KOSHER KOALA

SUMMER/ JANUARY 2023

AJGS
L'dor V'dor

David Austin's unkempt grave at The Coast Hospital Cemetery,
Kamay Bay National Park. Photograph: Dani Haski

IN THIS ISSUE

FEATURES

FROM MYSTERY TO HISTORY - THE AUSTIN PROJECT

AJGS received an enquiry lamenting the state of a single Jewish grave - broken in two and at risk of being inundated by rising water — at The Coast Hospital Cemetery in Kamay Bay National Park, Malabar. This prompted us to look into the story of man buried there to see if he had any living descendants. What we have found is truly astonishing.

The Coast Hospital Cemetery at Little Bay, now located inside Kamay Botany Bay National Park, is a former burial ground used by the hospital better known as Prince Henry Hospital. Operating between 1888 and the 1950s, over 2000 people were buried on the site, although today only a few dozen graves are still visible.

The Coast Hospital was established as a specialist infectious diseases facility after numerous outbreaks of smallpox in New South Wales. In 1902, an outbreak of Bubonic Plague resulted in 128 cases being admitted and treated at the Coast Hospital. 26 people were reported to have died and the majority were buried at The Coast Hospital Cemetery. One of those graves has a distinctive Hebrew inscription.

It is occupied by Mr David Austin.

On Friday, October 3, 1902, _The Hebrew Standard of Australasia_ reported on the consecration of a Jewish section within the cemetery:
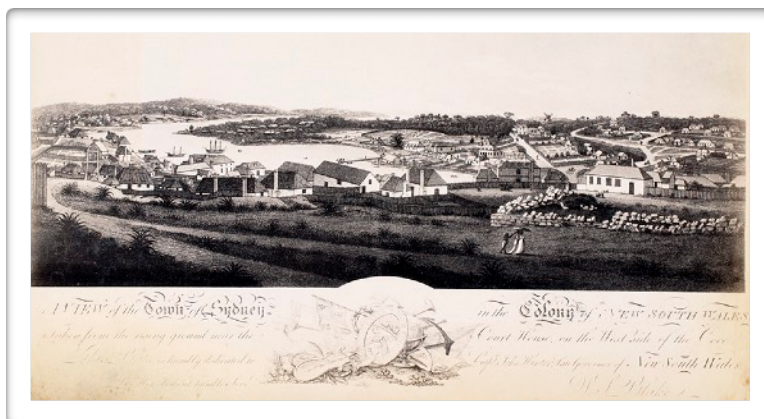
> In response to an intimation made at the Great Synagogue on Sabbath last, a number of congregants accompanied the Rev. A. B. Davis to the burial grounds attached to the South Coast Hospital.... The Rev. P. Philippstein read Mincha; and then Mr. M. Goulston, officiating as a Cohen marked off with the spade the land apportioned for a Jewish cemetery. This adjoins Mr. Austin's grave. The Rev. A. B. J Davis ... delivered a very impressive pathetic address, alluding to the last days of Mr. Austin in very feeling terms and prayed that no other victim shall be taken from our community should an epidemic ever break out again.
>
> The late Mr. David Austin was the first Jew buried at South Coast was a native of Westphalia, Germany. He was the husband of Mrs. M. Austin, Botany-road, Alexandria. The deceased, it will be remembered, was stricken during the epidemic, and died on 10th March, 1902. Aged 65 years. His son Alexander, who was taken to the Hospital about the same time, was present at the consecration of the ground just alluded to.

David Austin appears to be the only Jewish person to have died during this outbreak of plague. His grave sits all by itself at the very bottom of the cemetery. There do not appear to have been any other Jewish burials at the site.

Born David Arnstein on January 24, 1841, in Lippstadt, Germany, he was the first born son of Adolphe Arnstein (b. 1795 Sulzbach, Bavaria) and Sara (nee Hernfeld/ Herrnfeld/ Herrenfeld — b. 1806 Lippstadt, Germany).

Records pertaining to the family are found under several variations of their European surname including Ahrenstein, Arenstein and Arnstein. In Australia, the family adopted the anglicised surname Austin.

Sydney Cove in 1850 - as the Arnstein Family would have experienced it when they arrived.

David arrived in Australia when he was 10-years-old, traveling with his parents, his brother Lewis (b. 1822) and sisters, Fannie (b. 1830), Dorah (b. 1845) and baby Eve

(b. 1849, all born in Lippstadt, Germany), aboard the barque *San Francisco*. The ship, loaded with German immigrants, left Hamburg on June 23, 1850, stopping in South Australia on October 13, before heading to Sydney.

The family arrived in the colony of New South Wales on November 13, 1850.

Ahrenstein Adolph - Lipstadt Sara [???] David, Fanny, Lewis
NB: Dora and Eve were also with them but still would have been very young.

Ship's Manifest of the barque San Francisco 1850

But what motivated Adolph to bring his young family to the other side of the world? Perhaps they came at the urging of his younger brother, Elias Arnstein, aka Edward Austin?

Elias (b. July 17 1804, Sulzbach, Bavaria) had apprenticed as a tailor in his home town and by 1831 had made his way to London, adopting the name Edward Austin. Unfortunately, he was caught by a shop assistant, walking down from her residence above a shop, with some of her jewellery. He was promptly arrested, convicted of larceny in the Old Bailey, and sentenced to transportation for a period of 7 years. He arrived in the colony of New South Wales as a convict in 1832.

Edward Austin
aka Elias Arnstein
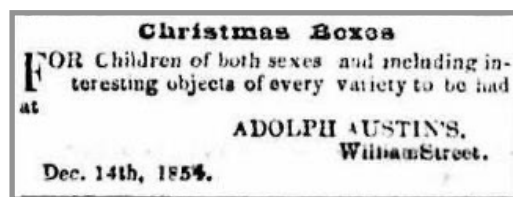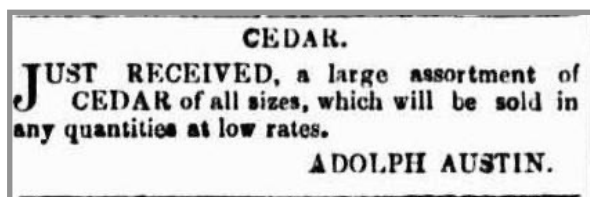Bathurst Regional gallery
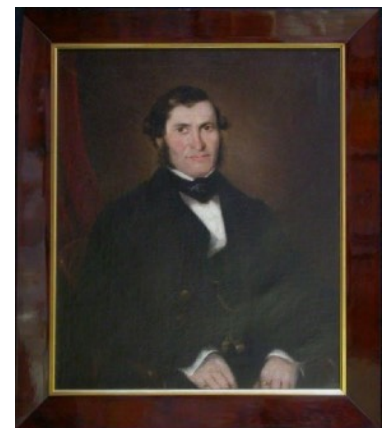
After serving his sentence, Edward chose to stay in Australia and became a very successful and respected businessman in Bathurst. He even earned a full pardon from Queen Victoria after his neighbours petitioned on his behalf.

