, provided another potential avenue for searches, along with the confirmation that he was from “Yassy” (Iasi), which enhanced the possibility of finding his birth certificate.

A brother is identified as Yehuda who “would not be attending the wedding”. This corresponds to Adolphe’s older brother Isidore (Idel), and adds to earlier research that suggested Isidore arrived in England (with his wife and child) after 1902.

If this family had gone to the United States, instead of the United Kingdom, we would now turn to the vast trove of available shipping and arrival documents to try to identify their dates of arrival and family origins but, unfortunately, shipping documents for immigrants travelling to the UK from European ports at the relevant time have, with some exceptions, been lost. UK Naturalisation Records, available through the UK Archives (and Ancestry) are a potential avenue. However, my great-grandparents, like many other immigrants at the time, do not appear to have applied for British citizenship.

The missing brother and an ancient obligation

But why the inclusion of details relating to the Groom's brother? This was for the purposes of Yibbum.

Here we will turn to the explanation about the tradition of this obligation provided by Louise Messik and Jeremy Rosen in their notes to the Marriage Authorisation provided by the United Synagogues:

Traditionally if a man dies without children, it is the obligation of his eldest unmarried brother to marry the widow. The brother and widow may relinquish these responsibilities by going through a form of divorce called Chalitzah. Therefore, brothers need to be identified. Yibbum has been banned in Ashkenazi communities for a thousand years, but it was practised in Sephardi communities until they moved to Israel in 1948. Sometimes it is recorded if they are unavailable or likely to refuse to do their duty, if necessary, in which cases such phrases as “not present” ...or not amenable...might be used.

The “wrong” brother

Buoyed by the success of this find, I applied, again to the United Synagogues, for the Marriage Authorisation for my paternal great-grandparents, Jacob May and Elizabeth Coster, who married in Nottingham Synagogue on 26 May 1891. Although Jacob lived in Leicester, the young couple married, as was tradition, in the bride's adopted hometown of Nottingham.

As I expected from his UK Naturalisation documents Jacob, born in Russian Congress Poland in 1864, is identified in the Authorisation as the previously unmarried, Yaacov, son of Samuel (Shmuel). The bride, Elizabeth Coster, is the daughter of Chaim. This is confirmed by her (English) birth certificate and other family records, to be Hyman Coster (Dutch Cigar Maker and father of 9). Her Hebrew name is “Baiyla”, a poignant find for

No. 331
Date of Application 12th May 1891.
Date of Marriage { 26th May 1891.
Date of Marriage { 26th May 1891.
התן ... } הרב יצחק בן שלום
Name of Celebrant { Jacob May
Address _____
Native of Russia Certificate? Yes
Married before? No Related to Bride? _____
Brothers (if any) אם יבואו הרים
Reside in _____
כלה ... } התפוסת בתו של חיים ק"ג
Name of Celebrant { Elizabeth Coster
Address _____
Native of _____ Certificate? _____
Married before? No
Synagogue Nottingham
Place of Celebration ditto
Hour _____
Name of Celebrant _____
* Special Remark _____
Signature _____

Marriage Authorisation for Jacob May and Elizabeth Coster

me as my Hebrew name, after her, is Baiyla Chai. But, what of the obligated brother of the groom?

Where is David and who is Tzvi Hirsch?

This is where things get interesting. We “know” from multiple family records that Jacob had one, younger, brother David (Dawid) also born in Russian Congress Poland, in 1869.

He first “appears” in 1897 in Jacob’s adopted hometown of Leicester under the name “Davis May”, at the time of his marriage to Annie Simons at the Leicester Synagogue. He appears again in Leicester, with Annie and two small children in the UK Census of 1901.



Jacob & Elizabeth May

Jacob, by way of contrast, is found as the sole occupant of 3 Grafton Street, Leicester in the UK Census of 1891. That Census was taken throughout the UK on the night of 5 April 1891, just weeks prior to Jacob and Elizabeth’s wedding. But no record of David in Leicester, or indeed, any other town in England at the time.

