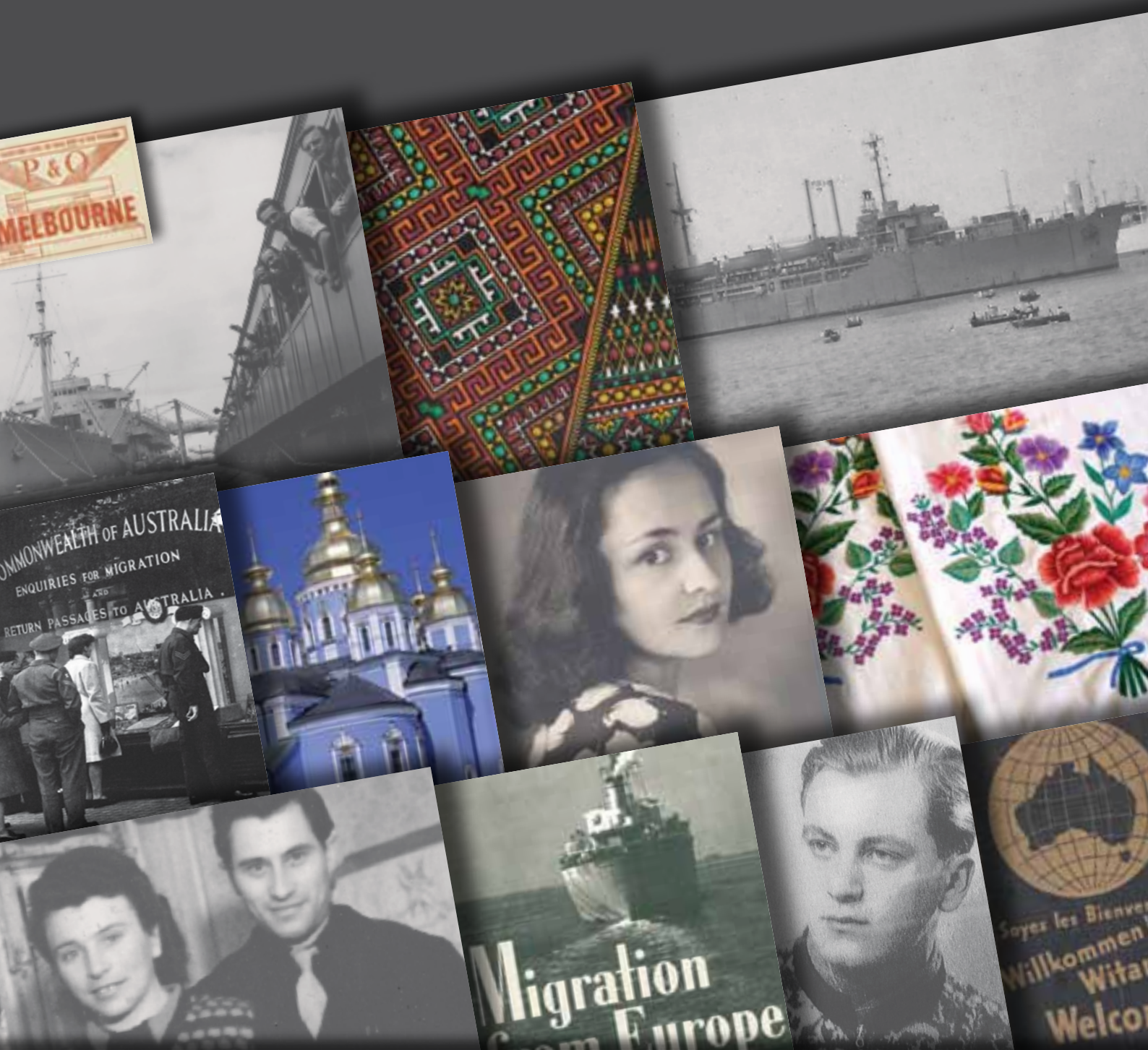


# YOUR STORY

## DESTINATION DOWNUNDER



Kalyna Care

Personal and Compassionate Care





## CONTENTS

Forward	1
POST-WAR IMMIGRATION	2
Rudolf Illko	4
Wira Fedewytsch	6
DISPLACED PERSONS	9
Vanda Jovanovic	12
Johann Maszczak	13
ALL AT SEA	18
Olga Kosylo	22
Gesualda Mazzarino	26
Luba Saciuk	27
DESTINATION DOWNUNDER	28
Shadows in the Fog	32
Veronika Geryk	25
Walter Lychody	36
Maria Sokolowskyj	38
Anna Wychowanko	40
Moiria Smith	42
Serhij Kolyniuk	43
Acknowledgements/About the Editor	44

*Backnang, Germany.*

*Swallows Nest.  
Yalta, Crimea, Ukraine.*



## FORWARD

This is the second volume of Your Story which publishes the stories of those who have come to live at Kalyna Care. Each and every person has a story to tell about his or her life; where they come from, what they have left behind and the journey they have travelled. Residents at Kalyna Care arrive here during their later life and their journey has most often been a long and interesting one.

This book and its predecessor give us a glimpse to what has been significant in the life journeys of our residents. Like looking through a window, we can see those events they choose to share with us, rather than life in its entirety; something that would be impossible for us to do within the scope of this publication.

It is often said that you never really know anybody until you know their story and come to an understanding of what they have been through to shape the person into who they are today. To know and to understand builds an empathy that enables us to provide the care and companionship that all of us need.

In this year's book, we have looked at the way people arrived in Australia as migrants and focused on their journey before and after their arrival as indicated by the book's sub-title "Destination Down Under".

Please enjoy looking through the small window that each of them has given us, learn to understand who they are and appreciate the long journey they have been on.

Thank you to each of them and their families for sharing their stories.

Mark Sheldon-Stemm  
General Manager





# 'POPULATE OR PERISH'

## AUSTRALIAN POST-WAR IMMIGRATION

'POPULATE OR PERISH'<sup>1</sup> WAS THE POST-WAR WAR CRY, IF YOU LIKE, THAT SPURRED AUSTRALIANS TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSED INFLUX OF THOUSANDS OF EUROPEAN REFUGEES IN THE PERIOD FROM 1949 TO 1954.

Not since the Gold Rushes of the 1850's and 1890's had Australia seen such an influx of migrants as occurred after WWII. From 1947 to the mid-1950's Australia brought in thousands upon thousands of refugees from war-torn Europe to populate our country. In a *Statement to the House of Representatives* The Hon. Arthur A. Calwell, Minister for Immigration in 1949, comments that 'this will indeed be a tremendous accomplishment'<sup>2</sup> pointing out the social and economic benefits of immigration on such a grand scale.

Post-war Australia faced a few critical problems that significant immigration could alleviate. Firstly, the Government had had

a real scare over her defences when the Japanese invaded Port Moresby in 1942 and then engaged the allied naval and air forces of the United States and Australia in the Battle of the Coral Sea. Had Australia not had allied support available at that crucial point in time, the possibility of enemy invasion would have been very real. The consequences of WWII, in conjunction with the low birth rate during the Great Depression, meant that Australia needed to increase her population resources and bringing Europeans in would solve that problem. The Chifley government believed that immigration would give 'increased confidence... for the future security of our children and our children's children'.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, Australia was still very much a developing country. Her population in 1949 was well under 8 million (probably about 7,739,358 persons), not enough to encourage growth beyond her major cities. Broad national development was needed with a population distribution more evenly spread throughout the country. Immigration would not only populate regional areas but also create significant economic and social growth. Infrastructure could also be expanded and it was because of the increased immigrant labour force that the Snowy Mountain Scheme was able to progress.

About 170,000 displaced persons came from Eastern Europe to Australia during this period

and it transformed the face of Australian society and urged an economic boom that would last for the next 20 years. For the immigrants themselves, Australia was a far flung sanctuary from the tragedies and complexities of war. She provided the gentle transition from trauma and oppression to a hopeful future for those who no longer had a home to go to.

Many of our residents here at Kalyna Care fell into this category of Displaced Persons. In particular were Ukrainians whose country had been overtaken by enemy forces and a political regime unpalatable to them. When the war was over, they found themselves in Displaced Persons Camps all over Europe but especially in

*Background: Orcades 1948.  
Colour image: Achille Lauro.*

Italy and Germany. And they were all faced with the dilemma of literally being homeless.

Fortunately, countries such as Canada, England, the USA and Australia offered them a solution. Some of the stories here tell of how some of our residents took up this solution and made for themselves and their families a new life DownUnder.

<sup>1,2,3</sup> IMMIGRATION POLICY  
STATEMENT by The Hon. Arthur A. Calwell, M.H.R., Minister for Immigration to the House of Representatives, Canberra, 8th September, 1949



# RUDOLF ILLKO

RUDOLF (RUDI) ILLKO WAS BORN IN KAPFENBERG, AUSTRIA ON THE 30TH JANUARY 1931.

Background and colour image: Kapfenberg, Styria, Austria.



In 1956, under the Australian German Assisted Passage Scheme, young Rudi and his wife migrated to Australia. By this time they had had a daughter, Erika, who had been born in February 1953. Together, they sailed on the *Flaminia* and arrived in Melbourne on the 11th November. Rudi's brother, Alfred, who was nine at the time, stayed in Austria.

From the ship, Rudi and his family stayed at Bonegilla, the Migrant Reception and Training Centre in Victoria. Their first home was on Leonard Avenue in St. Albans. Rudi worked as a fitter and turner for Steelweld and Hermine worked for Dunlop Rubber until her retirement. Their married life centred around gardening, visiting nurseries, eating out and relaxing in the garden.

Their close friends were the Geretschlager, Waniczek and Hoenig families.

Rudolf retired in 1996.



Located on the Murz River and central to the Murtal Valley you will find Kapfenberg, the third largest town in the federal state of Styria, Austria. Famous for the Bohler steel factory, the town saw huge destruction during WWII and the factory was rendered useless. After the war, the town rebuilt its industry and this is the main source of employment there today.

It was in this pretty and industrious town that Rudolf (Rudi) Illko was born on the 30th January 1931. As he grew up during war torn Europe his schooling was much interrupted and he spent many hours missing

school hiding in a bomb shelter. He became an apprentice fitter and turner at sixteen and spent his wages on food and tickets to the soccer, one of his favourite sports. Rudi's other favourite sport was skiing in Austria.

Rudi met his wife, Hermine, whilst still very young. Hermine (née Skofitsch) worked as a waitress at the railway station in Kapfenberg. They were married at a registry office in April 1954 and celebrated with a dinner with their families before going to see a soccer match. Their witnesses were his brother-in-law, Gusti and his Uncle Max.



Rudolf's passions were his cars; a Volkswagen and a Toyota Sprinter which was red. Not being a lover of books or films, Rudolf loves sports, especially the Aussie Socceroos and Melbourne Victory teams, and he likes to watch current affairs, sport and documentaries on television. Rudolf tells us that he is 'proud of his belongings. I like things to be clean and tidy and to be in order as I hate messes.' Rudi's philosophy is to treat others with respect and to hope that others would do the same for him. He would like to be remembered as a kind man who did his very best.





*Wira (centre) at Ukrainian School.*

## WIRA EUGENIA FEDEWYTSCH

WIRA FEDEWYTSCH (NEE WACH) WAS BORN IN SAMBIR <sup>1</sup>, UKRAINE (THEN PART OF POLAND) ON 27TH FEBRUARY 1922.



*Wira as a young woman.*

Her mother was Antonina Ortynska. Wira's father, Pavlo Wach, was a Ukrainian Catholic rite married priest and the family moved a few times in Wira's early years as her father was assigned parish priest to different areas.

Most of Wira's childhood was spent in Povoroznyk (Powroznik) close to the Slovak Polish border in Western Lemkivshchyna.



*Povoroznyk (Powroznik).*

In the 1920's and 1930's, before the terrible 'ethnic cleansings' by the Germans, Soviets and various partisan groups, this was a cross-roads of many nationalities and cultures. Wira attended a Polish government school that was 75% Jewish. Her language was peppered with Yiddishisms!

For secondary schooling came a move to Peremyshl (przemysl) as a boarder in the Ukrainian Girls' Institute (Ukainskyi Divochyi Instytut). Some close friendships were formed at that time plus recruitment into Plast (Scouting).

The September 1939 school semester, which was to have been Wira's matriculation year, never commenced. The Germans invaded Poland. Planned life stopped in its tracks.

Eventually, Wira passed her matriculation in Krakow in 1940 with the consequential dilemma of what to do next.

German authorities allowed Western Ukrainians who declared themselves Statelos (stateless) to study in German and Austrian universities. Many hundreds of Statelos students took up this chance. Wira enrolled for a degree at the Hochschule fur Welthandel (Economics and Trade) in Vienna. The Ukrainian student organization "Sich" thrived and with a ratio of young men to women students of 8:1 those early war years were quite memorable!



It was in Vienna that Wira met the man she eventually married: Roman Fedewytsch who came from Peremyshl and who was studying Industrial Chemistry at the Vienna polytechnic.

As anti-German partisan activity in Ukrainian lands increased, Nazi authorities became suspicious of Ukrainian students in the Reich. A wave of arrests followed. One night in December 1943, Wira woke to find Gestapo agents in the house with an arrest warrant. She was taken to prison in Linz where she spent the next three months in jail. Several weeks were in solitary confinement. She left the prison weighing only 35kg. She says, "They fed us, yes, but not every day..."





Wira at College.

The summer of 1944 was the last time that Wira saw her family. A massive Soviet offensive across Western Ukraine and Poland cut Wira off from her home. She remained in Vienna until 1945 when further Soviet pressure sent her, along with millions of refugees, on a headlong flight from what were clearly going to be Stalin's new borderlands.

