

# YOUR STORY

MEMORIES & MILESTONES



**Kalyna Care**

Personal and Compassionate Care

20 YEARS AT DELAHEY



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YOUR STORY: MEMORIES AND MILESTONES  
 WAS LAUNCHED BY  
 THE HONOURABLE MATTHEW GUY  
 STATE MINISTER FOR PLANNING  
 AT  
 KALYNA CARE  
 ON  
 SUNDAY 2 JUNE 2013

THANKS GO TO THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES FOR THEIR  
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## FORWARD

This is the third volume of our Your Story book, and it is a very special one of memories and milestones as Kalyna Care celebrates 20 years of operation at Delahey. A significant story here is that of Maja Hrudka and her committee as they started the aged care facility and units known as Ukrainian Elderly People's Home.

20 years on and the facility has grown to three times its original size providing a valuable service to the Ukrainian community as well as many other local communities hailing from Eastern Europe and other parts of the world. Along with the history, there are many other individual stories about the people who live at Kalyna Care with stories of hardship, determination and the love of life, their families and friends.

The richness of their stories comes to life as they describe their varied experiences and adventures. It is these stories that preserve the memories of our people that will, in all probability, contribute to and influence the lives of future generations. Most importantly, they are the words of the residents themselves, as they now see and remember their world.

Please enjoy the many stories and join us in celebrating 20 years of extraordinary service to people from the Ukrainian and other communities. Again, thank you to each one who provided their story and to their families for sharing what are truly amazing insights into the journey they have travelled.

Our thanks go to the companies who have provided us with sponsorship for the publication of this book.

Mark Sheldon-Stemm  
 General Manager



## MAJA HRUDKA

MAJA HRUDKA (NÉE OSTROWSKYJ) WAS BORN ON THE 18TH OF JANUARY 1925 IN KRASNOHRAD LOCATED IN THE POLTAVA REGION OF UKRAINE. SHE HAD TWO BROTHERS, ALEX AND VLODYMIR. ALEX WAS A PILOT WHO LIVED IN MOSCOW AND VLODYMIR LIVED IN UKRAINE.

When war broke out in 1939, Maja had just begun to study nursing. However, German occupation saw many young people removed from their Ukrainian villages to provide forced labour for Germany on farms and in factories. When they came for Maja in 1942, she stubbornly refused to do farm work and insisted on only doing the work for which she was trained. The Germans sent her to Vienna to work in a hospital.

Maja was one of the first Displaced Persons to arrive in Australia after World War II. Having nothing but a suitcase to her name, Maja sailed by ship to Melbourne in 1949. By the end of 1950 she had achieved her diploma in nursing at Lakeside psychiatric facility in Ballarat and mastered the English language.

In 1954 she moved to Melbourne to work at the Royal Park Psychiatric Hospital in Parkville. It was there she met Peter Hrudka who was also a trained psychiatric nurse, and they married. Maja and Peter lived in Carlton and later in Lyttle Avenue, Essendon in a house they bulldozed and rebuilt. They didn't have any children, which is something Maja has always regretted, and their marriage did not last.

Following her completion of studies at Melbourne University, Maja was appointed Director of Nursing at Larundel psychiatric facility at Bundoora. She eventually became Superintendent of psychiatric services in Victoria and her office was situated on Collins Street, Melbourne.

Maja had high expectations of her staff and ran a tight ship. She had red hair and, apparently, a temper to match! She always drove a red Honda sedan and loved shopping for clothes on Collins in the city.

In 1982 Maja took a cruise vacation that would change her life. On board, she met David Greenland, a former seaman, and they formed a life together. They loved to go cruising and they owned an apartment on the Gold Coast where they took holidays. They enjoyed many years together until David passed away at UEPH on 3rd January 2009.

Maja was extremely active in the Ukrainian community and she held various executive committee positions not the least of which was as Secretary of the Ukrainian Women's Association. During this post, she represented the UWA at a national level and at conferences in Toronto, Beijing and Ukraine.



In 1995, she attended the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women and in 1996 she contributed to international conferences in response to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

It is significant that Maja now resides and is cared for in a home she built for other people. Some of the original staff who began work at UEPH in 1993 are now her carers. Maja contributed to the progress and maintenance of the facility until she began to develop dementia in 1998.

*In 2012, the Editor nominated Maja's story for the Ethnic Business Awards. The application achieved that of State Finalist and was represented at the Victorian State Luncheon held at the NAB in Melbourne.*





## UKRAINIAN ELDERLY PEOPLE'S HOME

IN 1960 THE UKRAINIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION VICTORIA PURCHASED LAND TO BUILD A HOME FOR UKRAINIAN ORPHANS. HOWEVER, AT A MEETING HELD ON 21ST OCTOBER 1966, CHAIRED BY MRS MARIA OSIDACZ, IT WAS DECIDED THAT A HOME FOR THE ELDERLY WOULD BE BUILT INSTEAD, AS THERE WAS NO LONGER A NEED TO HOUSE ORPHANED CHILDREN.

A committee was formed comprising Natalie Zimnytski, Maria Semkiw and Mr Oleh Bulka. The committee formed a Society with members and registered this society with the Hospital and Charities Commission. The society was registered on the 20th August 1966.

The land and collected money were transferred to the society known as Trustee Ukrainian Community, Essendon.

By 1968, the proposed building project was headed by Maja Hrudka as Chairman, Mr B Shemet, Vice Chairman and Mr W Denes as Secretary.

The creation of the Ukrainian Elderly People's Home Society was not without its ups and downs.

Whatever obstacles came their way, the Society was quick to respond in order to achieve their goal of building a home. In 1976, a ten bedroomed house was purchased in Brewster Street, Essendon and in June of that year, the home was officially opened for elderly Ukrainians able to care for themselves.

In August 1984, the society was incorporated as a Public Company limited by guarantee. By 1985, the society had over 120 members and at the Annual General Meeting in March it was decided to transfer all collected monies and house in Essendon towards the Public Company to be registered as the 'Ukrainian Elderly People's Home' (UEPH).

The decision was made to find and purchase land to build a hostel, nursing home and retirement village.

On the 3rd September 1987, Maja Hrudka and V Rudewych applied for grants and on 27th May 1988 the Ukrainian Elderly people's Home was advised that a grant for \$707,000.00 had been approved.

All other funds were to be raised by the company and the community.

In May 1991 the grant was increased to \$998,400.00 and UEPH could commence to build its home.

Following a search for three years, on 21st June 1988 a plot of land measuring 1.7 hectares was purchased on Taylors Road. In 1991 on the 21st May the Urban City Land Authority gave a grant of \$485,760.00. Several members of UEPH had donated hundreds of dollars. The UEPH was now in a position to approach architects for plans.

The hostel was to consist of 32 bedrooms with an ensuite in each room, a large dining/lounge area with extensive windows, offices and a staff room.

On Monday 26th April 1993 the first Ukrainian Home for the Elderly in Australia was opened. The UEPH was blessed by Father Zenon Chorkaw and Father Ivan Pashula. The official opening took place on the 22nd May 1994 with government representatives present. Mr V Rudewych was the chairman of the opening committee.

The Maja Hrudka Wing commemorates the work of Maja Hrudka.



## KALYNA CARE

THE PERIOD FROM 2009 TO THE CURRENT DAY SAW THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS IN KALYNA CARE'S HISTORY.

In previous years, the Board had planned and prepared for major expansion to the facility and 2010 saw the beginning of its final execution. Building extensions began to incorporate a Chapel/Hall, Board room and a two-storey resident wing complete with resident kitchens, nurse's stations, lounges and dining rooms along with a doctor's room and staff room. Furthermore, the Maja Hrudka wing was extended to include more resident rooms and a lounge.

On 27 November 2011, the new buildings were officially opened by the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship, the Honourable Nicolas Kotsiras MP and Mr Andrew Matiszak, Chairman of the Board of Kalyna Care. The Chapel was named after the Bishop Ivan Prasko and the Hall is named after Father Borys Stasyshyn of the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church. This was blessed by the Right Reverend Olexander Kenez of the Ukrainian Catholic Church and Father Ivan Pashula of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The Noble Park Children's Choir and the Rodyna Ensemble sang at the ceremony. Following the opening, the first volume of Your Story was launched by Marko Pavlyshyn.

By the end of 2012, the exterior was complete with a Sensory Garden and parking facilities for staff and visitors.



Two new flag poles replaced the old ones for the Australian and Ukrainian flags and were erected at the front of the building.





Overall, aged care facilities were becoming more cultural in their outlook and intake of residents and the Board decided to bring Kalyna Care up to date with current practises.

One of the most significant changes was the introduction of its new trading name 'Kalyna Care'. Whilst retaining its organisational name 'Ukrainian Elderly People's Home', this new name and its new logo signified a desire to reflect the multicultural nature of Australia with which Kalyna Care would make greater engagement, opening its doors to future residents who were from other cultures as well as of the Ukrainian community. Concern was expressed about this direction by some community members who took time to understand that the Ukrainian nature of the facility would remain unchanged.

However, it proved to be a positive transition that made the facility more easily recognizable within the vast number of aged care facilities in Victoria, and more marketable within this highly competitive field.

A competition was held for the design of the new logo and this was won by Melanie Zelinka.

