

Dear members

Welcome to the June newsletter of AJGS (VIC). I hope you enjoyed the March 2026 newsletter. Don't forget that if you have any suggestions as to items you would like to see included in future newsletters, please contact Terry Ashton at ajgsvictoria@gmail.com

With the help of our donors, AJGS-(VIC) is keeping membership fees as before, having not changed for 10 years. Fee renewal notices have been emailed and we encourage those who have not yet renewed their memberships to do so at their earliest convenience.

Who we are

The Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) Inc (AJGS Vic) is a non-profit society passionate about encouraging and assisting people in researching their Jewish ancestry. We welcome everyone with an interest in this research area, regardless of ethnicity or background, whether you are researching your family history for connections to Jewish heritage or studying this fascinating and important area of history.

We provide access to the AJGS (Vic) research library and to specialised researchers; we hold regular meetings; provide workshops and events to support members and provide practical assistance for research on such topics as DNA, using JRI Poland and more.

A warm welcome to new members

AJGS (VIC) extends a warm welcome to the following new members:

- Danielle O'Brien
- David Bartak
- Pip Brown
- Caroline Lazarus

My interest in genealogy: Mark Ellison, AJGS-VIC Treasurer

Mark arrived in Australia in 2017 and later discovered that he had family in Melbourne, although he had no details or contact information.

Using genealogical research tools, he discovered that three of his grandfather's siblings came to Melbourne from the UK in the 1930s. This sparked an interest in genealogy, which included a trip to Lithuania to find out more about the family.

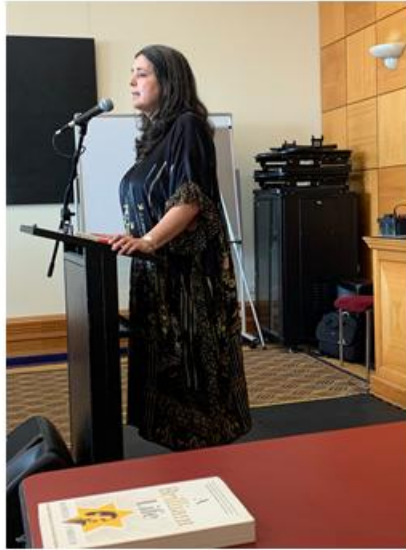
Mark is a qualified accountant, and his career in finance has led him to working and living in France, Kazakhstan, Monaco, the US and Hong Kong. He now calls Melbourne home.



Update on Past Events

MARCH 22ND 2026: “The importance of recording one’s personal history”

In late March, Rachelle Unreich, a journalist for over 37 years, spoke on the importance of recording one’s personal history, touching on the story of her mother, a Holocaust survivor. Her talk was highly informative and created much interest.



MAY 31ST 2026: RECOVERING THE WORLDS OF MY JEWISH FAMILY: THE JOURNEY TO OPPORTUNITY



AJGS-VIC committee member, Yolande McNicoll, PhD, drew on stories shared to her by her grandmother, which allowed her to build a richly documented family history. In this talk, she traced her Fink ancestors’ 40 year journey from Poland to Melbourne via Geelong, London, Guernsey and Berlin, using genealogical research and expertise in history and language and palaeography.



Forthcoming Presentations: Introducing changes to booking for events

At a recent AJGS (VIC) committee meeting it was decided to use TryBooking (<https://www.trybooking.com/>) for our future presentations, which will also be advertised on 'Social Blueprint;' see <https://thesocialblueprint.org.au/>

Please add these dates to your diaries and log onto TryBooking to register - <https://www.trybooking.com/>

- June 21st: Using the International Tracing Service
- July 19th: Solving your genealogical queries.
- August 4th: My family's connection to the Dunera boys

AJGS (VIC)
PRESENTS

The International Tracing Service

ARCHIVES AS A RESOURCE

Elize Bath of the Weiner Library, London will discuss how to use the International Tracing Service Archives as a resource.