Roman and Wira married in October 1947 in Lindau am Bodensee (under French occupation). One of their marriage witnesses lived here at Kalyna Care, Mr Myroslav Boluch!

Australia was chosen as the final destination in 1949 because it offered a secure two year employment contract and board, shelter and a stable political system. Wira and Roman spent their first year in Australia in the camp at Bathurst NSW where Wira was captivated by the natural landscapes of the new country.

Both worked in a variety of assigned jobs; Wira did a stint in a radio factory and Roman worked in the steelworks.

Lured by Melbourne's reputation as more "European", the couple set off there. They bought their first home in Murrumbena. By 1954 Roman secured a professional position as Industrial Chemist for Bostik where he eventually became Senior Chemist in R & D. Wira worked in the Commonwealth Statistician's Office until the birth of their daughter, Daria, after which she left the workforce until the late 1970's. On return to work, Wira was employed by George Patterson's Advertising agency as a copy checker, a position she thoroughly enjoyed.



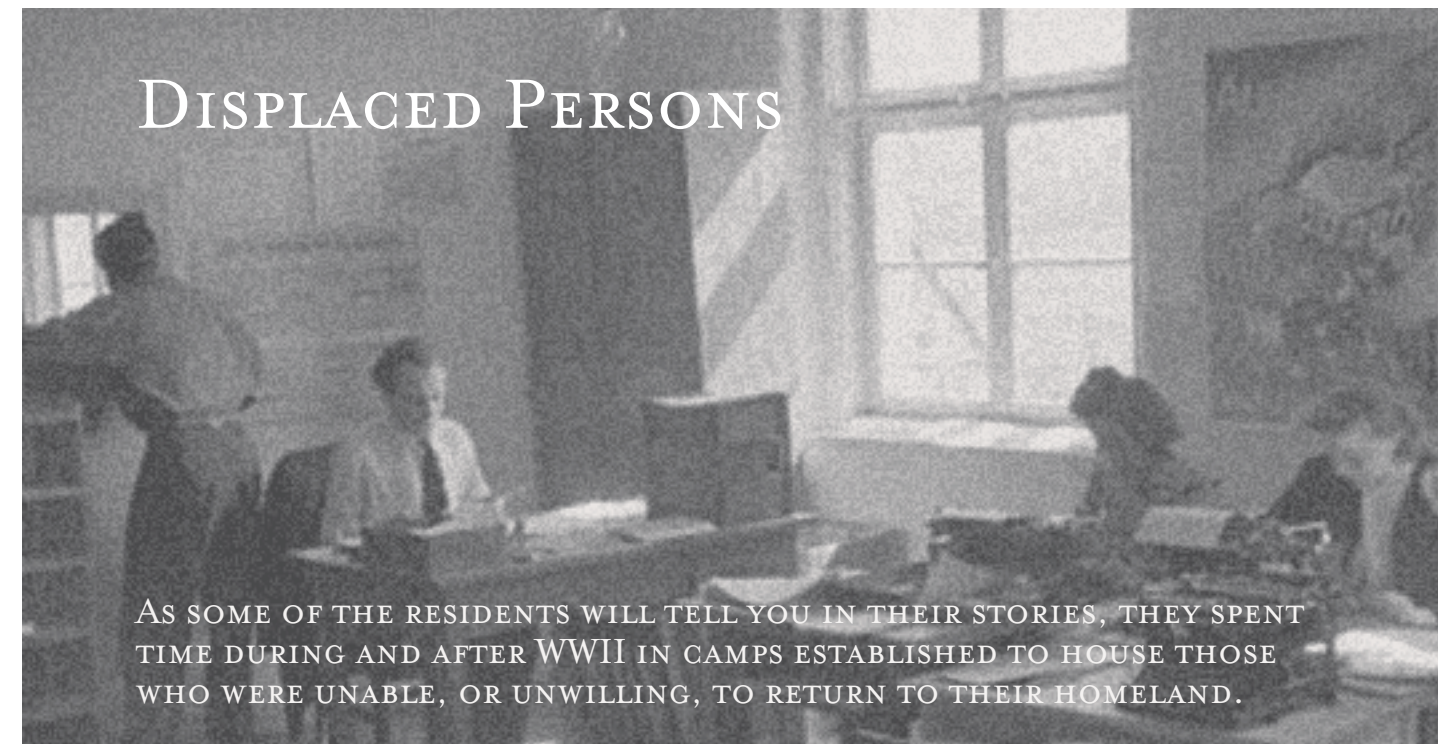
Wira (left) in a Band 1936.

Wira and Roman were both active in the Ukrainian Community. Roman taught history at Noble Park Community School, while Wira was engaged in the Plast Auxiliary (Plast Pryiat).

Roman passed away in 1987 and in 1990 Wira travelled to Ukraine to see the mother (who had reached 96 years of age) and sister she had not seen since 1944.

Wira's daughter, Daria, married Jonathan Dickson and Wira got great joy from the arrival of a grandson, Emil. Emil loves his grandmother very much. They have a special rapport and you will see him at Kalyna Care most weeks on a Friday or Saturday which is his traditional 'Babtsia' time.

<sup>1</sup> EDITOR'S NOTE: Sambir is a city in the Lviv Oblast, Ukraine. It serves as the administrative centre for the Sambir Raion and is a designated Raion in its own right. It has been part of independent Ukraine since 1991.



## DISPLACED PERSONS

AS SOME OF THE RESIDENTS WILL TELL YOU IN THEIR STORIES, THEY SPENT TIME DURING AND AFTER WWII IN CAMPS ESTABLISHED TO HOUSE THOSE WHO WERE UNABLE, OR UNWILLING, TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMELAND.

Migrant centre at Wildflecken showing Australia poster.

As many people had initially been removed from their homes to work for Germany during the war, the Displaced Persons Camps were mainly set up in West Germany, Berlin, Italy and Austria by the International Refugee Organisation (IRO). There were about 2,500 camps providing shelter for roughly 1.5 million homeless people.

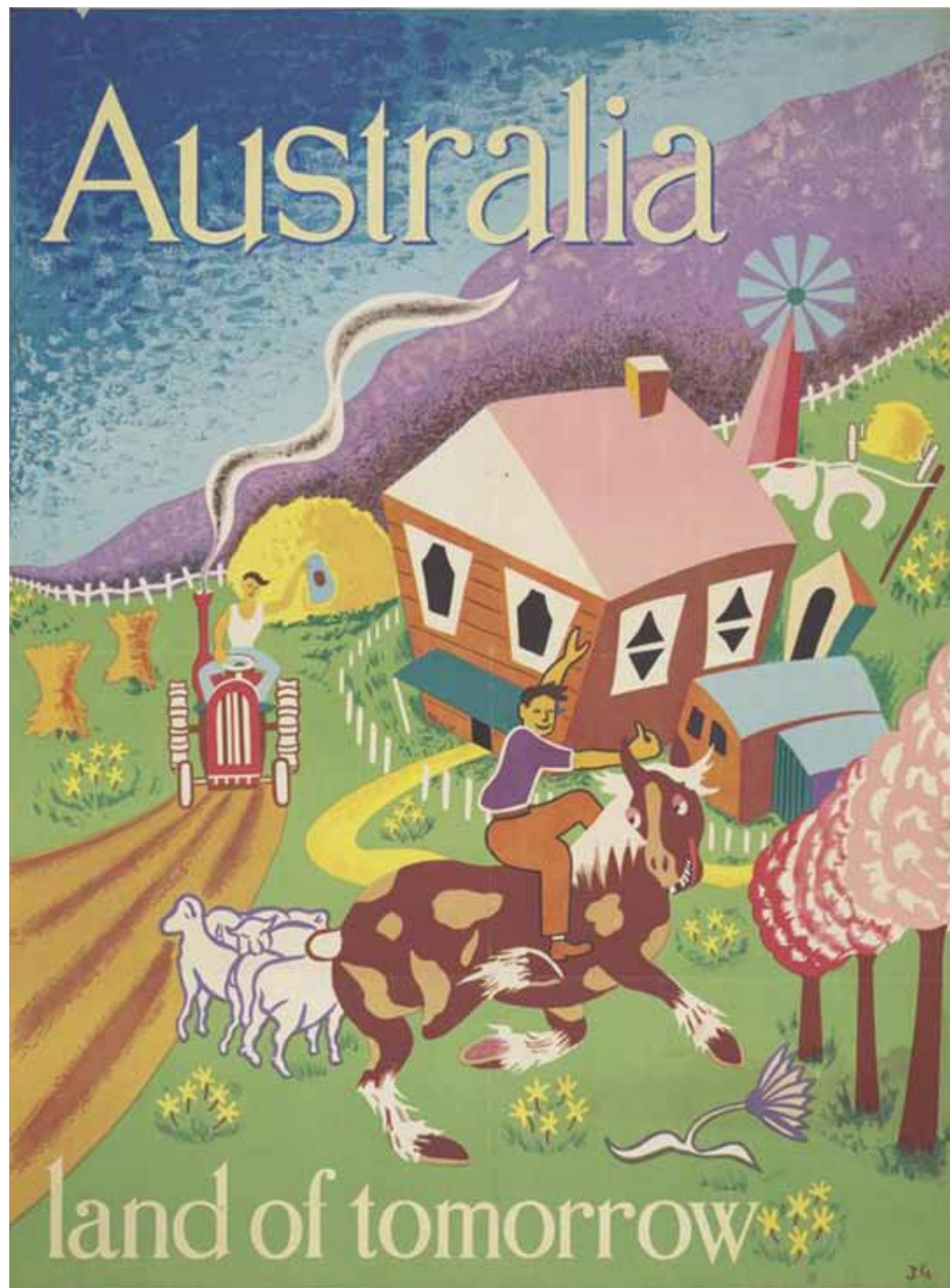
In July 1947, the IRO agreed that the Commonwealth Government could select displaced persons (DPs) to resettle in Australia and Canada. As a result, Australia sent officials to camps to interview people and evaluate them for their employment abilities and their level of fitness. By 1949, anyone who was classified as a displaced person by the IRO was eligible for resettlement in Australia.

People in the camps were well looked after. They were issued camp 'money' and the British and American military authorities provided basic needs such as food, medical services and transport. Under no circumstances were these camps detention centres; they were a refuge and a pit-stop to a better life.



Displaced Persons Europe Map.





Australia Land of Tomorrow Poster. Displaced Persons Camps, Post War.

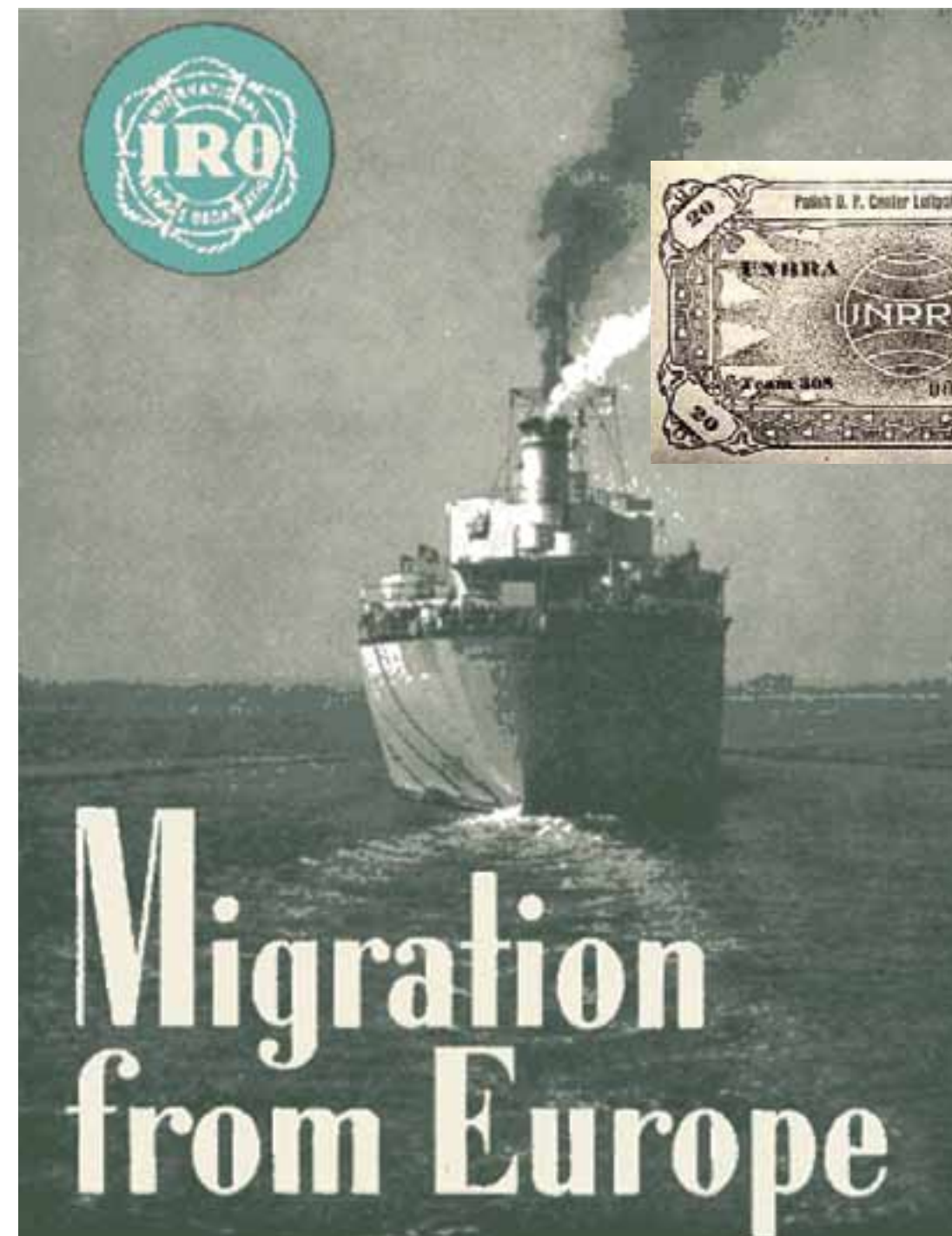
Australia was a popular choice for migration. Firstly, the Australian Government did not require a DP to have a relative or sponsor for migration. Secondly, it offered the greatest distance from war-torn Europe which many found attractive.