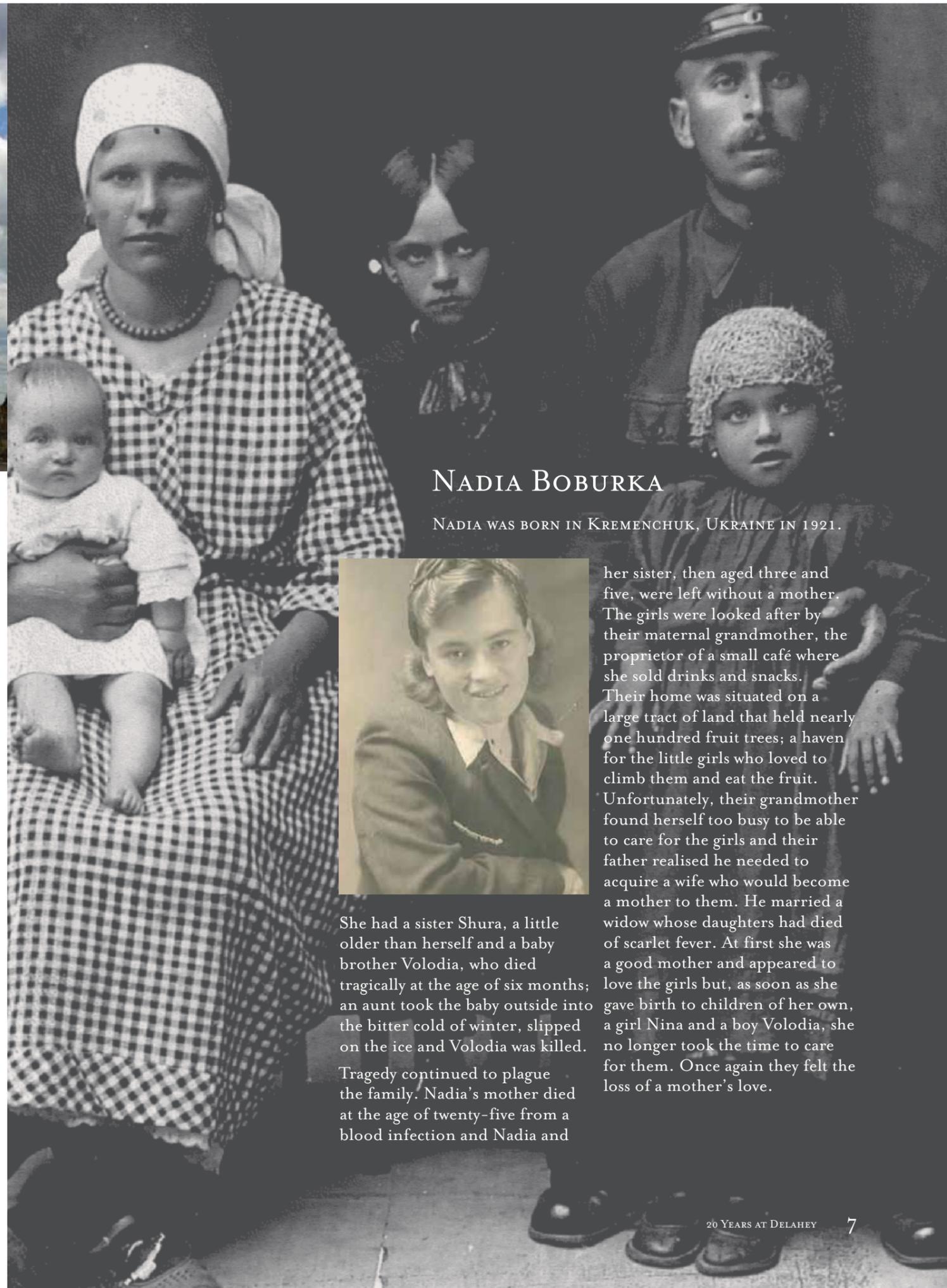
It was also a time to re-think about the values, vision and mission of Kalyna Care. These needed to mirror the quality of care provided in the home, the way people are treated and direct the manner in which care is given. The values gave way to the acronym of 'RESPECT': respect, empathy, support and improvement, privacy and dignity, equity and encouragement, compassion, tolerance and understanding.

The staff uniform became emblazoned with the new logo and "I RESPECT U" as a reminder of Kalyna Care's values.

Kalyna Care's Mission Statement was also developed during this period. Integral to its mission was knowing your story, recording it and using it to understand the residents who live in the home initiated by Mark Sheldon-Stemm, who became General Manager in 2010. He took this concept further and published a book of stories about residents in 2011. Hence, the beginning of Your Story.

Importantly, the new Mission Statement continued to signify Kalyna Care's Ukrainian origins and continuing traditions, along with reference to 'other cultural and religious traditions'. Equally important is the commitment to quality services and continuous improvement.

By 2010, Kalyna Care employed 25 full time and 21 part-time staff. This number grew to over 100 staff by the beginning of 2013 serving the 102 residents at the facility.



## NADIA BOBURKA

NADIA WAS BORN IN KREMENCHUK, UKRAINE IN 1921.



She had a sister Shura, a little older than herself and a baby brother Volodia, who died tragically at the age of six months; an aunt took the baby outside into the bitter cold of winter, slipped on the ice and Volodia was killed.

Tragedy continued to plague the family. Nadia's mother died at the age of twenty-five from a blood infection and Nadia and

her sister, then aged three and five, were left without a mother. The girls were looked after by their maternal grandmother, the proprietor of a small café where she sold drinks and snacks. Their home was situated on a large tract of land that held nearly one hundred fruit trees; a haven for the little girls who loved to climb them and eat the fruit. Unfortunately, their grandmother found herself too busy to be able to care for the girls and their father realised he needed to acquire a wife who would become a mother to them. He married a widow whose daughters had died of scarlet fever. At first she was a good mother and appeared to love the girls but, as soon as she gave birth to children of her own, a girl Nina and a boy Volodia, she no longer took the time to care for them. Once again they felt the loss of a mother's love.

As the years passed, communism increased. People disappeared. Properties were confiscated and their owners thrown out into the street. Houses were ransacked for food. Nadia's grandparents were victims of this appalling treatment and they died from the cold and starvation. The Soviet regime induced a famine that killed millions of Ukrainians during its occupation. Somehow, Nadia's immediate family survived and her father was able to bring home a few pieces of bread a day while her stepmother sold clothes and their belongings for food.

Nadia's ambition was to be a chemist and she began studies at a pharmaceutical institute. Her sister Nina's goal was to become a doctor. Neither girl was able to follow through her ambitions as the German occupation closed all the schools in Ukraine.

One dreadful night, the German militia raided the town and took the two girls and any young person aged from sixteen, loaded them onto carriages and despatched them to Germany or Austria as slave labour. Their anguished parents could only look on in despair as the fearful girls were carried away. Their journey ended in Austria where they were forced to work on farms until the cessation of the war.

They were poorly fed and worked hard. Somehow, they heard that their sister Shura had been taken to Germany and they tried to make contact with her. Successfully doing so on a few occasions, they finally heard when the war had ended that she had been sadly killed in a bomb attack on Berlin.

Nadia met her husband Wasyl during her time in Germany. He was working for another farmer who treated his workers with extreme cruelty.

Nadia managed to sneak food to him through a fence whenever she could. They fell in love.

When the war ended and they were freed, Nadia and Wasyl married. Wasyl had to bribe a priest with some ham and other goodies that he had acquired with his coupons to do this. Their daughter Luba was born in the first year of marriage and they continued to live in Austria for a couple of years. They were happy years and, although they still had to work hard, they were free, they were young, they had made good friends and together they enjoyed simple pleasures.

During that time many people had been forcibly returned home by the Russians who insisted that they would have a better life and Nadia's sister Nina was among those taken. By lucky chance, Nadia and her family had been away on the day the Russians rounded people up and she was distraught that she never got to say goodbye to her sister. Unfortunately, the good life promised by the Russians never eventuated and many people were treated badly.

The chance came to emigrate. Early in March 1949 the family boarded the troop carrier General Heintzelman and headed for Australia along with almost nine hundred other migrants. From the deck, Nadia and Wasyl waved their goodbyes to Europe not knowing what the future held. Nadia gazed at the disappearing shore for a long time. The voyage was long and difficult, having none of the comforts of passenger ships today. Sleeping in hammocks and sitting on hard, bare decks, Wasyl, along with many other passengers, suffered terribly from seasickness. Many of the children, Luba among them, were confined with chicken pox.



Finally, they set foot on Australian soil in April 1949. Trains were there waiting to transport them to a migrant camp in Bonegilla. After a month there, they were moved to another camp at Rushworth, where they lived in army barracks for a year. A son, George, was born there in 1950.

Nadia and Wasyl were given work in a small rubber factory in Port Melbourne where Wasyl made mattresses and Nadia made inserts for bras. Luba loved making fancy doll's hats from these; they were a perfect hat shape! Their accommodation was a caravan on the factory site. When the factory exploded and burnt to the ground, they moved to Newport where many Ukrainian migrants had settled. Luba, then seven years old, would always remember walking home from Newport State

Life became easier when they acquired a wood stove and could heat water and food. This is how they lived, without water and electricity and through various illnesses, for several years until the house was completed. Their son, Michael, was born in 1954.

In 1970, Nadia returned to Ukraine to see her father, sister Nina and brother Volodia. At this time, Ukraine was still under Russian domination and the visit was closely monitored by the militia. Nadia found that many of the letters she had written to her family had been censored with thick black lines through many of the sentences. She would only make one last trip to Ukraine in 1991 and after that would never see her father, sister or brother again.

When their children had finished University and their studies and left home, Nadia and Wasyl moved to Watsonia where they lived for twenty-five years. Their children married and had children. Nadia, or "Baba Cuckoo" as the grandchildren called her, because of the cuckoo clock she had on the wall, lovingly looked after all the grandchildren for many years while their parents worked.

School where children sitting on fences would be singing "Bloody, bloody Baltics," as she passed. The new immigrants became a very close knit group helping each other whenever necessary; lack of English and lack of understanding the new country's rules made life very difficult.

Nadia and Wasyl worked in various factories until Wasyl settled at Shell where he worked for the next twenty-one years. Long days at work and building their house during the evenings took a toll on their health. When one room was completed, the family moved in. Blankets covering windows were not a problem. Nor was the fact that they still had no floorboards. The family was so happy to have their own roof over their heads. In the evenings they would all huddle around an oil lamp as Nadia read them stories.

In later years, and with their health failing, Nadia and Wasyl decided to move to an independent living unit at the Ukrainian Elderly People's Home now known as Kalyna Care. The one bedroomed unit was small and after a while they decided this was not for them. They moved to Bright, a picturesque little town in North East Victoria where their son Michael owned a café. They spent three years there in a comfortable unit. Nadia said that Bright made her feel as though someone had poured gold over her – it was such a beautiful little town. They enjoyed watching the kangaroos grazing on the hills behind their house and the peace and quiet.

However, failing health again forced them to return to Kalyna Care in Delahey. Wasyl passed away in December 2010. Nadia remains in Kalyna Care surrounded by photos and fading memories of her long and eventful life.

*Original story submitted by Nadia's family.*



## ROSALIA CZACZUN

IN HER OWN WORDS

Everyone has a story to tell. I can speak Russian, Polish, Ukrainian and I used to speak German well but you know, I have lost a lot of it. I can understand when I hear it, but to speak it no; slowly, slowly I have lost it. I never use it now. I still know Russian and Polish well. Of course, I can speak English.

My mother was Maria and my father was Nikolai. There were eight children in our family; Anna, then me, Katie, Josef, Vladimir, Maria, Olga and Slavko. Eight of us! We had a house with a very big garden. My mother used to be in the garden all the time. We had big fruit trees. There were cherries, apples and plums. My brothers used to climb them but the girls didn't. The boys had to climb them to pick the plums. There were chickens with baby chicks in the garden. And we had a duck and a cat. When we talked to the cat, he used to pull funny faces at us. He was a funny cat! When I was a little girl, I used to get into trouble all the time. My mother used to say, "Can't you listen to what I say?" and sometimes she would bring out her big stick. She would say,

"You won't go places unless you do what I tell you!" When my mother got sick, my big sister and I had to look after everyone. We did everything; all the laundry and cleaning and cooking. My cooking wasn't very good. I just gave them bread and milk. Yes, back then was a completely different life.

My father worked in a timber mill. He worked very hard. He worked so hard that he worked his way up to be the boss.

My older brother did whatever he wanted; he wanted to be a hero! I think my youngest brother was my favourite. I looked after him because he was much smaller than me. All my brothers were soldiers.

Our village was quite big. It was surrounded by farms and forests. Most of the houses were brown wood. If you were young and got married then you painted your house a pretty colour. Most of the houses were small. Everybody knew each other in our village and everyone had chickens. Some people had cows. The rich people had a horse and cart but everyone else had to walk or ride a bike.

