



# AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY (VIC) INC ANNUAL REPORT 2018 -2019

## Committee of Management

President	Allan Jankie
Vic-President till Dec18	Debbie Jurblum
Vic-President from Jan19	Max Wald
Secretary	Bubbles Segall
Treasurer	Rene Eisner
Committee	Heshy Adelist
	Rodney Eisfelder
	Liz James
	Bernie Kuran
	Ian Samuel OAM
Newly joined	Terry Ashton
	Clive Kaicer

## Honored Life Members

Rodney Eisfelder  
Liz James

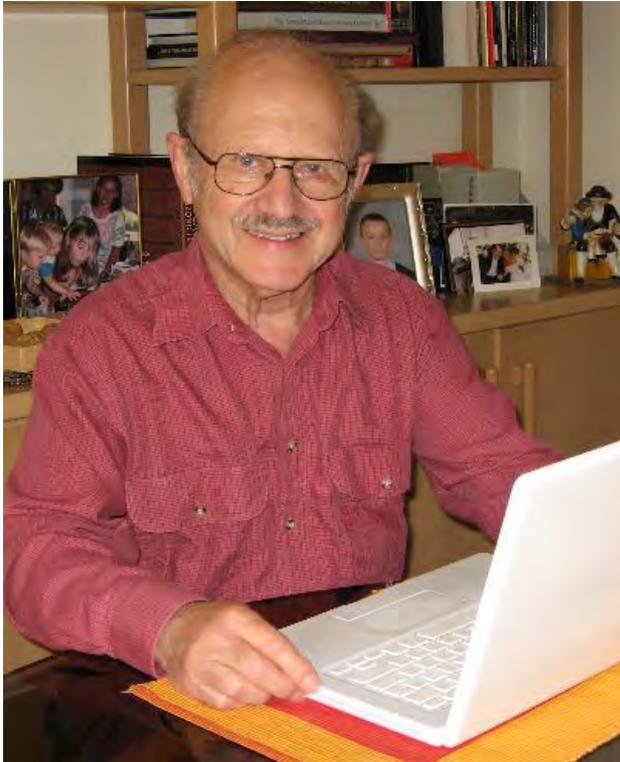
[admin@ajgs-vic.org.au](mailto:admin@ajgs-vic.org.au)

[www.ajgs-vic.org.au](http://www.ajgs-vic.org.au)



# OBITUARY FOR LIONEL SHARPE OAM

**1932 -2019**



The death of Lionel Sharpe in Melbourne on 7<sup>TH</sup> April, 2019 marks a sad milestone for many Jewish organisations that act in the service of Melbourne Jewry.

Lionel was born in 1932, son of Gladys and Maurice, and brother of Ronald and Natalie. He grew up in East St Kilda, going to school at Grimwade House then on to Melbourne Grammar, and on to Melbourne University to complete a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and Social Work.

Lionel married Annita Skop, whom he met when he was only 20, and they had 64 years of a very happy marriage with two children, Monique and Danny. Tragically, Danny passed away at the age of 29 years as the result of a car accident, plunging the

family's life into grief from which they never recovered.

Lionel dealt with this tragedy by devoting his career to the welfare of others, and ten years ago was awarded the OAM for services to the community.

His professional career was very broad, including years of social work at Jewish Welfare, where he later became a board member. He specialised in drug and alcohol rehabilitation at Prince Henry's Hospital, was a senior lecturer in social work at the Phillip Institute, and he lectured in Jewish history at Monash University within the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation

Lionel was a hardworking stalwart of many community organisations such as Melbourne Jewish Orphan and Jewish Aid Society (of which he became the secretary) and in that capacity Lionel organised the funding of aids to assist handicapped Jewish children, and for them to attend Jewish day schools.