Thirdly, Australia would pay for all transport costs and would act like a parent upon arrival in Australia

by providing accommodation and employment until people could be self-sufficient.

In return, DPs over the age of sixteen were obliged to agree to an employment contract which would expire after two years. At the end of this period people were free to return to Europe or to become permanent residents in Australia.

The poster 'Australia Land of Tomorrow' was displayed in the DP camps in Europe to persuade people to choose Australia as their new home. It was designed by Joe Greenberg in 1948 and appears here courtesy of Museum of Victoria.



Displaced persons camp money.

Cover page 1950's booklet describing the work of the International Refugee Organization. Courtesy of Miff Crommelin.



## VANDA JOVANOVIC

VANDA JOVANOVIC WAS BORN VANDA MYNCHEVITZ IN POLAND IN 1926.



Vanda has seen something of the world, though not always by choice.

She was born Vanda Mynchevitz in Poland in 1926 and had an older sister, Stanislava. Her parents, Ivan and Filitsia, were farmers and her father was also a shoemaker. Vanda remembers that both her parents were good people. Ivan was a father who looked after his family even though there was never much money to go around.

During WWII, Vanda was taken by the German army to Germany to work in a munitions factory. After the war, Vanda went with a girl friend to live in Yugoslavia and it was in Belgrade that she met a man several years younger than herself, Zivorad, who became her husband-to-be. Zivorad was a tram driver at the time that Vanda worked as a ticket-seller. They fell in love and planned a life together. Zivorad travelled to Italy, arranged migration papers for himself and sailed to Australia where he settled in Melbourne.

They were very much in love and Vanda says that being apart from him was incredibly hard.

It took five to six years for Zivorad to be able to bring Vanda out to Australia. He arranged all her papers through Immigration and when Vanda arrived in Australia they were married. The newlyweds had very little money (it was a costly business to emigrate) and even though they were married in church, Vanda did not have a wedding dress. A couple of their friends attended the wedding.

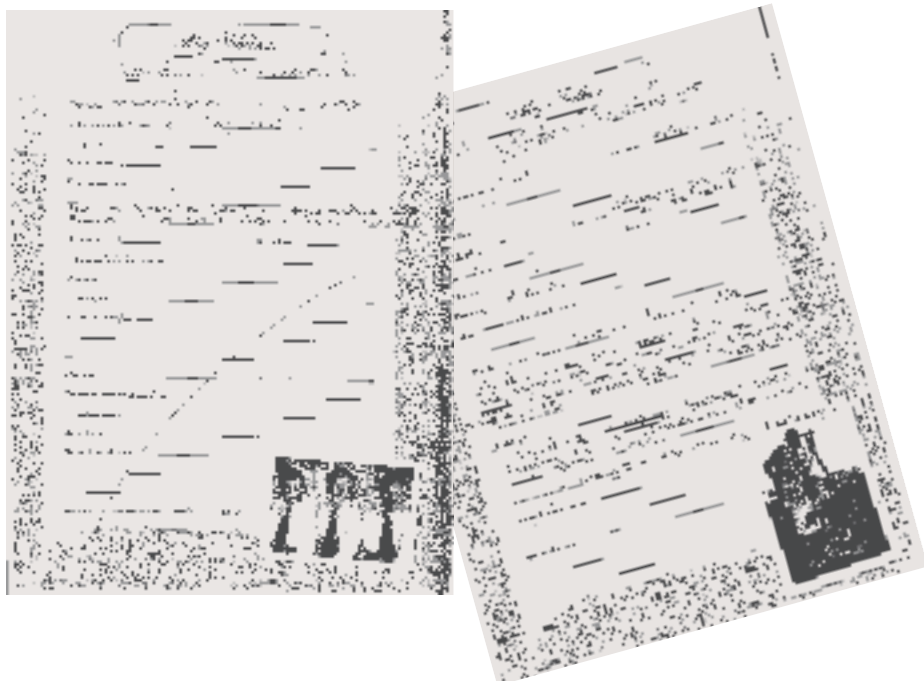
With both of them in Australia at last, Vanda thought life would settle down. However, it did not. After one year, they returned to Yugoslavia but Vanda disliked it so much that she told Zivorad she would return to Australia alone if he didn't want to go back with her. Back they both went a year later.

Returning meant they had to start all over again; get a house, a vehicle and new jobs. They found a house in Richmond. Vanda worked as a waitress in a restaurant on Little Collins Street in the city. Meanwhile,

Zivorad used his skills gained in Yugoslavia; he drove trains, trucks and taxis and became the station master at Murrumbidgee. He drove a taxi for a taxi company and owned his own taxi to operate his own business. At home they grew all their own fruit trees and vegetables in their large front and rear gardens. Vanda says it was a beautiful garden; flowers all through the garden beds and bountiful fruit trees.

Sadly, Zivorad became ill and died a young man before they could have any children. When Vanda speaks of him it is with passion; of what a good, kind and 'smart', man he was and of how he helped her and made her life wonderful. She says they never argued once and, because he was 'smart' she would always listen to him.

In spite of proposals from other men, Vanda preferred to live her life as a single woman. She feels Zivorad could never be replaced. She worked at John Brown's textile factory for many, many years and this she loved doing and it fulfilled her life.



## JOHANN MASZCZAK

I WAS BORN IN THE SMALL VILLAGE OF NANOWA SITUATED IN WESTERN UKRAINE IN 1925.



It lies within the region of Zakarpats'ka Oblast. Cities and towns near Nanowa include Stebnik, Rudavka and Steinfels and the closest major cities are Lvov, Kosice, Lublin and Cracow.

It wasn't a big village: about 2kms square with about a hundred families living there. However, it was a pretty village of white painted wooden houses with thatched roofs.

In 1925, my mother gave birth to me at home. She was a solid woman, my mother, but even so it was hard work looking after our house with its mud floors. She did a lot of cleaning and the comforts were sparse. My parents were farmers and they grew the traditional vegetables of beetroot, potatoes, wheat and rye and we also had dairy cows. I worked on the farm with my parents and for every season there was something different to do. I went to primary school for only three years.

There was only myself and my parents and we all shared a room together until my parents died. I remember my father passed away first and then my mother.



*Residenzschloss Ludwigsburg near the Ludwigsburg Displaced Persons Camp.*

I don't remember much about my parents. When they died, I was looked after by an uncle who had migrated from Argentina but I lived in that same house for 16 years until I left in 1941.

When war broke out, the Germans came to Ukraine. I had heard that labour was needed, so I didn't wait to be called up; I volunteered to go work in Germany. I was on my own and young and fit and looking for adventure. In 1941, I found myself working on a farm for Nazi sympathisers. I think their name was Landschaft. They treated me

quite well. I had my own room so the living conditions were actually better than they were at the home I had left in the village.

However, there came a time when I disliked them so much that I couldn't work there anymore and I tried to run away. I was caught. I was captured. They hauled me into the back of a truck and threw me into the prison cell in the town. I was there for two weeks. I didn't have a clue as to what would happen to me but, you know, when you are young, you tend to think everything is a joke; that everything will be ok.



*Backnang, Germany.*





*The General Ballou.*

You really don't know at the time what you are dealing with. I did know that these Germans didn't muck around. I didn't go back to that farm. I found myself at a different farm after my two week's imprisonment.

The next farm I was sent to belonged to a family by the name of Schwader and it was near the city of Stuttgart. They also treated me quite well even though Hitler's orders were to treat all foreign labourers as inferiors. The main thing that was different in my life then was that I had to eat on my own.

I just went along with everything; I had to, to survive. Actually, civilian Germans had to comply with orders. They were also in a bad way; just ordinary people struggling like everyone else caught up in the war.

The city of Stuttgart was a major target for enemy bombing. I remember working out in the fields with my horse during the summer and seeing the fighter planes go overhead on their way there. Sometimes, I could see

the bombs being dropped. If bombs were dropped at night, everywhere would be as white as snow in the morning from the ash. It covered everything and everywhere. Sometimes, I would see tanks and when I remember them now I think, 'what a waste of money it all was; building tanks and weapons to kill people when so much money in the world could have been spent on finding cures and medicine.'

After work, and especially on the long summer days, I would meet up with other young men in the same situation as myself who were my friends. There wasn't much for us to do, so we'd just sit around and chat most of the time. We couldn't dare talk about politics because you never knew who might be listening. It was too risky to talk freely about what was going on. When the war was over, we all went our separate ways and I never saw or heard of them again. That's pretty sad but it was impossible to communicate well anyway in those days.

I worked at that farm until the end of the war in 1945. By that time, the Russians had taken over Ukraine with their communism. I couldn't go back there, not to that. I couldn't stay in Germany either, not after the war. The end of the war was a huge relief but I was faced with no home, nowhere to go and with the biggest dilemma of my life.



*Germany 1948.*



I'd heard about the camps for war refugees on the grapevine and through Germans who came to the towns. I wasn't wanted on the farm anymore; the German boys who had been at war had returned and there was no work for me there.

I packed up what few belongings I had and, with a little money I had earned from my work, caught the train to the Ludwigsburg Resettlement Camp outside of Stuttgart.

The camp was organised through the United States military. It wasn't too bad but there was nothing to do but keep the place clean, which was expected of us anyway. A few people worked in the kitchen but I chose not to. Some families lived together but if you weren't married you bunked in with other single men. Russian officials of the KGB were (amazingly!) allowed to visit the camp to try to convince us to go to live in Russia. They came with their propaganda and pushy, threatening attitudes. Some people went to Russia but not many.

I didn't stay long in the camp. I decided to go look for farm work and found myself in Backnang, roughly 30 kilometres northeast of Stuttgart. It was there that I met my wife, Eva, who was working in a wool factory doing spinning and things like that. We met at a dance and we got married.

We returned to the camp at Ludwigsburg in order to migrate. We couldn't stay in Germany.

My first preference was for Brazil but the paperwork to do so was slow progress, so we ended up choosing Australia. We could have gone to England or Belgium; a few people did and they would have gone to work in the coalmines. Coalmines were not for me! Some German POW's told me about Australia; how good it was even though the cities were very far apart! We made our decision and boarded the *General Ballou*,<sup>1</sup> a US ship that had already picked up passengers in Naples, Italy in April, 1949. We were headed for Sydney.



It was not exactly a good trip; everyone was sick except me! We sailed through the Suez Canal, stopped at Colombo; down past India to the Indian Ocean. Crossing the Indian Ocean was really rough and sailing through the Great Australian Bight was even worse! I actually had a job on the ship; I was given the task of painting the hold. It was hot and difficult and I didn't last very long at it. Anyway, we finally reached Sydney safe and sound. The Yanks caught the ship back to Europe. When we disembarked we were taken to Bathurst camp.



John and Eva.



John with his beloved Accordion 2012.

My first impressions of Australia seem quite amusing now. I remember that when I saw gum trees I thought they were all completely dead because they were all losing their bark. I thought that there mustn't be enough water in this country!

There were lots of rabbits. Even though there was plenty to eat, some people trapped rabbits for food. That's just human greed, I think. All in all, the conditions at Bathurst were very good, much better than in the German camp. We had arrived in spring time, so it wasn't too hot. Besides, we loved the heat!

Some people were homesick, naturally. But what was the point of that? They couldn't go home. There wasn't a home to go to. That probably made the homesickness worse. Anyway, nobody I knew went back. For the older people, it took some getting used to.

I loved the sense of space in Australia and Eva felt the same. There were no KGB agents hiding or looking for you. The space meant freedom to do anything and go anywhere. Eva and I worked on a farm; I made gates and fixed fencing and Eva helped with the domestic duties. The farmer was a stingy old bugger; he wouldn't give me a raise.

We had only been at Bathurst for six months when we decided we wanted to leave the farm. That got us into a bit of trouble with the Aussie authorities because

if we didn't fulfil our two year employment contract they threatened to send us back home. We ended up in Canberra at the Department of Immigration arguing about being sent back to Germany. Eva called their bluff and said she would go; it wasn't going to cost us anything. Of course, they couldn't send us back. Instead, we went to the Goulbourn employment office. To our surprise they were expecting us and we got work straight away. For the first time in our lives we were called "Mr" and "Mrs" so we were treated with respect.

There were lots of jobs back in those days. I worked for the Goulbourn City Council labouring and Eva worked as a domestic in a hotel. We made friends with other migrants and with the Aussies too. Eva managed everything but not all was easy. When we went shopping the shopkeeper had to help us because the food was different and we couldn't read the labels. The shopkeepers were all friendly with us.

After two to three years in Goulburn a friend of mine from the Ludwigsburg camp who lived in Bayswater asked me to go down to Melbourne to live. Eva and I moved to live with his friend in Broadmeadows. We actually wanted to live in Brisbane where it was a lot warmer but we ended up in Melbourne instead. I was keen on the heat in those days; not so much now!

There was plenty of work. I got a driving licence more by luck than by brains! I drove a truck for the Land Department. Eva worked now and then in hotels and milk bars. You never forget your own home but we got used to being in Australia. We started to accept the fact that Australia was now our home. About 1950 or '51 we got our Australian Citizenship at Keilor.

I was excited but could hardly speak English. In fact, I am still learning it!

