



AUSTRALIAN JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY (VIC) INC ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 2020

Committee of Management

President
Vic-President
Secretary
Treasurer
Committee

Allan Jankie
Max Wald
Bubbles Segall
Rene Eisner
Heshy Adelist
Terry Ashton
Rodney Eisfelder
Liz James
Clive Kaicer
Bernie Kuran
Ian Samuel OAM

Honoured Life Members

Rodney Eisfelder
Liz James
Lionel Sharpe OAM dec.

ajgsvictoria@gmail.com

www.ajgs-vic.org.au





TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Report by Allan Jankie	2
Vice President's Report by Max Wald	4
Secretary's Report by Bubbles Segall	5
Treasurer's Report by Rene Eisner	6
Statement of Income & Expenditure	7
Library Report by Liz James	8
Roots Project by Liz James	9
Roots Project by Bernie Kuran	10
Database Report by Rodney Eisfelder	11
Marriage Database Report by Ian Samuel	12
Cemeteries Report by Max Wald	13
Website Report by Clive Kaicer	14
2020 Report by Terry Ashton	14



Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) Inc.

ABN 17 078 119 093

2020 PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Allan Jankie

2020 for the Australian Jewish Genealogy Society (Vic) has been like most things around the world, a tale of 2 stories.

The first half of the year was as per normal, a busy year for our Society as you will read in the reports contained in this Annual Report. The last 6 months were very 'trying' for us in attempting to honour our commitment to aid people in researching their Jewish ancestry. So many of our programmes and projects were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and still are today.

The highlight for me of the past year was our AGM meeting and the delivery of the inaugural Lionel Sharpe Memorial Presentation by Prof Martin Delatycki.

It was personally gratifying for me to see the large turnout to honour Lionel's memory and to welcome Annita and the rest of Lionel's family. Prof Delatycki didn't disappoint with his presentation either!

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, especially in light of the difficulties emanating from Covid-19.

(Continued) **PRESIDENT'S REPORT** by Allan Jankie

To the Committee, Max Wald- Vice President, Bubbles Segall – Secretary, Rene Eisner – Treasurer, Liz James, Rodney Eifelder, Ian Samuel, Bernie Kuran, Heshy Adelstein, Terry Ashton, Clive Kaicer, who 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, unable to fulfil our primary mission of assisting people with their Jewish Genealogy research.

Hopefully, I will be able to catch up with you during the coming 12 months, most likely by Zoom meeting as unfortunately this appears to be the current state of play for the foreseeable future. I can assure you we are working on providing informative and entertaining sessions for you to join in with.

Stay safe

Allan Jankie, President



At the 2019 Inaugural Lionel Sharpe Memorial Presentation,
with Annita Sharpe and Bubbles Segall

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT by Max Wald

This year has been a very eventful year for our Society and the world in full. Due to the Covid-19 Virus, the Society has had to undertake a virtual face. As many of you will be aware, our committee meetings and presentations are now on Zoom. No need to go out and drive to our presentations. Just attend in the comfort of your home.

In many ways this has been an easier method for those who wish to attend. Our planned participation in this year's usually successful 'In One Voice' was cancelled last minute due to the oncoming virus.

Obviously our 'Open' days in our rooms at the Lamm Library have ceased, although we are attending to any enquiries by email. We can offer Zoom assistance if necessary. Please contact us at ajgsvictoria@gmail.com

Presentations:

The society has decided to honour the late Lionel Sharpe with Memorial Presentations at all our AGM meetings. Through the year we had 5 successful meetings:

- * **Sept 8** - Mark Feldschuh presented My Journey into Jewish-Polish Genealogy from Lodz to Warsaw to Borszczow.
- * **AGM Oct 27 2019** was our first and very successful Lionel Sharpe Memorial Presentation at the City of Glen Eira Townhall
Martin Delatycki - Genes and Jews -What did we do to deserve this?
- * **February 16** - Bernie Kuran, committee member, presented his now famous Meaning of Jewish Surnames
- * **May 3** - was our first Zoom presentation. Rodney Eisfelder – German Jewish Genealogy - methods, sources and examples.
- * **May 24** Paul Gardner Q & A regarding his book - The Unsung Family Hero: The Genealogical Background
- * **June 28** Rabbi John Levi Q & A with Ian Samuel - Discovery of our Australian Jewish Past - The Lonely Jews

AJGS (Vic) has again 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. We were to include King David this year before the virus arrived. This has again been postponed until next year.

Max Wald, Vice President

SECRETARY'S REPORT by Bubbles Segall

Liz James and I attended a one-day DNA Downunder Conference here in Melbourne in August last year. Blaine Bettinger from the United States, a professional genealogist specialising in DNA, was one of the main presenters. I also attended his three day conference in Sydney.