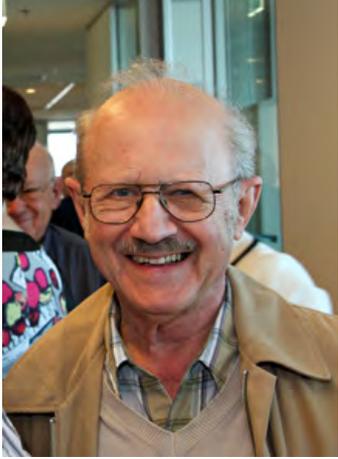
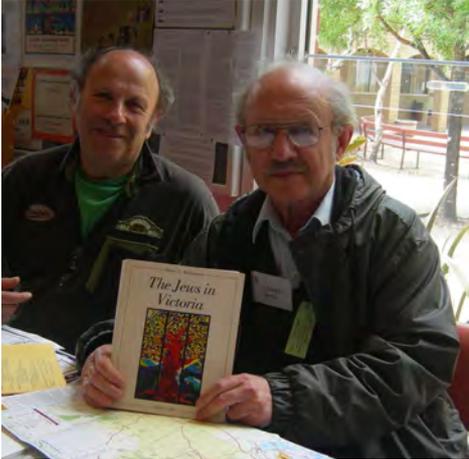
Lionel was a life-long member of the Australian Jewish Historical Society and was, for some 15 years until his passing, a much-loved active and valued committee member of AJHS. Lionel researched and wrote the history of the Melbourne Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society for its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and contributed his immense knowledge to the history of the Jewish Welfare Society, written by the late Rodney Benjamin.

Lionel was a remarkable source of information on early Melbourne and its families. He was an active photographer of Melbourne Jewish events, places and faces, and could have become a professional photographer had he wished. He had a vast collection of early photos of previous generations, many of whom he was related or connected to.

Lionel was involved with the establishment of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society from its very beginning. He was at various times the chair and the secretary of AJGS (Vic), and for 15 years was the editor of its informative newsletter, 'Genealogy Downunder'. He awakened the interest of the community to genealogy and family searches around the world, and was a regular contributor to Avotaynu, the powerful tool of international Jewish genealogists.

He will be sadly missed by the Jewish community, but his memory will be a blessing.

Compiled by Liz James and Howard Freeman, AJHS Vic Inc.  
This obituary was published in the Australian Jewish news.



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## Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) Inc.

ABN 17 078 119 093

### 2019 PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Allan Jankie

2019 has been, once again, a busy year for our Society as you will read in the reports contained in this Annual Report. There were many highlights during the year and one significant low point.

The passing, in April, of our 'Founding Father' Lionel Sharpe was truly a shock. Although Lionel's health had been waning for the last couple of years, he had continued to be an eager contributor to the Society he helped form some 3 decades ago. Along with the late Les Oberman he was the 'face' of Jewish Genealogy here in Melbourne and the wider genealogical world will miss him. It was Lionel in 2008 who encouraged me to join the Society and I well remember the first meeting I attended, at Les and Sonia Oberman's place, where I met the rest of the Committee. From that initial meeting I can recall hundreds of conversations over the years between Lionel and myself regarding genealogy and I miss his knowledge and level headed approach to research. I have much pleasure in announcing that in honour of his memory, the Committee has decided to do the following :

- a) All future presentations at our society's Annual General Meetings will now be called THE LIONEL SHARPE MEMORIAL PRESENTATION
- b) We have decided to name our resources collection THE LIONEL SHARPE RESOURCE COLLECTION and a memorial plaque along with his photograph will be displayed in our rooms alongside that of the late Les Oberman.

Also in December our Vice-President Debbie Jurblum retired after holding that office for many years. Debbie has been a stalwart contributor to our Society's success for many years and we miss her smiling face and sunny demeanour around the Committee table. I am sure she will continue to appear at our events in the future as her passion for genealogy hasn't waned.

Debbie was succeeded by Max Wald who became Vice-President in January and Max, as you'll read later on in this report, has immersed himself into co-ordinating and running many projects for us.

During the year we welcomed 2 new members on the Committee, Terry Ashton and Clive Kaicer who each bring their own talents and fields of expertise to our combined knowledge. In the short period they have been on our Committee they have already shown they will be valuable assets going forward.