One special thing in my life has been my button accordion. When I was young and living in Germany, Eva sold up some of our belongings so I could buy one. I still have it. I played for pleasure at home and I made a lot of noise! I bought another one just recently that has a keyboard... and I still make a lot of noise! I don't have the time to play much these days as I'm too busy!

<sup>1</sup>EDITOR'S NOTE: The *General Ballou* had first called in at Naples, Italy where it had picked up migrants. It carried 859 displaced persons. John was number 458 and Eva number 459. It arrived in Sydney on 29 April 1949.



# ALL AT SEA

THE WELFARE OF DISPLACED PERSONS IN CAMPS THROUGHOUT EUROPE FELL TO THE INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANISATION, (IRO) THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN MILITARY, THE USA AND THE COMMONWEALTH. HOWEVER, TRANSPORT TO THE RECEIVING COUNTRIES WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE IRO AND IT SOUGHT TO ACQUIRE SHIPS VIA LEASE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CESSATION OF THE WAR.



MV Dundalk Bay.



General Omar AP 152.

All of the migrant ships had former lives transporting cargo, serving as troopships or even as aircraft carriers and were ill-equipped to carry passengers on the long voyage from Europe to Australia. The first step to move migrants was to refurbish the ships as quickly as possible but even when this was done accommodation was sparse, lacking in privacy and designed mainly for single persons. All in all, it was probably a tough trip with none of the fancy trappings we find in cruise trips today.

Conditions were no doubt cramped and uncomfortable and it is no surprise that outbreaks of measles amongst children aboard are reported in Australian official records.<sup>1</sup> However, in the stories of our residents, none complain about their voyage except perhaps to say the sea was rough and they were seasick!

Researched and collated data from government records reveals something quite amazing about the passengers on some of these voyages. Several residents sailed together on the same ship to Australia and what is not known is whether they knew each other on that ship, or even in the DP camps back in Europe.

Whatever the facts, questions remain. Did Walter Lychody know Stanislaus Zablockyj all those years ago? They both sailed on the ss Fairsea leaving Naples on 21 September 1949. Did Sophia Manyk drink tea with Peggy Bojcuk aboard the SS Charlton Sovereign between August and October 1948? Did Stefan Chaj and Stefania Demkiw stand on the same deck waving goodbye to Europe as the SS Skaugum left the port of Naples in May 1949?

How amazing is it that some of our residents on board the same ships have lived out the majority of their lives in various parts of

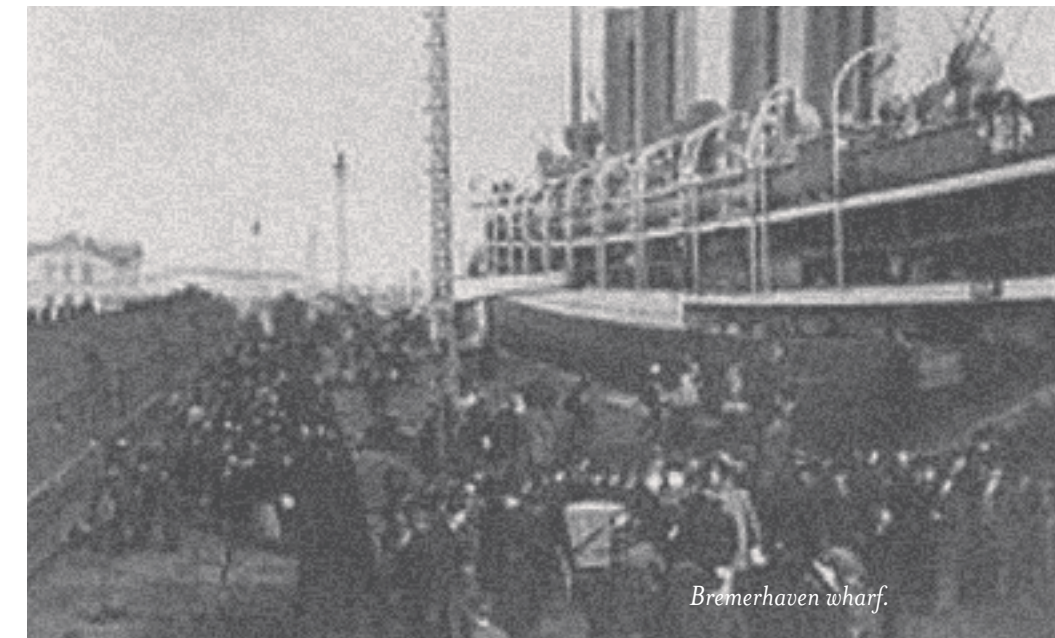
Australia and are now together in the same place. It's a wonderful world we live in!

<sup>1</sup> SOURCE: National Archives of Australia.



Stanislaus Zablockyj.

So, what were the ships and what information do we have about the voyages our residents experienced all those years ago? Please note that information for every voyage is not possible to convey here as in total 170,700 DPs migrated to Australia between 1948 and 1954 on several ships from different shipping lines. Details within the following information are given with permission from the National Archives of Australia and are accessible to the public.



Bremerhaven wharf.

The SS Nelly carried 1563 DPs on her second voyage to Australia departing Naples on 13 August 1949. On board was Nina Suduk. Three entire families fell ill on this voyage causing the ship to berth at Fremantle where they were disembarked for hospitalisation. All others continued to Melbourne and on to Bonegilla.

The Nea Hellas, on which Leon Kowalski sailed in January 1949, had quite a history before she became a migrant ship. Launched as a passenger ship in 1921 under the name 'Tuscania' she would have been considered quite old by 1949. She was purchased by THE GREEK LINE in 1937 and renamed the 'Nea Hellas'.

In 1941 she was commissioned by British authorities to be used as a troopship during WWII. She returned again to the Greek Line in 1947. She made only one trip to Australia, carrying 1535 DPs and a stowaway.

Stefan Chaj and Stefania Demkiw were amongst 1700 passengers on board the Skaugum when it departed Naples on 2 May 1949. It arrived safely in Melbourne and everyone on board was transported by train to Bonegilla on the following day.



	HOW WE GOT HERE				
SHIP	RESIDENT	DEPARTING	DATE	ARRIVING	DATE
ss Dunera	Herbert Kluger	Liverpool, England	10/07/40	Sydney	6/09/49
ss Nelly	Tatiana Slipeckyj	Naples	17-Jun-49	Melbourne	15-Jul-49
	Stanislaus Kaczanowski	Naples	17-Jun-49	Melbourne	15-Jul-49
	Rosalia Czaczun	Naples	17-Jun-49	Melbourne	15-Jul-49
	Maria Lazurko	Naples	17-Jun-49	Melbourne	15-Jul-49
	Theodore Winniki	Bremerhaven	22-Aug-50	Melbourne	25-Sep-50
	Nina Suduk	Naples	13-Aug-49	Melbourne	15-Sep-49
	Lydia Dudinski	Naples	13-Apr-49	Melbourne	15-May
ss Nea Hellas	Leon Kowalski	Naples	24-Jan-49	Melbourne	23-Feb-49
ss Skaugum	Stefan Chaj	Naples	2-May-49	Melbourne	31-May-49
	Weronika Nosek	Naples	2-Mar-50	Melbourne	28-Mar-50
	Stefania Demkiw	Naples	2-May-49	Melbourne	31-May-49
	Natalia Starostin	Naples	4-Jul-49	Melbourne	29-Jul-49
ss General CH Muir	Maria Handocha			Melbourne	26-Oct-50
	Stefan Handocha			Melbourne	26-Oct-50
	Ruth Buniowski			Melbourne	26-Oct-50
	Wasył Besida	Bremerhaven	27-Sep-50	Melbourne	25-Oct-50
ss Fairsea	Wasył Dazkiw	Bremerhaven	16-Jul-50	Melbourne	18-Aug-50
	Olga Kosyło	Bremerhaven	18-Apr-50	Melbourne	24-May-50
	Kateryna Sawczak	Naples	21-Sep-49	Melbourne	19-Oct-49
	Stanislaus Zablockyj	Naples	21-Sep-49	Melbourne	19-Oct-49
	Walter Lychody	Naples	21-Sep-49	Melbourne	19-Oct-49
ss Wooster Victory	Vera Terestschuk	Naples	13-Feb-49	Sydney	15-Mar-49
	Michael Wasylenko	Naples	24-Apr-49	Melbourne	24-May-49
	Tatiana Wenhrynowych	Genoa	16-Oct-48	Melbourne	16-Nov-48
	Maria Kozaruk			Sydney	15-Mar-49
ss General Stuart Heintzelman	Nadia Boburka	Naples	31-Mar-49	Melbourne	26-Apr-49
	Anna Bryndzia	Naples	31-Mar-49	Melbourne	26-Apr-49
ss Castel Bianco	Peter Bojko	Naples	18-Feb-49	Melbourne	19-Mar-49
	Myroslav Boluch	Naples	26-Sep-49	Sydney	24-Oct-49
ss Canberra	Wira Fedewytsch	Naples	30-Aug-49	Sydney	5-Oct-49
ss Goya	Felix Andrzejewski	Trieste	30-Jan-50	Melbourne	28-Feb-50
ss Protea	Ksenia Popowycz	Venice	21-Aug-48	Melbourne	25-Sep-48
	Anna Wychowanko	Naples	2-May-49	Sydney	6-Jun-49
ss General Langfitt	Anna Tomyń	Naples	27-Aug-49	Melbourne	22-Sep-49
ss General Omar Bundy	Nadia Panashir	Naples	20-Feb-49	Sydney	20-Mar-49
ss General Ballou	Johann Maszczak	Naples	5-Apr-49	Sydney	29-Mar-49
ss Achille Lauro	Arnaldo Valenta	Naples	20-Jun-67	Melbourne	20-Jul-67
ss Dundalk Bay	Maria Palczak	Naples	15-Aug-49	Melbourne	14-Sep-49
ss Charlton Sovereign	Pellagia (Peggy) Bojczuk	Bremerhaven	4-Aug-48	Sydney	29-Oct-48
	Sophia Manyk	Bremerhaven	4-Aug-48	Sydney	29-Oct-48
ss Anna Salen	Serg Kolyniuk	Naples	2-Oct-49	Melbourne	1-Nov-49
ss Svalbard	Olga Keryk	Naples	28-May-49	Melbourne	27-Jun-49
ss Australis	Vinko Rijavec	Trieste	10-Dec-53	Melbourne	8-Jan-54
	Ivan Serenc	Austria		Melbourne	Jul-69



SS Nelly Equator Certificate.

Ksenia Popowycz and Anna Wychowanko both travelled on separate voyages on board the *Protea*. Ksenia would have been one of 898 passengers of whom 95 were Ukrainian. The passenger list for this voyage was an interesting one as, for the first time, some passengers were shown as ‘Polish/Ukraine’ as their previous homes in Poland had become part of Ukraine.

The ship called in at Suez, Aden, Colombo and Fremantle on this 1948 voyage.

Anna Tomyń came to Australia on board the *General Langfitt* as one of 826 passengers from Naples, Italy in August 1949. Nadia Panashir travelled on board the *General Omar Bundy* in February of the same year departing from Naples also. This voyage also saw an outbreak of measles amongst some of the children.

John Maszczak and his wife Eva sailed on board the *General Ballou* on her first voyage to Australia from Naples in April 1949. She carried 875 DPs on their way to the Reception and Training Centre, Bathurst, Greta, NSW. It was a late trip for them when they arrived as they did not board the train for Greta until midnight!

Sleeping quarters on board the *Anna Salen*.



The *General Muir* departed Bremerhaven with Wasył Besida on board as one of her 1280 passengers in September 1950. This was her second voyage to Australia as a migrant ship.

Kateryna Sawczak, Stanislaus Zablockyj and Walter Lychody all departed Naples on 21 September 1949 on board the *ss Fairsea*, a ship that was later to become a cruise ship of some renown. This was her third voyage to Australia and she carried 1890 DPs. In 1950, and on her seventh and eighth trips to Australia, she again carried 1890 DPs amongst whom were Wasył Dazkiw and Olga Kosyło. Both had departed Bremerhaven and were bound for Melbourne.

The American built vessel *Wooster Victory* was practically new when she made her second voyage to Australia carrying on board Orion and Tatiana Wenhrynowych. Orion’s craft is portrayed in this book. The ship was leased by the IRO from a company based in Panama. On this voyage she carried 475 DPs from camps in Europe and picked up a further 417 DPs of Yugoslavian origin at Suez. On board were 154 Ukrainians. Migrants experienced an eventful journey again berthing at Colombo and sailing through very rough seas before arriving at Melbourne only to find that a rail workers

strike prevented people from disembarking. Two days later on the 18th November migrants were taken by train to Bonegilla.

The *General Stuart Heintzelman* carried 822 DPs on her second voyage to Australia when Nadia Boburka and Anna Bryndzia were on board. They arrived on 27 April 1949 and at 8:45 in the morning were taken by a special train to Bonegilla.

When Peter Bojko made his voyage on the *Castel Bianco* from Naples in February 1949 he was lucky to avoid catching the measles! Three people were admitted to Fairfield Hospital when the shipped berthed in Melbourne.

Later that year, the *Castel Bianco* brought Myroslav Boluch to our country. This was her fifth voyage and she carried 900 DPs.

Wira Fedewytsch was a passenger on the *Canberra’s* first voyage to Australia as a migrant ship. She sailed out of Naples and the voyage was fraught with infectious diseases; there were 40 cases of measles and three of chickenpox. Several people, mostly children under the age of 14 years, were admitted to hospital on arrival in Sydney.

*Goya* sailed out of Naples in 1950 carrying 898 DPs amongst whom was Felix Andrzejewski.