I should add at this point that both brothers were tailors. Circumstances suggest that Jacob went to Leicester in response to an initiative by the leadership of the British Jewish community to encourage Russo-Polish Jews fleeing persecution in Eastern Europe to move to provincial areas such as Leicester to relieve the growing congestion caused by their influx into the East End of London. A large firm of tailors in Leicester, with the support of the local Jewish congregation, welcomed experienced Jewish tailors to settle there. It’s very possible that Jacob, having settled in and married a “local” girl, encouraged David to join him.

But back to the marriage authorisation. What is said in response to the question of Jacob’s brother? Now that you know all about Jacob and David, no doubt you’re expecting, as I did, to find David either present or, if he had not as yet arrived in England at the time, recorded as “not attending the wedding”.

But, no. No David. We have, instead, listed as “the brother” one “Tzvi Hirsch”. As far as we know (but genealogy has a way of proving us wrong!) there is no such other “brother”.

Perhaps Tzvi is merely an over-zealous “best man” eager to please a “brotherless” groom? Could it be one of the bride’s brothers? Here, we have a choice of 36-year-old Benjamin or 17-year-old Henry (Tzvi Hirsch often being the Hebrew equivalent of Henry). However, the inclusion of the bride’s brothers wouldn’t have satisfied the obligation dictated by Yibbum, even if it were largely ceremonial by this time.

We may never know, but it does offer the opportunity for some interesting new searches. As they say, “one door opens” but, in this case, another “stays ajar”.



THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE MARRIAGE AUTHORISATIONS

The United Synagogues of the United Kingdom is a union of British Orthodox Jewish Synagogues, representing the central Orthodox movement. [You can search the website](#) for Marriage Authorisations.

Cost: £15 for United Synagogue or Jewish Genealogy Society of Great Britain members, £20 for non-members

Search function is limited to “First name” and “Last name” of bride or groom using Soundex search system. The online search is available for authorisations from 1880 – 1921 and rolls forward each year. For a record outside of these years contact the United Synagogues office at: marriageenquiries@theus.org.uk.

[HERE](#) is a list of Synagogues under the umbrella of the United Synagogues of the U.K.; Don’t miss the list of defunct or merged synagogues at the bottom of the page.

[Search Free BMD](#) to establish if and when/where a marriage took place. This index provides the details of the County record of the marriage. You can then use these details to order a copy of the civil marriage registration from the [UK General Register Office \(GRO\)](#).

The Civil Marriage registration will identify the Synagogue where the marriage took place, the date of the wedding, the Bride and Groom, their occupations and addresses at the time of the marriage, the names of their fathers (living or deceased) and their occupations, as well as the witnesses to the wedding.

Acknowledgements: *With thanks to Robyn Epstein Baume who alerted me to the existence of these documents, and Miriam Marson, Community Engagement Manager and Gila Howard of the United Synagogues office, London, England. Excerpt from Notes to United Synagogue Marriage Authorisations © Louise Messik and Jeremy Rosen.*

CONFERENCES, CLASSES & COURSES

The Only Constant in Life Is Change - Heraclitus

And so it is with *Kosher Koala*. With the regular rollout of our monthly newsletter to promote events in a more timely manner, the focus of the EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS page is shifting to promote major conferences, classes, courses and events, and issue call outs for projects and volunteering opportunities to enhance genealogical resources available to our community.

OPERATION JACOB - YOUR INVITATION TO HELP

Did one of your ancestors fight at Fromelles? AJGS member Peter Allen is looking for volunteers help him research the family stories of the 70 to 80 Jewish diggers who survived the Battle of Fromelles, which was fought over two bloody days in July 1916. It was Australia's - and Australian Jewry's - worst 24 hours ever in war or peace. This work is being done in association with the Fromelles Association.