Edward married Mary Ann Chambers on November 19 1839, in a local church, indicating he may have renounced his Jewish identity and embraced Christianity.

One can only surmise that Edward wrote to his family in Europe, telling them of his success and inviting them to join him in Australia, as several members of his extended family ended up in Bathurst with him, including his sister Esther's children, Hannah (b.1832, Vienna) and Henry (b.1836, Vienna) Herrenfeld[1], who arrived in 1848 aboard the *Beulah*. Hannah subsequently married Isaac Lewis Isaacs at the Sydney Synagogue (York Street Synagogue) in 1852. Henry married Mathilda King in 1865 in Wellington NSW.

Upon his arrival in 1850, Edward's brother Adolph set up business in Bathurst, first dealing in timber and subsequently as a tobacconist. There are several ads in the local Bathurst paper promoting his wares.

CEDAR.
JUST RECEIVED, a large assortment of CEDAR of all sizes, which will be sold in any quantities at low rates.
ADOLPH AUSTIN.

Christmas Boxes
FOR Children of both sexes and including interesting objects of every variety to be had at
ADOLPH AUSTIN'S.
William Street.
Dec. 14th, 1854.

Adolph relocated his family to Sydney around 1855, but tragically, he died on September 29, 1856, at the age of 61, leaving Sarah with 5 young children. He was buried at Devonshire Street Cemetery.

Adolph's grave besides his daughter Eve's at Rookwood.

Within two years, Sarah re-married. On Oct 10, 1858 she wed Moses Mayers at the Sydney Synagogue. In 1864 Adolph and Sarah's youngest daughter, Eve, died at the age of 16. She was also buried at Devonshire Street. When Devonshire Street cemetery was decommissioned in 1901, David organised for both graves to be relocated to Rookwood Cemetery.

Sometime during the mid 1870's, David Austin established a pawnbroking business in Redfern. On February 20, 1884, he married Leah Alexander. The wedding was held at the home of Leah's parents, Godfrey and Miriam Alexander, and officiated by Rabbi A B Davis of the Great Synagogue. Leah came from a large family who were very involved in the local Jewish community.

MARRIAGES.
AUSTIN—ALEXANDER.—February 20, at the residence of the bride's parents, 626, Crown-street, Surry Hills, by the Rev. A. B. Davis, David Austin, of Regent-street, Redfern, to Leah, daughter of Godfrey Alexander, Surgeon Chiropodist of this city.

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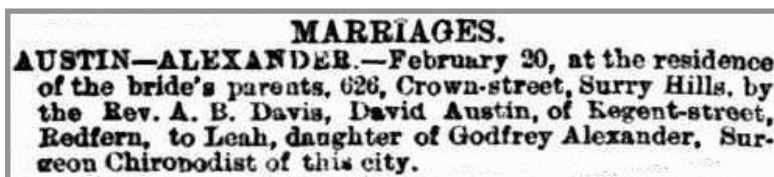
[1] *I speculate that Esther's husband, Abraham Herrenfeld, could be Sarah Arnstein nee Herrnfeld's brother*

David and Leah's son, Alexander, was born May 29, 1888. There is a record of a second child, stillborn in 1894, who has no name; and another death notice for a child described as "adopted son of Mrs David Austin". It appears that Leah adopted the infant child of her sister, Isabella, who may have died in childbirth. Sadly, he too died on February 21 1896, aged just 4 months.

On June 8, 1901, young Alexander celebrated his Barmitzvah at the Great Synagogue.

Births.
AUSTIN.—May 29, at her residence, 30, Botany-road, Alexandria, the wife of David Austin, of a son. Both doing well.

BIRTHS.
AUSTIN.—At her residence, 30 Botany-road, Alexandria, April 1, the wife of David Austin, of a son, stillborn.

Deaths.
ALEXANDER.—February 19, at the residence of his adopted mother, Mrs. David Austin, 30 Botany-road, Alexandria, Lear Sydney, second beloved son of Sydney and the late Isabella Alexander, aged 4 months and 21 days, of marasmus and convulsions.

Master Alexander Austin, son of Mr. David Austin, Botany-road Alexandria, will be called to the Reading of the Law, at the Great Synagogue Sydney, on Saturday.

Barely 6 months later, tragedy struck the family again.

Sydney was no stranger to outbreaks of plague — Yersinia pestis (Y. pestis), a bacterial infection. The disease is caused by fleas biting infected rats and then passing the disease onto humans.

Barrier Miner (Broken Hill, NSW : 1888 - 1954), Wednesday 26 February 1902, Page 2

There were numerous outbreaks of plague in Sydney at the beginning of the 20th century. Between January and August 1900, 303 cases of plague were reported in New South Wales, with patients treated at the Maritime Quarantine Station at North Head.

In January 1902, a second wave of plague lasted six months. The Board of Health was notified of 139 cases in total; 39 people died. This time, the authorities decided to send patients to The Coast Hospital, where 3 wards were set aside for infected patients. Of the 139 reported infections, 128 were admitted and treated at the Coast Hospital — with 26 deaths.

Alexander was registered as infected on February 25, 1902.

He was immediately taken to The Coast Hospital.

THE PLAGUE.

A CASE THIS MORNING.

David Austin, 75, a pawnbroker, carrying on business in Botany-road, Alexandria, was this morning found to be suffering from plague. He is the father of a boy who contracted the disease last week.

Up to noon to-day there had been 45 cases and 14 deaths.

This morning's report as to the condition of the patients states that Austin is improving;

Evening News, Monday 3 March 1902, Page 4

Evening News, Monday 3 March 1902, Page 4

A week later, on March 3, his father is reported infected. He too is taken to The Coast.

THE BUBONIC PLAGUE.

INSANITARY SYDNEY.

SYDNEY, Wednesday.

No further cases of plague were reported to-day, but the patients Arthur Hayes and David Austin are in a critical condition.