The 2020 Lionel Sharpe Memorial Presentation will be given by Louise Coakley – **Introduction to DNA for Genealogy** which will cater for both beginners and those who are more advanced in their DNA research.

Queries from people in Australia and overseas researching their family history keeps the committee busy most of the year. If we are unable to assist any-one we have a wide network of contacts we can call upon.

Earlier in the year I visited South Africa and on a visit to my home town of Stellenbosch, I had the opportunity to photograph headstones in the cemetery that are not yet on JewishGen's Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR).

Bubbles Segall

Honorary Secretary



Zoom meeting with Paul Gardner and some of the attendees.

TREASURER'S REPORT by Rene Eisner FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 2020

Membership fees received for the financial year 2020 were \$3,325, with 89 members financial. Thank you to those members for their prompt payment of their fees.

A warm welcome to our 6 new members.

Donations totaling \$620 have been received. Thanks to all, for your generous support.

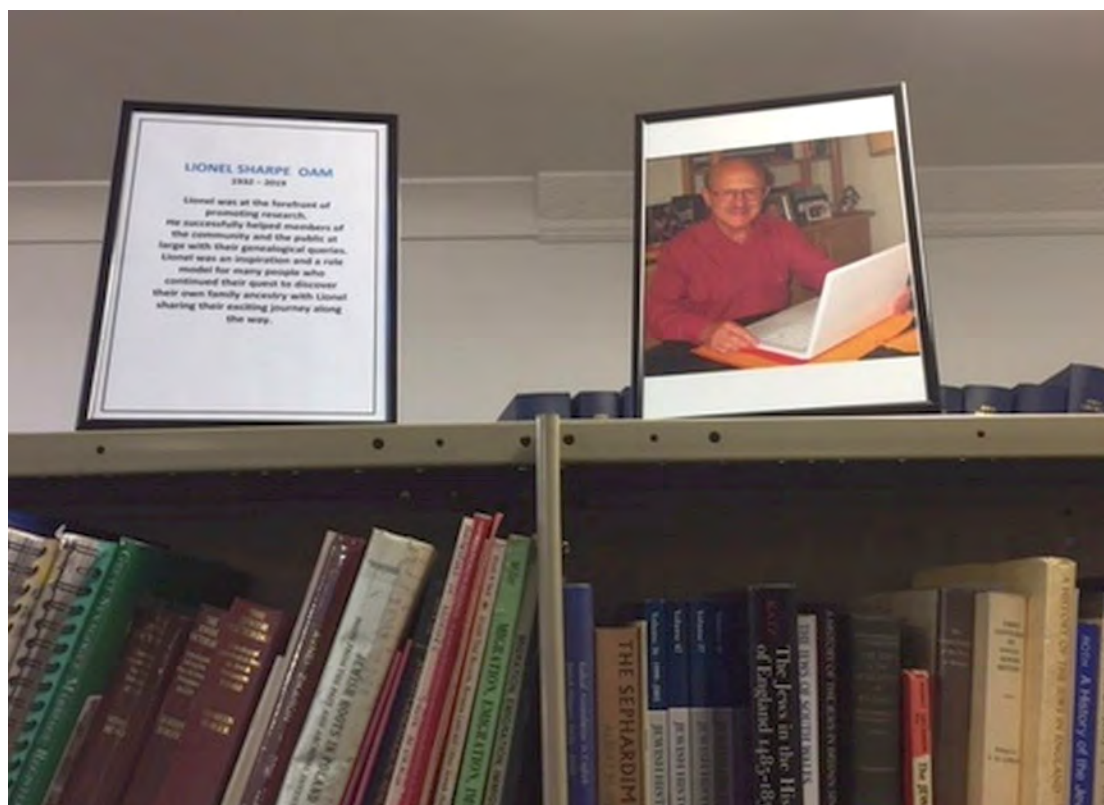
This year, we have continued to have marriage records scanned and recorded. We have printed brochures, being available for distribution to schools, and at various events.

During the year there were six successful meetings, of which two were on Zoom.

For the financial year our net funds saw a reduction of \$4,776.04 due in part to several one-off expenses, with a bank balance at 30th June at \$5,425.43.

Due the COVID-19 crisis, and the challenges upon us all, your committee have announced that all paid-up members for 2020 will have the benefit of reduced fees for the next year 2021.

Presenting the Lionel Sharpe Resource Collection.



Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) Inc.

