



# The Kosher Koala

Newsletter of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc.

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## EDITORIAL

It's Rosh Hashana again, the Jewish New Year of 5760 in the sixth millenium, and we wish all our readers good health, prosperity, and peace for all humanity, as well as fruitful genealogical research.

We've had a quiet three months, with our regular monthly Sunday morning workshops always well attended, but no lectures. In late May the Society participated again in SHOWCASE, the NSW genealogical show organised by the Society of Australian Genealogists (SAG) in and around their headquarters at 120 Kent Street, Sydney, and various halls in the vicinity. It is an occasion when people can explore various aspects of their family history in a brief but convenient way, and browse at bookstalls of several state archives and BMD registries, and buy books on genealogy. One also makes friendly contact with other parallel societies, and the resultant comradeship is very stimulating. As last year, we only participated on the Friday, but we are grateful to SAG for giving us the opportunity of participating. Rieke Nash, Gary Luke, Kim Phillips, Miriam Shifreen and Sophie Caplan manned our table.

On the Queen's Birthday weekend we were invited to participate in the first ever LIMMUD OZ, an adult multi-topic learning experience with a vast array of lectures, at the Moriah College campus. Gary Luke and Rieke Nash gave a lecture on "New Developments in Jewish Genealogy" and had a small but respectable audience despite competition from another ten lectures at the same time. One could choose from an array of eleven topics each hour.

Those who are in Melbourne in early November are invited to participate in a joint conference sponsored by the Australian Association of Jewish Studies, together with the Australian Jewish Historical Society and our Society on the topic "Australian Jewry - from a Remnant of Israel to a Vibrant Community". This is the 12th Annual Conference, but the first time that the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society is associated with it. Dates are Sunday 7th and Monday 8th November 1999 at the Slome Hall, 74-82 Alma Road, St. Kilda, 3183, Victoria. Application forms and payment to Lionel Sharpe, AJGS (Vic) Inc., PO Box 189, Glenhuntly, 3163, (continued on page 8)

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## STOP PRESS !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Myra Beth Teck of Rockville, Maryland will speak on "Jewish Cemetery Art in U.S.A." on Wednesday 15 th September at 8 p.m., at 5 Woonona Road, Northbridge. Her talk will be illustrated by slides.

## SYDNEY WORKSHOPS 1999

The Society will hold its usual workshops at the North Shore Synagogue, Lindfield in the Rev Katz Library on the following Sunday mornings, 9.30 am to 12.30 pm

October 10  
November 14  
December 12

The library is occasionally open at other times. If you would like to be notified when a day or evening session is planned, please contact 9427-6075.

## Dates of Future International Conferences

Salt Lake City July 7-12, 2000

London, 2001

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

### New South Wales

Mariela and Roberto Brozky  
Roger and Joan Ellison  
Barbara Prissman

Walter Einer  
Kenneth Lipworth  
Gay Wilson

### Moved to NSW

Dennis Phillips

### Moved to Victoria

Miriam Mandryk

### Victoria

Ross Goldsmith  
Di Hirsh

### Western Australia

Amanda Lovitt

## NOW ON THE INTERNET

### JEWISH GENEALOGY IN AUSTRALIA

<http://www.zeta.org.au/~feraltek/genealogy>

### AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

<http://www.zeta.org.au/~feraltek/genealogy/ajgs>

### THE HOME OF JEWISH GENEALOGY

<http://www.jewishgen.org>

### JGS - VICTORIA HOME PAGE

<http://www.melbourne.net/csaky/>

### TASMANIA IN THE 19TH CENTURY

<http://www.eos.tased.edu.au/pioneers/>

## STOP PRESS !!!!!!!

on trial for a short time free of charge

### NSW BIRTHS (1788-1905), DEATHS (1788-1945) AND MARRIAGES (1788-1945)

<http://www.agd.nsw.gov.au/bdm>



## A TRIP TO POLAND, BELARUS AND WESTERN UKRAINE.

### Part 11 BELARUS

By Sophie Caplan

We arrived around midnight and found that the hotel Tourist in Grodno embodied several characteristics of former Soviet hotels: inconvenience, lack of amenities including few food choices and unusual interior decoration. Ground level access was denied to cars and our luggage had to be carried up one steep outdoor staircase from street level to the entry. There were no porters available to carry the suitcases up those stairs, but luckily our guide and our driver were most helpful. At the same time the staff refused the almost obligatory tips. Our 'suite' had a gloomy sitting-room furnished in brown velvet and black-painted timber, while the bedroom was a mess of frilly white and pink nylon and looked like a Russian idea of a French brothel, and neither of our two bathrooms had the benefit of any spirit level in fitting shelves and basins. Everything hung askew.

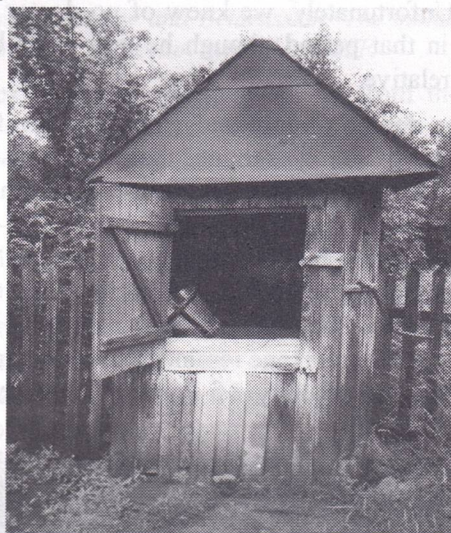
Additionally we had arrived in early July, during the fifth anniversary celebrations of Belarussian independence from Russia and these celebrations meant no deliveries of fresh food or drink had been made for nearly a week. Hence the shortage of everything from bread to fruit and vegetables, to fish, to jam, to eggs, and even beer. At least that was the reason given for the lack of almost everything listed on the hotel restaurant's menu.