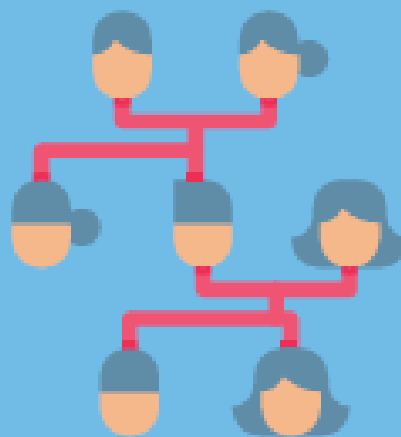
SUNDAY, JUNE 21ST
7PM AEST
A FREE ONLINE ZOOM EVENT
REGISTER [HERE](#)




AJGS (VIC)
PRESENTS

Ask the Genealogists

**AJGS Vic will help with your
family tree research.
Come with your questions/brick
walls and let us assist you.**



**AFTERNOON TEA PROVIDED
GLEN EIRA TOWN HALL
FREE!**

**SUNDAY, JULY 19TH
2:30-4:00PM**

AJGS (VIC)

Presents

MY FAMILY'S CONNECTION TO THE DUNERA BOYS

With Terry Ashton



Register
HERE

TUESDAY, AUGUST 4TH

7:30PM - 9:00PM

A ZOOM EVENT - NO CHARGE

**Richard
Abrahamowicz/Richard
and George Arlen**
From escaping Nazi
occupied Austria, to
internment in the
UK, transportation
to Australia on HMT
'Dunera', internment
in Tatura and Hay, to
joining 'X' Troop, as
a Commando.
An incredible tale!

FROM 'GEDMATCH'

The Next Generation of GEDmatch — Live Preview Webinar

This is the one we've been waiting to show you. We're pulling back the curtain on the all-new GEDmatch — rebuilt from the ground up, redesigned around the way you actually do your research, and faster everywhere it counts. You'll get a guided walkthrough of the new interface, a look at what's changed and why, and a first glimpse of where the platform is headed next.


If you've been with us a while, this is a genuine leap. If you're newer, it's the GEDmatch we always wanted to give you. Either way — come see it before anyone else.

Open to **all users**, free to attend. Can't make it live? The full recording will go up on our [YouTube channel](#) afterward.

[Register for the webinar](#)



Reconstructing Ancestors with GEDmatch: Lazarus, My Evil Twin, & Phasing

 Fri, Jun 26, 2026 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM PDT

Final Friday Webinar: Bring Your Ancestors Back to Life

The response to our recent Tier 1-focused webinars has been wonderful.

Missed the last ones? Tier 1 members can find the recording and slides waiting in the [Tier 1 members-only forum channel](#).

"Reconstructing Ancestors with GEDmatch: Lazarus, My Evil Twin & Phasing" Friday, June 26th · 12:00 PM PST (3:00 PM EST)

Here's a question worth sitting with: how much of an ancestor who never tested still survives in the DNA of their descendants?

Quite a lot, as it turns out — and GEDmatch has the tools to find it. In this session we'll put three of them to work: Lazarus, My Evil Twin, and Phasing. You'll see how they can be used to reconstruct DNA, tease maternal lines apart from paternal, and reveal what did and didn't make it down through

the generations. We'll be honest about what these tools do brilliantly and where they hit their limits, so you leave knowing exactly when to reach for each.

Good news for everyone: this webinar is open to all GEDmatch users. Sign up, join us live, and come with questions.

And for our Tier 1 members — the recording lands in your exclusive forum channel once the session wraps. Not a subscriber yet? Upgrading now gets you both the recording and full access to the reconstruction tools we'll be demonstrating.

Mark your calendars for both. June is a big month, and we'd love to have you there.

Happy researching, **The GEDmatch Team** <https://www.gedmatch.com/>

2027 46th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

An Important Update on The Future of Conferences — And Why We're Excited About It



Our community is built on stories. Stories of families who crossed oceans, rebuilt lives, and carried their histories forward against tremendous odds. It's that spirit of resilience, of doing what it takes to keep going, that guides everything we do at IAJGS. And it's that spirit that shapes the news I want to share with you today.

After careful analysis, honest conversations, and a lot of hard work by our board and our volunteer conference leadership, the IAJGS Board has made the decision to reschedule our upcoming conferences:

- **The 2026 Virtual Conference has been moved to April 4–6, 2027**
- **The 2027 In-Person Conference has been moved to 2028**

I know that's not what many of you were hoping to hear. Frankly, we weren't either. But I want to walk you through exactly why we made this decision because you deserve the full picture, not just the headline.

The Financial Reality of In-Person Conferences

When I stepped into the role of IAJGS President last August, I brought a finance background with me and immediately turned that lens on our conference model. What I found was sobering but also clarifying.