Contained in this Annual Report are reports provided by other members of our Society's Committee and I leave it up to them to provide you with a snapshot of what their year has been like vis-à-vis the Society's work. You will read reports about our ongoing projects like:

- the School Roots program done in conjunction with the Jewish Day Schools and the Jewish Museum of Australia,
- the ongoing Cemetery Project where we're photographing Jewish Headstones,
- the Jewish Marriages Project,
- and of course, our core task of aiding/assisting people in their Jewish genealogical research.

But it would be remiss of me not to publicly state that I am once again in awe of the sheer magnitude of what these volunteers do on behalf of Jewish genealogy

Max Wald – Vice president

Bubbles Segall – Secretary

Rene Eisner – Treasurer

Liz James – Committee

Rodney Eisfelder – Committee

Ian Samuel – Committee

Bernie Kuran - Committee

Heshy Adelist – Committee

Terry Ashton – Committee

Clive Kaicer – Committee

have each been involved in some area of Society activity over the past 12 months and without their input we would be a poorer Society and unable to fulfil our primary mission of assisting people with their Jewish Genealogy research.

I look forward to catching up with you during the coming 12 months either at one of our Presentations at the Caulfield Town Hall, or maybe at the "In One Voice" Community Festival, or in our Les Oberman Room at the Lamm Library.

Allan Jankie

President

## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Max Wald

This year has been a very successful year for our Society.

We have had seven presentations which included 2 sessions of Breaking Down Brick Walls

- At the AGM, Terry Ashton spoke eloquently on Researching Family Ties, Records and Connections in the UK to Polish Roots
- School Roots Projects information for parents.
- Researching your Lithuanian Roots, by Bubbles Segall
- A beginners Guide to Jewish Genealogy, by Bubbles Segall
- Jewish Records Indexing Poland (How to use JRI)

We have also been proactive in assisting many schools with their Roots projects. Namely, Mount Scopus, Bialik and Yavneh. We are open to assist other schools if needed. Next year we will be including King David.

We had a very strong interest at our table at the 'In One Voice' festival in March. Many passers-by were drawn in to our stall and many have since been in touch with our Society for assistance. Even as we are assisting in family research our main object is to 'show you how'. We have gained many new members. The access to Ancestry.com (Library version) continues to be available to all members at the Lamm Library.

As an affiliate library to the FamilySearch database (LDS) films, we are currently having issues with access to the films, particularly those from Poland State Archives. Hopefully this will be rectified shortly.



At In One Voice: Allan Janke, Max Wald, Bubbles Segall

## SECRETARY REPORT by Bubbles Segall

Another busy year with world-wide queries from people trying to find information about family members with connections to Melbourne. Thanks to the research skills of our committee, we were able to find documentation for most.

After struggling with an outdated email program, we have recently acquired a more robust system which has made the secretary's job much easier.

In March, our Society had a table at the annual **In One Voice**, Jewish Cultural Street Festival. We were kept busy for most of the day promoting our Society and its activities.

Two of my presentations this year were well attended. One titled **Researching your Family in Lithuania** and the other, **A Beginners Guide to Jewish Genealogy**.



If any of our members have suggestions for future presentations, please let us know.

Bubbles Segall  
Honorary Secretary

## TREASURER'S REPORT by Rene Eisner FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 2019

Membership fees received for the financial year 2019 were \$4,315, with 129 members financial. Thank you to all our members for their prompt payment of their fees.

**A warm welcome to our 15 new members.**

Donations totaling \$700 has been received. Thanks to all, for your generous support. Included, is the kind donation towards the subscription to Ancestry.com from Michael Adler in memory of his wife Rena.

This year, we have continued to have marriage records scanned and recorded. We have printed brochures, being available for distribution to schools, and at various events.

In July, several of our committee members travelled to Poland to attend the IAJGS conference in Warsaw. Due to the wide array of information available, the "on-demand" video was purchased for inclusion in our Library.