After a quick breakfast the next morning, we set off early to visit Svishlosh and Porozow, the home towns of the paternal ancestors of my husband Leslie and his cousin Leslie Fox. The eastern end of the city of Grodno where the hotel Tourist stood, was dominated by large multistoried bleak blocks of flats, only a few decades old and with no vegetation to soften the contours, but already showing clear signs of concrete cancer. As we drove to the edge of town a large and busy open-air car mart was in full swing, once again replete with large, expensive and new-looking western automobiles. We could not help but suspect that these were the products of large-scale car thefts in Western Europe, driven here for resale.

Our way to Svishlosh and Porozow took us eastwards and then south in the Grodno plain, a flat landscape to the horizon in all directions. There were large fields of wheat and other grain, only two to three feet high in early July, and not looking particularly heavy with grain. But there were also large extensive uncultivated fields left fallow, and occasional woodlands. Few villages, and very

sparse traffic on the well-surfaced roads, and then only the occasional, horse-cart with its triangular profile, similar to those in Poland and Ukraine.

Svishlosh was the first town, and it seemed to have seen better days. The former Jewish quarter was in the centre of town, with one synagogue left standing, now the town cinema, and part of a complex which included the former rabbi's dwelling, complete with stables for horses and cart, now a garage. We were told that two other synagogues had been burnt by the Nazis. Nearby was a small street market, rather vestigial, with a few farmers selling potatoes and onions, not much else. The surrounding streets had the houses with front doors to the street, now unused, which had allegedly been Jewish houses. Many houses had wells, with buckets and chains, some wells roofed over, at the street frontage and most houses had kitchen gardens.



*Svishlosh, Belarus. Water well currently in use, with bucket and chain at the ready, at front of a house in a street not far from the main Synagogue. All photos taken by Leslie Fox, Harrowgate, UK*

We were directed to an old woman who was supposed to remember the Svishlosh Jews, but her memories seemed tenuous and she expected a reward for a vague sentence or two. We were also told of a Jewish man, the only one who had returned to Svishlosh, but by the time we heard of him, it seemed time to move on, particularly as it was now raining, so we did not follow this up.

It was twenty-three kilometres to Porozow and by the time we reached it the sun shone again and the atmosphere was altogether more pleasant. It was a substantial small town and we reached it just as worshippers were coming out of the Russian Orthodox Sunday service. We had a vague notion that the Caplan family's house had been near that church or the Roman Catholic one, but we could



not recall precisely father Caplan's stories on that point and now there was no one left to ask. Our driver stayed with the car while Waclaw, our guide, and the two Leslies and I tried to question the church-goers about the erstwhile Jewish community. One man looked as if he could be of part-Jewish descent, but as soon as we mentioned the Porozow Jews, he firmly took his wife by the hand and made off, while the others stayed and chatted. It made me wonder whether he could indeed have been of part-Jewish descent, but unwilling to have it revealed. Others were willing to recall the Jews, but we could not find out anything specific about our families. People recalled a Dr David Kaplan who had survived until 1943, some two years after the bulk of the community. His former house and clinic still stood, now a workers' club, and people recalled being treated by him. There was now no doctor in Porozow, nor was there likely to be one again. Unfortunately, we knew of no doctor in the family in that period, though he may have been a distant relative.

Near the doctor's house and clinic was the former compound of the synagogue, the rabbi's residence and the Beit Hamidrash. The lodge of the shamash still stood, now derelict, as did the large two-storey Beit Hamidrash built of rough cement and large river pebbles, now locked and barred. The townsfolk still called it by its Hebrew name, Beit Hamidrash, and it stood, a lone reminder and monument to the Jewish community of Porozow, murdered in 1941-43.



*Porozow, Belarus, 6th July, 1997. Beit Hamidrash building - locked up and barred but still standing*

We were directed along a side street which led to the former Jewish cemetery, the street itself also paved with river pebbles. Most of the houses were built of handsawn timber, and with the tell-tale main door to the street now permanently locked. The picturesque yards with kitchen gardens growing beans, peas, cabbages and strawberries, covered wells and apple trees, free ranging chickens, ducks and flocks of geese, looked like a stage set for outdoor scenes of 'Fiddler on the Roof'. Leslie Fox

was quite enchanted with the sights, declaring he would like to buy a house and come and live here again every summer. Indeed it looked idyllic in a bucolic way.

The street stretched for two hundred yards, veering right into the open country with wheatfields and a tethered grazing cow. The landscape was deserted except for us, a lushly fertile scene worthy of an impressionist brush, reminiscent of "Chemin Montant dans les Herbes", as we walked on to the site of the Jewish cemetery. This was on a hillside a few hundred yards on. The site was easily distinguishable, the lost gateway easily identifiable, though all fencing and gates had gone.

The whole site was fallow, self-sown with shrubs and young trees, and holes in the ground where graves had been. We toured the whole site, quite a substantial area, but every shred of tombstone material had been removed. Not one small piece of stone or masonry identifying a grave remained, only holes, shrubs, and young trees. We had hoped to pray at the graves of our ancestors, but there was nothing left. Their lives were obliterated a second time.