*IRO 913—DP Camp Papers.*

The return of collective farming and the man-made famine of 1932-3 were also factors in ending any hope of 'Ukrainianisation' of east and west. Then WWII came and the terror of the Bolsheviks and the German armies. I remember that my sister Sophia, then seventeen, my brother Mykola, twenty-four and I (I was then twenty-six) were taken to Germany to work for the Germans in 1940 and 1941. We were separated during our time there. I was working on the farms and my siblings were in different towns. It wasn't until twenty-seven years later that I found out Sophia was living in Adelaide, South Australia and that Mykola was living in Manchester, England.

## OLGA KOSYLO

I WAS BORN IN THE VILLAGE OF HOSHIW ON 6 JUNE 1914. HOSHIW IS SITUATED IN THE DOLYNA DISTRICT OF THE IVANA FRANKIVSK REGION, UKRAINE.

I was the second eldest of nine children. I had three brothers and five sisters. We were a strict Catholic family. Adjacent to our home was the Catholic church with its nuns living in the convent.

Our village was famous for the annual pilgrimage to "Yasna Hora" (Shining Mountain) and the Basilian Monastery and the monument Our Lady of Garabandal. I remember only finishing grade two as my parents needed me to help them

around the farm. As I grew older, I started working away from home in Resorts of the Lower Carpathian Mountains region and even house-keeping for some socialites in the local district.

Growing up was hard on the farm; my father told me it was important to keep the family together and care for each other despite the continuing infighting amongst Ukrainians of Halychena and Soviet Ukraine.



*With friends at Bielefeld. Olga far right.*



*Olga's son Mykola and his friends at Broadmeadows Migrant Hostel.*



*My approval to stay in Australia on arrival, May 1950.*

### ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA

When WWII ended, people started to migrate to new lands with new partners and children. I got separated from my husband during the various movements to the Displaced persons processing camps around Bielefeld and Munster. Finally, with a two year old son, Stefan, I was bound for Australia in October 1949. Our ship, the Fairsea, broke down in the Suez Canal and had to return to Naples, Italy where we changed ships to the ss Castel Bianco. We eventually arrived at Port Melbourne on the 24th May 1950.

After processing, I was transferred to Mildura and then to Bonegilla near Wodonga, where I worked in the kitchen for Commonwealth Hostels Ltd. Life was tough here, especially because I was alone with my young son.

Because I was alone, I was kept on by the Hostels even after working off my passage. My wages were two pounds a week after food and board were deducted. The food ration tickets I received were mainly given to my son.

In 1953 I was transferred to Broadmeadows Army Barracks in Camp Road, where a new migrant centre had been opened. I worked in the kitchen there for nearly fifteen years.

I was naturalised and became an Australian citizen on the 8th December 1958. I was no longer a 'displaced person', I belonged!



*Children outside the Nissen huts at Broadmeadows Migrant Hostel.*

### MY WORKING LIFE

During my time working at the Broadmeadows Migrant Hostel there were more centres opening up around Melbourne but I chose to stay in Broadmeadows. A large Ukrainian community developed in the Glenroy and Broadmeadows area and I made a lot of friends and this helped me to cope with the difficult life I was having in raising a boy on my own.

I rented a bungalow in Broadmeadows in 1959 as they were closing down the Broadmeadows Migrant centre and transferring to Maribyrnong. During this time I was sending Stefan to a Catholic school in Coburg and it was becoming expensive so I had no choice but to send him to a local state school.

I started working at LM Ericcsons in the catering section of the factory and I was there for fifteen years until I was told to retire. I was nearly 69 years old. However, I kept on working for the company doing special functions once or twice a year over the next three years.

I still have a dear friend from the Hostel days that is still alive and I see once in a while. The other nine workmates have since passed away. I still receive Christmas cards from one of the ladies who worked with me at LM Ericcsons. She now lives in a retirement home in Queensland.



## MY COMMUNITY

Living in Broadmeadows in the early years was good. The suburb was developing quickly with homes and factories being built, it seemed one every four weeks. Broadmeadows became a housing commission area with pre-fabricated concrete homes. It was very much a working class area. However, the Ukrainian community prospered. We travelled to the city to St Augustine's Church for our Sunday Ukrainian mass. We travelled to South Melbourne for community events until we purchased a community centre in Essendon near the station. Our children went to Ukrainian school in a garage at one of the homes in Broadmeadows, then to Essendon. The boys even had their own scout group. They also formed their own soccer team.

I also had friends from Bielefeld, Germany living in Ardeer. On my days off, I would take my son and travel by train to Sunshine, changing at North Melbourne, and would get on a bus to travel to Ardeer. Sometimes we would even walk the nine kilometres as buses didn't run a regular timetable. Ardeer in the 1960's became known as 'little Ukraine' because there were so many Ukrainian families living in this new suburb. Over the years friends were trying to 'marry me off' to help me raise my son. Men were introduced to me nearly every year but I decided to remain single and raise my son myself mainly because I had seen and heard of many migrant family arguments and bashings while living in the hostel.

Although life back then was hard, people were friendly and inviting. I would often go to see friends unannounced and within thirty minutes other friends would drop in and soon after there would be food and drink on the table and

we would reminisce about life in Ukraine or in the labour camps in Germany. The children would all be outside playing with each other on the unmade roads and often get very dirty. We didn't have to worry about cars then because there weren't many! The families mostly had bikes as their mode of transport.

### REFLECTIONS TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES IN MY LIFE:

Firstly, I was taken from my family and transported to the labour camps in Germany. I worked on the farms and became ill after my son was born. He was raised by the farmer for nearly a year and when I finally came back from hospital Stefan only spoke German. My husband, Stefan Myskiw, worked in the munitions factories and had no input.

Secondly, during our preparation in the displaced persons camps for traveling to Australia, my husband disappeared and I was left alone to do all the papers to emigrate. I decided to apply my maiden name to all my documents and to keep the married name on my son's papers. I was fortunate to have friends to help me.

Thirdly, in Australia in 1966 my son and I travelled to Adelaide for my god-daughter's wedding. At the reception a lady happened to ask some local people on my son's table who was the lady sitting at the main table with the bride's parents. When told, the lady said that she looked like a friend of hers in Kilkenny. The next day after lunch the lady drove me to meet her lady friend. Once there, I went into shock! It was none other than my younger sister Sophia who I hadn't seen since we were taken from our village in Hoshiw and worked in Germany.

That was twenty-seven years ago. Sophia was crying and hugging and whimpering. All I did was to stare unemotionally and tell her to stop crying. I did however suffer some five days later by going into 'after shock' and needed hospital treatment. Each one had thought the other was dead and yet here we were living only 800 kilometres apart from each other.

Sophia had also had a difficult life. She had been married, was now divorced with a son. However, over the years we never grew close and saw each other rarely mainly because it was difficult for me to travel. Sophia died in 2008 from chronic bronchial complications.

Fourthly, in 1988 my brother Mykola decided to visit us from England for a six week stay. He returned to England after three weeks as we couldn't rekindle our close family ties. I remembered him in Germany constantly letting me down with promises to take me and my son away with him to England. He was always 'on the go' and didn't have time. When he came here to visit, I still treated him as my younger brother and fussed over him, not realising I was embarrassing a man in his seventies. He and Stefan got on very well and this upset me that my relationship could not be that close with my own brother. Mykola died in 2007 in Manchester, England.

Lastly, my youngest sister Maria was the only sibling who stayed on the family homestead in Hoshiw with my parents and was there when my mother died in 1986. Maria has since died only four months before Sophia died in 2008.

## MY FAMILY

I was thirty-three years old when I had my first child, Stefan. He was born in Bielefeld, Germany in April 1947. He was three when we arrived in Melbourne in 1950. He was a normal boy growing up and getting into mischief all the time, especially while I was working shifts in the kitchen at Broadmeadows Hostel. I was very strict with him and I know he called me 'Gestapo' but in the end he was well-mannered, got a good education and started work in white collar jobs. This was important to me as I didn't want him to work in hard dirty jobs like I had to.

When he reached eighteen, Stefan lived with his godfather in Sydney for two years and this stressed me out as I lost sight of my son. But my Kym said that Stefan wanted some fatherly guidance which I couldn't give him and which he needed during his growing up. Not long after returning to Melbourne, he started dating and eventually got married to Daria Regan from Niddrie, in January 1970.

During their first year of marriage they built a house in Glenroy and moved from their rented Broadmeadows home to the new house in April 1971. I lived with them in my own granny flat at the back of the house.

The 'Kosylo Family Tree' started to grow in 1972 with the birth of my first grandchild, Nadya Emilia, followed by Marcus Stefan in 1973 and Adrian Peter in 1976. Marcus was the first to marry an Australian girl, Joanne Quinlan. After nearly seven years of courtship they finally got married in May 2003. They have blessed me with two great-grandsons, Jacob in 2006 and Jaxon in 2008.

Nadia and her partner Brendan Carey purchased a small farming property near Dookie (Shepparton). They married in 2007 before their first child was born. Both of their children were conceived through the IVF program and I was again blessed with these miracle great-grandchildren Ayden in 2007 and Jayde in 2008.

I'm still waiting for Adrian to marry and have children but he tells me he has no time and is busy working as a chef and manager in hospitality.

At 97 years old I am happy that I have three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren and still alive to see four generations of my family tree.



*My sister Sophia and my brother Mykola, Germany, before I lost contact.*

## WHAT MAKES ME ME!

I feel strongly about my heritage, religion and culture. Although I haven't been back to Ukraine since the War ended, I tried to instil these values into my son as he grew and also into my grandchildren when I looked after them. They all went to Ukrainian school and the Ukrainian Catholic Church in North Melbourne and belonged to CYM and did Ukrainian dancing.

We still keep the traditions of celebrating Christmas and Easter in the Julian calendar. The great-grandkids love getting two lots of presents during Christmas and at Easter they help their parents and 'baba' to colour the eggs, making a 'pascha' and taking the basket at night to church. They also enjoy the egg hunt.

I'm so proud that all my children grew up of good character, are well-mannered and have strong family values, especially in showing respect for their elders.

### MY PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

My philosophy of life is to respect others and give back to society what society has given to you.

### I'D LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED...

- As a person who was always kind and willing to help people around her without expecting anything in return
- As a person who was hard, strict but never selfish and who worked hard to reward others and not herself.
- And as a person who never carried a grudge against anyone, who showed little emotion but who had a heart of gold and would only suffer in silence.



## GESUALDA MAZZARINO

GESUALDA WAS BORN IN FEBRUARY 1929 IN THE TOWN OF VIZZINI, SICILY.



Her father migrated to America when she was only 18 months old, so Gina grew up with her mother, Francesca and older brother Gregorio. Francesca owned a fruit and vegetable shop and worked hard to bring up her children. She never remarried.

Gina's husband Salvatore was also born in Vizzini. Formerly a prisoner of war, he met Gina when he was delivering fruit and vegetables to her mother's shop. Gina was 18 years old then. Salvatore used to always talk about the war; how he was shot and hospitalised and how he spent the two years between 1943 and 1945 in a prisoner of war camp in Germany. He had received a few medals for his military service. Gina herself says that she will never forget the day the Germans arrived in their little village. He had just returned to Sicily when he met Gina, as he used to call her. On the New Year's Eve of 1947, they eloped, got married and honeymooned at her new sister-in-law's house. How romantic!

One of Gina's most significant events in her life was migrating to Australia. In 1961 she, her husband and their young family arrived in mid-April to make a new life for themselves. Her husband worked for the Victorian railway as a blacksmith and Gina worked in a clothing factory as a machinist. Her first job was to sew men's shirts before she progressed to men's suits. After that she worked sewing women's clothing; a career she continued for twenty years. She loved to sew her own clothes and those for her children and grandchildren. She was always buying materials and planning what outfit she was going to create next.

Gina always wanted to own her own house. A keen gardener, Gina had a large back yard but even so bought the block next door so that she could grow her own vegetables and fruits. She also cooked up a storm! Her favourite foods to create were pasta, tomato sauce, ricotta tarts and donuts.

She made her own sun-dried tomatoes and marinated olives. And when she wasn't gardening or cooking, she had her children and the chickens to take care of! Gina has always loved a garden and her favourite flowers are roses, carnations, lilies and orchids, which she grew.

In 2004 Salvatore passed away from cancer and Gina lived on her own until moving to Kalyna Care.

Her favourite movie stars are Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni, while her favourite sport is Aussie rules. Gina is a Collingwood supporter but her real heroes are the Pope and the Queen. Gina is a true family oriented person and she enjoys picnics and family outings.

Gina would like to be remembered as a strong person who likes to dress well and who has the most beautiful blue eyes!

*Salvatore and Gesualda.*



## LUBA SACIUK

I WAS BORN IN A SMALL VILLAGE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF LUTSK, UKRAINE ON 30TH AUGUST 1924.

*[Lutsk is a city located by the Styr River in north western Ukraine. It is the administrative centre of the Volyn Oblast and the administrative centre of the surrounding Lutskyi Raion within the oblast. The city is also designated as a separate raion of its own within the oblast.]*

I was the third child in a family of four children. My family's name was Plodnik, so I was Luba Plodnik before I married. My family were Ukrainian Orthodox and I lived with them in the village until I was sixteen. I lived with a step-sister from my father's first marriage and two brothers, Anatol, who joined the army and Wasyl, who became a farmer. My brother Wasyl married and had two daughters, Nila and Luda.

When I was young and living on my father's farm, I remember we had a German shepherd dog called Bobic and a flock of geese. It was a challenge herding geese because it was easy to stomp on a chick if the flock stopped suddenly. We also had a series of ginger cats all of whom were called Martin. (The last cat I had was called Myrko).

My father was also a cobbler and he was quite well off. We rented the front rooms of our house to a Jewish family to use as a shop.

I was sixteen when the war tore havoc through my homeland. The Germans rounded up all the Jews in our town but many locals were caught up in the group.