Age, Thursday 6 March 1902, page 6

Newspapers across the country carry the news of the latest infections. On March 6, David's condition is reported as critical.

On March 11, 1902 newspapers report David's death.

He appears to be the only Jewish person buried at the Coast Cemetery.

THE PLAGUE.

ANOTHER CLEAR DAY.

DEATH OF AN ELDERLY PATIENT.

Yesterday one of the patients at the Coast Hospital, David Austin, 65 years of age, died. He was taken ill at his home, Botany-road, Alexandria, about a week ago, and a son of the deceased, who contracted the plague previously is still in the hospital. This makes the sixteenth death during the present epidemic.
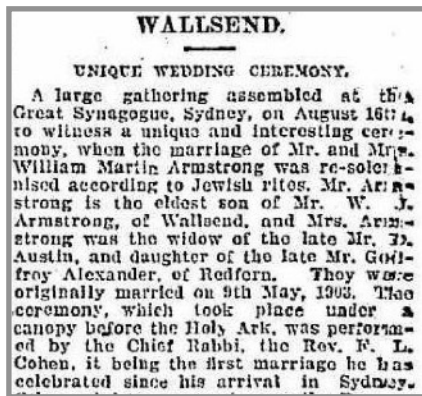
The Daily Telegraph Tue 11 Mar 1902 Page 6

Horse drawn ambulances at the entrance of The Coast Hospital in Little Bay at the turn of the century. Image: Prince Henry Hospital Museum

Alexander survived his brush with plague and was released from hospital in April.

Leah took over David's pawnbroker business and, in 1903, married William Martin Armstrong of Newcastle in a civil ceremony.

THE PLAGUE.
Two Patients Discharged.

Alexander Austin, a boy, and William Ingham, were discharged as cured from the Coast Hospital on Saturday.

The boy Austin was a son of the plague patient David Austin, pawnbroker, of Alexandria, who died recently at the Coast Hospital.

Australian Star (Sydney, NSW : 1887 - 1909), Monday 7 April 1902, Page 6

WALLSEND.
UNIQUE WEDDING CEREMONY.

A large gathering assembled at the Great Synagogue, Sydney, on August 16th, to witness a unique and interesting ceremony, when the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. William Martin Armstrong was re-solemnised according to Jewish rites. Mr. Armstrong is the eldest son of Mr. W. J. Armstrong, of Wallsend, and Mrs. Armstrong was the widow of the late Mr. D. Austin, and daughter of the late Mr. Godfrey Alexander, of Redfern. They were originally married on 9th May, 1903. The ceremony, which took place under a canopy before the Holy Ark, was performed by the Chief Rabbi, the Rev. F. L. Cohen, it being the first marriage he has celebrated since his arrival in Sydney.

Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate Saturday 2 September 1905, Page 3

In August 1905 the marriage was "re-solemnised according to Jewish rites" at The Great Synagogue. This can only mean that William converted to Judaism. The ceremony even rated a mention in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* and the *Miners' Advocate*.
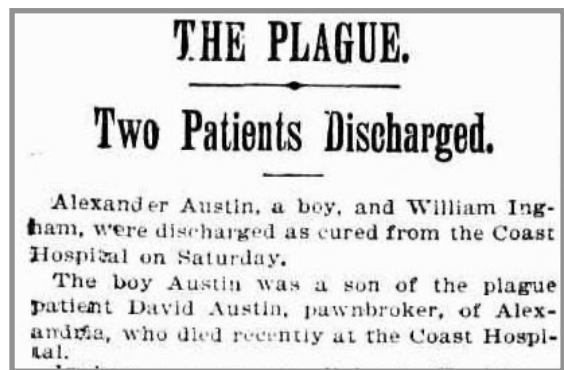
Around 1905, Alexander Austin travelled to the UK to continue his education. He ultimately pursued a diplomatic career with the British Foreign Service.

Leah Armstrong died on March 23, 1924. She is buried in Rookwood Cemetery.

Alexander was in England when his mother died. He returned to Australia in 1925 to settle her affairs. He must have developed quite a reputation, as his return was noted in both *The Daily Telegraph* (17 April 1925) and *The Australian Jewish Chronicle* (30 April 1925)!

Mr. Alexander Austin, a member of the British Foreign Service, arrived yesterday by the Orama. Mr. Austin is revisiting Sydney—his birthplace—after an absence of 20 years, during which he has served in China, Japan, South America, India and other countries. He is expert in several languages, and has a working knowledge of eight others.

Daily Telegraph, Friday 17 April 1925, Page 6

Personal and Social News

Amongst the latest visitors to his native land is Mr. Alexander Austin, the son of the late Mrs W. M. Armstrong, of Sydney.

Mr. Austin is one of the very few Australians attached to the British Foreign Office in London. He is noted as a great linguist, speaking fluently seven languages and having at least a nodding acquaintance with eight other tongues.

Mr. Austin possesses a most pleasing personality, and established for himself the reputation of being the most popular passenger on the ship.

*   *   *   *

Australian Jewish Chronicle, Thursday 30 April 1925, Page 9

Alexander subsequently returned to England and on September 27 1934, married Kathleen Winifred Marjorie Waterfall, (b 1909, London), better known as Marjorie. Following the wedding, Alexander returned to Australia aboard the *SS Orsova*, with his new bride, to visit his family.

They spent a considerable amount of time in Sydney and, according to notes found in Ancestry[2], Alexander became friendly with his 2nd cousin, Ernest Norman Austin[3], and spent a lot of time at his home in Mosman.

In 1937 Alexander and Marjory left Australia and traveled extensively through Asia and Europe. In 1938, they visited Japan, returning to Sydney from Yokahama aboard the *SS Katuragi Maru*. According to the notes, they were in Germany when war was declared and had to travel via Switzerland and France to get back to England. They then made the decision to emigrate to the US.