One of the church-goers who had spoken to us earlier came out again and told us how in the years since the war the inhabitants of Porozow had used the stones of the Jewish cemetery as foundation material for their new houses. The Beit Hamidrash was literally the last sign of the once prosperous Jewish community of Porozow.

We returned to the car quite sobered. We were grateful that both Avrom and Faivel Caplan had had the foresight to leave. The town had a certain antique charm, but there was nothing left for us.



*Wolkowysk, Belarus, 6th July, 1997. Fragments of Wolkowysk Cemetery viewed by Leslie Caplan*

On the way back we also stopped in Wolkowysk at the site of the former Jewish cemetery there, now a large flat fallow-field with half a dozen large remnants of masonry, including a part of the Ohel, clearly identified with a few Hebrew letters. On one cluster of stones a few picnicking drinkers were



getting drunk, using the gravestones as seats. As the four of us were wandering around the cemetery site, a number of local inhabitants came out to point out the visitors to each other in an aggressive way. When Leslie Fox turned his camera on them, they quickly dispersed. Back in the car we drove on to a main road from which there was a clear view of Wolkowysk railway station from where Faivel Shraga Caplan had left the district by train in 1910 and Avrom in 1903.

On the way back to Grodno we took a detour to visit Szczuczyn Litevski, the putative hometown of my Leslie's maternal grandfather. It was Wacław Wojciechowski, our guide, whom I had asked to take us to grandfather Morris "Gold's" home town who had concluded that this was the right Szczuczyn of the four possibles, from clues such as that he came from Grodno gubernia. We had hoped to find Grandpa Morris' elusive original surname, but this was not possible. Still Chana, the present leader of the eleven remaining Jews of Szczuczyn Litevski confirmed that the Prussak family, surname of two of my Leslie's greatgrandmothers, sisters whose children married, was a numerous clan in pre-1941 Szczuczyn Litevski.

Chana, with whom I was able to communicate in Yiddish, took us to the Szczuczyn Jewish Cemetery. Here again, the Jewish tombstones had been used as quarry material for the foundations of new houses in the town. Both Chana and her friend claimed to know who the tombstone robbers were, but to be unable to act against them. There were half a dozen graves with tombstones left, but both women stated these would inevitably soon disappear too. There appeared to be no remedy. Chana was the only pre-world War 11 Jew of Szczuczyn Litevski. She had survived because she had joined the Russian army during the Russian occupation of 1939-41 and had married a Russian officer. She said that her children knew that she was Jewish and that they themselves were of Jewish descent. All the remaining ten Jews of the town had come from further east and each was intermarried.

Chana took us to the place of execution of the Szczuczyn Jews, at the edge of an airstrip and shooting range. A simple monument had been erected during Soviet times and Chana claimed, not very convincingly to us, but herself convinced of the truth of the matter, that the five-pointed Soviet star on the monument had originally been a Magen David six-pointed star, with one point having fallen off. We felt too embarrassed for this nice woman to point out the impossible geometry of the matter, but duly took numerous photos. She also told of the poverty of the remaining Jews, so we gave her a

sizeable donation in memory of our families, and dropped her off at her home.



*Monument erected in recent years to 2060 Jews of Szczuczyn Litevski, Belarus, killed on 7th May (or March), 1942 and shot in a mass grave on this site. Text in Russian, Hebrew and Belarussian. The monument is surmounted by a red star, symbol of USSR*

The next morning we checked out from the hotel and drove into central Grodno to look at some former Jewish sites there. From the central town square a narrow gateway led to the site of the former Great Synagogue of Grodno, the main Jewish cemetery and what had been the wartime Jewish ghetto. Above the gateway was a large bas-relief memorial plaque to the murdered Jews of Grodno, which gave their number as 29,000 and 1943 as the date of their final deportation to Stutthof Camp



*Commemorative Plaque at the entrance to former Grodno Jewish Ghetto, memorialising the 29,000 Jews killed between 1941 and 1943.*

The gateway led past several now derelict Jewish communal buildings and a small cemetery overgrown with nettles and other weeds and devoid of any tombstones. A few hundred yards further, on a magnificent cliff-site overlooking a large part of the lower town stood the three storeyed building of the Great Synagogue of Grodno. All entries and windows were nailed shut, and it appeared to be a mere



shell of a large ornate 19th century building, abandoned for a few decades. The only signage were signs warning vandals of possible penalties if the building were entered or damaged.



*View of the rear of Grodno Great Synagogue*

We understood that there was now again a small Jewish presence in Grodno, but Waclaw's enquiries in the main post-office and in various shops could not elicit its whereabouts. We sent some postcards to family and friends, and then drove back towards the Belarus frontier with Poland. Forewarned, this time we paid for our Environmental Beautification tax in advance, and so the frontier-crossing shenanigans only took an hour and a half. Back in Poland, we lunched at the same hotel-roadhouse in Bialystok as on the way in, glad that herring, eggs and salad were freely available this side of the frontier. Then we took the road back to Warsaw, conscious that Waclaw our guide, was due to catch a train to Cracow that evening.

Everything went well until Wyszki, 'the shtetl on the Bug', when traffic was reduced to less than crawling pace. After half an hour of this regime we found that the delay was caused by a jack-knifed and overturned semi-trailer. Once this was passed, traffic became normal. We paid Waclaw and Marek, our driver, while on the road, to save Waclaw's time on arrival in Warsaw. That night cousin Leslie Fox invited us for dinner in one of Warsaw's excellent first class restaurants, a huge contrast to Belarus.