Since COVID-19, conference costs have increased by **25 to 38%**, driven by inflation, labour shortages, and supply chain disruptions. The three biggest cost drivers (venue rental, catering, and AV) have surged **18 to 25% since 2022 alone**. AV alone typically runs us between \$65,000 and \$85,000. And that's before we talk about speaker honorariums, which we began paying in 2021 and which now run approximately \$40,000 for a domestic in-person conference.

Location matters enormously too. "Tier one" cities, those major metropolitan areas where we've traditionally held our conferences, carry a **40 to 60% cost premium** over "tier two" cities. We simply can no longer afford to hold conferences in those markets.

To put real numbers to it: I took our last pre-COVID conference in Cleveland, which cost approximately \$440,000 to produce, and modelled what that same conference would cost today. The answer: up to \$167,000 more. To cover that increase with registration fees alone, we would need to charge each attendee up to \$238 more, raising our early bird price from \$325 to \$563. Alternatively, we would need to nearly double our fundraising, from \$177,000 to \$344,000.

When I looked at 12 years of conference data, another pattern emerged: in 7 of those 12 years, we were reliant on local fundraising donations just to break even. And that fundraising starts from scratch every single year, in a new city, with a new local team, with limited ability to transfer knowledge from one conference to the next. It's an uneven model, and it's become an unsustainable one.

What Our Conference Leadership Told Us

At our all-day board meeting in Salt Lake City in February, Todd Knowles and Suzanne Hoffman (volunteer co-chairs of the virtual conference) presented their honest assessment of what it would take to make the 2026 virtual conference a success.

Their conclusion was clear: pushing through with a virtual conference in October 2026, followed by an in-person conference in 2027, would risk the quality of both events. The timeline was too compressed. Many of the volunteers needed for the virtual conference were also being tapped to plan the in-person conference. And holding a virtual event in October 2026 and an in-person event in mid-2027 puts the two so close together that one would inevitably cannibalize the other.

As Suzanne put it: *we could do a conference in October. It just wouldn't be the conference you want. We want the conference you want. And so do they.*

What We're Doing Differently

This isn't just a scheduling change. This is the beginning of a fundamental reimagining of how we plan, fund, and deliver our conferences. Here's what that looks like:

Moving to tier two cities. Our conference experience in Fort Wayne in 2025 proved something important: a smaller, walkable city with a strong local Jewish community and a right-sized venue can produce an exceptional conference experience. We heard overwhelmingly positive feedback about the ability to walk out of the convention centre and explore the city on foot. We're building on that lesson.

Fundraising as a foundation, not an afterthought. We have a new fundraising committee forming right now, and we're developing a meaningful, multi-year development plan at the

IAJGS level, not just relying on local groups to carry that weight alone. Irv Adler, who did an outstanding job leading fundraising in Fort Wayne, has agreed to serve on the committee, and we're grateful for his expertise.

Planning further ahead. Properly producing an in-person conference requires a 2 to 3 year runway. We contracted with Fort Wayne 25 months in advance. This new timeline gives us the runway we need to do this right — from site selection and vetting, to contract negotiation, to building local partnerships and fundraising relationships.

Reimagining the conference format. We're looking at shorter, more focused conferences (approximately 3.5 days) with fewer simultaneous sessions, a stronger emphasis on new and distinctive content, and a closer look at every cost element to make sure we're spending where it matters most.

Building new partnerships. We're actively exploring partnerships with like-minded organizations such as historical societies, museums, synagogues, and other genealogical groups that share our mission and our audience. There is no reason Jewish family history and broader historical preservation shouldn't be working hand in hand.

What's Happening in 2026

We want to be clear: **we are not going dark in 2026.**

We have two AI-focused virtual summits planned for IAJGS member societies. The next one is scheduled for **April 26th** and is free to attend. These summits are designed to keep our community engaged, learning, and connected while we lay the groundwork for what comes next. More details are coming shortly. Stay tuned and please share with your local society members.

We will also be holding our **annual meeting** later in 2026, and we'll announce that date soon.

Save the Date: IAJGS Virtual Conference: April 4–6, 2027

More details, including registration information and the call for speakers, will be announced in the coming months. We are building something worth waiting for.

How You Can Help

This community has always been powered by the people in it. Here's where we need you most right now:

Do you have fundraising experience? We are actively building our fundraising committee and would love to hear from you. Please reach out to us at feedback@iajgs.org.