1940 US Census

Alexander and Marjorie arrived at Ellis Island aboard the *Scythia* from Liverpool on May 16, 1940. They settled in Los Angeles and are listed in the 1940 and 1950 US Census. Alexander lists his profession as "investor". There is also a US military registration card, which indicates Alexander worked for a US Navy war relief agency called "Bundles for Blue Jackets". Marjorie was a

1950 US Census

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[2] *Notes attributed to Laurel Austin (1922-2000) — daughter of Ernest Norman Austen — interviewed in 1991. Ancestry family tree for the Austin/ Learmonth/ Elder/ McPhee family —* https://www.ancestrylibrary.com.au/family-tree/person/tree/113850900/person/400130814063/facts

[3] *AKA E N Austin, Grandson of Adolph's brother, Edward; son of Charles German.*

volunteer for the Peace Corp. In 1941 Alexander and Marjorie became naturalised as US citizens.
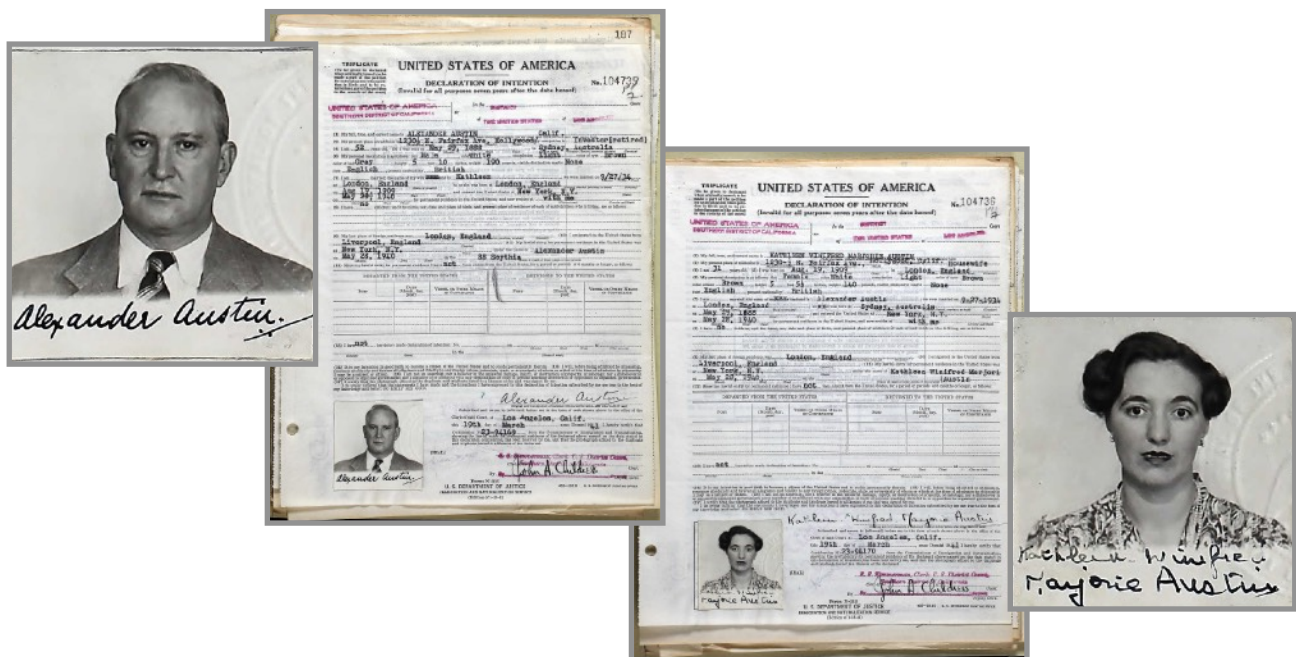
Alexander Austin died in Los Angeles in May 22 1968.

Marjorie died September 25, 1977. They did not have any children.

While David Austin has no direct descendants, there are numerous indirect descendants from his siblings, and his aunts and uncles. The vast majority appear not have maintained Jewish traditions... except for one branch which I discovered was <u>very</u> close to home. To my great delight, I found that one of David Austin's nieces was the grandmother of a close family friend. He and I are looking forward to getting together to compare notes in the near future.

I have also managed to trace ancestral lines of the Arnstein family further back in time. The family were very prominent in the printing industry in 18th Century Germany and the family tree is bursting with prominent rabbinic lineages — from 17th Century Vienna and 16th Century Krakow to 15th century Prague and 14th Century Spain. But all that is for another issue of Kosher Koala.

There are so many stories still to be told about this one family, and it all stemmed from a casual enquiry about a single neglected headstone in an old cemetery.

Austin/ Arnstein Family Tree

Carolina/ Caroline/ Chaile Myers/ Miers
1765 - 1860

Loeb/ Low/ Loew Arnstein/ Fraenkel
1764 - 1832

Esther Arnstein
1805 - 1846

Edward Elias AUSTIN
1804 - 1856

Eve Arnstein
1849 - 1864

Dorah/ Dora Arnstein/ Austin
1845 - 1887

Sarah Hernfield
1806 - 1869

Adolphe/ Adolf/ Adolphus Austin (Arnstein)
1795 - 1856

Leah Alexander
1857 - 1924

Stillborn Austin
1894 - 1894

David Ahrenstein/ Arnstein/ Austin
1841 - 1902

Kathleen Winifred Margorie Waterfall
1909 - 1977

Alexander Austin
1888 - 1968

Fanny Maggie Arnstein/ Austin
1830 - 1911

Lewis/ Louis Austin
1822 - 1891

NEWS

Z'L SUSAN E. KING - FOUNDER OF JEWISHGEN DIES

On December 30, 2022, Jewishgen announced the death of Susan E. King, the legendary founder of the JewishGen platform. In an emotional email, Avram Groll, the current executive director, described the legacy Susan's work represents, saying:

> When Susan first created JewishGen, I doubt she expected the impact it would have upon thousands of people, and the countless family connections it would ultimately facilitate - including siblings who had been separated during the Holocaust... JewishGen will be there for future generations. When people many decades now wake up one day, and wonder what it means to be part of the Jewish people - JewishGen will be there. And this is all because of Susan.

Susan King was a professional genealogist with a decades long career in traditional, forensic and genetic genealogy. She was also a professional musician, playing the Steel Pan, and she was instrumental in launching a youth Steel Pan Band in Sonora, Mexico in conjunction with CastawayKids Mexico.

King founded JewishGen in 1987 in Houston, Texas. As this was prior to the launch of the World Wide Web, it was initially developed as a bulletin board with approximately 150 users interested in Jewish genealogy. To access it, users dialled into the connection using a telephone, and paid an annual donation of $25 to fund the service.

Susan King
(Jewishgen Facebook Page)

By 1990, JewishGen had migrated onto the burgeoning Internet as a mailing list and online forum called the *Jewish Genealogy Conference*. Alongside Susan, it was managed by founding members and volunteers including Warren Blatt, Bernie Kouchel, Gary Mokotoff, Michael Tobias, and others active in the community.