The next day Leslie Fox flew back to England and we flew to Paris for the Fifth International Seminar on Jewish Genealogy, which would be followed by our trip to Western Ukraine at the end of July when Oleg Silberman, our Ukrainian guide, would be available.

*Address for WACLAW WOJCIECHOWSKI, Kanie, 3 ulica Mila, OTREBUSY, 05-805 (near Warsaw) Poland. Tel/Fax 48 22 758 5850.*

## NEWS FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**By Michelle Urban**

We had a very interesting discussion on Sunday 4th July, our guest speaker being Dr. Ossie Tofler. He spoke about the demographics of Jewish people in Western Australia. It was also a very wet and windy afternoon so the turn out we had was fantastic.

The Western Australian Group met at the Perth Synagogue at 1.30pm on 4th July, 1999. Gillian O'Mara introduced Dr. Ossie Tofler, the guest speaker who is well known in the community. Dr. Tofler is a practising Perth cardiologist and formerly Head of the Cardiology Department at Royal Perth Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital. He has a close association with Carmel School and is founding editor and editor-in-chief of the WA weekly "The Maccabean".

Since 1968 Dr. Tofler had been charting Perth's Jewish families in his spare time. Dr. Tofler's demographic information *proved the value of family trees*. His research enabled us to see migration from such areas as the United Kingdom, Russia, Europe, Palestine/Israel, South Africa and the eastern states of Australia and other countries, from the last century through to this decade. The methodology he uses can also be used to predict: primary and high school enrolment numbers, the needs of aged care homes, etc., far into the twenty-first century. His work in this area is extremely interesting and should be encouraged.

Members of the Perth and Sydney groups, community members and three visiting Americans attended. One of our visitors was named CAPLAN which should interest at least one person in the Eastern States. In all, around fifty people attended. Our normal group meetings of workshops interspersed with such speakers has proven to be a popular way of keeping up interest.

On 29th August we held a workshop and guest speaker meeting with Martin Levit whose subject was *From South Africa to Perth: A Jewish View*.

On 7th November we will be discussing the Internet and what is available and where and what to do.

*Enquiries can be directed to*

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## REPORT ON THE 19TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON JEWISH GENEALOGY IN NEW YORK

By Dr. Anthony P. Joseph

For nearly twenty years there have been annual major Jewish Genealogical Conventions, mostly held at some venue in North America, but interspersed with more international-flavoured seminars in Jerusalem, London and Paris. This latest example of the genre was the largest ever and over 1,300 people attempted to register for it. In the event, rather more than 1,200 attendees actually appeared, including some twenty from Great Britain and three or four from Australia. The Conference, like New York City itself, was impressive and the intensity of the Jewish genealogical experience was mirrored by the vibrant non-stop quality of the "The Big Apple". There were so many lectures, workshops, special interest group gatherings etc. as to provide a staggering choice for all genealogical tastes. The final banquet was addressed by Stephen Dubner who gave a most moving and fascinating account of his own personal odyssey through Jewish genealogy and the interaction of Catholicism with Judaism in his own family experience.

By just a coincidence immediately before this New York Jewish Genealogical Seminar opened, the news broke that Hilary Clinton had a partial Jewish connection. By any standards it was somewhat tenuous! It appears that her grandmother's second husband was a Jew and that he had brought to the new family set-up a daughter by a previous marriage who was, therefore, a Jewish step-sister to Hilary's mother. It did not escape the attention of many of us that this announcement coincided with Hilary's need to impress the New York electorate in advancing her own political career. With so many Jewish voters in New York it was no doubt a calculated political move. It may succeed!

I have, on numerous previous occasions, reflected on the odd desire by many non-Jewish people to claim Jewish connections. In so many cases these are entirely spurious, and perhaps based on misinterpretation of family stories, or names that have appeared in the background researching. I have written elsewhere about this "romantic legend syndrome" and, of course, we Jews are frequently equally guilty of claiming non-Jewish connections if they seem sufficiently charismatic. I plead guilty to linking myself to royalty through divorce. A distant cousin of mine was the late Ernest Simpson (son of an Ernest Solomon) who was once married to Wallis Warfield, whose subsequent marriage was

to the ill-fated monarch, Edward VIII, later Duke of Windsor.

One of the most interesting presentations at this New York Seminar was on Rabbinic and Chassidic genealogy by Dr Neil Rosenstein. Neil repeats this talk frequently on these sorts of occasions and I have heard it at different gatherings and in different parts of the world many times over the past fifteen years or so. However, it is always fresh, brought up-to-date with the fruits of his continuing researching and presents a fascinating "snapshot" over so many interlocking and widespread dynasties. The involvement of both the Jewish and Gentile worlds and the display of well-known personalities from across the breadth of the human spectrum is well illustrated by Neil's story, although critics could be forgiven if it seems, on occasion, a vast exercise in "name-dropping".

Many of the sessions ran in parallel but, of course, it was possible to purchase tape recordings of those that could not be attended because of other commitments. I decided to concentrate on the American experience and I was able to learn much about the local history of New York, the growth of the Jewish Communities in North America and the methodology of accessing available records. Myself as computer-illiterate and non-electronic, I learned that some 89% of the registrants were on E-mail and while I recognise the enormous advantages of the system, I am satisfied that there is still scope for older-fashioned technologies to flourish. If my ever-expanding "snail-mail" postbox is to be believed, (and it has not diminished since my return from New York), I may yet be safe pursuing genealogical researching in my own style.