A lady in the village used to make our clothes. My mother used to give us her clothes and we had to share sometimes. I remember one time; my mother bought my older sister a new blouse. I was jealous and I told my mother that I wanted one but she said she didn't have any money. Then my sister had to go away for a little while and I put on her new blouse! She came back and said, "What are you doing wearing my blouse?" I said, "Well, you're not wearing it!" My sister was not happy.

My mother said she would buy me one but she had to save for two months first.

When I was a little girl, the special times in my life were Christmas and birthdays. Here now young kids want lots of things. But back then things were different.

We never waited for big presents; we used to get chocolate. It wasn't much but we were so happy and grateful. Because, you know, there were eight children and not much money. Chocolate was a treat.

I always liked to read. I still read. When I was young, I would go to bed and read by a kerosene lamp. My mother used to tell me, "Stop reading so much! You will ruin your eyes! That lamp is no good for reading!" I read all the time. I still read every day. I like life stories and romances.

There was a big house in the village where school children from Poland used to stay for holidays. I was told to help out. I wasn't old enough to earn money so they paid us with things like dresses or blouses. When I was older I could earn money. There wasn't much free time. We used to all go to Church every Sunday. Sometimes I had to work in the hospital on Sundays.



I used to work in a hospital. The hospital was a big building. It was three storeys high. The Russians were in charge of the hospital. I suppose I was like a nurse because I looked after the people there. There were soldiers and military girls – all sick. The hospital boss was a man and he said we could do what we wanted. I worked all the shifts; night shift from eight in the evening until eight in the morning; and day shifts. The first week I would work mornings, the second week I would work afternoons and then the third week I worked nights. I worked on the weekends too. I slowly got used to it. I did some cleaning too. It was an important part of my life. My sister also worked in the same hospital. She did cleaning but only worked in the day time. There were lots and lots of stairs for her to clean. It was hard work having to climb the stairs. My sister said she didn't want to clean the men, so I had to do it! We wore a blue dress for our uniform but they were expensive so I only had one dress.

I loved to dance. When I was old enough, I went to a dance in the village but I didn't know how to dance. I just sat and watched everyone else. I said to my sister, "I have to learn!" So I learned to dance. I could dance everything; the polka, the waltz, the Ukrainian dances.

I used to dance with the boys! On special dances in the village, I was always the first up to dance. The soldiers used to go to the dances in the village. I would dance all day and all night if I could. When the music was on in the hospital, I couldn't stay still. The soldiers would say, "You should leave your feet at home!" But I said to them, "I don't have anywhere to keep them!" My mother said, "You are just like me." My parents didn't dance much. They were always too busy. My father was a good dancer and my sister Olga only danced a little bit and then only the slow ones. There were so many boys in the village. They were all soldiers. You could take your pick of boys! But I was only a girl, only sixteen. I was a good girl. I had a friend who was a boy when I was fifteen. But after I was sixteen and I went to Germany, I didn't see him again.

I was sixteen when the Germans came to our village. Because there were three girls old enough to work, they wanted to take all three of us to Germany but only two of us went; me and my older sister. I was at home with my family and they knocked on the door and told us this. I was scared. They said we would only have to work there for a couple of months but I ended up being in Germany for three years and I never went back to Ukraine. It was very sad to leave.

When I got to the farm I had my own room. My job was to milk the cows. I didn't know how to do that so they had to teach me. I had to learn how to speak German as well. The farmers were nice people. The war was on. I remember the planes. I was nineteen when I left.

I was only eighteen or nineteen when I got married. There were three boys who wanted to marry me. They were all soldiers; a couple Polish and one Ukrainian. I was a strong and healthy young woman.

My sister got married one year after me.

After the war, I couldn't go back home because the Russians had taken over my village. I went to Australia. One of my sisters went to New Zealand and one of my sisters went to Brazil. I went to Bonegilla. I was married and we built a house in Newport. We had two children; a boy and a girl but I couldn't have any more. I have grand-children and great-grandchildren. I brought my mother and father to Australia and they lived in our house and I looked after them. Then my sisters came to live in Australia too. They stayed with us for a little while. My sisters live in the units now.

When I was married, we liked to go to Victoria Markets in Melbourne. We had Australian neighbours and they were our friends. I used to give them things out of my garden. We used to go to the Ukrainian clubs and to church every Sunday. My husband died. He died too quickly. My family told me to sell the big house. I lived in a unit then I came here. I am very happy to be here. I am in Heaven – no cooking, no cleaning, no washing! It's very good. When I lie in bed, I don't fall asleep straight away. Then I remember things.

# MARIA HNATIW

HER STORY AS TOLD BY HER DAUGHTER KATHY

My mother Maria was born on 16th September 1926 in Bielyn Ukraine, or Bielin Poland or Bielin Belarus, or even Pinsk Poland, depending on which part of history you believe, and how the country borders have changed. But for all intents and purposes, Maria was born in Bielyn, Ukraine, well, that's according to her passport!

Not yet 16 years old, Maria was taken by the German army to work in a labour camp in Hannover, Germany. Her family was told that she would be working to help support them, and be able to send money back to them in the village. Unfortunately, that was not to be and that was the last time she saw her mother and father.

Mum's parents also killed one of their chickens and cooked it for her to take on her journey. She was rationing it so much wanting to save it, and only took little bites, that eventually she had to throw it out because it went off. She was so heartbroken that we think this started her life-long love affair with eating chicken... every day of the week!

The journey to Germany took many months by trains, living in cattle style wagons with twenty to thirty other women. There were no beds or blankets and they were stationed at a rail siding for months during winter, where she developed a severe ulcer on her back due to the icy conditions.



The labour camp was also crowded with three-tier bunk beds where four to five women shared a bed. Food was rationed and to this day mum disliked wholemeal bread as it reminded her of the bread they had to make using sawdust.

Because she was thin and wiry, the other women in her barracks used to get her to steal food from the local farmer near the camp. She used to climb under the wire fence and then dodge the search lights so as not to be seen. We never found out why she just didn't escape and not go back.

At her camp, the women were put to work at a cannery, making cans for conserved meat, vegetables and so on, working with huge vats of molten steel. Mum was part of the quality control unit. She was once getting bored with checking each can for any defects and, sort of accidentally on purpose, pushed one of the cans off the conveyor belt.

A German soldier grabbed her by the scruff of her collar and held her over the vat of hot liquid and it was only due to her crying and other women's shouting that another officer in charge made the soldier put mum down.

The camp allowed inmates some free weekends and that is how Maria met our dad, Dmytro, who worked at a camp nearby.

After the war ended, and lured by the Russian army's promise of being taken back to their homeland in Ukraine, they were once again loaded onto a cattle style train only to find that they were being treated worse by the Russian army than they were by the Germans. Like something out of a James Bond movie, they jumped off the moving train in the middle of the night and made their way back to Germany.

In 1947 they were married in Hannover and, with their son Stefan, lived at the American

refugee camp until they boarded an American ship in Naples bound for the other side of the world, Australia. They could have in fact boarded a ship bound for Chile, but the one headed to Australia went first, so that decided their fate!

They arrived at Princess Pier, Port Melbourne on January 26, 1950. Yes, Australia Day!

From there, they were taken to Bonegilla in northern Victoria where they lived for quite a few years and where dad worked at various jobs including fruit picking.

They then had earned enough money to move down to Melbourne and build a home in Greensborough.

I was born a few years later and our family was always lovingly known as the 'wogs' who lived in Beewar Street!

Mum developed close friendships with her neighbours and the Smith family next door became our second home.

Maria worked at various jobs throughout her life, ranging from work in a nursing home, being a cook at the Olympic Village in 1956, as a seamstress and then finally as a qualified cook at rehabilitation centre called Gresswell, until her retirement.

Unfortunately in 1982, our dad passed away and mum continued to live in Greensborough until she moved into an independent

living unit at the Ukrainian Elderly People's Home in 2001.

Mum loved singing, and with that typical Slavic lilt in her voice, she was often heard singing above others at parties and other occasions. You could always hear her! While living at the retirement village, she joined a choir which often performed at the Pensioner's meetings held at the Ukrainian Hall in Essendon. She loved it.

She also loved clothes and shoes... and plastic bags! As the time came to clean out her unit and move into the hostel, she was telling us which clothes she wanted to take with her, as her whole wardrobe would have filled the entire retirement village... "You know, the shirt with the blue and red flowers. The one on the left hand side of the cupboard, above the drawer in the spare room, behind the bags..." she would say. Needless to say, we could never quite figure out which shirt she was referring to and we kept bringing her the wrong one.

Maria was delighted when, after almost forty years, she was able to go back to Ukraine to see her younger sister Katya, and have her come to Australia and stay with her twice over the past decade.

Maria missed her sister so much and was longing to have the chance to bring her out here again. But unfortunately, mum's health and her painful ulcers on her legs did not allow this dream to come true.

Due to her worsening pain and deteriorating health, mum moved into the hostel at Kalyna Care. She celebrated her 86th birthday on September 16th, 2012 and passed away quietly on the evening of Saturday 13th October, 2012.

Maria was the mother of Stefan and Kathy and mother-in-law to Katya and George. She was the Baba of Simon, Andrew and Maree, Timothy, Kristen and David, Emily and Matt. She was the great-grandmother (Baba Bubbles) of Mia and Charlie.

## MARIA KORCLINIEWSKA

MARIA WAS BORN IN POLAND ON 1ST MAY 1926 TO SERGIE AND TATIANA ROZEK. HER MOTHER WAS A HOME MAKER AND HER FATHER WORKED ON THEIR FARM. SHE WAS THE YOUNGEST OF THREE CHILDREN; TWIN SISTER TO OLGA AND SISTER TO ANTHONY, WHO WAS THE ELDEST.



After the war, she and Jan stayed in Germany and then migrated to Australia in 1951. They had two children; a son, Stan who now has two children, and a daughter Yadwiga who also has two children.

Jan and Maria lived in North Sunshine. Jan used to like to go fishing and Maria liked to cook (she likes perogi, cabbage rolls and hamburgers!), do crochet and go to dances.

Maria likes to be dressed nicely, walks in the garden, smelling the flowers and speaks her mind!

She used to go to school with her sister and completed five years of primary school. All the family worked the farm. Sergie suffered from frostbite which he incurred during World War I.

Maria remembers the German occupation, when the soldiers came and they had to move. At the age of sixteen, the Germans took her to Germany to work on the farms. She was very lucky as she stayed with farmers who were good to her and she stayed with them until the war ended. It was at the farm that she met her future husband, Jan, who had arrived a year after her. They worked hard, but had no money. They were lucky though; some of the other farmers used to beat their workers.



*Editor's Note: Jan and Maria sailed from Nordenham, Germany on the ship Castelbianco on 2 February 1951 and arrived in Melbourne on 13 March 1951.*

## ANASTASIA KOTOWSKYJ

ANASTASIA WAS BORN IN NOVEMBER 1929 IN UKRAINE.