Do you have ideas for conference locations? We're looking for tier two cities with a local Jewish community, good flight access, walkability, kosher food options, and a mid-sized venue. If somewhere comes to mind, please let us know.

Do you have thoughts, questions, or feedback? We mean it when we say we want to hear from you. Write to us at feedback@iajgs.org and we will respond.

Transparency is one of the commitments I made when I stepped into this role. This post is us trying to live that out. We are not retreating from our mission. We are building the foundation to advance it more sustainably and more powerfully than ever before.

Thank you for being part of this community. The stories we preserve matter. The families we reconnect matter. And the conferences where we come together to do that work, they matter too. That's exactly why we're taking the time to get this right.

Warmly,

Susan Weinberg, *IAJGS President*

LDVDF (L'Dor V'Dor Foundation) Worldwide Jewish Calendar

You may be interested in the LDVDF Worldwide Jewish Calendar where you can check out Jewish genealogy, Jewish history, and Jewish heritage events coming up from around the world.

The L'Dor V'Dor Foundation (LDVDF) promotes events that strengthen Jewish identity and continuity, JDays is the first comprehensive, central calendar of upcoming Jewish webinars, seminars, workshops, lectures, films, tours, conferences, meet-ups, oral history collection days, historical photo and document scan-a-thons,...any creative program with a focus on Jewish family history, Jewish history or Jewish heritage.

It is a free service to view, it is a defining initiative and global resource in Jewish education, teaching and learning. In addition, to Jewish Genealogical Societies, LDVDF has invited other organizations to post and view such as Jewish Museums, Jewish Universities, Holocaust Museums, Universities with Judaic Studies Programs, Jewish Historical Societies, Hillels, Jewish Federations, Chabad's, Jewish Community Centres, Young Jewish Professionals, B'nai Brith, BBYO's, as well as Jewish Fraternities & Sororities.

For further information, log onto <https://ldvdf.org/jdays/>

Resources and Links: The Lamm Jewish Library of Australia (<https://ljl.org.au/>) has over 46,000 books and includes the collections of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (Vic) and the Australian Jewish Historical Society.

Stay in touch with us via any of the following:

Please remember to visit our website at <https://ajgs-vic.org.au/> where past presentations will help with your research.

Email: ajgsvictoria@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.ajgs-vic.org.au/>

Facebook: [Australian Jewish Genealogical Society-VIC](#)

Ms Terry Ashton
Honorary Secretary
Australian Jewish Genealogical Society (VIC)

AND FINALLY!!!!!!!!!!!!

Easy Cousin Relationship Chart

Determining a “Cousin” Relationship between two people is quite easy if you have a proper chart. Many of the charts can be confusing. The one below is quite easy. All you have to do is follow 3 steps:

1. Determine the common ancestor between two people.
2. For the first person, select the common ancestor’s relationship to them across the top row.
3. For the second person, select the common ancestor’s relationship to them down the left column.

Where those two selections intersect is their relationship. See? Easy Peasy!

Common Ancestor	Grandparent	Great Grandparent	2nd Great Grandparent	3rd Great Grandparent	4th Great Grandparent	5th Great Grandparent
Grandparent	1st Cousin	1st Cousin Once Removed	1st Cousin 2X Removed	1st Cousin 3X Removed	1st Cousin 4X Removed	1st Cousin 5X Removed
Great Grandparent	1st Cousin Once Removed	2nd Cousin	2nd Cousin Once Removed	2nd Cousin 2X Removed	2nd Cousin 3X Removed	2nd Cousin 4X Removed
2nd Great Grandparent	1st Cousin 2X Removed	2nd Cousin Once Removed	3rd Cousin	3rd Cousin Once Removed	3rd Cousin 2X Removed	3rd Cousin 3X Removed
3rd Great Grandparent	1st Cousin 3X Removed	2nd Cousin 2X Removed	3rd Cousin Once Removed	4th Cousin	4th Cousin Once Removed	4th Cousin 2X Removed
4th Great Grandparent	1st Cousin 4X Removed	2nd Cousin 3X Removed	3rd Cousin 2X Removed	4th Cousin Once Removed	5th Cousin	5th Cousin Once Removed
5th Great Grandparent	1st Cousin 5X Removed	2nd Cousin 4X Removed	3rd Cousin 3X Removed	4th Cousin 2X Removed	5th Cousin Once Removed	6th Cousin