By 1995 JewishGen had developed a website and in 2003 it became affiliated with the _Museum of Jewish Heritage_ (MJH).

After an inexplicable near-death experience in 2007, Susan shifted her focus and worked to hone her skills in genealogy, DNA and forensic research. She retired from JewishGen in 2008.

Under new leadership, JewishGen moved their administrative office to the MJH facilities and, in partnership with JewishGen, Ancestry.com took over the data centre hosting of the JewishGen computerised assets. JewishGen remains free to access, although registration is required. Today, the platform hosts millions of records and continues to grow with its army of dedicated volunteers.

Susan received several awards recognising her contribution to both general and Jewish Genealogy. In 1997 she received a Director's Award from the _Federation of Genealogical Societies_ (FGS) in the US. In 1998, the _Outstanding Contribution to Jewish Genealogy via the Internet Award_ from the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) and in 2005, the IAJGS _Lifetime Achievement Award._

Susan was an avid volunteer. Susan's most recent volunteer activity was with _DNADoe Project_, which uses DNA and genealogical research to try and identify unidentified remains. She served as a consultant on cases where Jewish DNA was noted.

In 2019, the IAJGS _Volunteer of the Year Award_ was named in Susan's honour. In his obituary, Avram Groll said of Susan:

> She, more than anyone else, was able to galvanize people, and to provide them with both a sense of inspiration to get involved, and a sense of aspiration for what they could accomplish.

AI PUTS NAMES TO FACES
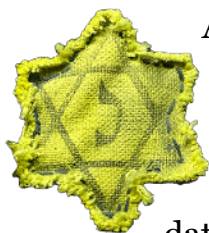
Artificial Intelligence, or AI, is developing at an unprecedented rate and its utility in the genealogical space it becoming more and more evident. From analysing millions of datapoints to pinpoint matches in DNA samples, to trawling the billions of records available in online databases, so that we can build our family trees faster than ever before, the use of big data and AI is becoming an essential tool.

One area that is growing in surprising ways is facial recognition. One Google researcher has applied a facial recognition AI model to help put names to faces in hundreds of pre-WWII photographs and to identify Holocaust victims and survivors. As recently underlined reported by the BBC, Software engineer Daniel Patt leads a team who have set up a website, *From Numbers To Names*, designed to leverage the power of both AI and crowdsourcing to identify the people in over half a million photographs held by the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yad Vashem, and other institutions. The project aims to identify people in group photos in the collection. These include school photos, youth groups and family groups taken prior to the Holocaust.

Anyone can upload a photo of a relative and the algorithm compares it to the hundreds of thousands of faces in the database. It then returns a set of possible matches with a probability score. To gain access to more photographs you can create an account. Unfortunately, the interface is not very intuitive right now and could do with some simple instructions; but the potential is certainly exciting.
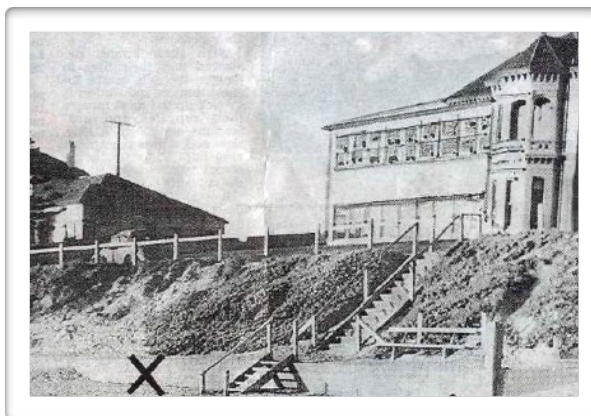
GENETIC GENEALOGY SOLVES A DECADES' OLD AUSSIE MYSTERY

An Australian researcher has solved one of Australia's most mysterious cold cases using the power of genealogy. The identity of "Somerton Man" has been a mystery since the unidentified male was found lying dead on a South Australian beach more than 70 years ago. No one came forward to claim him. Some of the items found on his body led to speculation that he was a Communist spy. The case became a *cause célèbre*, inspiring amateur sleuths for decades.

One such sleuth is Professor Derek Abbot, from Adelaide University. He has been obsessed with the Somerton Man case for more than 20 years. He has followed all the publicly available physical clues , including following up on the name embroidered on the tie he was wearing; a clue which directly led him to meet his wife.

The beach in Somerton, Adelaide, where the body was found.

Now, using a combination of DNA analysis and traditional genealogical research, Abbot is convinced he has positively identified Somerton Man as Carl "Charlie" Webb.

Police detectives Dave Bartlett, Lionel Leane, and Len Brown show journalists the suitcase and personal effects belonging to The Somerton Man, found at Adelaide railway station.
Image: Australian police via Wikimedia Commons. Public Domain.

In 2020, the SA Police exhumed the body to collect DNA samples, however they did not allow Abbott to participate in their investigation. Instead, Abbott sourced DNA from samples of hair embedded in a plaster death mask made of Somerton Man's face. The hair yielded over 2 million DNA markers which, when compared to samples on GEDMatch, showed over 4,000 potential familial matches. To make sense of all this data, Abbot engaged the services of American forensic genealogist Colleen Fitzpatrick.

Abbot and Fitzpatrick contacted some of the best prospects and built up several family trees using traditional research methodology, looking for anyone whose date of death was missing. As they narrowed their search they focused in on Carl Webb, who had no date of death or traceable death certificate.

His identity was finally confirmed through DNA testing of potential relatives. None of them had any idea that they could be the key to solving one of Australia's most persistent mysteries.

So, was Charlie Webb a communist spy? Sadly, the truth appears to be far more mundane and Charlie most probably took his own life after suffering a prolonged depression.

You can watch the whole story of Professor Abbott's search for Somerton Man's identity on _Australian Story - My Name is Charles_.

NSW MUSEUMS OF HISTORY LAUNCHED

NSW State Archives and Records Authority (SARA) and _Sydney Living Museums_ (SLM) have amalgamated to become _Museums of History New South Wales_ (MHNSW).

In an email to members, they announced they had:

> ...brought together the historic houses, museums and collections previously in the care of Sydney Living Museums with the vast archives and records in the NSW State Archives

Collection, and are changing the way our past is understood and our future will be experienced.