Peter is the coordinator of *Operation Jacob* - named as a nod to the US *Operation Benjamin*, named in honour of Private Benjamin Garadetsky, a Jewish soldier mistakenly buried under a Latin Cross at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial. The projects work to identify all Jewish servicemen who died in battle to ensure they have been interred under appropriate memorials, correcting the record when mistakes are found.

Peter is currently researching and preparing personal narratives for all 340+ men named on the Australian Jewish War Memorial for a touchscreen in the ACTJC Centre in Canberra.

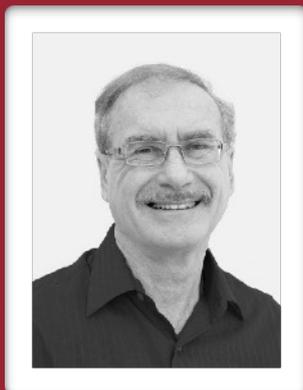
Besides the touchscreen at the ACTJC Centre in Canberra, and the continuing, widening research and associated interests in Australian Jewish Military History, '*Operation Jacob*' may also encompass:

- seeking support and assistance for other (Jewish Museum) sites to host a touchscreen, similar to that at ACTJC, in each state capital.
- The correction/recognition of Jewish Australian war graves with OAWG/CWGC, on behalf of FAJEX;
- the correction/addition of Jewish Australian war dead on the AWM's Roll of Honour or Commemorative Roll, on behalf of FAJEX;
- the commemoration of Jewish Australian war dead at the AWM's Last Post Ceremonies, on behalf of FAJEX.
- enhancement of The Australian Jewish Military Database currently hosted on the AJHS website, with incorporation of narratives, images and associated elements.
- transcription of diaries and letters of Jewish service men and women:
 - Pte Lawrence Saywell (completed)
 - Lt Dalbert Hallenstein (underway)

Assisting Peter is a great opportunity to learn new research skills. Peter will provide you with support, a research template and resource links. Please contact him directly via email or by phone - 0418 161 366.

Uncovering the Stories of Jewish Service Men & Women

Sunday 5th December 2021 - 3:00-4:00pm



Via zoom (Link in the December Newsletter)

Peter Allen, a member of AJGS, is working on a very special project to record the history of Australian Jewish Service Men and Women. The project aims to verify which Australian Service Men and Women were Jewish and then to discover what these people did when they returned to Australia.

- What were their professions?
- Did they marry and have families?
- What can we find out from all the records that are available?

Having gathered all this information, it will be recorded for future generations to access.

Where We Lived
42nd IAJGS Conference
on Jewish Genealogy

iajgs2022.org



Philadelphia
August 21-25
2022



The 42nd International Conference on Jewish genealogy will take place in Philadelphia from the 21st to 25th of August, 2022. The local host is the Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia.

Philadelphia has a rich Jewish history with Jewish merchants recorded trading in the area as early as the 1650s.

According to the *Jewish Virtual Library*, between 1830 and 1906:

the Philadelphia Jewish community was innovating, pioneering, and, in many ways, the most influential Jewry in the U.S. ... perhaps because New York's Jewry was so immense and diverse as to be unmanageable, uncontrollable, and diffuse – it was in Philadelphia that new ideas for the shaping of U.S. Jewish communal life were tested. Such creative religious and lay leaders of Philadelphia as Leeser, Sabato Morais, Abraham Hart, Moses Aaron Dropsie, Mayer Sulzberger and Joseph Krauskopf were as concerned with the future and fate of Jewish life throughout the country as they were with developments on the local scene.

Call for Papers – Lecture themes are:

- Life in the 19th and 20th Century
- Jewish Pennsylvania
- Methodology Track
- Beginners Track
- DNA Insights for Genealogy Track
- Memories Using Stories, Photos and Video

Deadline for submissions is November 21. All proposals must be submitted via the submission page. More information is available at the conference website.