



Perth Jewish Roots

Jewish Historical & Genealogical Society of Western Australia Inc (JHGS-WA)

ABN: 96 870 570 226

website: www.jhgswa.org.au

E : michelle.urban@jhgsa.org.au

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025



ANZAC DAY

Friday 25th April 2025

JHGS-WA laid a wreath at the Jewish War Memorial in Kings Park

GUEST SPEAKER – CANCELLATION of RABBI DAN LIEBERMAN

Rabbi Dan Lieberman has been rescheduled to Speak on his Topic of the “Anzac Rabbi David Isaac Freedman. This will now take place on Sunday 22nd June 2025.

We are sorry for this cancellation and any inconvenience this may have caused, but unfortunately Rabbi Lieberman has had to go overseas at short notice.

However, we have an excellent replacement for our next General Meeting in Christine Silbert.

Christine Silbert

Christine will provide insights into the research and writing of her book.



“How Did I Get Here?”

The book discovers the breadth of the Silberts’ of Bialystok and their Australian story
Book selling for \$35.00

SUNDAY 25th May 2025

1.30pm for 2.00pm start

Noranda Chabad Synagogue

RSVP: Michelle – M:0418 910 258 or email: michelle.urban@jhgsa.org.au

BREAKING NEWS



John and Michelle Urban were delighted to catch up with Sabrina Elias, Head Archivist and President Peter Philippsohn of the AJHS (Australian Jewish Historical Society) to discuss the History, Archiving and Storage of the Perth Jewish community’s records.

To enable Perth’s Jewish history and archival material to be available for perpetuity, JHGS-WA desperately needs support by the way of funds, donations, sponsorship, benefactors etc.

(Interview Peter Philippsohn had with Morry Frenkel on 27 November 2024)

<https://ajhs.com.au/2025/02/10/peter-philippsohn-interview-with-lchaim-podcast/>

Peter described the AJHS’s multi-year project to catalogue more than 13,000 photos of the Australian Jewish community, which will now include Perth’s Archival history, and the various databases that are available free of charge to the general community and researchers. The databases include Jewish cemetery records, the names of Jews who have served in Australian military forces, Jews elected to parliament and those who have received honours.

A Tribute to Emeritus Chief Rabbi Shalom Coleman (1918-2025)

Rabbi Coleman passed away in Perth aged 106



Born in Liverpool on December 5, 1918, Rabbi Coleman received many accolades as an esteemed rabbi, for his military service, academic achievements, as an author and editor, and for his services to the broader community. Rabbi Coleman’s passing marks the end of an era. Rabbi Coleman always expressed his joy for Judaism and always imparted a positive energy. That is his greatest legacy that we should all carry forward in his merit. In short, Rabbi Coleman was a student of history, a recorder of history, a commentator of history, a participant in history, and a creator of history.

COMPUTER WORKSHOP

Thanks

JHGS-WA would like to thank Ian Simon from Family History WA who helped us to organise a very successful Computer Workshop, which was held on Tuesday 18th March 2025.

Many thanks to the members who attended and in many cases finding their elusive ancestors in the huge collection of records on the different websites.

The feedback from those in attendance on the day was so very positive and especially on tips on using Ancestry, Find My Past, Family Search and more.

The positivity of this inaugural workshop of the two Societies, will enable future computer workshops to be organised at a later date.

DIARISE

Guest Speaker Rabbi Dan Lieberman

Topic: "The ANZAC Rabbi David Isaac Freedman"

SUNDAY 22nd June 2025

1:30pm for a 2:00pm start

Venue: at

**Perth Hebrew Congregation Synagogue (PHC), Freedman Road, Menora
(Please note Change of Address).**

Members \$5.00

Non-Members \$10.00

Please RSVP Michelle on 0418 910 258 or email her on: michelle.urban@jhgsa.org.au

For security and catering purposes.

In 1914, Rabbi David Freedman, embarked on a journey that would etch his name in the annals of heroism.

Joining the ranks of the ANZAC forces, Rabbi Freedman carried with him a small Sefer Torah gifted by the Jewish community of Alexandria, Egypt, where he had stopped during the arduous journey to Gallipoli.

The ancient Jewish community of that famous city wanted to show its appreciation for his and the Jewish soldiers' war effort and to do something to protect them. They gave him that small Sefer Torah, which he took and kept with him at all times.

Come and find out more about what happened to Rabbi Freedman and that Torah.



Website to visit : iajgs.org

<https://iajgs2025.org>

Colonel Charles (Charlie) Herbert Leedman 1891-1972



On Sunday 23rd March 2025, JHGS-WA held their general meeting with their Guest Speaker of the month of March.

In true Dr Bruce Leedman style he shared the story of his Uncle Charlie who by all accounts was “An Exceptional Man”. Bruce is a consummate researcher and storyteller, winding in anecdotes, good humour and a dose of reality about the times in his presentation.

Charles Leedman was born in Young, NSW, moved with his parents to Menzies Western Australia. He was educated in Menzies, where he won a scholarship to CBC College in Perth as a young 13-year-old.

This facilitated his acceptance to study Medicine in Melbourne, where he met his future wife, Juliet Morris (known as Brighty). WHY? because she was very bright.

After graduating Charlie returned to WA and worked at the Kalgoorlie Hospital before being lured to the remote gold mining town of Westonia. He loved treating his patients in this busy town but by 1916 WORLD WAR 1 was raging, so Charlie signed up to the Army and would become a Medical Officer in the corps. Thousands of young rural boys signed up also and suddenly there was an outbreak of measles, mumps and meningitis in Perth training camps, causing 100's to die before they had even left our shores.

Charlie left with a shipload of soldiers for UK and eventually was assigned to the Battle of the Somme where he used his medical training to attend to the thousands of wounded and dying soldiers. Life in the trenches was tough, dirty and treacherous, but no matter what was happening around him, Charlie just kept treating the soldiers, anyway he could with what-ever he could give them. At this stage there were no antibiotics and limited medications to help.

Charlie succumbed to Mustard Gas and was sent back to UK to recuperate but was eventually returned to France - this time to Flanders Fields. Once again under fire and in terrible circumstances Charlie continued to treat the thousands of soldiers including German Prisoners of war. To add to the trauma in the field, the Spanish Flu arrived and wiped out thousands more soldiers.

It was during this time in 1917 that Charlie was awarded the 2nd highest military award – The Military Cross - only given to Captains and high-ranking officers. The award was for his Conspicuous Gallantry in difficult situations. Later that year he was also awarded the Bar to the MC — one of very few ever awarded.

War ended and Charlie planned to return to Westonia however he was warned off because the Spanish Flu had found its way there and had devastated the town. He married Juliet and started life as a Doctor in a small hospital in Kellerberrin. In 1920 this was a pioneering town.

WWII broke out and Charlie rejoined the Army, now as a 50-year-old. He was given a Command and was to take a group of Doctors to Singapore for training on the night before Singapore fell.

Charlie continued working as a Doctor until his death in 1972. The family connections in Perth are wide and strong and as Bruce ended his enlightening talk, he said;

Charles Herbert Leedman's life message was

***“It was a Noble Life well lived”
and indeed it was
He was an Exceptional Man***

Viv Levin