MHNSW continue the work of SLM and SARA:

> ...to collect, manage and preserve the state archives and our historical sites and collections, and to increase and promote knowledge, enjoyment and appreciation of the stories that shape the social, historical, political and cultural identity of NSW

SARA will evolve to become State Records NSW (SRNSW) a separate organisation from Museums of History NSW. It will focus on record-keeping standards, regulation, advice, education and policy.

SLM membership and NSW Archives Readers Tickets will roll over to the new organisation and they have a shiny new website. There are redirects in place on the old website addresses to ease the transition. Online catalogues, guides and indexes remain active and move to the new website. Access to items in the State Archives Collection and the Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection remain unchanged.

Explore the collections

Browse all

Caroline Simpson Collection

Home and garden design, history and life

Discover more

Library catalogue ↗

State Archives Collection

Making history every day

Discover more

State Archives catalogue ↗

Museum Collections

Place-based collections at our historic houses and museums

Discover more

Objects catalogue ↗

The *Centre for Jewish History* in New York has launched the DNA Reunion Project, to trial if genetic genealogy can help reunite branches of families torn apart by the Holocaust. Led by acclaimed genealogists Jennifer Mendelsohn and Adina Newman, this pilot program offers free commercial DNA tests to survivors or their children who have not taken a test before and works with them to interpret the results and trace family connections. They will also be developing training resources to help people do their own research. It is a worldwide effort funded by the Ackman Ziff Family Genealogy Institute through the Centre of Jewish History. They also accept donations from the public.

The program was launched with a live webinar on 29th November 2022 where Jennifer and Adina, along with Jennifer's brother, Daniel Mendelsohn, author of *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million*, and Jackie Young, a child survivor who featured in the BBC program DNA Family Secrets. Jennifer and Adina were able to positively identify Jackie's biological father.

Jennifer Mendelsohn (left) and Adina Newman lead the project (Screenshot)

The webinar (available on YouTube) offers an excellent explanation of genetic genealogy and the work being done in this space.

OLD FRIENDS LAUNCH NEW WEBSITES

JEWISHGEN EDUCATION

JewishGen Education has launched its new website with new classes and a year- long program of webinars and courses. Get started on your genealogical journey with *Research Fundamentals* and *Search Strategies Using Google* or learn how to share your stories with *Writing Short Narratives* and *Crafting Stories from Your Family's History*. You can view details of and enroll in all available courses at the *Course Schedule* page.

AVOTAYNU BOOKS

With the retirement of Gary Mokatoff due to Covid and the sale of Avotaynu Publishing last

year, _Avotaynu Books_ has launched a new website. Avotaynu is considered one of the leading publisher of books on Jewish genealogy, with over 50 titles in print. All the seminal works are available including a new edition of Gary's How To classic _Getting Started in Jewish Genealogy_, the series of Jewish Surname dictionaries and other special interest publications.

MYHERITAGE RELEASES ISRAELI MIGRATION RECORDS FOR FREE

MyHeritage has announced the publication of 1.7 Million Israeli immigration records in a searchable database, free to everyone.

In the blog post announcing the data drop, MyHeritage states:

This collection is the Israeli equivalent of the famous "Ellis Island" immigration database for the United States... For a period of more than a year, MyHeritage painstakingly indexed thousands of public domain images made available by the Israel State Archives that include all surviving records of all those who immigrated to Israel by ships and by planes from all over the world starting in 1919.

The records in this collection include the name of the immigrant and the names of relatives who immigrated with them, country of origin, the name of the ship they arrived on, the date of arrival, names of parents, names of relatives who are expecting them in Israel, and their destination city in Israel.

As the Zionist dream of resettling the biblical land of Israel began to evolve, discernible waves of Jewish immigration, called _Aliyot_ in Hebrew, in the area then known as Palestine began to occur. There were two waves between 1882 and 1919, while the region was still under the administration of the Ottoman Empire. This period is not covered by the new collection.

In 1919, British forces took control and between 1919 and 1923 mostly Eastern European Jewish immigrants called _halutzim_, or pioneers, migrated in large numbers.

Members of the He-Chaluts movement from the Borochov Zionist pioneering training commune-kibbutz hachshara- in Katowice, 1933 (Wikimedia Commons)

Between 1924 and 1929 a fourth wave arrived, predominantly fleeing a sharp increase in antisemitism throughout Europe and the Middle East. Most came from Poland, the Soviet Union, Romania and Lithuania but there were also Jews from Yemen and Iraq.

The Fifth Aliyah, from 1929 through 1939, saw the influx of 250,000 immigrants, the largest wave yet. Most were fleeing Poland, Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Greece in response to growing antisemitism and the rise of Nazism. There were also Jewish immigrants from Turkey, Iran, and Yemen.

From 1933 to 1948, the British enforced immigration quotas, limiting the number of Jews who could move to Palestine. Many Jews found ways to enter Palestine illegally. The collection does not include lists of illegal immigrants, but there are several lists of children who arrived as part of the youth immigration during this time period.

Most of the data is in Hebrew but MyHeritage utilises it's Global Name Translation Technology™ to translate names into your preferred language. You can also copy and paste Hebrew words that are not translated into Google Translate to help decipher the results.

Jewish pioneers pictured in the sand dunes of a future Tel Aviv circa 1910 (Wikimedia Commons)

DIY

PICTURE THIS - USING GOOGLE STREETVIEW FOR GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

Have you got old addresses for your ancestors? or photographs of their homes in the town where they were born? What do these places look like now?

The New York Times recently underlined published an interactive digital story[4] by David Botti, a member of The Times' Visual Investigations unit — a team of digital detectives who search the internet for photographic and video clues that help tell complex stories.

David's grandfather, Donato Tarullo, was born in the town of Scanno in Italy and migrated to the US around 1906. David explains that he'd never really given much thought to his family history, but one weekend, as he was helping his mother clean out her basement, he came across a box of old photographs that chronicled a family visit back to Scanno in the 1960s. Donato had won the lottery and taken members of his family back to the old country! One of the photographs showed the distinctive front staircase and doorway to the house Donato was born in.

David decided to use his professional research skills to try and find the house online. Would it still look the same? He didn't have an actual address but Scanno was not a large town and the photos contained some very distinctive elements.

David started with *Google Maps Streetview*. He explored the streets of Scanno and spotted a potential match - a house with a similar looking staircase. He compared the architectural features and found them to be comparable. Then he noticed one important difference, a plaque bearing the name Henri Cartier-Bresson - a well-known 20th century photo-journalist.