ABN 17 078 119 093



PO Box 2071
Camberwell West, Vic, 3124
ajgs victoria@gmail.com
www.ajgs-vic.org.au

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 2020

Membership Fees		3,235.00
total members 175 (86 unfinancial)		
Functions Income		305.00
Bank Interest Received		6.82
Donations Received		620.00
Gross Income		4,166.82
<u>Less Expenses</u>		
Affiliation Fees IAJGS	-	120.44
Archival Scanning	-	81.00
Advertising re Meetings	-	1,185.00
Consumer Affairs, Registration Fee	-	59.20
Donation to Jewishgen – in memory of Phyllis Kramer	-	275.19
Donation annual to Jewishgen & JRI Poland	-	324.80
Equipment purchases	-	349.00
Equipment Hire – In One Voice	-	238.00
Hall Rental for Meetings	-	176.00
Library Books	-	1,322.53
Insurance Public Liability	-	671.00
Printing Brochures	-	1,322.45
Subscriptions to Genealogy websites	-	124.18
Website Upgrade and Email Maintenance	-	1,853.67
Lamm Library – maintenance of Library Catalogue	-	840.40
	-	8,942.86
		- 8,942.86
NET REDUCTION OF FUNDS for year		- 4,776.04
Creditor 30 June 2020		840.40
Bank Balance at 1/7/19		9,361.07
BANK BALANCE 30 June 2020		<u>\$ 5,425.43</u>

LIBRARY REPORT 2020 by Liz James

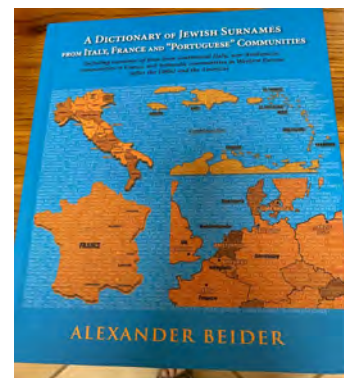
Due to the COVID-19 virus our AJGS / AJHS Library has been in lockdown since March. We had prepared our resource box in readiness for the 'In One Voice Festival' which was cancelled at the very last minute.

We were very fortunate to receive a large donation of books, documents, photos, memorabilia and obituaries from the library of the late Lionel Sharpe. These items are being itemized and will be catalogued once the library reopens. Many thanks also to Paul Forgasz and Bubbles Segall for their book donations. (See Lamm Library catalogue for full list of our Jewish Genealogy and Australian Jewish History collection.)

We are still receiving email requests and phone calls from people needing documentation, searching for their ancestral towns and this interest has increased since many people having time to ponder questions and explore their ancestry.

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.

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.



RECORDS

I am in process of compiling a database of the Register of Births of the Jewish Congregation of Melbourne Port Phillip 1844 – 1975. This also links to the marriage of their parents and will be added to the marriage and death data on the AJHS website. A copy of these births from 1844 – 1920 is also available in our resource room which once we are back out of lockdown will be open to the public.

Hope to see you in our library very soon. We will notify you when we reopen.

Liz James

ROOTS PROJECTS by Liz James

Rene Eisner updated our website handouts and I then produced a Power Point presentation showing what documentation one would expect to find for each of these website links.

This presentation was shown at a Sunday workshop meeting to the parents of students doing their Roots projects this year.

It was also presented to the students at Yavneh, Mt Scopus, Sholem Alecheim and Bialik as well as to the Yavneh parents during an evening information session.

The students were given assistance with their family trees and we received many enquiries from parents wanting further assistance.

The students at the schools have varying ancestral backgrounds including a large cohort from South Africa, Lithuania and Israel so the demand for research assistance was necessary and thanks to Bubbles for assisting the students as well as a very large group with ancestors from Poland and Galicia.



James Degen proudly displays his Roots Project

ROOTS PROJECTS by Bernie Kuran

Members of AJGS (Vic) Committee were invited again to present to students from Mt.Scopus, Bialik and Yavneh Colleges. We were fortunate that these presentations took place before the first lockdowns. Unfortunately, King David School did not participate this year, but we are hopeful that we will be able to be a part of their Roots project in 2021.

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 email enquiries to the Committee to assist with their research. Over 200 children participated this year, and we look forward to continuing our involvement with the schools next year.



DATABASE REPORT by Rodney Eisfelder



The last year has certainly been a roller coaster ride. In August last year I attended the IAJGS conference in Cleveland, which was followed by a visit to a distant cousin in Virginia, where I carefully explained how her grandfather's step-father (my great-uncle), was actually his cousin.



That trip was followed by my first visit to Shanghai, where I explored the youthful haunts of my father and represented him at the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum. Less than three months later, the world changed, and travel to Shanghai, and almost anywhere became impossible...

Photo: Rodney with Chen Jian, Director of the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum, outside the first Eisfelder residence in Shanghai

The Covid-19 experience, while it has its down sides, has also given many opportunities for research. I've taken full advantage of my State Library membership card to access Ancestry from home while the pandemic keeps the library closed.

That in turn has led me to discovering another half-brother of my great-grandfather, who died at a young age and was completely forgotten by the family.