During the year there were six successful meetings. For the financial year our net funds saw a reduction of \$1,991.63 with a bank balance at 30<sup>th</sup> June at \$9,361.07.

Rene Eisner  
Honorary Treasurer

### 2018 JULY- IAJGS CONFERENCE IN WARSAW, POLAND



Nigel Meinrath (Sydney), John & Rene Eisner, Max Wald, Sarah Meinrath, Greta Davis (Sydney) Martin & Debbie Jurblum in back row, Liz James, Bubbles Segall, Pebby Wald (hiding at back), Amanda Samuels.

# Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) Inc.

ABN 17 078 119 093



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## STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 2019

Membership Fees		4,315.00
total members 177 (48 unfinancial)		
Functions Income		200.00
Bank Interest Received		9.90
Donations Received		700.00
<b>Gross Income</b>		<b>5,224.90</b>
<u>Less Expenses</u>		
Affiliation Fees IAJGS	-	109.40
Archival Scanning	-	554.95
Cons Affairs, Registration Fees	-	57.80
Conference IAJGS – on demand	-	249.78
Donation to Jewishgen & JRI-Poland	-	859.74
Equipment purchases	-	69.95
Equipment Hire – In One Voice	-	218.00
Hall Rental for Meetings	-	680.00
Lamm library computer fees	-	840.40
Insurance Public Liability	-	659.00
Printing Brochures	-	850.24
Subscription to Ancestry.com, etc.	-	1,136.27
Web Maintenance	-	401.00
	-	6,686.53
		- 6,686.53
CREDITOR : GLEN EIRA COUNCIL	680.00	- 530.00
DEBTOR: REFUND OF SCANNING FEES	-150.00	
<b>NET REDUCTION OF FUNDS for year</b>		<b>-1,991.63</b>
Bank Balance at 1/7/18		<b>10,292.70</b>
<b>BANK BALANCE 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019</b>		<b>\$ 9,361.07</b>

REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT TO GLEN EIRA COUNCIL \$400.

## CEMETERIES PROJECT by Max Wald



In November on Mitzvah Day, then continuing in March, we completed photographing the headstones at the Springvale Botanical Gardens Cemetery (Necropolis). This project was achieved with the assistance of many volunteers. These images (about 4500) have now been forwarded to JOWBR (Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry) within Jewishgen. We have also forward all the available headstone images of the St.Kilda Cemetery. With the generous assistance of Lois Comeadow and her committee of Brighton Cemeterians, we have been able to upload all the available images (over 800) of Brighton Cemetery to JOWBR. The Fawkner project of a couple of years ago has been stalled as the MCK is still working initially to get the 4500 images onto their website. We have decided to pass on the Fawkner images directly to JOWBR. The project will also include Ballarat and many other

regional cemeteries where there is a substantial presence of Jewish graves.



Mitzvah  
Day:  
Frances  
Prince,  
Max Wald,  
Marion  
Simmelman,  
Allan Jankie,  
Ron James,  
Sonya  
Oberman.



**On Mitzvah Day:** Howard Freeman, Eve Chapman, Rodney Eisfelder, Max Wald, John Eisner, Rene Eisner, Liz James, Allan Jankie, Marion Simmelman, Helen Fisher.

## Library Report 2019 by Liz James

We were very fortunate to receive a large donation of a collection of rare books donated by the late Malcom Turnbull. Many books were limited copies covering early British and Australian Jewry. All of the books have now been catalogued and shelved in our Resource Room.

(See Lamm Library catalogue for full list of our Jewish Genealogy and Australian Jewish History collection.)

We received many email requests, phone calls and visits to our Resource Room from people needing documentation, searching for their ancestral towns and we in return assisted them by showing them how to use the online records from various websites such as Jewishgen, Yad Vashem, Arolsen Archives and USHMM in Washington.

A subscription to Ancestry.com has been a welcome and popular research resource over the last few years. Ancestry.com is accessible in the main library and in our resource room. Many thanks to Michael Adler for his generous donation in the memory of his late wife Rena, and to the Lamm Library for also contributing with the payment of the subscription which benefits all of our members.