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[4] *Gift link to story - should not require an NYT account*

David's research revealed a trove of photographs taken in Scanno by Cartier-Bresson, and today re-created over and over again by Instagrammers from around the world. The position at the top of the stairs of his grandfather's home was a popular vantage point for photographers emulating Cartier-Bresson's image of the church opposite.

You don't have to spend thousands of dollars on travel to find the location of your ancestors' homes. Google, Google Street View, Instagram and Flickr are invaluable resources to visualise ancestral towns, villages and shtetlach. Street View can show you what they look like now and old postcards and vintage photograph collections can take you back in time, perhaps even to when they lived there.

Photo taken by Cartier Bresson from the top of the Donato Tarullo's staircase

Or give it a go yourself! Here's an example from my own family - My great grandparents' house in Melody St, Coogee.

What is a calendar? It's a measurement of the passage of time.

The movements of the earth around the sun or the moon around the earth, and the regular patterns of nature and seasons this movement creates, have been used by humans for tens of thousands of years to mark the time of notable events.

For genealogists, time is a crucial marker in our research. When researching our families, we often start with a person's name and a significant date — birth, marriage death or migration — to place them in a temporal context. Sometimes we have this information close at hand — a certificate or other official document — while at other times, we have to estimate a date range. How we do this could depend on when and where our ancestor was living in a given period.

Some recent articles provide interesting perspectives on how dates are calculated in different countries and by different religions and cultures.

THE ROMAN, JULIAN & GREGORIAN CALENDARS
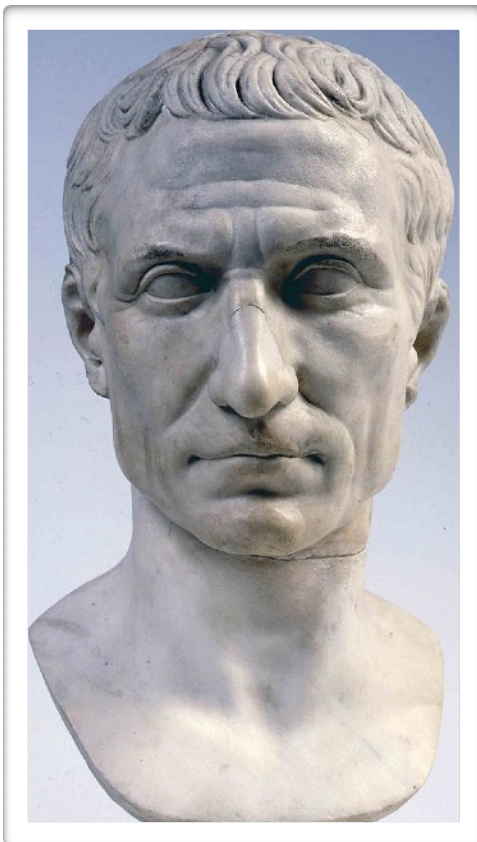
Julius Caesar Vatican Museum
Public domain, Wikimedia Commons

The Roman Empire developed a calendar which consisted of ten months, beginning in Northern Hemisphere spring (March); winter was left as an unassigned span of days. These months ran for 38 cycles, each forming a nine-day week, ending with religious rituals or a public market. These were called *nundinals*. The winter period was later divided into two months, January and February, creating the 12- month cycle we know today.

This calendar was replaced by the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar in 45 BCE. The *Julian Calendar* was developed by mathematicians and astronomers. It had two types of years: a normal year of 365 days and a leap year of 366 days, which followed a cycle of three normal years and one leap year, giving an average year of 365.25 days, which is slightly longer than a Tropical Year of 365.24219 days[5]. This meant the Julian calendar gained a day every 128 years.

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[5] the actual duration of the earths orbit around the sun

This was fine in the short term, but it eventually played havoc with calculating the date of Easter. So, in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII issues a papal bull, or decree, announcing a new calendar, now known as the *Gregorian Calendar*. This is the one we're more familiar with. It was designed to correct the error in the Julian Calendar.

While the Pope had a lot of power in Catholic countries such as France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Poland, it was several years before this new calendar was adopted globally. The British Empire did not change its dating system until the

Pope Gregory XIII - Lavinia Fontana, Public domain, Wikimedia Commons

end of the 18th Century. With the passage of the *Calendar (New Style) Act 1750*, the British finally adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1752, by which time it was necessary to make a correction of 11 days — so Wednesday, 2 September 1752, was immediately followed by Thursday, 14 September 1752. This is inside the range of documents some researchers may be using.

The Gregorian Calendar is still not completely accurate and some further adjustments to dates may be necessary in the future to align the atomic clocks now being used to track time.

THE HEBREW CALENDAR

When we are researching our Jewish ancestors, we need to be mindful of the calendar used by Jewish communities for thousands of years. The Hebrew calendar is lunisolar, which means it keeps in sync with the natural cycles of both the Sun and the Moon. Featuring a body of complex regulations, exceptions, and mathematical rules, it is also designed to satisfy requirements conveyed in the Jewish Scripture.

The calendar loses approximately 1 day every 216 years.

The Hebrew Calendar developed from the Babylonian Calendar, which used the crescent moon on the horizon

Babylonian Calendar
Public domain
Wikimedia Commons

to delineate the start of the new month. An additional month was added every two or three years to correct for the difference between the lunar year of twelve lunar months and the solar year. The year in which it was added was based on

observation of natural agriculture-related events in ancient Israel. This system was gradually displaced by the mathematical rules of the Metonic cycle, a regularly repetitive 19-year cycle of the moon. The principles and rules of this calendar were fully codified by Maimonides in the *Mishneh Torah* in the 12th century. Maimonides' work also replaced counting "years since the destruction of the Temple" with Anno Mundi, AM, years since creation - analogous to BC & AD in the Western cannon. Maimonides also established the biblical date of creation as 3761 BCE, setting this as Year 1. Accordingly, we are now in the 6th millennium of the Jewish calendar.
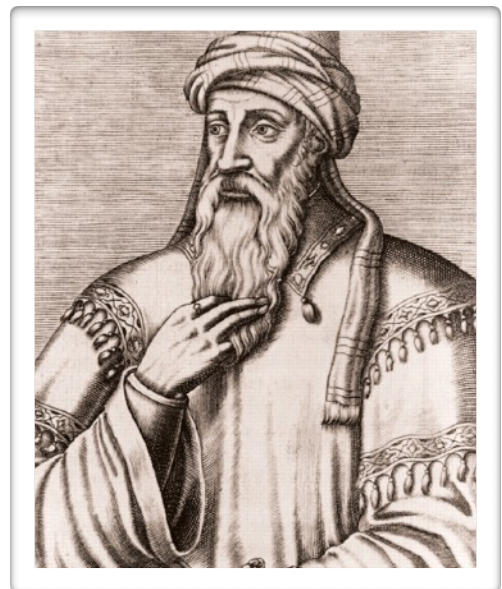
Moses Maimonides
Public domain, Wikimedia Commons

To make things even more confusing, Hebrew dates are measured from sunset to sunset, so the 4th October 1984 would be 8th Tishrei 5745 before sunset, but 9th Tishrei 5745 after sunset. Thankfully, we have plenty of apps, such as *HebCal*, to help us convert between Hebrew & Western dates accurately today.