I was taken to the local castle and was about to be shot when the Ukrainian police stepped in and separated the Jews from the Christians.

I was sent to Germany on a cattle train. My father had heard of my arrest and he packed up my belongings onto a cart and followed. He found me in a large town and gave me my clothes. It was the last time I saw him. I ended up working in the fields on a German farm until the owner's wife discovered my sewing skills. She brought me into the house to work as a maid. I didn't get paid but they treated me well. I baked bread, spun wool and made clothes for the family.

When the war ended, I was moved to a hostel for displaced people in B....., Germany.

I will never forget being separated from my parents and siblings.

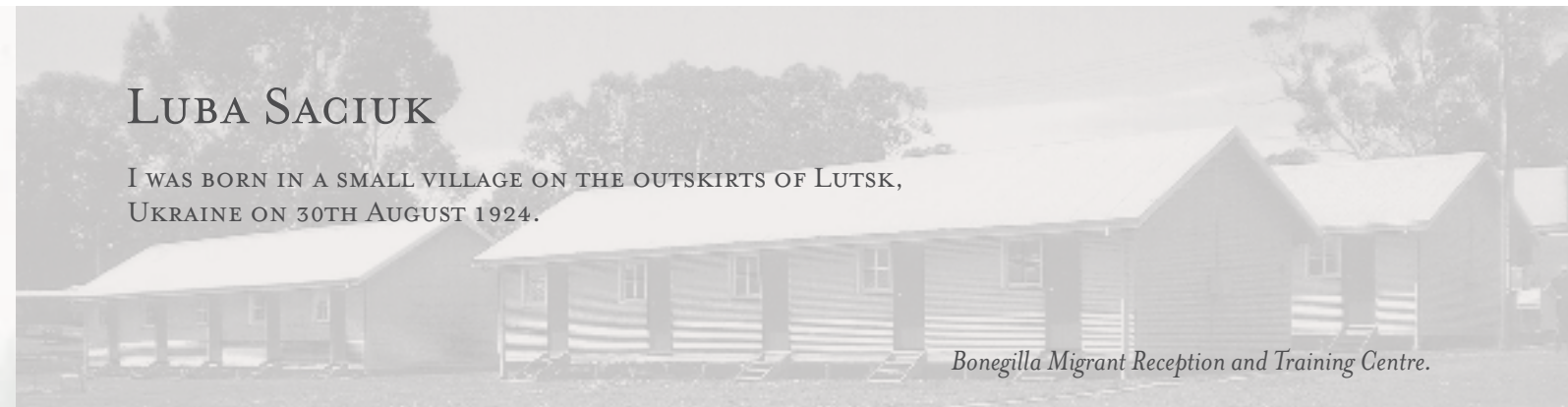
I met my husband, Wasyl, through mutual friends during the war when I was working on the farm and we were married at the displaced persons camp in November, 1945 by Ivan Medinez. Unfortunately, the photographer ruined our photos. He was a fitter turner for the German aircraft maker 'Junker Aircraft'. We had our first child, Anatol in 1947 and our second, Valentina in 1950.

In 1949 my husband and I left for Australia on the Fairsea departing from Naples on 11th May.

We arrived in Melbourne 8th June 1949. Wasyl found work building house frames and was a fitter and turner and press operator for PMG and then he worked for Telstra.

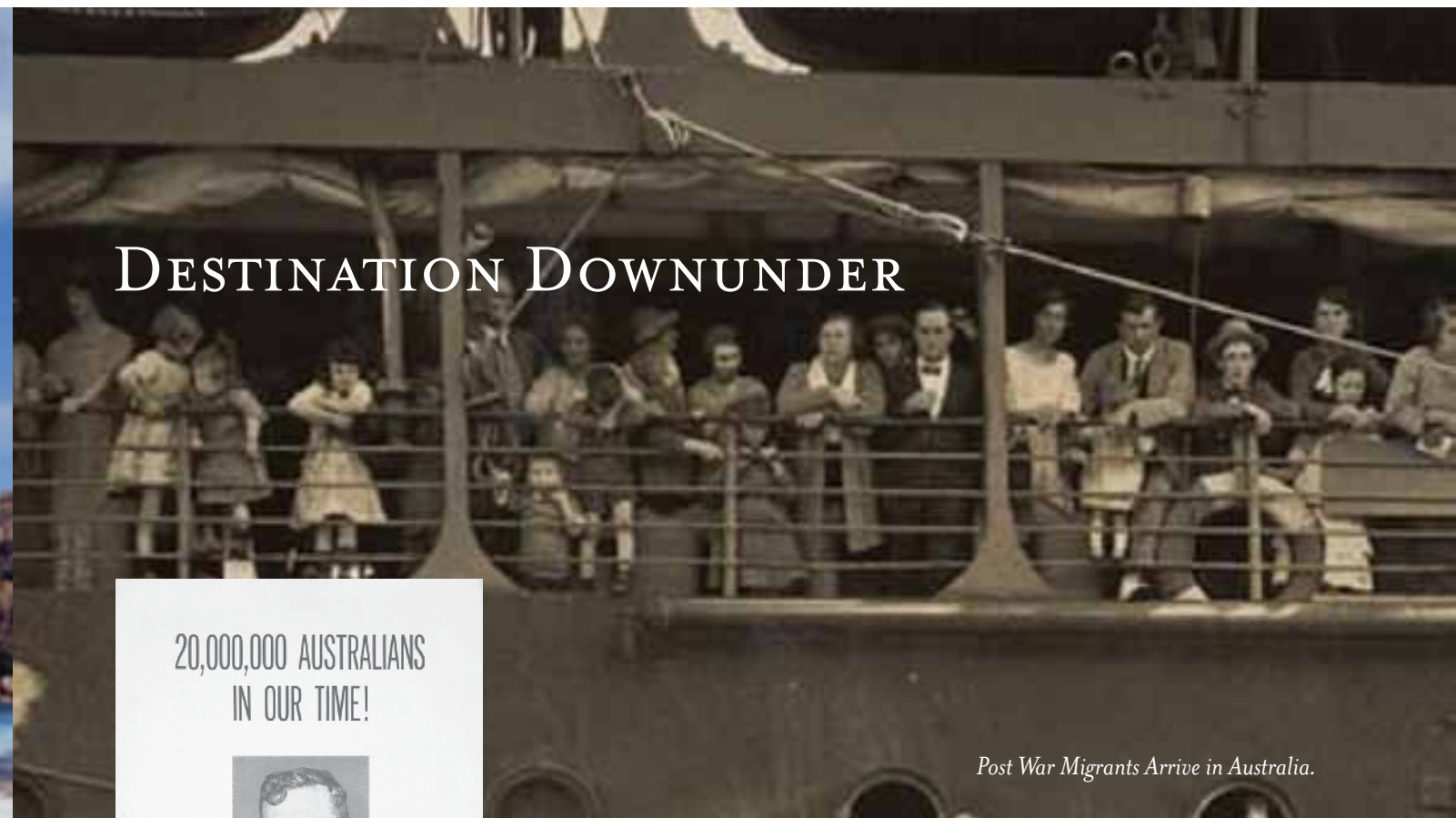
Our first home was at 53 Meredith Street, Broadmeadows where we lived for about three years. We spent our time helping to build houses for the Ukrainian community (and our own!) raising money for our church and socializing with friends. My prized possession was my sewing machine and I could dress make very well. Our closest friends were the Kolyniuk's, Chervani's, the Huk's and the Komanitski's but we were friendly with many, many Ukrainians. We also lived on Wattle Avenue, Royal Park in South Australia; at Forrest Street in Yarraville and at Khartoun Street in West Footscray. Wasyl (he used to call me by the pet name he gave me: 'Kitchka') and I were together for 45 years.

Over my life I have enjoyed many things but those that have most impressed me are church music, especially hymns, poppies, the Ukrainian version of hockey and my grandchildren. I have always believed in treating people the way you would like to be treated, in helping others, especially the needy, and that every visitor should be well fed. I believe in the motto: why cry when you can laugh? I'd like to be remembered for telling jokes and having a laugh.



*Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre.*





## DESTINATION DOWNUNDER

*Post War Migrants Arrive in Australia.*

20,000,000 AUSTRALIANS  
IN OUR TIME!



Statement of Immigration Policy by the  
Minister for Immigration,  
the Hon. Arthur A. Calwell, M.H.R.,  
to the House of Representatives,  
September 8, 1949

IT'S A LONG, LONG VOYAGE FROM EUROPE TO AUSTRALIAN SHORES. IT'S CERTAINLY NO 'CRUISE'! BY THE END OF SEVERAL WEEK'S SAILING YOU ARE QUITE READY TO SET FOOT ON TERRA FIRMA ONCE MORE. IMAGINE, THOUGH, THE EXPERIENCE OF SOME OF OUR RESIDENTS WHO DID NOT EVEN KNOW THEIR PLACE OF DESTINATION. AUSTRALIA YES, BUT WHERE?

It was quite common that while a ship was at sea the disembarkation port would change as employment requirements had changed, so you could end up in New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia or Victoria. Most of our residents disembarked at Melbourne and so began their Australian journey.

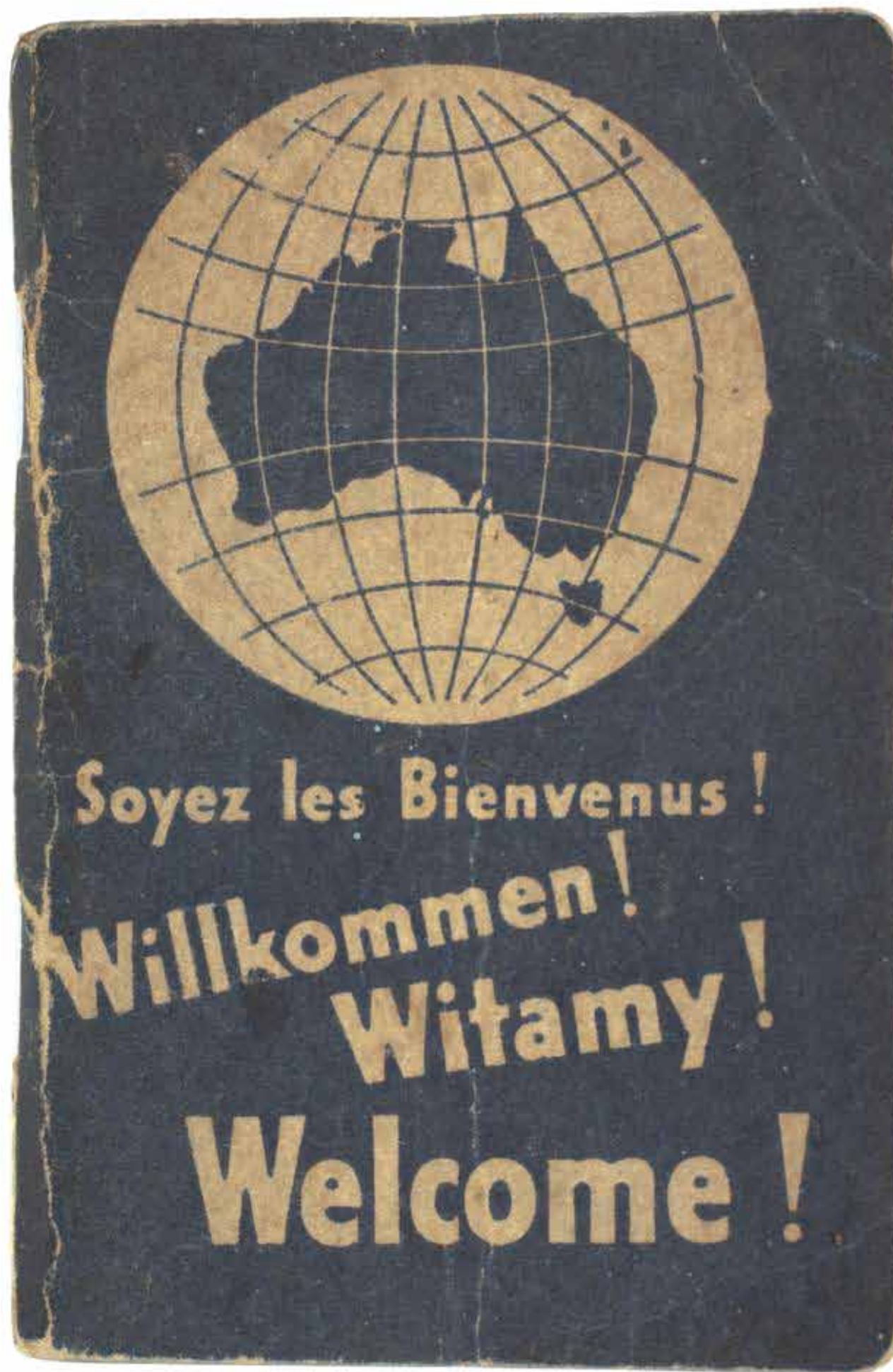
The Commonwealth Government had established camps to accept DPs upon their arrival. The camps were called *Reception and Training Centres* and were situated at Graylands in Western Australia, Bathurst and Greta in New South Wales, Woodside in South Australia and Bonegilla in Victoria.

Upon arrival, everyone was given a health check and again interviewed for employment. Between 1949 and 1954, migrants received a special social service benefit and this helped people to contribute towards their upkeep. DPs were able to receive health and medical services, sickness and unemployment benefits, Maternity Allowance and Child Endowment. The Australian government ensured that everyone had the opportunity and resources to assimilate into Australian society and to begin their own, independent lives.