Increasingly these Jewish Genealogical gatherings place emphasis on the involvement of the geneticist with genealogical activity and the mutual need that each group may have for the other. Several presentations in New York were concerned both with specific alleged "Jewish diseases" and the ability to sort out population movements from genetic evidence in disparate groups all over the world. Professor Vivian Moses from London was particularly impressive with the presentation of ethnographic data, information on the "Cohen Project" and identification of a "Lost Tribe" of a people indigenous to an area just north of South Africa who claimed descent from the Queen of Sheba. Although total proof of some of these ideas may not be possible, some of the suggested links and apparent confirmation of the course of Jewish history is, impressive.

Two ever-popular presentations from Israel which I have also heard many times at many similar gatherings and yet, like Neil Rosenstein's talk,



never lose their appeal or relevance, are those of Batya Unterschatz and Diana Sommer. The former, a prodigious and dedicated worker for the purpose of reuniting families separated by such tragedies as the Holocaust, once again moved everybody by her latest accounts of successes and sad proofs of losses. Batya has struggled with her enormous workload against so many odds and with constant threat of cutting even the limited resources available to her that it was not surprising to hear her say that this may be her last year before she tries to make life a little easier for herself. Diana's updating on the Douglas Goldman Jewish Genealogy Centre at Beth Hatefutsoth was, by contrast, upbeat and optimistic. Over 4,000 family trees have now been received and the Centre is well poised to accept much more data if people submit it to them. Diana also gave a moving and entertaining mention of how one of her own cousins had arrived at the Centre, unaware of her relationship to Diana. It must be every genealogist's delight to be working at the forefront of the research interest and have your own personal story expanded for you while going about your daily working business!

Although the Australian presence at this Gathering was, in number terms, "low-key", it was noticeable. Lionel Sharpe, suitably dressed in appropriate hat with corks, entertained his audience, notwithstanding attempted sabotage of the talk, by the overhead projector. He concentrated mostly on the State of Victoria and to some extent New South Wales, but scarcely touched on the other Australian States. Of course, in number terms, this was entirely appropriate since 90% of the Jewish population of Australia lives in New South Wales or Victoria, but it was apparent from the questions to him that there was considerable interest in the history and background of the Jews in the whole of the Australian Continent.

Was this Conference "the best ever?" Such judgements are always entirely subjective, and perhaps all I can say is that it was very much up to previous levels and it will have set a high standard for future gatherings.

*Dr. Anthony Joseph is President of the JGS of Great Britain, a Past President of the Jewish Historical Society of Great Britain, and a long-term member of our own Society*

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#### **Editorial** (Cont from page 1)

Or by email: [sharpe@pa.ausom.net.au](mailto:sharpe@pa.ausom.net.au). Tel ; 03 9523 6738, Fax: 03-9532 7797. Special cheaper rates apply to members of the three sponsoring organisations. There are also concession rates for students.

Rieke Nash and Lionel Sharpe attended the New York genealogical conference in August, and Rieke also attended a conference in Washington. We look forward to all the news they will bring.

The AGM of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies took place during the conference and has resulted in a new executive and two board vacancies. The new president is Howard Margol of Atlanta, Georgia, an expert on Lithuanian and Latvian research. The vice-president is Hal Bookbinder, of Oak Park, California, who became interim vice-president in September 1998 and was previously treasurer. The new secretary is Arline Sachs of Springfield, Virginia and member of the Greater Washington JGS, and initiator of the Jewish cemeteries CD-Rom Project. She and her husband Sid came to Sydney a few years ago when she addressed our Society. The new treasurer is Marilyn Natchez of Detroit, Michigan. The retiring president was Karen Franklin of New Jersey and the Leo Baeck Institute, Saul Isroff, a Londoner of South African origin, was the previous secretary, and Nancy Fels Brant, the interim treasurer. Vacancies on the IAJGS Board were left due to Howard Margol and Arline Sachs' elections to the executive. New candidates are being sought, but this comprises two trips a year to the seat of the International Association, now at 4430 Mt Paran Parkway, NW, Atlanta, GA 30327-3747, USA, at one's own expense for Board meetings. Accommodation is provided. The present Board members are Bruce Kahn, Rochester, New York, David Fielker, London U.K., Anne Feder Lee, Honolulu, Hawaii, and Rob Sealtiel, Israel, who will complete their two-year terms in July 2000.

The conference was also the occasion for the now established awards of achievement in Jewish Genealogy for which we were invited to make nominations some months ago. The lifetime achievement award went to Arthur Kurzweil, author of the epochal "From Generation to Generation", while Miriam Weiner received an award for her book "Jewish Roots in Poland", for which our Society also nominated her. Stanley Diamond, initiator of the research projects on thalassamia among Jews and on the Jewish Roots Indexing in Poland (JRI Poland) received an award for achievement via the Internet, while the Israel Genealogical Society was recognised for its outstanding publication "Sharsheret Hadorot", particularly for being a completely bilingual publication in Hebrew and English. And the JGS of Michigan received an award for being an outstanding society. (Continued page 11)



## EXPLORING THE UK 1881 CENSUS

by Rieke Nash

One of the Society's latest acquisitions is a set of 25 CD-Rom's which contains the 1881 Census for the United Kingdom. This Census covers England, Scotland and Wales and lists everyone present at each residence in April, 1881. The publication was a cooperative effort by the Federation of Family History Societies, the British Genealogical Record Users Committee, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, the Public Record Office, London, the General Register Office, Scotland and the Genealogical Society of Utah.

Searches can be made on one, some or all of the following fields:- given name, last name (choice of exact spelling or approximate), birth year (option to specify range up to 5 years), birthplace (country, city or town), census place (region, county, city or town). Searching for an address is not possible.