They spent their weekends in the garden, doing housework, cooking and visiting friends. They took a wonderful trip to Canada one year. Anastasia and her husband were married for fifty-two years.

Anastasia is proud of being Ukrainian and of her Ukrainian culture, heritage and traditions. She loved to embroider. She likes to dress smartly and takes pride in her appearance and loves to socialize with family and friends.

Anastasia would like to be remembered as an honest, funny, hardworking lady whose family is very important to her. She also admits to having a quick temper and speaking her mind!

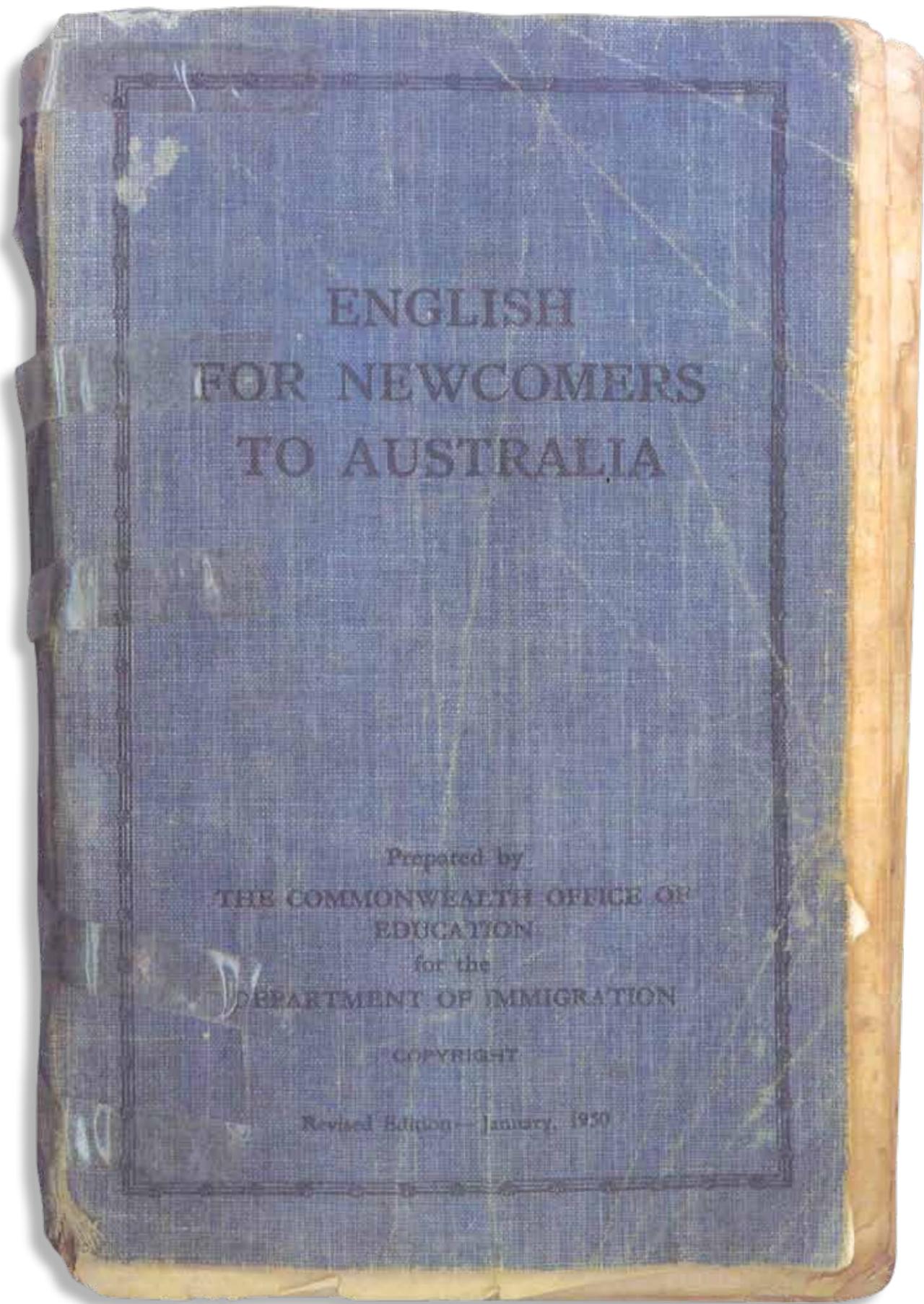
She was the fifth child of George and Anastasia and had eleven brothers and sisters. As a little girl, Anastasia had limited schooling opportunities but she was able to attend school for four years. She helped with and worked on her parent's farm.

Anastasia remembers her father as being a strict person who was hard-working and who provided well for his family. During WWII, the family was relocated to Poland by the German army. She remembers that this was a time of hiding and fear of being killed. In fact, her mother was shot in the arm at one point. Sadly, Anastasia lost two brothers in the war.

Anastasia was married in Poland in June 1955. Her groom was badly burnt before the wedding but fortunately he was able to get better for the ceremony. They had their first home in Popowa, Poland where they lived for eight years. By the time they migrated to Australia in 1964, they had two children; a daughter, Slavka and a son, John.

Anastasia and her family lived in North Sunshine. She worked as a quality controller for Spalding and loved her work as she could mingle with women from other countries. Anastasia's husband was a labourer doing bricklaying and carpentry jobs.





*Book kindly supplied by Mrs Kalyna Kenez.*



## ORESTA LENKIWSKA

Oresta was born on 6th January, 1940 to Maria, a kindergarten teacher, and Dmytro, who worked for the railways in Verechanka. They lived in Verechanka in Ukraine and then moved to Bukovina, annexed by the Germans. Oresta was sister to Maria, Anna and Adam.

Although living through difficult war years, Oresta experienced a wonderful childhood. Being a very young child, she had an amazing time traveling from one camp to another and being exposed to many events that were not always pleasant. However, her memories of this era of her life are very positive and she believes that through those events she became more tolerant towards people.

She enjoyed school and was able to complete high school and do very well in her classes. During her free time she loved to help her mother in the kitchen.

Oresta's mother sent all her children to Ukrainian dancing classes and they gave many performances. The classes were expensive so her parents had to work hard to find the money to pay for them.

Her first job was working as a garden assistant once a week for the grand sum of \$10.00.

Oresta married her husband, Peter, in 1950 in St Peter and Paul Cathedral in North Melbourne. It was a small wedding; the weather was fine and she looked beautiful in a dress she had bought. She and Peter made life-long friends with Orion and Tatiana Wenhrynowicz and both their families were very close. She travelled with Peter to Europe; to Germany, the country where she says felt more like home than anywhere else, and to Munich, Paris and Ukraine.

Before she retired, Oresta worked as a photographer for sixteen years. When it came time for her to retire the company she worked for asked her to stay on, which she did, for a short time. She filled her free time doing things like embroidery for the Ukrainian church, going to Ukrainian concerts and other events, listening to classical music and gardening.

Nowadays, Oresta still enjoys listening to the classical music of Beethoven and Bach, sitting outside on warm days and enjoying the peace at Kalyna Care.





## PAUL MALLIA

PAUL'S STORY IS TOLD TO US BY HIS DAUGHTER PAULINE, THE YOUNGEST IN THEIR FAMILY WHO WAS ALWAYS 'DADDY'S LIL' GIRL.'



Paul Mallia is very much a family man who doted on his wife Carmen. They were such a great pair who always walked arm in arm and loved to go dancing every week. Dancing was a wonderful excuse for Carmen to have new clothes. Their close relationship saw them do everything together and in all the ups and downs of life they were supportive of each other and their family.

Although Paul was a conservative man, he did some rather un-conservative things! During Pauline's childhood, her father cooked their pet duck for dinner but none of them could even touch it! He used to book halls during the summer and after a day at the beach, all the family would dance the evenings away. Carmen's birthday was on the 1st January and the family booked a band and organised a birthday cake for her. Hundreds of people attended the party.

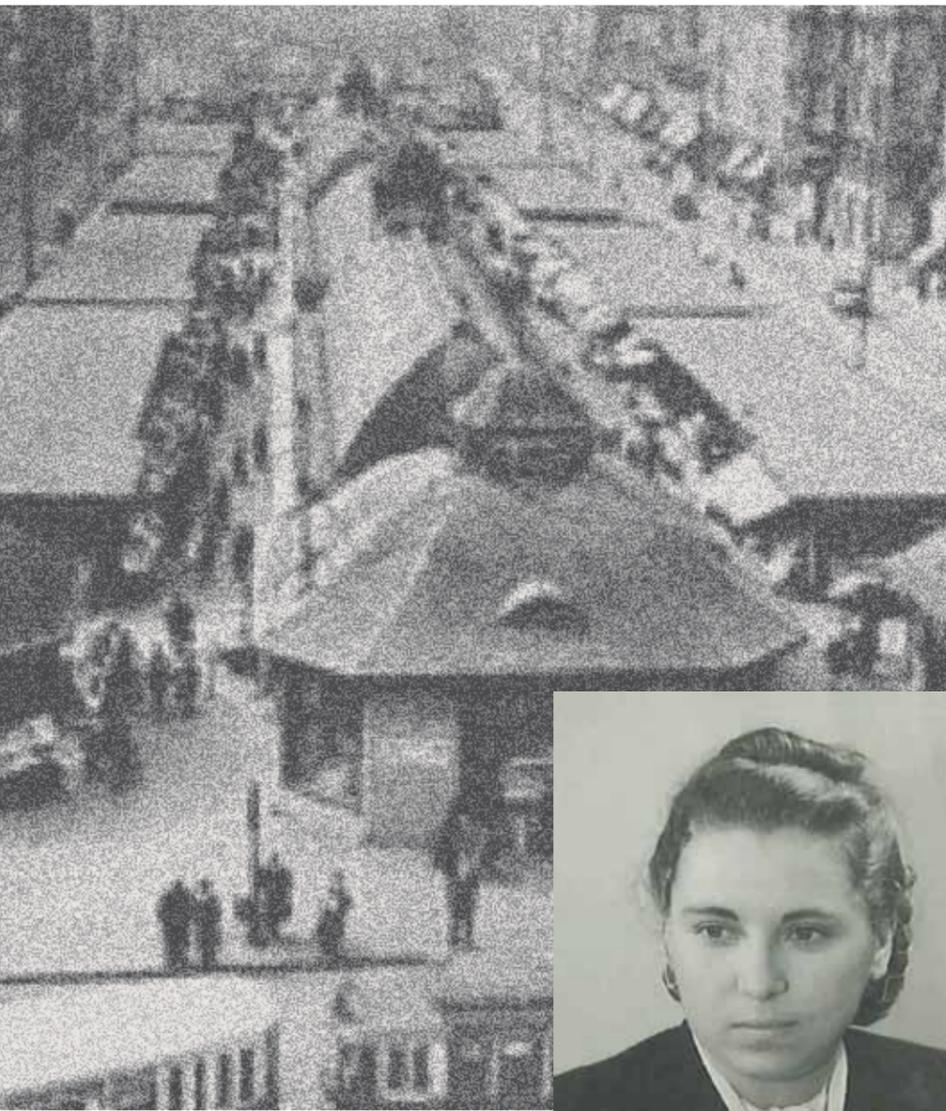
Sadly, Carmen passed away aged 68. She had survived a triple bypass when she was 54 and Paul retired from his work at Massey Ferguson to look after her. When Pauline visited her father he always used to say how he missed her mother and would sit outside the Sunshine Hospital on a park bench remembering her.