One great illustration of the complexity of the Hebrew Calendar came from a Limmud presentation several years ago called '*Pesach is Early this Year*' by Steve Schach. He also published an article, "*Pesach Is Early This Year, but We Need to Fix the Jewish Calendar*"[6], in the Great Synagogue Journal[7] in 2013.

THE KOREAN CALENDAR

To highlight the differences culture can have on calendars, a recent article on the *9News* website reported on complications of calculating birthdays in South Korea, where there are three ways to quantify a person's age: their "international age," their "Korean age" and their "calendar age":

> On the 10th December 2022, a new law was passed that aims to standardise how age is calculated in the country... the country's parliament has decreed that from June 2023 all official documents must use the standard "international age", [which] refers to the number of years since they were born,

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[6] *reproduced here with permission*

[7] *The Great Synagogue Sydney Journal, Vol. 69, No. 3, Nissan 5773, April 2013, pp. 7–9.*

and starts at zero, the same system used in most other countries.

But when asked their age in informal settings, most South Koreans will answer with their "Korean age," which could be one or even two years older than their "international age".

Under this system, babies are considered a year old on the day they're born, with a year added every January 1.

In some circumstances, South Koreans also use their "calendar age", a kind of mash-up between international and Korean age, which consider babies as zero years old the day they're born and adds a year to their age every January 1.

Take "Gangnam Style" singer Psy (pictured right), for example — Born on December 31, 1977, he is considered 44 by international age; 45 by calendar year age; and 46 by Korean age.

THE PERSIAN CALENDAR

Persian (Iranian) Solar Calendar
Parthsbod K.A. Hakhamaneshian (CC)

The most accurate calendar is actually one of the most ancient, the Persian or Solar Hijri (SH) Calendar, developed in the 2nd millennia BCE. It loses less than 1 sec per year or 1 day in 110,000 years.

Unlike the Gregorian calendar, the SH calendar is based on astronomical observations. The year begins at midnight closest to the vernal equinox in Iran. The first day of the new year is called Nowruz, and is celebrated around the world by Iranians. The Solar Hijri year count starts with Mohammed's migration (*Hegira* or *Hijrah*) to Medina in 622 CE. The SH calendar is different from the Islamic Hijra calendar, which is a Lunar calendar similar to the Hebrew system.

To understand more about calendars and calculating historical dates *MyHeritage* has a handy article on their education platform.

EXHIBITIONS

REVERBERATIONS: A FUTURE FOR MEMORY

The horrific events of the Holocaust ended 78 years ago. Even child-survivors are coming to the ends of their lives. How will we be able to hear their stories in the future? This stunning experience at the Sydney Jewish Museum offers one possible avenue. Hundreds of Holocaust survivors have recorded their stories over the years, providing testimony to the dark days of World War II and insights into the character traits and internal resources which helped them re-build their lives in a new country. *Reverberations: A Future For Memory* weaves this testimony into a narrative, highlighting the stories of survivors who made Australia their home. It also showcases the revolutionary program which harnesses AI and Hologram technology to invite individuals to have conversations.

> You can also immerse yourself in conversation with the interactive biographies of three Holocaust survivors: Olga Horak, Yvonne Engelman, and the late Eddie Jaku, which use cutting-edge artificial intelligence technology to respond directly to any question you ask them.

This project, which originated around 2013, as a collaboration between the University of Southern California's USC Institute, the Shoah Foundation and private technology company Conscience Display, is a global endeavour which uses a circular rig of 23 cameras in a green-screen environment to record the life stories of survivors. The process takes several days. Once the interviews are complete, the soundtrack is analysed by an AI algorithm which then needs to be "trained" to enable it interact with an unpredictable audience. Visitors to SJM can help in this process by booking into an Interactive Biography session.

The testimony of those who lived through events such as the Holocaust is crucial to our understanding of history and of an individual's role in the larger narrative. Seeing new ways of recording and sharing these stories can also inspire our own work as family historians.

REVERBERATIONS:
A FUTURE FOR MEMORY
Tickets via the SJM Website.

CONFERENCES, CLASSES & COURSES

Reviving Jewish Heritage in Slovakia:

The Story of a Lost Community in Senec near Bratislava

Guest Speaker: Dr Maros Borsky (right)

Date: Sunday, 19 February 2023 — 2.00 pm - 3:00 pm

Venue: Sydney Jewish Museum

Dr Maros Borsky is a director of the Jewish Cultural Institute and Jewish Community Museum in Bratislava.

He will share his knowledge of the rich Jewish heritage of Slovakia, and the various activities and projects implemented to preserve it. His main focus will be the restoration of the Senec synagogue (left).

Dr Borsky manages the research, curatorial and educational project to preserve the memory of the lost community that built this synagogue.

Learn more at www.synagogasenec.sk

Tracing Jewish Roots

IAJGS JGSGB

43rd IAJGS International Conference on
Jewish Genealogy
LONDON 2023

Polish Genealogy Open Day

Special Guest: Michał Majewski -

Operations Director: Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw

Sunday 26th March, 2023

Time, Venue and Zoom details TBA

- Are your ancestors from Poland, Galicia or the surrounding area?
- Do you want to research your family-tree but don't know how to start?
- Are you already working on your genealogy but stuck at a brick wall?

Bring your questions, queries and stories to the AJGS/ ASPJ Genealogy Open Day. Our guest will be Michał Majewski, a professional genealogist and historian.

Michał is a graduate of Warsaw University's Institute of History. He also works with and for the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Gesher Galicia, and as Operations Director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.

Full Details in the March AJGS Newsletter.

Registration is now open!

Join us 2–4 March 2023
virtually or in person

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