The resulting information includes dwelling address, census place, source LDS Film No., GRO Ref. Volume No. and enumeration district information. As well as for the above fields, each person is described either as head of the household or his/her relationship to the head. Labels include wife, son, daughter, boarder, visitor, brother, sister, cousin, son/mother-in-law, etc. Labels such as patient, inmate are used for hospitals and prisons. It is also noted if the person was Naturalized.

Sometimes it requires creative techniques but with its powerful search mechanism any of the fields can be used in the selection process.

This resource has already provided significant finds for some of our members. The first look-up was for our member, Miriam Shifreen, whose grandfather Solomon Levy was known to have lived in London with his wife Mary and children. Searching for Solomon or Mary Levy produced numerous possibilities, however using daughter Rebecca Levy, born in a particular year, produced the right family. For Miriam, the important piece of information was that Mary was born in Poland and so explained why she could never find her birth in UK records. Various spellings of Levy were listed, including Levi, Levey, Levie, McLevy and Le Vey.

Another member found that a female ancestor who was a resident of a Poorhouse with one of her children and another child listed in a Technical Boarding School. What story is hidden here?

Another of the first searches was for Gary Luke who knew that his ancestor Harris Lazarus lived in

Glasgow at a specific address in 1881. There was no success initially. In desperation Gary tried First Name "Harris" and Place of Birth "Poland" for the Glasgow region and one of the responses was HARRIS LAWARUS!

This is a good example of the care needed in searching databases. The transcription can be faulty. I happened to notice one entry for the son of the family whose birth year was 1761 i.e. 120 years old. Obviously the date should have been 1861. Another example was GOODMAN spelt as GWDMAN. In this case 'OO' was read as 'W'. These errors may have been made by the census taker initially or as typing errors by the transcribers, but they indicate that persistence is needed if the expected result is not immediately achieved.

Just scanning through records is fascinating. As it is possible to list the neighbours of a specific address, the crowded conditions as well as the ethnic mix is apparent. Images of an all-Jewish neighbourhood are dispelled by the listing of Irish and country born families living next to Jewish families.

This reasonably priced resource, \$AUS55.00 should be available in some local libraries and most family histories societies as well as LDS Family History Centres. It can be purchased from LDS centres.

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## CANBERRA CORNER

By Sylvia Deutsch

Genealogical workshops were held on 11th July and 5th September. The last workshop for the year will be on 7th November from 1.30 – 3.00pm at the National Memorial Centre.

Many thanks to local member Valerie Brown for her kind donation to the Canberra group of *Web Sites for Genealogists* by Cora Num (3rd edition, 1999). The author is a local genealogist who has compiled a list of useful web addresses for people researching their family history.

Mention in the last Koshers Koala of the genealogy talk by Steve Hart, great-grandson of Henry Hart who built the Royal Hotel in Yass, led to two inquiries from other descendants of the family, one from Sydney and one from Melbourne. They were put in touch with Steve Hart and hopefully the contact will prove fruitful!

*Enquiries can be directed to  
Sylvia Deutsch in Canberra:  
Tel/Fax 02-6248-6196  
Email: deutand@ozemailcom.au*



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## REPORT FROM QUEENSLAND

**By Morris S. Ochert O.A.M.**

The period under review has been quieter than for some time, with about six enquiries from Australia and three or four from overseas. I am preparing material for the visit of a lady from Kansas, USA who is attending an International Art Congress here and who is also involved in the symbolism to be found on Jewish Headstones. As I have collected quite an amount of that data to assist me in both historical and genealogical research we will have a useful and interesting day, mainly at our historic Toowong Cemetery.

*Enquiries to Morris Ochert, 3/23 Lucinda Street, Taringa QLD 4068 or [stirk@uq.net.au](mailto:stirk@uq.net.au)*

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## A MONTEFIORE GATHERING IN BRISBANE

**By Morris S. Ochert O.A.M.**

About forty years ago I wrote a manuscript titled "A Montefiore Family in Queensland". The editor of *The Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* at that time, Dr. George Bergman, decided that it would be more appropriate to place it in the Mocatta Archives in England, together with a quantity of memorabilia of the late Sir Moses Montefiore with books, photos, letters, diaries, albums, etc. These had been collected by a local descendant of the Montefiores. The Mocatta Archives contain data on the Montefiore, Rothschild, Mocatta Sebag, Barrow and other strands of those families. The Archives are now a part of the library of Southampton University, in England.

In June 1999 some Australian representatives of the Montefiore family met in Brisbane at the home of David Stevenson, who has carried out considerable research into the Montefiores. David's wife is Jill, nee Barrow Montefiore. He prepared the following data.

Three family lines were represented:

Joseph Barrow Montefiore, a cousin of Sir Moses Montefiore, settled in New South Wales in the years 1829 – 1840 and later in South Australia in the years 1846 – 1860. He was the first president of the first Australian Jewish Congregation and a successful businessman. The families of two of his sons remained in Australia. The family of Jill Stevenson (Nee Montefiore), a great granddaughter

of Joseph Barrow Montefiore, hosted the gathering at her home in Kenmore, Brisbane, Queensland.

Horatio Joseph Montefiore was the youngest brother of Sir Moses Montefiore. A grandson, Charles Monte Montefiore immigrated to Australia in 1878. His descendants were represented by Stanley Montefiore, Frederick Montefiore Snr., Frederick Montefiore Jnr, and Rohan Montefiore.