The pandemic also gave me more time to explore familysearch.org's collection of records from Königsberg, where I discovered the burial record of my 3-greats-grandfather, including the fee for the horse that hauled the hearse, and also the marriage records of his son.

Just in the last few weeks, a posting on the JewishGen discussion group led me to discover a photo of the grave of my 4-greats-grandfather in Baiersdorf, Germany.

Our marriage project began more than ten years ago with the scanning of a handful of microfilms from the three "early" Melbourne Synagogues. That was followed by the indexing of those scans, and the development of a database to house the indexes. The project has since grown in scope and size and now covers over 50 congregations and/or rabbis.

(Continued) **DATABASE REPORT** by Rodney Eisfelder

Other projects I am working on include a civil marriages project for Jewishgen's Danzig SIG, and correcting Trove's transcriptions of birth, death and marriage announcements.

I still have time to help members solve some of their genealogical puzzles. The most recent used the assistance of a fellow researcher in Germany to contact two municipal archives, and returned a haul of birth, death and marriage certificates, as well as residents' cards to confirm that Moritz and Meier were the same person (Meyer at birth), and that Martha was actually Minna.

Rodney Eisfelder - keeper of the marriage database.

MARRIAGE DATABASE by Ian Samuel

The past year has been a busy one for Max Wald, Rodney Eisfelder and me as we both increase the size of the marriage record collection and then to prepare it for demographers. We now have over 50 synagogues and rabbis involved and over 30,000 records collected representing approximately 27,000 marriages from 1832-2020.

We have reached an agreement with the Australian Jewish Historical Society in New South Wales to have those records from NSW that we haven't got added. A sealed copy of the database is held by the president of the AJHS which can only be accessed by arrangement with me as chairman of the group. They have put basic details of marriages occurring more than 80 years ago, on their website (www.ajhs.com.au). The searchable databases which they have created for burials and marriages along with other areas are very useful tools for genealogists.

Following a meeting which took place in July, with Gary Eckstein the former demographer for the Jewish community in New South Wales, we are going back and adding further information onto our database spreadsheets. This will enable demographers to research the information without breaching privacy issues as they will only be able to view the data minus the names.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank both Max Wald and Rodney Eisfelder for the magnificent work that they are doing for our community. They have spent countless hours in transcribing and checking details on the scans that we possess.

Despite the travails of the pandemic we have been able to work on hopefully helping the cause of genealogy and the preservation of our past.

Ian Samuel OAM

August 2020

CEMETERIES REPORT by Max Wald

On Mitzvah Day 17th November 2020, with the assistance of the committee and many volunteers we had a very successful day photographing over 2,300 headstones, in the Melbourne General Cemetery (Carlton) that had not been previously photographed.

These have been edited and combined and finally OVER 3.500 images were forwarded to the JewishGen database JOWBR (Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry).

Although many of the older headstones were illegible, we photographed the headstones we felt gave some indication of the interned person. It was a difficult task as the layout of the cemetery was at times haphazard.

During the year we have also forwarded images from Ballarat Cemetery to JOWBR. Over the last few years, the society has photographed Fawkner, Springvale Botanical Cemetery. Also forwarded to JOWBR images from St. Kilda Cemetery, Brighton and Ballarat.

As genealogists, we feel it is very important that Jewish researchers worldwide have the ability to find the details of deceased possible relatives and if possible, to view the headstone.

Max Wald, Co-ordinator



At Carlton General Cemetery November Mitzvah Day 2019

WEBSITE REPORT From Clive Kaicer

Website has been renewed as below and will continue to be enhanced this coming year.

- updated theme
- updated resources (links to helpful genealogical websites)
- added events scheduling
- updated logo clarity and colours
- reviewed web-hosting package plan
- added videos of recorded meetings and presentations

Clive Kaicer

2020 REPORT From Terry Ashton

As a member of the AJGS committee, the past year has been extremely interesting and varied and I have enjoyed working with a very committed and dedicated team.

A number of highlights for me included being fortunate to be involved with the Roots project, helping students at various Jewish schools to create a family tree and research some of their ancestors. As well, I was able to help those who came to the Lamm library (pre Covid!) who wanted assistance with family research.

I am on the sub-committee preparing for an Australian conference in the middle of 2021, which will provide a great opportunity for attendees to hear from a variety of speakers on numerous topics. The conference is still very much in the planning stage and the sub committee is having to be creative, given the Covid 19 situation.

Whilst Covid 19 has presented difficulties in communicating with members of the committee and AJGS members, it has also presented opportunities via technology. The committee meetings I have attended on Zoom have been as enthusiastic as if we were actually meeting face to face.

I would like to thank the members of the AJGS committee for making me extremely welcome and for their support over the past year.

Terry Ashton

Committee Member