The library is open on the first Sunday of each month from 2pm – 5 pm, and the third Tuesday of each month from 5.00 pm – 8 pm.

The Sunday sessions are usually the most popular and the numbers in each session varies in attendance.

Many thanks to Lauren Joffe and all of the librarians in the Lamm Library for their assistance in directing the more specific Genealogical enquiries our way

Liz James  
October 2019

## Roots Projects by Bernie Kuran



Following on the success of previous year's efforts, members of AJGS (Vic) Committee were invited again to present to students from Mt Scopus, Bialik and Yavneh Colleges. Due to staffing changes, King David School did not participate this year, but we are assured that their Roots project will resume in 2020.

A presentation on the Origins of Jewish Surnames wetted the students' appetite to enquire and research their family histories. They were able to ask questions from the Committee members there, and many took the opportunity to come to the Lamm Library to undertake further research with our volunteers. Over 200 children participated this year, and we look forward

to continuing our involvement with the schools next year.



## Roots Project by Liz James

NEWS

**ROOTS PROJECT**

### Family tree bears fruit

PETER KOHN

FOR Jeremy Arndt, 14, delving into his family's past and learning about his forebears has been an educational adventure.

The year 9 Mount Scopus College student has completed a roots project with assistance from the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society of Victoria (AJGS), his six months' research uncovering information about a Melbourne shule pioneer, the foundations of an iconic liquor brand, and much more.

Using birth, death, marriage and naturalisation records, and sources including the National Archives and the Melbourne Chevra Kadisha, Jeremy was able to learn more about ancestors including Joseph Joffe (1888-1967), his maternal great-great-grandfather, who became first president of Brunswick Hebrew Congregation.

Jeremy also learned much about another maternal great-great-grandfather, Clifford Baitz (1888-1962) who ran a Fitzroy wine bar with celebrated vintner Samuel Wynn, and whose son Eddie Baitz, founded Baitz Liqueurs, a popular staple at simchas.

Like other students in his class, Jeremy has produced a detailed presentation book with important information and rare family



photographs, and a comprehensive family tree chart, assisted by Liz James of the AJGS.

Photo: Peter Haskin

"It was interesting to find out where they came from and the process of how they really became Australians," Jeremy told *The AJN*.

James, who also volunteers with the Australian Jewish Historical Society, said AJGS input into Jewish schools comprises a mix of presentations, assistance with individual students' research, and helping them access the resources of the Jewish Museum of Australia.

Bernie Kuran of the AJGS said his organisation works with students at Mount Scopus, Bialik and Leibler Yavneh Colleges and at the King David School.

"We don't want to do the work for the students but we want to create an interest."

[www.ajgs-vic.org.au](http://www.ajgs-vic.org.au)

We presented a talk on Family Tree Research with other committee members at Bialik College and then at The Jewish Museum of Australia for Mount Scopus and Yavneh Colleges.

The students are given time to explore their family names and to fill in as much as they can on each family tree branch. (King David will return again in 2020.)

In conjunction with our Roots Program assistance, the Australian Jewish News conducted an interview with Jeremy Arndt, a Mt. Scopus Student who explained how the documentation that we, in the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society provided him with, were essential as proof and gave evidence of his family in Vienna

and Bolivia and their migration to Australia for the satisfactory completion of his School Roots Project.

Liz James

October 2019

## AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### TERRY ASHTON



I was born in London and with my parents, Margaret and Cyril and brother, Paul, emigrated to Australia in 1967 on the £10 Assisted Migration Scheme that the Australian Federal government promoted at that time. We left behind a large extended family on both sides, with mum's side originally coming from Poland and Lithuania, and dad's family originally coming from Romania and what is now Latvia. With the exception of one set of great grandparents, by the late 1890s, most of my paternal and maternal great grandparents had arrived in the UK, originally settling in the

Whitechapel area of the East End. The last set of maternal great grandparents, arrived from Poland in the UK in 1933 and fortunately, stayed!