Paul travelled to Europe with his son Peter for a three month trip. Because of her ill health, Carmen could not join them and, disappointed, she stayed in Australia with Pauline. Carmen spent a lot of time with Pauline, travelling around with her before Pauline married.

When Pauline sent Christmas cards on behalf of her father to family and friends in Malta and Melbourne, they did not know that he was living in a home and their reaction touched Pauline so much that she burst into tears.

Later in his life, Pauline noticed that her father was wandering and that he had stopped cooking for himself. She used to cook all his meals and leave them in the fridge, but they went untouched. It was then that Pauline realized her father was suffering the early stages of dementia and needed more care.

Here at Kalyna Care, Paul whistles all the time and makes us laugh with his singing and asking his carers, "How are you sweet heart?" He must be happy!



## NADIA PANASHIR

WELL, WHERE TO BEGIN? I WAS BORN IN THE OBLAST OF POLTAVA, UKRAINE IN A SMALL TOWN ABOUT 30KMS FROM THE CITY. IT'S CALLED OPISHNIA AND IT'S FAMOUS FOR ITS CERAMICS.

My father, Ivan Bromot, was a barber and my mother, Olga, was mainly a housewife but she did other things too like work in a kindergarten and sometimes she cleaned at night in a big shop. My father worked for the Russians as a barber. He did everything barbers do; he cut hair and he shaved beards. He had a big sign in his shop window that was green with big black letters saying 'Barber.' He was a good father.

I was the middle child of seven children. I was born on 24th October 1923. One of the children died before I was born and another died of typhoid.

When I was a little girl, we all lived in a nice house that had a big lounge and two joining bedrooms. It was like an 'L' shape. Our garden was very big with so many fruit trees we had everything; apples, plums, cherries and pears.

One year we had so much fruit that father made a tray to lay it all out in the garden to dry in the sunshine to make prunes with.

My mother was a lovely woman. She was a nice mum to all of us. She was famous for her baking. When I was growing up she would bake for everyone and she cooked for the men who worked the tractors in the fields. She used to bake beautiful bread. The farmers used to ask her to bake bread for them and she was so kind and generous she did it. People used to ask, "Why is Olga always at home?" Because she was baking bread for everyone else!

I am very much like my mother. In fact, I even look like her. Our neighbour used to say that if you looked at me, you would be looking at my mother! And I learned a lot from her. All the cooking and baking she did, I learned too.

When I was a child, I was always sick. Dr Makohon told me I couldn't get sick anymore because I have had everything! When I was only six, I had a very bad stomach and I missed a whole year of school when I was nine because of malaria. I had to repeat a year of school. That was during the hunger years. Nineteen thirty-two and nineteen thirty-three. Terrible times. I caught typhus when I was eighteen in 1941. I was supposed to be a bridesmaid at my best friend's wedding but I missed out. I'm very sorry about that.

I was sick all the time, so not much school. Then the war came anyway and destroyed all my hopes and dreams. I wanted to be a doctor like my cousin but the universities closed so it was too late for me to be what I wanted to be.

When I was at school, I liked to play on the roundabout in the school yard. Every morning we would have to do exercises even if it was snowy and freezing cold we had to do our exercises. I liked to play cards and I can still play some.

When I was a little girl I loved to play in the snow. We used to make 'snowy babas' and make faces on them with beetroot. I liked to go fishing too in the rivers near our town. There were two very deep rivers and I learnt to swim in one of them. The first time I went I was really frightened but I jumped in and all my friends were yelling at me 'Keep going, keep going!' and that is how I learnt to swim; I just kept going! I kept going from one side to the other. My mother worried but she never said I couldn't swim in the river, she just said I must be careful.

When the Germans came I was eighteen years old. All the twelve to fifteen year old boys were taken away by the Germans to work.

After I made recovery from the typhus, I met my husband. He used to work with my brother driving tractors. Then the Germans took us to work in Austria. The trucks were full of people. There were so many people taken for work.

Then we got moved to Vienna. That was in February 1945. It was beautiful with greenery everywhere; in the parks, the trees. It was very pretty. But there was no work for the women. They [the Germans] put us in a big school to stay. It was close to the Opera House and the Ukrainian Church. Women were housed in one part of the building; we slept on bunk beds but there weren't any proper bathrooms. The women just waited for work. The men went to work for the fire brigade and they slept at the fire stations. They said to help against the enemy. In our free time, which was only on a Sunday, we visited lovely places like Schonbrunn. It's the oldest zoo in the world. And we saw Ludwig's house [Beethoven].



In March I was given a job in a factory, cleaning machines. Machines were everywhere. But then the factory was bombed. There was a lot of bombing in Vienna then. I was transferred to the same place as Maja Hrudka. Until I met Maja, I was unaware that we both went to the same market in Vienna and that we lived near each other, on the same street in fact. It's a remarkable coincidence that we ended up working together on the Board of UEPH years later. And now we both live here! [At Kalyna Care]

Vienna is one of the most beautiful cities I have ever seen. That and Kiev are the most beautiful cities in Europe, I think. But you know Vienna was bombed such a lot in the war and many beautiful buildings were damaged or destroyed. Even the Ukrainian church in Vienna was damaged. One place I enjoyed going to was the swimming baths. We didn't have a bath where we lived so I used to go there to get clean. The swimming baths were lovely. Lots of people used to go there, especially on the weekend which is when I liked to go.

The war cut my life in half but finally it ended for us on 25 April 1945. I had married Kuzma in 1944. We had to leave Vienna.





I even had to leave our wedding photographs behind. We carried what we could in our suitcases. We didn't have a lot. Our next job was to get to the American Zone in Munich, Germany where there was a DP camp.

We couldn't return to Ukraine. To get to Munich we first had to get to Linz [184km away] so we trudged through rain and mud and avoided soldiers to get to the railway station. To my surprise, my brother\* was there with his wife. What a coincidence!

We were travelling dangerously; we only had Cossack passports; nothing to say we were from Ukraine. My brother had said that we should go to Italy via Innsbruck but he had heard that a lot of married people who had gone there had been separated by the Russians who had coerced them to return to Russia to work in the mines in Siberia and in Donetsk. I think single women were made to rebuild Donetsk.

We heard that some people living in the British Zone committed suicide rather than go to Russia. That didn't happen in the American Zone but people did protest against what the Russians were doing.

When we got to Innsbruck, the camp there was full and when we reached Munich we found that camp was full as well. It was another journey to Salzburg and then a 85km journey to Augsburg, the next camp and that was full too and they were sending people on to Ulm.

My brother went there and so we went too.

At Ulm the Russians came to the railway station and they were getting hold of people to take to Russia. My brother cried out, "RUN!" We dropped everything and ran from the platform. It was so frightening. One of my brothers joined them. For two weeks we lived in a bombed house;

there was no water and we didn't have anything to eat. We found apples buried under sawdust in the cellar. That was lucky.

In the camp we slept on straw mattresses and the Americans gave us clothes and food. I got to work in the office with a tall, skinny French lady and an Australian lady (Mrs Pallinck). I sorted food cards. There was a teacher there, a Mr Zubenko, who had taught maths, a Mr Andre Klemkiw and Mr Stefan Dratschew. They used to go to the warehouse to get the food. We spent six years in that camp.

It wasn't easy; there were police at the gate even though we were free to come and go as we pleased. If we were given cigarettes, we would sell them in exchange for meals and coffee. I know the camp was organised by the UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration]. Then in 1947 the IRO took over [International Refugee Organization]. We had to wait and wait, that's all we could do until they called us up with papers and everything.

At last we were sent to Naples and we spent a couple of weeks in another camp until we could sail for Australia. We could have gone to Canada or Brazil and a couple of other places but the wait was too long. The people in the camp were so hungry that they used to ask us for bread.

\*Nadia's brother Fedir, his wife and child who travelled to Australia per Castelbianco departing Naples 5 July 1949 and Fremantle on 28 July 1949 and arriving in Sydney on the 3 August, 1949.



They had oranges to swap with us. That was the first time in my life I had seen an orange. I remember the toilets were terrible; one long trough that everything went past you. Disgusting! Anyway, after a week we were put on the American ship, Omar Bundy and we headed for Australia.\*

Everyone was sick! From the start to the finish of the Red Sea everyone was sick everywhere! It didn't help that there were eight women to a room and we were not with our men. I wasn't sick. Surprise!

When we got to Australia we were sent to the camp in Bathurst. I met Mr Calwell there. [Immigration Minister]. We had some schooling and they tried to teach us English. The officials at Bathurst wanted to separate us for work but my husband said, "Oh no!" But then we came to Melbourne for work. I had had work in an office back home and I had studied some bookkeeping so I could look for a job.

My husband got a job with a construction company and he lived down near Geelong.

\*Kuzma and Nadia travelled to Australia per General Omar Bundy [General Bundy] departing Naples 20 February 1949 and arrived in Sydney 20 March 1949.

I got a job working in a hotel in the city and I could live there. The owner of the hotel was a Mrs 'J'. When I started work there, Mrs 'J' had gone to the UK on holiday but her daughter Pauline was there and she said it was a good thing her mother was away. I didn't understand why at that time.

I had a bedroom, bathroom and little sitting room all to myself. My husband was able to come to see me from Friday night to Sunday afternoons. Pauline was the same age as me. Her husband's name was John and they had a little boy called Terry. I used to play tennis with Terry and he called me 'Nanny' because he couldn't say Nadia. Pauline's husband had never had mint jelly in his life and he loved it. From that time I was cooking legs of lamb and making mint jelly over and over. I cooked it all the time.

Mrs 'J' returned from her holiday after six weeks and I began to understand what she was like. She had brought presents for Pauline from her holiday but nothing for me, even though she knew I was there. I cried by myself in the kitchen. It wasn't because I didn't get a present. It was because I didn't have a mother any more.

My birthday came around and Pauline gave me some dusting powder as a present. We got everything ready for a party in the kitchen. Of course, I cooked a leg of lamb – again. But Mrs 'J' came in, took her plate from the table and sat on her own in the dining room. I thought that wasn't very nice. The next morning, she had removed everything from the kitchen; all the food, everything and locked it in the dining room.

Strange, awful woman! She once offered me half an orange, but I had been to the markets that morning and I shouted at her, "I'll give you more than half!" I felt like throwing them at her!

One morning, I was cleaning Pauline's room and I happened to look out of the window to see Mrs 'J' at the letter box. "Any letters?" I called, but she said no. "I'm leaving you, Mrs 'J'," I said to her.

"OK," she said, "Plenty more where you come from!"

Now I understood what Pauline meant. Pauline knew what her mother was like.