Sir Joseph Sebag Montefiore was a nephew of Sir Moses. A grandson, Cyril Sebag Montefiore immigrated in the early 1920s. His son John Sebag Montefiore attended the gathering.

The families are also connected through the maternal line. Joseph Barrow Montefiore's wife Rebecca Mocatta and Horatio Joseph Montefiore's wife, Sarah Mocatta, were sisters and their aunt Rachel Mocatta, was Sir Moses Montefiore's mother Sir Joseph Sebag Montefiore's grandmother.

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## AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY (Vic), Inc

**By Leslie Oberman, President**

Our secretary Lionel Sharpe and our treasurer Kurt Friedlaender have attended the 19th Annual Conference on Jewish Genealogy in New York and we are looking forward to their reports on Wednesday September 22nd.

We now have one hundred paid up members of the Victorian Society. Number 3 issue of our newsletter prepared by Lionel was distributed to members at the beginning of August. We have given it the title of *Jewish Genealogy Downunder* and are looking for a suitable logo to go with it

The workshop held on Sunday 20th June was successful and well attended. On 7th July we had a very interesting lecture by Sandra Riordan, the assistant director, public and reader services, National Archives of Australia. Lionel named our meeting on Wednesday 18th August *A Eureka Evening*. No not a revolution but an opportunity to share some of the problems members have and hopefully our 'mavins' were able to solve them.

The Victorian Society takes this opportunity to wish the members of all of our societies and chapters Shana Tova, a happy, healthy, peaceful and successful New Year.

*Enquiries:*

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[Sharp@pa.ausom.net.au](mailto:Sharp@pa.ausom.net.au)*



**(Edit)** We've also gleaned two pieces of good news for Australian Jewish genealogists. One is that Rabbi John Levi, now retired from his ministry, is currently updating his 1976 monograph "The Forefathers: A Dictionary of Biography of the Jews of Australia, 1788-1830" possibly to 1850, as he said he would do one day. The other is that Malcolm Turnbull, Victorian editor of the Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal, is preparing a dictionary of biography of more recent Australian Jews who have played a notable part in the community. Both publications will be awaited with great alacrity.

Finally, while many communal bodies send to us queries they receive on genealogy and family history matters, we are now also receiving requests to trace Jewish individuals from the Australian Red Cross.

*Sophie Caplan, editor*

## **WHAT'S NEW IN SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS**

**By Sophie Caplan**

### **1. Vilna Area.**

Joel Ratner in U.S.A. has formed a group to purchase, translate and make available the data from a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Revision list, which is a Russian Empire census list, of the town of Vilna and its surrounding towns Boguslavski, Gedrovitz, Gelvon, Intkurkes, Maishagola Mikaliskes, Moliat, Musnik, Nemenchin, Paberzhe, Shirvint, Tsiobikishi, Verikiai in one subdistrict, and Bystritsa, Ilya, Mitskuna, Redamina, Rukoiniai, Shalchininkai, Smusk, Varniai and Yoniskis in another sub-district. These Revision lists have a lot of information showing family groups, etc..

But funds are needed for the purchase, translation and publication costs and so interested genealogists are asked to contact Joel Ratner by email giving their full name, address, telephone and fax numbers, email, as well as towns and names of interest in the Vilna district. A financial contribution will be expected in order to participate in the project. Contact by email: [Joelrat@aol.com](mailto:Joelrat@aol.com)

### **2. Gyor Cemetery, Hungary**

Stephen Schmideg, member of the Melbourne branch, has recently set up a database of the Jewish Cemetery in Gyor, Hungary, which has over 3,000 graves, many of them containing multiple remains. It is one of the largest still functioning Jewish cemeteries in north western Hungary. Stephen has also set up a database of 3,500 Holocaust martyrs from the same area which can be accessed through the H-Sig JewishGen site. Stephen is aware that there are many people in Sydney whose families originated in that region of Hungary and he is happy to look up names from the cemetery lists. Contact by email: [Stephen@sicore.com.au](mailto:Stephen@sicore.com.au)

### **3. Jews Transported from France in Convoy no.73 on 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1944**

This convoy left France with 878 Jewish men and is the only transport from France which went to Lithuania and Estonia during WW11. A book has been written giving the hitherto unknown story of that transport, giving a lot of information, including photos and documents. The second part contains the personal stories of almost fifty deportees from that transport. Now a second printing is considered telling the stories of more deportees of the transport. Please contact Eve Line Blum for details about the book.

[email:blume@edu.essec.fr](mailto:email:blume@edu.essec.fr)

## **NEWS FROM THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH**

**By Klee Benveniste**

South Australian members have continued to meet every two months to discuss research. At the June meeting, Hilda Hines described the "Matrikel" (German for register or roll) which limited the number of German Jews allowed to live in each town in Bavaria. Jews had to take an oath of allegiance, could not immigrate unless they came to marry someone born in Bavaria, and required police permission to leave. Jews were privately Jewish at home, but could not be different in the street. The matrikel concept started in Napoleonic times and imposed legal restrictions on various groups, not only Jews. The rights of free movement by minorities and stateless persons have certainly improved since those times in Europe.

In other news, our Port Lincoln member Almuth Hauptmann has moved to Adelaide, so all South Australian members of the Society now reside in the State's capital. Almuth informed us that Emanuel Solomon, a Jewish philanthropist in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Adelaide, is featured in a scene of a play about Sister Mary MacKillop, being performed at the Arts Theatre during August. Emanuel Solomon provided accommodation for a group of nuns who were forced to leave their convent, and who became known as the Josephite nuns. A move is now afoot to beatify Sister Mary MacKillop.