I think my interest in genealogy started as a young child, with my mother telling me stories of growing up with her three first cousins, Jack, Stanley and Ronnie Prashker and the mischief they got up to. My interest grew further as I listened to many stories about how on both sides of the family, they coped with the blitz on London; food shortages and my father's role in the RAF, helping burnt airmen in the first burns unit in England at the Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead.

Genealogy for me is about the telling of stories and in many ways keeping the memories of past relatives, alive. I have come to appreciate the sacrifices they made so that I could have the future that they imagined. As I have become more skilled in using Jewish Gen, Family Search, the UK National Archives and the UK's General Registry Office, I have been able to access many documents which have widened my knowledge about members of my family. In the process, I have learnt that my maternal grandfather, Maurice Prashker, who arrived in the UK in 1921, had by 1925 bought his first house and by 1932, together with his brother, David, were running a gown manufacturing business in central London, employing around 300 people. Not bad for someone who originally arrived in the UK with a smattering of English and not a lot of money!

I have also been lucky enough to make contact with new cousins on each side of my family; one in North Carolina, USA and the other in Brighton, England. For me, that is the icing on the cake!

I don't see myself ever stopping my genealogical research-it's too fascinating! I would encourage as many people as possible, to start interviewing members of their families, hunt through photos and documents and use the Jewish Gen website as well as Family Search and other websites, to begin to discover the stories of where they come from. By doing this, we preserve not only our own family's stories, but in a wider sense, the stories of the Jewish people.

## CLIVE KAICER



I've always been interested in my family's history and their story. My grandparents on my mother's side would always talk to me and my brothers about their parents, where they came from and what they used to do back in the old country, and why they left. As I got older, I was able to travel abroad in 1998 and meet relatives of whom these stories were based on, and meet them face to face, though we never talked about the past. I began to notice that my grandparents on my father's side were a little less open about their past. So, naturally, I became even more curious about their past than my other set of grandparents' past. I felt there was something to

uncover, to discover and understand. Then in 2004, I signed up to JewishGEN, I had no idea what I was doing. I enlisted in the "Family Finder" and didn't get very far. Back then I was searching for spelling variations that made sense to me at the time. I didn't get very far. I started asking my grandparents (Dad's side) the hard questions, to which they would often tell me "they couldn't remember", or "no, it's not a good thing to talk about". I knew I was hitting the right buttons.

One afternoon, I went to wake my grandfather for some afternoon tea and we got talking. I asked him about names, places, relationships. He answered everything. And back then it was a huge revelation to me that there was more family than I'd ever been told. I got the bug. But it didn't take hold until recently, when a co-worker revealed that her mother was obsessed with the Ancestry App on her phone. I enquired further, downloaded the App and started building my family tree on the spot with my recollected data my grandfather had told me (it wasn't very much). Hints started appearing and I soon realised there was information out there to discover. But the bug was back. That night I re-registered with JewishGEN and made a donation to allow for extra search abilities and accesses. I also, paid for the Ancestry membership to gain further records. Upon doing a simple search of what I thought our family name was, I saw a different spelling, and the penny dropped. I'd been searching for the surname with the wrong spelling. Well kind of right, but wrong. You see it was spelled a certain way until one family member moved towns and it began to be spelled differently. I have now built my tree to over 800 people on both sides of my Dad's parents. So many stories have been revealed and uncovered. I now understand on a deeper level why my Dad's parents didn't want to talk about their past. I have connected with previously unknown family in Israel, USA and South Africa. I have images of gravestones, collected pictures and newspaper entries as well. Facebook, FamilySearch and Ancestry have been paramount in my ability to trace and build my family tree, and I have added additional information to a new Family Finder listing on JewishGEN which has helped me immensely. My original Family Finder entry is still there on JewishGEN. I'm leaving it there as a nostalgic reminder of where I was in my genealogical journey and how far I have come, and how much more there is to go. I've met wonderful people along the way and I'm looking forward to connecting with more people, as well as discovering so much more.