Off I went to the job office. When I had told them I had come from Mrs 'J's hotel, they laughed. They were surprised I had lasted there so long. So, from there I went to work at a chocolate factory.

From the chocolate factory I went to another factory that made toys, torches and so on and I was there for four years. My husband and I had a house in Essendon by that time. I met Mr Calwell at our church and I shook his hand. He remembered us from Bathurst.





One day I was looking in the Herald newspaper and saw an ad for a tram conductress. I didn't tell my husband but went to the depot and got an interview. I was employed straight away, on the spot! So were four men. We were given uniforms on that very same day at the Exhibition Building and got trained to start work the next day on the trams.

On the fifth day of my new job, I got an awful nose-bleed. I had to go home. But the conductor was nice; he came to see me in his lunch-time. However, the next day I was entirely on my own – after only four days practise! However, I learnt fast. I had a perfect report all throughout my years working on the trams and I worked for them from 1958 to 1968. Since then I have had free transport. I've even got a MYKI! I had worked for it! The only reason I left was because they wanted me to work five weeks on and six days off. I couldn't do it. On your feet all day and I got ill.

The doctor said I was unfit for that sort of work. So I left, wondering what I could do next. My husband had also been working as a tram driver. He drove the trams for seventeen years.

I decided I needed the papers to start a different kind of work so I went back to study to get a certificate in book-keeping. I had a stall at the Preston Market. One day, I met a lady called Suzanne Kohut at Victoria Market. She was selling scarves and things from Ukraine. I ended up working in her shop for her for two years. Then I worked for a company at 344 Collins Street. I worked there from 1968 until 1974. Mr Y was in charge. He owned the business. Mr Y used to eat sour cream, garlic and black bread all the time. He smoked and only drank black coffee. I used to tell him it was no good for him. He was in his late 60's when I met him and when he was ill, I used to go to the doctor's with him.

When Mr Y died suddenly I took over the business. Because I was the executor of the business, I was not able to sell it for twelve months. I had to keep it going. I used to send clothes to Ukraine, especially for Independence Day. I met Maja Hrudka at a meeting of the Ukrainian Women's Association. We were sitting next to each other and we got talking.

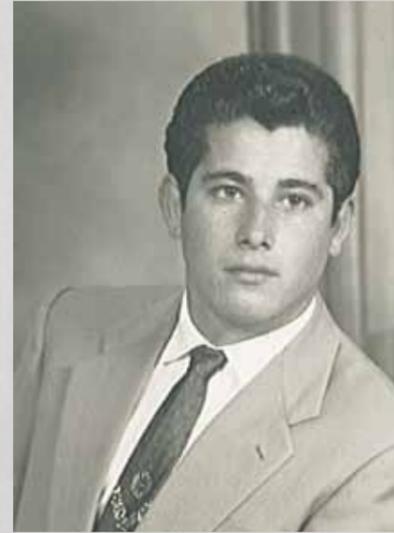
Then I found out that we used to live very close to each other in Vienna and that we both went to the same market there. Such a coincidence! Later, Maja asked me if I would like to help form a committee to build an aged care home on Brewster Street in Essendon. Of course I accepted. Then we all got very busy. We did the entire fundraising for the home; we ran bazaars, lotteries, cake stalls everything we could to raise money. One time, the women of the association made 3,000 vereniky. I organised 30 women who did all the baking and I kept all the accounts. My book-keeping came in handy.

I was doing so many jobs in those days. I sang in the church choir at Essendon and organized a club for elderly Ukrainian people. At the same time, I worked on the committee for the Ukrainian Elderly People's Home and there was a lot to do to get the building going. When it was built, I was the third person through the new door! I saw to all the volunteers and I kept account of all our donations.

My husband and I lived in one of the independent living units for quite a while. When he died, I lived there by myself. Then after a while, I moved into Konvalya wing. I still get out; I go to the club, into the city and I like to go shopping.

## JOSEPH PIROTTA

'MALTA IS MY COUNTRY OF BIRTH,  
BUT AUSTRALIA IS MY MOTHER'



I was born in the village of Qormi in Malta on the 5th of January 1938. My parents were Maria, a housewife, and Emmanuele, a member of the British Army. My grandparents were Thomas and Arneenziata Pirotta. I had five brothers and sisters, four older than me and one younger. There were Thomas, Frank, Lonza, Charlie, Me and Doris.

There was a British Army base at Qormi during both World Wars and that is where my father worked. I didn't get to know my father really because he died when I was only four. I went to school but didn't like it at all. School work and lessons were a struggle for me, so I left in grade three. I got jobs and I must have helped my mother out because she was on her own with six children to bring up. My mother had never worked and so where we lived was poor. I think we lived in the basement of a house for a while in Malta. I loved my mother very, very much and she loved me. When I met my wife, Lynette, my mother

told her that she used to worry about me but, having met her, she didn't have to worry about me anymore. I suppose I must have worried my mother a bit!

I remember working as a waiter in a restaurant in Malta and I also worked as a labourer on the wharf there. That was a job I did in Australia too. In fact, I worked on the wharf in Australia for twenty-eight years. That was hard work! I even worked as a concreter part-time to earn extra money for my family. But hard work brings rewards; I made some good mates and there was a good deal of comradeship on the wharf.

I met Lynette in Australia through a mutual friend, Lina Attard, who was also Maltese. This would have been in Melbourne about 1959. We were married on the 6th October, 1962 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Ascot Vale. Oh what a happy day that was! The weather was nice and the church was beautiful. We've been married now for fifty years.

We have two sons, William Emanuel and Kraig Anthony. William and his wife Emma and daughter Abbey live in Queensland.

Life in Australia has centred on my family, the St. Kilda Football Club and the Maltese community clubs. I used to be a member of the Malta Star of the Sea club and then of the Maltese Community Club at Albion, where I am a life member. I was also a member of a bocci club I am crazy about football and especially St.Kilda. Going to watch St Kilda play has been a significant part of my life and I still like to watch them play on the television.



# KALYNA CARE EVENTS

2009



*Essendon Senior Citizens 2009.*



*Animal Farm Day.*



*Melton Primary School Choir Day.*



*Slava Matiszak & Iryna Baran, Volunteers for the Kiosk.*



*Elvis!*



*Staff Christmas Party.*

2010



*Maja Hrudka's Birthday.*



*Brendan James dances with Evica Groszow.*



*Aged Care Luncheon.*



*Chinese Dancer Day.*



*Turning of the Soil.*



*Circus Dogs.*

2011



*Easter.*



*Magician.*



*Sing Australia.*



*Chervony Maky Donation.*



*New Resident Lounge.*



*Grand Opening.*

2012



*Senior CALD 'Games Project' funded by Dept. Health.*



*Melbourne Cup Day.*



*Caring Staff.*



*New Look' Kalyna Care Web Site.*



*Bus Update.*



*General Manager represents Kalyna Care in Every Australian Counts cycling tournament.*

## IVAN PLEJIC

IVAN GREW UP IN A HOUSE FULL OF CHILDREN! HE HAD FOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS ONE OF WHOM, RUZYA, IS NOW 95 YEARS OLD.



Ivan was the youngest of the children to be born to Marion and Ivka in Croatia on 25th August 1939 making him 74 years old this year.

Before migrating to Australia, Ivan was a bricklayer and he and his brother owned their own business in housing construction. They had this business for five years and it was hard work involving lots of lifting, long hours constructing single and double storey houses.

Ivan's first job in Australia was in a West Footscray meat factory. His work involved slicing the freshly slaughtered sheep and cattle that would arrive in his boiling room swinging from chains for him to cut up. He wore all white clothing; zipped overalls, a hat and thick black safety boots. He worked there for ten years and shortly after he departed the factory closed down.

His next employment was at another Footscray factory that made cans. Again, he worked there for ten years and again dressed all in white with black boots. Although he wore the same kind of clothing for twenty years, Ivan says he enjoyed his work and he had very good bosses.

Ivan married and had a son who was tragically killed at the age of twenty in a car accident. They lived in St. Albans and the three of them created a happy household. There was a park close by and the house was often full of children playing together. There were several trees in the front garden which made the house lovely, cool and shaded from the hot, Australian sun. Watergardens shopping centre was only a ten minute walk from their house and very often they would walk there to browse or do their shopping. On Sundays, they attended the Croatian church in Sunshine.

Prior to this tragedy, his family was a happy one; having parties at his house where his brother-in-law and all of his friends would gather. He used to enjoy dancing the 'Kolo' at his parties. However, tragedy struck again when Ivan's sister died at one of his parties and he has been a teetotaler ever since.

During his marriage, Ivan liked to spend time in the garden especially growing tomatoes and potatoes while his wife cultivated flowers. He also liked to go by bus to the Victoria Markets in Melbourne city. Also in the garden were chickens.

Ivan lost his wife to Parkinson's disease and since then his life has not been the same. He stopped doing many of the things he used to like doing. However, he says he is happy where he is now at Kalyna Care.

## HARRY SAVAN

I WAS BORN IN LAOS, IN THE COUNTRYSIDE NOT FAR FROM THE NATION'S CAPITAL, VIENTIANE.



I was one of five children; two boys and three girls. My father was an opium dealer! But he was a good father who provided well for his family. My mother sometimes worked in the cotton fields picking cotton and, as a young boy, I used to have to pick cotton with her. Every summer I would pick cotton and I didn't like it much; the thorns pricked your fingers and it was hard work.

My father became a soldier and was killed during the war, so my mother and I went to live with my uncle. My other brothers and sisters went to live with relatives; we were a very large family. It was a very sad time to be separated from the rest of my family. Everyone had big families back then and sometimes life was hard. Laos is a very poor country but people help each other to get along and there are some very close communities.

I went to primary school when I was about eight years old. I learned about Australia at school.

I did very well at school and when I was in High School, I earned a scholarship that resulted in me studying for the Baccalaureate. I studied at University in Thailand and French was my minor subject. I also learned English at University.

When it was time for me to work, I went into the Public Service. The uncle I lived with was the Minister of Home Affairs, a very important position. He was a very punctual person; always on time for everything especially lunch and tea! He taught me a lot and I became very much like him. He had a good sense of humour and so do I. I worked there from 1969 to 1973.

After my father died, I went to a Buddhist temple and became a Buddhist, like my father and my becoming one was partly in tribute to him. I studied at a Buddhist school. I learned that it is important to behave yourself and to look after yourself so that you are worthy and able to contribute to your community and to the world. Buddhists are gentle people and my dream was to become a Buddhist monk had I not been employed as a Public Servant. However, I am still a Buddhist.

I met my wife Souk through an arranged marriage. Our families knew each other so it was a good match. Souk was working at the American Embassy at the time.

I was then twenty-five and she was twenty-one. She was a clever young girl and I was very proud of her. I fell in love with her. The wedding was quite famous because our families were famous; after all, my uncle was a Minister for the government!

We started life together in South Province. Souk had to forego work because according to government policy, married women were not allowed to work for the government in those days. Instead, she became a mother of six children; those born in Laos were our daughter in 1972, and our son in 1977. All our other children were born in Australia.