Please note that an incorrect phone number for our Chairperson, Hilde Hines, had appeared on the internet under a list of Jewish Genealogical Societies, and also in the journal *Avotaynu*. It should be 61-8-8379 6030. Thank you to the various overseas societies who send us their newsletters. We appreciate your gesture.

*Dr. Klee Benveniste is Honorary Secretary of Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (SA Branch) C/- Adelaide Hebrew Congregation P.O. Box 320, Glenside, SA 5065*





## FOREBEARS AUSTRALIAN FAMILY FINDER

Our Family Finder column will be charged for at the rate of \$AUS 8 for 25 words plus address, telephone, fax or email number of inquirer. For overseas advertisements \$US 5 if sent in cash OR for cheques US 15 due to new high bank exchange rates for cheques in other currencies. Please communicate directly with inquirers, but kindly inform us if this column has helped you to advance in your research.

00072 BENJAMIN KARLINER, palm Beach County, Florida, USA, email benkarliner@juno.com seeks Karliner or anyone from BOGORODCZANY near Ivano-Franklivsk, Ukraine. Also Ida Rottenburg and Bella Hunderd who allegedly emigrated to Australia, or their descendants, Will share all information on Karliner line.

00073 INGOLF STRASSMAN, 12 Geiselsbergstrasse, D 81545, MUNICH, Germany, Tel 49 89 64 0671, Fax 49 89 64 3975 is researching a book on Jews who lived in ALTENBURG city and county in Thuringia. All with links to those places near Leipzig can contact him. Particularly seeking family of tailor HEINRICH LIPPSCHUTZ, born 1893, wife JOSEPHINE, born 1890s, daughter GENIA born 1925-28, who emigrated to Australia in 1938-9.

00074 IRENE LITE, 99-45 67th Road, Forest Hills, N.Y. 11375-4, USA, Tel: 1(718) 775 9010 seeking any information on FIGA family from KRASNOSIEC, Poland, parents ELI and FEIGA KERSZ FIGA, children NOAH, ITZHAK, CHAIJA, VUDDLE, CYLA and FROMA MICHEL.

00075 AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS TRACING AGENCY, JAN MURPHY, 159 Clarence street, Sydney, 2000. Tel: 02 9229 4211, Fax: 02 9229 4265 has appealed to us to find several people: ALEXANDRA MYKOLAITSAK/MIKOLAICHAK nee ZUSSMAN /SUSSMAN, parents, born Ukraine 12.3.1926, parents Martin and Olga Zussman, emigrated to Australia in 1953, sought by relatives. Ring above or 02 9229 4143, 02 9229 4233 or 1800 812 028 (toll free)

00076 AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS TRACING AGENCY, JAN MURPHY, 159 Clarence street, Sydney, 2000. Tel: 02 9229 4211, Fax: 02 9229 4265 seeking MOSHE WAX/VAX born April 1928 in SIEU, MARAMURESH province, Romania. Last heard of in German hospital in Luebeck, June 1945, believed to have immigrated to Australia, or his descendants.

00077 MICHELLE V. POMERANTZ, POB 2354 Secaucus, New Jersey 07096 USA, Fax: 201 617 5440, Wildpom@aol.com is seeking the descendants of her great uncle Ovadia POMERANTZ. He may have immigrated to Australia from BRESTLITOVSK, BELARUS at the turn of the century or even earlier during the 1890s. His brothers and sisters left for America and lost complete contact with him.

## DATABASE OF HOLOCAUST ASSETS POSTED

I hope that you will bring this message to your members and to anyone else you think would be effected. Please try to spread the word, especially to age holocaust survivors.

Avotaynu has just posted a database of 29,000 Holocaust-era Jewish names. If you recognise the name of a relative, you or someone in your family may be an heir to unclaimed Holocaust-era assets.

Go to <http://www.avotaynu.com> and click on "What's New?" You will find the names and instructions on what to do next.

The database comes from two sources. One is a list of unclaimed Swiss bank accounts released by the Swiss government. The second list comes from a collection of files held in the Austrian State Archives in Vienna.

The Swiss Banks have created a \$1.25 billion dollar compensation fund. Individuals may have a legitimate claim to some of this money even without ever having had a Swiss bank account. The class of those entitled to compensation includes anyone forced to do slave labour during the war; anyone denied entry into Switzerland when they were seeking refuge, or mistreated by Swiss authorities after entering; and anyone whose assets were confiscated by the Nazi.

The problem is that the letter signifying intent to file a claim must be postmarked no later than OCTOBER 22, 1999. Any claims not filed by this date will not be considered. Unfortunately, this information is not widely known.

The database was created by Mike Raddle, a member of the Philadelphia JGS, substantially assisted by Bob Wascou, president of the Sacramento JGS from documents provided by Greg Ruckman, aide to former U.S. Senator Alphonse D'Amato.

We are doing this as a humanitarian effort to help ensure some measure of justice is done. Please participate by spreading the word.

*Sallyann Amdur Sack, Editor Avotaynu,  
International Review of Jewish Genealogy*

**Beth Hatefutsoth** has announced that as of 1 July 1999 every submitter of a family tree to the Centre will be entitled to receive information free of charge: Diana Sommer, Director, The Douglas E. Goldman Jewish Genealogy Center Beth Hatefutsoth Ramat Aviv PO Box 39359 Fax: 972 3 6462134; website: <http://www.Bh.Org.il>; email: [bhgnlgy@post.tau.ac.il](mailto:bhgnlgy@post.tau.ac.il)