Programmes to educate migrants about Australia were established

in the European Camps; pamphlets, documentary films and discussions in their native tongue were conducted by trained teachers. At the Reception and Training Centres, DPs were taught everyday English skills and about the Australian way of life. But probably the fact that people from the same cultural background were able to live together as a community had the greatest impact upon successful resettlement. However, Minister Calwell's Immigration Policy stipulated that "the problems of the immigrants are the problems of the nation; solving those problems is the duty of us all."<sup>1</sup>





*Welcome to Australia booklet. Vacuum company.*



*Mens Mess Hall at Bonegilla 1950.*

As the stories tell us, the new migrants were determined to make a go of it without too much help; they chose to create their own communities once they settled their contractual obligations. As a result, they were able to help each other build their new homes and keep their traditions, religious affiliations and culture intact.



*Men eating Icecreams at Bonegilla Camp 1950.*



*1949 IRO sales receipt.*

Many of our residents stayed at Bonegilla situated in the Wodonga Government area of northeast Victoria. It opened in 1947 having previously been an army base, and comprised twenty-four 'blocks' where migrants were housed. Each block accommodated 20 people and had its own kitchen, bathrooms and mess hall.

Men were separated from women and children, at least up to 1951. Most migrants did not stay long at Bonegilla as work was found for them on farms, in factories, the sugar cane fields and at logging sites around the country.

About 85,000 Europeans stayed at Bonegilla during the post-war years and it is estimated that

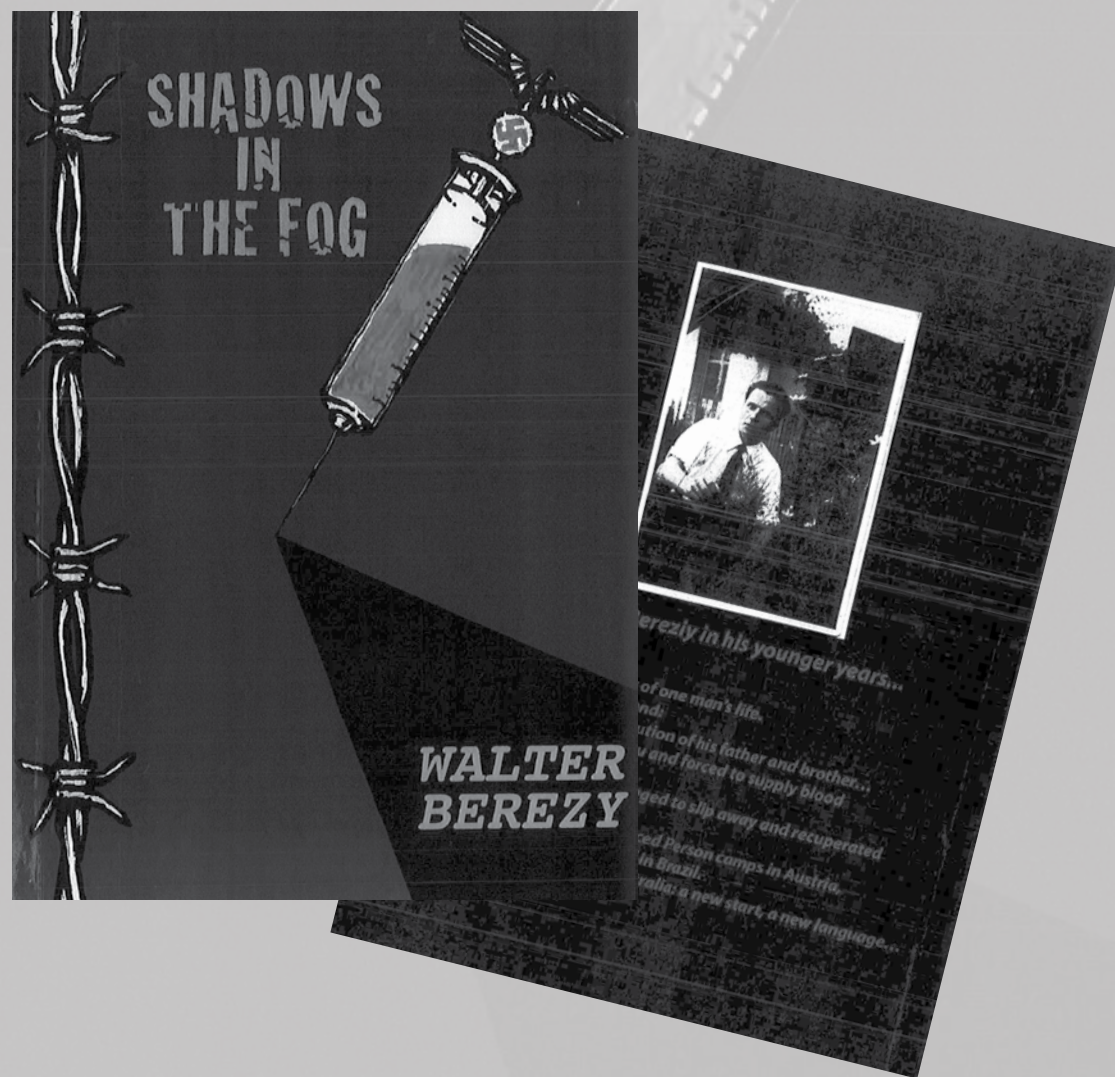
over 1.5 million Australians are descendants of migrants who stayed there from 1969 to 1971 when the centre was closed. Migrants were able to apply for citizenship under the Australian Citizenship Act 1948 put in place by the Commonwealth Government in 1949.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> IMMIGRATION POLICY STATEMENT by The Hon. Arthur A. Calwell, M.H.R., Minister for Immigration to the House of Representatives, Canberra, 8th September, 1949.

<sup>2</sup> AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS



# SHADOWS IN THE FOG



WALTER  
BEREZY

## SHADOWS IN THE FOG



BY WALTER BEREZY, EXCERPT  
PAGES 172 – 173

Another episode I wanted to mention was that my father's place was used as a safe house by three people from the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists: Dziuba, Holovko and Lebid. Maybe these were only their military nicknames. Lebid was possibly a messenger, he would sometimes disappear for a couple of days at a time, even weeks. The Polish police were always looking for him, and sometimes all three men would go disappear for a few days. When in 1934 or 1935 a bolt of lightning set our stable on fire, my father received an insurance payment. He quickly began cleaning out the attic and building a new stable, but this time with an iron roof.

Where these three freedom fighters hid during this time – I have no idea. It was enough for me that our stable soon had a new tin roof. There were two cellars, one on either side of the threshing yard, where the wheat and other grain [were] stored.

I was not home while the stable was being rebuilt, but was in Ruda-Koltivska at the Petelitsky's place learning the tailoring trade. These people were mother's distant family. I spent three months with them – April, May and June, while they were repairing the Oliyiv High School building.

When I returned home in July to continue my studies, our 'friends' had returned to their former hiding places, now modernized with secret exits, in case there was any danger. Our farm was an ideal place for them to hide. It was near the forest and my mother was Polish, while father was a member of the Ukrainian Radical Socialist Party. I think if our masquerade had been different they might not have hidden there. True, my father had an old friend who was a policeman and always knew ahead of time whenever there was going to be any searches conducted for freedom fighters. The chief of

the Polish police, Szczepanski, was a good friend of my mother's and was a member of the Jozef Pilsudski Legion, as was my mother; he was often over at our place and knew the layout of our farm like the palm of his hand.

Mother always knew how to tempt them with her home-made liqueurs, so that Komandant Szczepanski was always under the influence of alcohol and in a good mood. At times policemen dined in our house while the trio from OUN were up in their lair.

Throughout the Polish occupation no one had the slightest suspicion that the men the police were so ardently seeking were ensconced at Vasyl and Yulia Berezy's place. And later, during the German occupation, this hiding place saved the life of one of the policemen who had been hunting down the OUN guerrillas. As well as the Jewish dentist Schorr, whose daughter later saved me from certain death in Dachau.

*Author's Father, Vasyl Berezy.*

*Author's Mother and Sister  
Klymentyna, Manayiv 1943.*







*Author's Wedding in Camp  
Magdalena 03/02/1946.*

EXTRACT 2 FROM SHADOWS IN  
THE FOG BY WALTER BEREZY,  
PAGES 9 -10

When I started learning from the grade one reader called the 'Bookvar', my teacher Ivanna Voydivna, who taught reading and writing in grades one and two, asked us to fill a whole page of our exercise books with capital "A" and another page with lower case "a". I very quickly completed the task and even managed to fill a whole page with the letter "B" and another one with lower case "B". At the end of the lesson the teacher rang the bell and everyone dashed outside, but she held me back.

"Where did you learn to write letters so quickly?" she asked me. I told her that when my brother Yevhen did his homework I sat beside him and copied down what he was writing.

"Do you know all the letters of the alphabet, Volodia?" she asked me. I told her that I did. "Then write the letter 'F', in upper case and lower case." I did as I was asked. She let me leave after that, but sat down and began to write something herself. At the end of the day she handed me an envelope addressed to my father.

After dinner father called me over and asked how my first day at school had gone. I told him we had had to write out the first letter of the alphabet. He asked me to show him my exercise book, and looking through it said, "But you've got the second letter of the alphabet here as well." I told him I had written that myself, because I had had a lot of spare time while the others were still struggling to finish their first letter. "Did the teacher notice this?" he asked.

"Yes. I forgot. She gave me a note to give to you." I quickly dashed off into the other room, rummaged through my schoolbag and brought father the note. He tore open the envelope, ran his eyes over the note and burst out laughing. "Looks like you won't be lounging about in grade one for long. After you wrote down all those letters, they're going to move you into grade two in a week or so." Mother also wanted to know what Ivanna Voydivna had written. "She congratulates us that our Volodia is so interested in learning."

Father began to quiz me where I had learnt the alphabet. I said that I had seen Yevhen memorizing and writing the alphabet. Mum looked at dad and said, "Vasyl, go and take a look how he covered the entire wall of the oven with letters. I couldn't find any lime in winter to white wash the wall, so I hung some sacking cloth over it." My parents went off to admire my efforts.

"What a rascal!" father exclaimed in amazement. "Wrote out all the letters from "A" to "Z" and even the soft sign. I didn't even know we had such a brilliant talent in our family. Perhaps something will come of him when he grows up."

But mother said to him, "All the same, tell him not to write on the walls, just look at that! Buy him some paper, so that he can scribble all he wants!"

## VERONIKA GERYK

VERONIKA WAS BORN TO MICHAEL AND MARIA SCHMICH  
(NEE LYNHARDT) IN OCTOBER 1921.



*Grafenrheinfeld.*

Her parents were farmers in Grafenrheinfeld, a Bavarian town in Germany. Her father, a man of short stature, had served in the German army during WWI and then became a farmer. Both of her parents worked the farm and when Veronika was not at school, she did too. It was work she hated; working out in the fields was too hard!

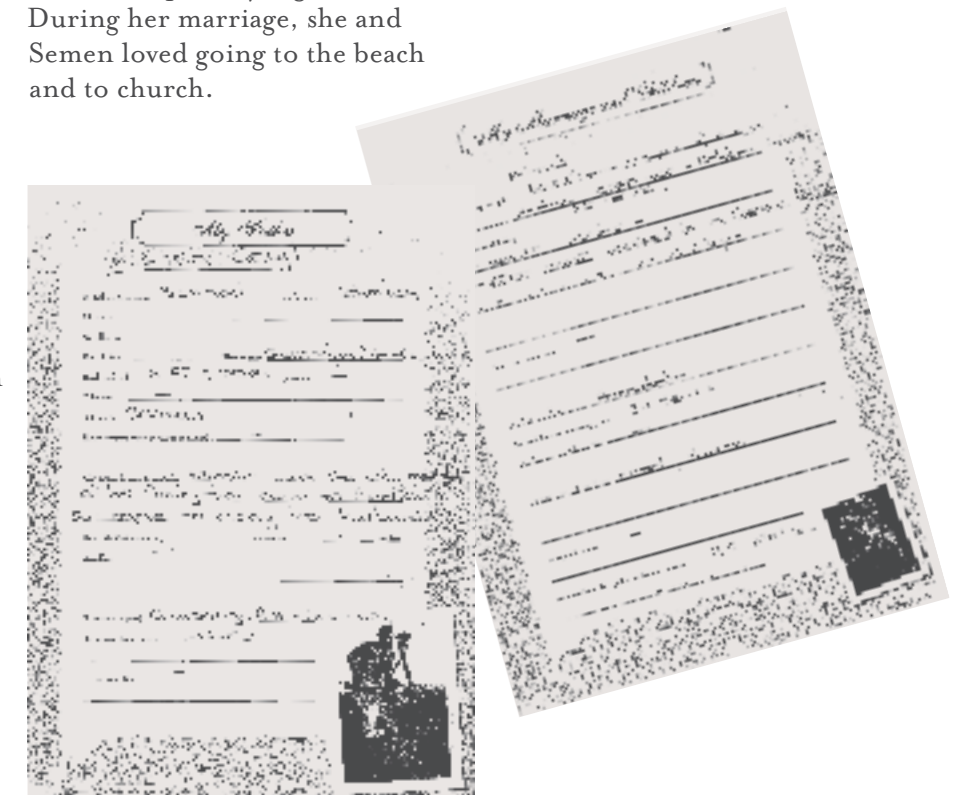
Veronika's husband, Semen, was Polish who had migrated to Australia in 1949<sup>1</sup>. He had served as a soldier during WWII. They met by correspondence through mutual friends and when Semen wrote for her hand in marriage, Veronika accepted. She left her family behind in 1965.

Their wedding in April, 1966 was held at the Ukrainian Church in North Melbourne and after the service they celebrated at a restaurant.

Semen worked as a machine operator for Holden for twenty-five years. They lived in the same house in Armadale for thirty years and were together for forty years.