I was successful in my job and was eventually promoted to Director of the Security Branch. I oversaw the police force, customs and border security. It was an interesting but very risky position; there were other men after my job and I had to work hard to keep it. However, it paid well and I was able to look after my family.

After a while, I found Laos was not a good place to be. I learned that you live in fear there. I couldn't talk to anybody, not even my brothers and sisters, because of my work. I had access to privileged information and this put me and my family in great danger. I was even threatened. So, I got in touch with some friends in Australia who told me it was easy to find employment and life was good there.



After three months of filling in forms, interviews, getting passports and health checks, the Australian government sponsored me and my family to migrate to Australia in 1979. I cost them \$10.00!

Our first home was at the migrant hostel in Maribyrnong, Victoria where we were very well looked after and fed. We all had our meals together in a large dining room. Supplies were very good here, I thought. I made friends at the hostel and one of them even lives here at Kalyna Care today. Her name is Marta Baran and she remembered me. What a coincidence!

I was very fortunate to get a job at the hostel. I managed the canteen there for five years. It was very different to what I had been used to doing but after all a job is a job and I could care for my family.

There were a few Aussie things to get used to. It was only in Australia that I first knew about, and went to, McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken. I think it's awful food but my children liked it! The other thing I had never seen before was a tram. I was very impressed by the Melbourne trams and, because I didn't own a car for a while, I rode on them and the buses to get around.

My next job was as a teacher's aide at Maribyrnong High School where I taught French. Because they asked me, I even taught them French swear words. Of course they wanted to know these, they were teenagers! This work was another big change for me and, honestly, I didn't like it at all. It used to take me fifteen to twenty minutes just to get the students to calm down every day!

When the government cut funding to employ me at the High School, I wasn't upset at all: I was sick of the bad behaviour I had to put up with and I wasn't impressed. Anyway, the government cut funding and so I had to leave, whether I liked it or not.

I next worked for National Mutual Life Insurance. I didn't like this work much either but I didn't have much choice as to what I did. I worked for them for eight years.

In the meantime, I had bought a house in Pascoe Vale because my wife worked in Coburg North, so it was convenient. We lived there for eleven years until we moved to St. Albans.

I have mixed feelings about moving to Australia. In the beginning I was a refugee; that's how I saw myself. Australians used to insult me but after a while I took no notice, mainly because I then had Australian children! Mostly, I am glad I came to Australia. I have eight grandchildren who visit me and I am really proud of them. It's lovely to see them!

## SLAVKA'S STORY

I WAS BORN ON 9TH AUGUST 1925 IN BATKIV, LVIIVSKA OBLAST, IN WESTERN UKRAINE.



It was not far from Manayiv where my auntie lived after her marriage and I remember visiting her there often as she was a skilled dressmaker. And so, one of my friends from Manayiv is Walter Berezy with whom I shared many adventures in our teen years.

My father was Fedor Dzis and my mother was Ksenia (née Kalynovich). I had an older brother Ivan and a younger sister Stephania. My mother had five sisters and one brother.

My parents had a farm and grew wheat, rye, vegetables and livestock – cows, geese, and poultry. We had a horse. As a child, it was my responsibility to look after the geese; to take them out to pasture every day. In spring, if the young goslings could not find nettle to eat then they would drop down and could not walk.

When I was nine years old, my mother was heavily pregnant and fell from a ladder. I had to run to the next village through snow carrying my two year old sister,

to call my father. So, my mother was taken to hospital but died and did not come back.

I went to school from 1932 until I was thirteen years old. Then I had to stay home to help with housework and look after larger animals, including milking the cow. My father had re-married and my brother ran away from home after my father had beaten him for being lazy. He was taken in by the local priest and lived and worked with there.

From 1918 to 1939, the Polish were in charge in our village, so we learnt Polish. Then the Russians took over and we had to burn the Polish books and learn Russian. My favourite subjects were poetry and singing. Today I can still remember lots of songs that I sang in my youth – Ukrainian, Polish and Russian songs. When we had free time, the young people would get together in the evening and sing and dance. We didn't have TV. I still love singing today.

In 1942, the Germans came to our village and we had to send a certain number of labourers to Germany. People over the age of sixteen had to register, so my brother Ivan and I were taken to Germany. My father's parting words were, "Child, do whatever you are told. Listen, don't argue and you won't get hurt."

So, I was in Germany for seven years working for a farmer who

was very kind to me. My brother went to a factory in a city but only got rations and was always hungry. After the war, I stayed in a refugee camp in Senheim for three years and that's where I met my husband Paul.

We arrived in Port Melbourne on 30th June 1948 and were sent to learn English for one month in Bonegilla. Then we went to Kew Cottages Mental Hospital to work out the two year contract. I was three months pregnant, so I was sent to the Broadmeadows Babies Home where young unmarried girls gave birth and had to give up their babies for adoption. We could not speak English and could not understand what was happening. My husband Paul worked at the Brickworks and lived at Watsonia Army Barracks.





After our son Alex was born, he came to take me home and said our baby is not up for adoption.

I then went to work at Mont Park as a ward assistant and was in charge of thirty-five mental patients. When writing the report for the hand-over shifts, I had to copy what had been written the day before as I couldn't write English well. I worked there for twelve years, nine of which were night shift as by then we had a farm in Bundoora and I looked after the animals and the children during the day.

I almost went insane one day when I was late getting on my bike to collect my children, Alex then seven and Vera five, from school in Greensborough; as they had been walking home to Bundoora by themselves, they were picked up by a man in a car and he drove them around for a long time. Finally, when it was getting dark, they came running home as he had let them out near our street. I was so relieved to see them.

That was one of the many challenges I faced in my life in Australia. I learned to drive a car because my husband had his licence taken away from him for drunk driving. I could then drive a truck and a tractor!

When I was collecting food for the farm animals from the brewery

in Collingwood, a pipe gave way as I was loading the truck and I fell from the first floor to the concrete. I don't remember what happened but I was asleep for two days and I woke up in St. Vincent's Hospital. I had injured my head badly but was lucky to get better again.

We moved house many times as well, from Greensborough to Bundoora, Wallan, and Macleod, back to Bundoora, to Kilmore, Viewbank, Rosanna, South Morang, Ascot Vale, Keilor, Dromana, South Yarra and Clifton Hill.

After I left Mont Park, I worked at the Repat Hospital in Heidelberg as a cleaner for twenty-five years where the floor polishing machine electrocuted me and injured my knee badly. I was afraid to take time off work as I didn't want to lose my job and so perhaps my knee never healed properly and it gives me a lot of trouble today.

I retired when my husband Paul had a stroke. He died in 1986 and I went to stay with my daughter Vera. She has six sons who have all grown up now and have their own work to do. I always helped my daughter to look after them. I now have two great-grandchildren. My son Alex has two daughters and his wife is Irene Lubchenko.

I went to Ukraine three times after 1991 to visit my sister Stephania as I had not seen her for 56 years. She had a hard life in the coal mining town of Sosnivka and has died now but I still get letters from my niece sometimes. I feel so fortunate that I came to Australia.

I also had a very good friend, Josef Petiach, and when he died I had another friend that needed company and some help and that was Slavko Bereznicki.

I went to visit my cousin Ivan Kalynovych in New York with my daughter Vera in 2010. My cousin went to America after the war and wanted me to go with him but I came to Australia with my husband. I think that was a good choice as I would not like living in America.

My son Alex lives far away and I don't see him very often, but I like him very much. My daughter-in-law Irene is always kind to me. They have two daughters, Krescha and Tanya. Simon is my first grandson and I like him very much. He's a beautiful boy and has a good character. I like all my other grandsons too, and also my great-granddaughter, Madeleine and her little brother Ayrton; I think he can sit up now. I enjoy having my family come to visit me.

I stay at Kalyna Care now and I have my own room and bathroom. I used to come just for holidays here and it's always very peaceful and quiet. So, I am pleased that I have my own place as my daughter is always very busy with her grandchildren and so on. I get a lot of help from everyone here and I like going on outings. We always have nice meals and I have a lot of good company; there are many of my long-time friends here who came to Australia with me so many years ago.

I'm Slavka Slota and this is my story.

## MARIA TORDAI

I WAS BORN ON THE 21ST OF AUGUST IN 1932 IN NOVI SAD, SERBIA.



I was an only child. My father, Andria, worked as a motor mechanic and my mother was a home-maker and cleaning lady. When it came time for my Christening, my father told my mother we would go to the Catholic Church. But to his surprise, he only then found out that his wife was not a Catholic and she refused! I was baptised in the Lutheran church, and my father did not argue about that!

I went to a Slovak school up to 6th grade. When Tito advised that children would have free education through to college, I went on to study nursing. After I qualified, I worked mainly with children. It gave me great joy to help children get better. When I came to Australia, I learned English and continued to work with children. In fact, working with children is one of my best memories; it was a nice job and gave me a lot of satisfaction, and I always liked to be called 'Mum'!

During the war, German soldiers captured my father in 1942 and took him to prison in Poland.

I have a picture of my father when I was nine and a half years old, just before he was taken away. A number of years later, someone who had escaped from prison told us that he had been killed whilst in jail. My mother never remarried and she went to work as a cleaning lady in a nearby town, only coming home at weekends. I lived with my grandmother and I was happy then, although I didn't like it that my mother left home during the week.

I used to like dancing with soldiers at the music hall and I was a good dancer. So, it's not surprising that I met my husband, a soldier, at a dance. He was a Captain and he lived in the next street to me. He was a very good man and we married when I was merely nineteen years old. He was about five years older than I. We didn't have a church wedding because I ran away to live with him at his house. Anyway, I was Lutheran and he a Catholic and I always told him that I would not change my religion.

My husband wanted to look for a better life, so we migrated to Australia, bringing my mother with us.

We went to live in Queensland and stayed there for twenty-four years. We loved living close to the Gold Coast.

My mother passed away a number of years ago and then my husband passed away eleven years ago.

I moved from Queensland to Deer Park about five years ago and bought myself a three bedroomed unit where I lived until recently.

My husband came from a very large family and so we only had one daughter, Anna, who is now 42 years old and she is married to John. They have five children; Natalie who is now 24, married and living in Queensland; Stephanie 15, Natasha 13, Jay 12 and Johnny 6.

I visited Czechoslovakia about seven years ago and I met my father's twin brother. I also visited Canada to see my cousin. We went to Niagara Falls but I couldn't go to the USA side as I did not have a visa to do so. That reminds me; my husband and I always had a little holiday away from home every two years.

Australia is my home.



# GINA TSCHOLY'S LIFE JOURNEY

(RESEARCHED AND COMPOSED BY PAOLA ZILM, MARCH 2013)



Gina Tscholy (née Pinti) was born on 8th August, 1926 in Tocco Casauria, Italy. She was one of seven surviving siblings: Pietro, Gina, Giuseppina, Gregorio, Nunzio, Carmelina and Fernando.

She commenced school in the village at the age of six or seven, a five to ten minute walk away. Gina only completed primary level.