Veronika enjoys all kinds of songs. Her favourite flowers are roses and she enjoys watching sport especially tennis. She used to enjoy reading but is limited now because of poor eyesight. During her marriage, she and Semen loved going to the beach and to church.

<sup>1</sup> EDITOR'S NOTE: Semen Geryk migrated to Australia under the Displaced Persons Scheme. He left Naples, Italy on board the General Ballou on 5 April 1949 and arrived in Sydney on 29 April 1949.





## WALTER LYCHODY

WALTER LYCHODY WAS BORN WOLODYMYR LYCHODIJ ON THE 10TH MARCH 1930 IN UKRAINE. HERE IS HIS STORY.



My parents were Maria and Petro. My father was a farmer and for three to four years he was the Mayor of our village. I had a sister, Helen, who has since passed away. I had a very hard childhood; I only went to school for three grades. I now feel that the best lessons I had back then were about life itself, and about how to survive.

I struggled with the effect the war [WWII] had on everyone around me and in fact I don't like talking about it now. I also struggled with the local youth with whom I tried to fit in. When I was young I particularly loved art work.

I have fond memories of my Babucia, Alexandra, who took care of everything I needed.

During WWII I was taken by the Germans to work as a machinist for the army.

I chose to migrate to Australia and left Naples, Italy in 1949 on board the *Fairsea*. I was taken to Bonegilla first and then to work on the steam engine from Melbourne to Port Lincoln, Adelaide. I had a three year contract and I loved this job. It gave me an opportunity to see Australia; I slept under the stars or in a tent and I had my first contact with Aborigines at this time. I accepted this job as part of my journey through life.

It makes me smile to remember that when I drove the train through the outback, the soot from the engines ended up on the local washing and women would come out shaking their hands at us.

I would have liked to do interior design and my ultimate goal was to own my own engineering firm. I had a little interior design training and that brought out my artistic abilities. So, when I moved to live in Avondale Heights, I was able to contribute to the house's design. At that time Avondale Heights had many Ukrainian families who socialised well. We had bus trips and picnics.

I bought an old run-down miners cottage in Fryers Town near Castlemaine which we renovated (it was all hands on!). We sold that and with the proceeds purchased a holiday house in Port Arlington. I have many fond memories of family and friends during the 1970's; picnics, boating, swimming and fishing.

I had met my wife at a local dance in Australia and we had our wedding reception at our home but no honeymoon. I remember it was a beautiful, exciting day and many local family members contributed to the celebrations. We were married for fifty years.

My wife passed away in 2003.

We had a son, Walter, of whom I am very proud. He graduated university and became a qualified accountant. When the firm I worked for was downsized, I retired to enjoy life with my family.

I found out I was artistic through doing some interior design. I took up art and was heavily influenced by the Ukrainian artist *Chebulskyj*. I have painted a lot of beautiful pictures and some of them are represented with my story.

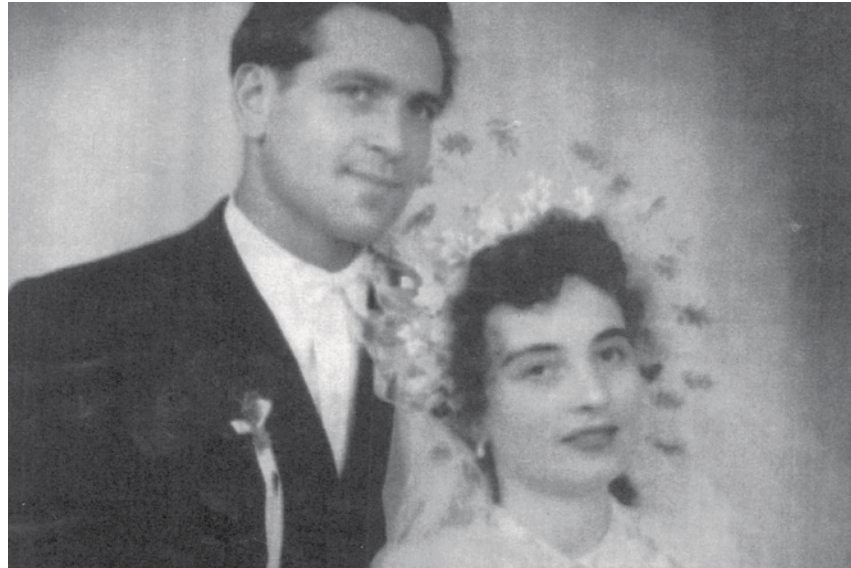


Images by Walter Lychody.



# MARIA SOKOLOWSKYJ

MARIA WAS BORN ON THE 11TH OF NOVEMBER 1932 IN POLAND TO GEORGE AND THEODORA, FARMERS. SHE WAS THE ELDEST OF THREE CHILDREN WHOSE NAMES WERE DAVID AND JOHN. HERE IS HER STORY.



I was very poor and until I was eight years of age I was still using a wooden spoon [to eat with] as we had very little money. We lived on a farm. We had no water on the farm and had to get someone to deliver water to us which we really couldn't afford. So, we dug a hole so that when it rained it would fill up with water. We had no toilet which was awful and so we had to go into the bush.

My Mum would make me a sandwich for lunch but when at school the other kids would steal it and I had to go hungry. This happened every day and that's all I can remember as it wasn't a very good childhood.

I came to Australia with my Mum, Dad, two brothers on 15th October (I think) in 1949. That was my first miracle. I can't believe God would let this happen – I am so happy and don't know why but am grateful – my life changed for the better. I met my husband Ivan and we married. My wedding day was a nice day and I was married in a church in the city. I was 19 years old. This was in 1951.

We had four children – three daughters were all born on the 10th; one on the 10th of September, one on the 10th of October and one on the 10th of January. I thought that was a lucky sign. My son was born on

the 18th of June. My husband's birthday was also in June on the 7th. Unfortunately, my husband passed away 8 years ago. He was a very good husband.

[Not long after we married] I had my first daughter and [we] bought a bungalow in a very short time. We had no water and no electricity. I used to use a hotplate to cook on.

My first paid job was as a nanny in Surrey Hills looking after two young children. I only lasted one month as it wasn't a job I was suited to. I was then given a job at Heidelberg Hospital as a waitress for fourteen months. Then I left as I fell pregnant with my first child, Anna.



*Maria in uniform when working on the Trams.*

After Anna was born I went to work on the trams in Melbourne, selling tickets. This was a job that I loved; I wore a uniform and was given a bag as well. I stayed there for around six years. My Mum would mind my daughter.

I was sent to Royal Melbourne Hospital in 1976 where I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. I think I was around 44 years old. I remember telling the doctors they had to be wrong as I wasn't that sick.

My animals were always important to me. I have always had dogs, cats, a bird (Daisy) and chooks. I can only remember two of my dogs' names – Contessa and Mushka.

I became too sick to care for them so I haven't had any pets for the past five years.

I feel very lucky to have ten grandchildren.

Kalyna Care is the place I really feel at home. I feel so blessed to be here. It is my miracle. I can't believe I have been so lucky and that having a fall would be the best thing that could [have] happened, as now I am here.

I have lived in many bungalows and moved home 13 times. I'm glad that now I don't have to move again.

I have only been on one holiday and that was for two weeks with my husband to Surfer's Paradise. It was nice and we had a good time.

My wish is to at least live until my next birthday although I would love to be around for another two years as I am loving life here and not even a princess would be treated as well as I [am].

It is important to me for everyone to know that I am happy and don't wish for my life to change. I often lie on my bed and cry because I can't believe how lucky I am to live here – I really am so lucky. I'm waited on hand and foot. I have everything I could ever wish for.



# ANNA WYCHOWANKO

ANNA WYCHOWANKO WAS BORN TO PARENTS JELENA AND ILLYA IN YUGOSLAVIA IN OCTOBER 1923. HERE IS A SNAPSHOT OF HER LIFE.

I was the youngest child. My school memories are not strong as I only went to Grade 4. I had to help and work on our farm. All my best lessons were from my parents. I was very good with my hands and doing the chores around the farm. I struggled with my academic skills. I like to recall my family life around the farm and the small village and friends I had there.

Farm work in the fields was my first job. After the war, we migrated to Australia. For my working life here, I worked in factories doing many various tasks. I also worked at Tom Piper as a cook for many years. I would not change the cooking job I had, but the factory work I would!

The people in my life who are important to me are my family and friends, most of whom have passed away. I was married and for a long time also. Now I am widowed. I got married in Austria. It was a basic wedding as we were in a camp there after the war. It was winter. Snow and cold.

I have three children: John, Helen and Danny who now makes all my decisions for me. Having children was one of my life's significant events. Others were the war and losing my husband, Petro, who was only 61 years of age.

Australia has been my home for over 50 years.<sup>1</sup> My home in the village I grew up in holds the happiest times for me as I had all of my family there.

I loved the countryside, the small creek that ran through our farm, the farm animals and the orchids. Germany and Austria were important to me as the war took hold. This is where I lost my mother, but met my husband.

The high of getting older meant I could retire and do some travel back home.

<sup>1</sup> Anna and Petro sailed on the *Protea* to Australia departing from Naples on 2 May 1949 and disembarking at Sydney on 6 June 1949.



The above article and its accompanying photographs appeared in The Argus newspaper in 1950.



## MOIRA SMITH

I WAS BORN IN SUNSHINE, VICTORIA IN 1929.



My mother's name was Mary and my father, a fitter and turner, was called Reginald. I had two sisters Sylvia and Catherine.

I can remember one Anzac Day in 1933 when I would have been about 3 years old that my mother took a photo of me standing in a wheelbarrow. During my childhood, I attended a catholic school in Sunshine. I loved reading and arithmetic and I was Dux of the school in 1942 when I was 13 years old.

In 1943 I attended Business College and studied maths, shorthand and typing. In 1944 I started my first job at the Spalding factory in Sunshine. I worked in the pay office there for four years.

I had many jobs throughout my life but my favourite one was as a secretary at Olympic Cables in Tottenham.

The other job I enjoyed was being a school crossing supervisor; a lollypop lady!

I married in 1949 to John William Smith. We have four children, Louise, Kay, Lindsay and Malcolm and eight grandchildren. I have a 15 year old Chihuahua/Pomeranian cross named Sunny. My husband passed away in January 1970.

One of the most significant places in my life was the house we built in St. Albans in 1953. I felt most at home there and it's where the children grew up. We had an onsite caravan in Torquay for thirteen and a half years and we enjoyed many holidays there. I travelled up to Cairns by plane and returned home by road which took three weeks. We stopped all along the coast with my sister and brother-in-law and it was a lovely time.

My most significant life events have been the loss of my husband, my heart surgery in 1978, the birth of my first child and the loss of my sister to cancer in 1998. Now I am here [at Kalyna Care] for the rest of my life. I like to be treated with respect as I would treat others. I like the attention the staff give me and that they are always eager to please.

## SERHIJ KOLYNIUK

SERHIJ (SERG) WAS BORN ON THE 16TH OF AUGUST 1924 IN UKRAINE WHERE HE GREW UP WITH HIS PARENTS AND TWO BROTHERS.



He was the second child and loved going to school and being with his family. He was able to complete school up to the fifth grade and loved all his subjects and especially the female teachers! Serhij tells us that he took after his father.

During the war years, which he calls, 'scary times,' he worked on farms and hid in bunkers when the sirens sounded. He remembers that bombs were exploding everywhere. He says he will never forget the sound of the bombs falling and the fact that they all survived them.

He met his future wife, Aniela, also Ukrainian, in a German camp during the war and they were married in Germany on the 12th February 1946. There was no honeymoon but they did celebrate with a little get together with their friends. Both Serhij and Aniela

had been taken by force by the Germans to work on farms. Serhij was 25 and Aniela 26.

The Kolyniuk's first home in Australia was in Hamilton Street, Seddon where they lived for ten years. They then moved a couple of doors up the street before finally settling in West Footscray. During this time Aniela worked as a housewife.

Serhij's first job was with the Richmond Skin Factory earning five pounds a week treating sheep skins. He worked there for a year before moving on to work for Containers Ltd. At Containers Ltd., Serhij worked as a foreman from 1955 to 1975. However, he also became a real estate agent and it was that field of work that gave him the greatest pleasure.

Serhij tells us that throughout his working life he made many friends and enjoyed spending

his money on his family. His favourite music is Ukrainian, especially the Ukrainian National Anthem. His other favourite things are the Bible, wrestling, Elizabeth Taylor, peonies and roses and the colours blue and yellow, as they are on the Ukrainian flag. His most prized possession was his Kingswood and he supports the Footscray Bulldogs because his grandson played for them.

Serhij and Aniela were married for fifty-two years before she passed away in 1998. His son Michael passed away in 1986. Serhij had two other children, Nicholas and Mary. Serhij would like to be remembered as a hard-working, family man.



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## ABOUT THE EDITOR

Monique Sheldon-Stemm was born in North Wales, UK and migrated to Australia in 1974 with her parents and sisters under the Assisted Passage Scheme. Monique became an Australian citizen in 1977. She holds degrees from the University of Western Australia in Literature, History and Education and her career spans 25 years of teaching, lecturing and mentoring in schools and colleges in Australia and the USA.

Monique has been responsible for several newspaper and year book publications in the past and her passions are oral history, music, art and travel.

Monique has worked at Kalyna Care since 2011. Please contact her at Kalyna Care if you, or someone you know, would like to contribute to future volumes of *Your Story*.



*Orion Wenhrynowycz, Photo Albums.*





*Ukrainian embroidery courtesy of O. Poltavskaya.*

## KALYNA CARE

344 Taylors Road, Delahey Victoria 3037

T 9367 8055 F 9310 7943

E [info@ueph.com.au](mailto:info@ueph.com.au) [www.kalynaagedcare.com.au](http://www.kalynaagedcare.com.au)

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