Her father, Loreto, worked on the land growing wheat, vegetables, olives, grapes for wine-making and other fruits. He only grew enough food for his family. Gina's brothers helped their father on the land.

In addition to farm work, Loreto made straw chairs and brooms, as well as woollen inserts for their mattresses with the family's assistance.

Gina and her sisters helped their mother, Liberata (née Di Giulio), with house-hold chores. They would walk for about thirty minutes to the huge communal troughs where approximately fifty people could also wash their dirty laundry. Then they would take the same home to be disinfected in boiling water in large barrels. This process would then be repeated!

In those days people walked or rode donkeys to wherever they needed to go. Gina's parents owned two or three donkeys.

Wooden fires and briquettes were used for heating and cooking. Gina's family made their own bread and killed their pigs for meat. A lot of food was preserved because there were no fridges. However, they did have electricity, and Liberata owned a special linen-making machine.

The close proximity of an electric power station attracted enemy bombing over the village during World War II and there were several fatalities. The villagers, Gina included, would take refuge in underground bomb shelters.

She received sponsorship to come to Australia from an uncle, Antonio Di Giulio, who had also previously sponsored two of her brothers, Pietro and Gregorio.

The sponsorship was called "atto di richiamo" in Italian, and ensured that the sponsor would take financial as well as settlement responsibility for their family member in Australia.

Gina left Italy sailing on the Cyrenia, an old, dirty and run-down Greek ship. When she arrived at Port Melbourne on 6th November, 1950 she was greeted by Uncle Antonio, Aunt Antonina, and brothers Pietro and Gregorio.

Initially, she lived with her uncle and aunty at Dunblane Road, Noble Park, but later relocated. Gina's second cousin, Marietta (ne Di Giulio), and her husband, Pasquale Maschitti, offered Gina and her brothers a house to rent in North Melbourne. She then kept house for her brothers, and worked in a clothing factory as a sewing machinist in Richmond to help support the family in Australia and back in Italy.



Gina was introduced to her future husband, Ukrainian-born Michael Tscholy, by Pasquale, who had befriended him through work at the quarry in Coburg.

On 26th April, 1952 Gina married Michael at St Augustine's church, Melbourne. She then lived in a bungalow at what is currently 60 Hotham Road, Niddrie, while a house was being erected on site by Michael, his friends and neighbours.

Gina managed to learn the Ukrainian language by exposure to it via Michael, his friends and acquaintances. She also willingly embraced the Ukrainian culture.

Gina and Michael's first daughter, Lia, was born in July 1954, followed by a second daughter, Paola, in October 1955.

In the interim, Gina's sisters, Giuseppina and later Carmelina, migrated to Australia, and the three sisters lived under one roof with Michael, Gina, Lia and Paola for several years.

Gina was occupied being a mother and wife. She was very house-proud and passionate about her cooking, exploring a myriad of Italian and Ukrainian recipes and dishes. She enjoyed listening to music and singing, sewing, gardening, reading and minding the neighbourhood children. She also found happiness and comfort in her faith, as well as social interaction.

Gina became a naturalised Australian citizen in 1959. She gave birth to her third and final daughter, Anna, in September 1963.

After Michael's retirement, she travelled with him to Canada and Italy, visiting and reconnecting with family and friends. It was a long overdue and well deserved holiday for both.

When Michael was diagnosed with dementia in 2004, Gina became his principle carer. It was a difficult and demanding role she diligently fulfilled for nearly eight years.

Over the years her three daughters married, and she is the much adored 'nonna' of Kathryn and Jessica; Stephen and Amy; Robin, Alicia and Caitlin, and 'bis nonna' of Ari, Grace, Jordhi and Elliot; and Edie.

A highlight of Gina's life was celebrating her 60th wedding anniversary with family and friends in April 2012 – a truly joyful, happy and memorable occasion.

Shortly after this milestone event, Gina and Michael became permanent residents of Kalyna Care. Gina had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in mid-January 2012, and eventually found it impossible to continue caring for Michael in their home of 60 years.

Sadly, Gina's husband, Michael, passed away on 8th October 2012, leaving behind his precious wife and loving daughters.



## MICHAEL TSCHOLY

### EULOGY

I am honoured and privileged to share Dad's life story with you all. Michael Tscholy was born in the town of Mostyshche in Western Ukraine on 12th October 1922, exactly 90 years ago today. He was baptised at St Nicholas Church in the Kalush district.

He was one of six children: Ivan, Peter, Michael, Paul, Anna and Roman. Michael started school at the age of seven and completed four years of education.

He lived and worked on the family farm, rearing cows and growing potatoes, other vegetables and fruit. When he was about fifteen, his father passed away as a result of a mishap associated with digging a well.

During World War II, Michael was transported to Germany and placed in a labour camp. He worked six hours a day in the Zeche Westfalen coal mine, one kilometre and thirty-five metres below ground. Michael then worked a further two hours at ground level.

When the war ended, he and an accomplice escaped at night, boarding a train to Hanover in the English zone, where he played banjo in an orchestra. His brother Paul managed to find him and advised Michael to relocate to the American zone where he then became a labourer and truck driver for the United States Army Air Forces,

at the 1400th AAF Base Unit in Wiesbaden. He later worked at the Griesham Ordnance Depot near Frankfurt. He obtained qualifications as a 3rd and then 2nd class auto driver.

On 29th October 1948, Michael arrived in Sydney from Germany after a lengthy and treacherous voyage aboard the SS Charlton Sovereign. He was passenger number 653 and ready to commence a new life in a new country.

As a Displaced Person, he was contracted to work for three years. Michael drove trucks at the H.G.Reid quarry in Coburg and saved his money. At the end of 1951 he bought a block of land in Niddrie.

Michael married the love of his life, his Sabrina, Italian born Gina (née Pinti) in 1952. He then pursued his dream of building a house and raising a family.

Michael became an Australian citizen in 1956. For twenty-eight years he worked as a forklift driver at GMH Limited at Fishermen's Bend, Port Melbourne. His ingenuity was acknowledged and rewarded with monetary bonuses. He made suggestions which were implemented to improve the design of the forklifts used at the factory.

During his retirement, he travelled with Gina to Canada and Italy to visit relatives for a well-deserved holiday.

In 2004, Michael was diagnosed with dementia and Gina became his principal carer for nearly eight years.

In April of 2012 he and Gina celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary, a truly amazing milestone.

Michael was always a hard worker and provided well for his family. He had a caring nature and was always prepared to help those in need.

Michael took great delight in tinkering with cars, TV sets, washing machines, lawnmowers and, in fact, any gadget. He became the neighbourhood's 'Mr Fix It' and on many occasions displayed his creativity and inventiveness, giving some things a second, third and even fourth lease of life. He provided a free service for neighbours and friends.

As a father, he taught his girls how to sink or swim in the sea, ride a bicycle, fish, drive a car, check the oil and change a tyre. He was always proud of their achievements, especially in the academic field.

Michael enjoyed his fishing and would often organise family outings and camping trips, sometimes including relatives or friends. He was affectionately known as 'Skipper'.

Michael enjoyed growing vegetables and fruit, and would generously share his harvest with others. He converted a section of his garage into a home brew distillery, inviting all to sample his toxic 'grappa'!

Michael willingly embraced Gina's Italian culture, as evidenced by his wine making, tomato sauce bottling, legs of prosciutto curing and sausage making.

He showed a great interest in birds (the feathered variety!) and would often be seen tending to their needs.

He had a musical flair for singing and playing the mandolin and banjo, a source of entertainment for family, relatives and friends.

More recently, it was his unique sense of humour that provided much entertainment and amusement for staff at Kalyna Care.

Michael has been richly blessed with a long life, four days short of ninety, and leaves behind his devoted wife Gina, his loving daughters Lia, Paola and Anna, extended family and friends.

He will certainly be sadly missed by all.

Paola Zilm, October 2012



## CHARLIE SACCO

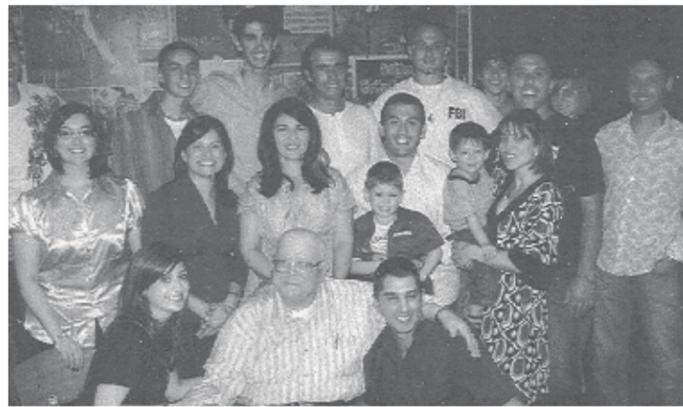
I WAS BORN ON THE 24TH APRIL, 1918,  
THE YEAR WORLD WAR I ENDED.



My parents were Assunta and Gaetan Sacco. My mother was a housewife and a fish monger and my father was a farmer. They had lots of children! There were Gaeta, Pietra, Katy, Joe, me, Dominic, Horace, Pauline, John and Stella. I also had another baby brother who died as a baby. All my siblings are now deceased. We lived in Gudja, Malta.

I learned to swim when I was a little boy; I was thrown in the deep end and just started to dog paddle. When I was about eight years old, I remember going to Tunisia, North Africa, with my Uncle to visit my aunts. At school I learned to speak English and Italian as well as Maltese. I still remember quite a bit of Italian.

My mother was a very significant person who greatly influenced my life. She really was a matriarch and she brought us up because father was rarely at home. He used to mainly work and live at the farm and we children lived in the villages of Gudja and Birzebuggia with our mother.



I married at the age of twenty-three and my wife, Josephine, was eighteen years old. At the time of our marriage, we lived in her home village of Zejtun as she was the eldest of four children and their mother had died when Josephine was nine. So, she still had to look after her three younger siblings, the youngest was only two. I worked for the council on a road crew.

Life in Malta during and after World War II was very difficult. There was never enough food or employment so I decided to migrate to Australia with my wife and five children. The youngest boy was only ten months old and by then I was in my early thirties. We arrived by ship on the Fairsea and it was a long journey – about six to eight weeks.

When I came to Australia, I worked for Mytton Rodd in Port Melbourne. This company made light steel products such as kitchen sinks and cutlery. This is where I lost two of my fingers in an industrial accident. However, I enjoyed my employment there and was highly respected by my employer and colleagues. I was promoted to leading hand and given the jobs of opening and closing the factory.

When I was younger, I used to love going to Festival Hall on a Saturday with one of my sons to watch live wrestling matches. I loved to watch it on the television as well.

We lived in Port Melbourne when we first arrived. There were a lot of relatives and friends who lived close by and my children grew up there. My job was good and they were probably the happiest times of my life. My children are Geitu, Phillip, Mary, Sam, Joe and Theresa.

I retired at the age of sixty and got to spend a few years at home with my beloved wife who unfortunately died from cancer when she was only sixty-two. This was totally unexpected. My retirement hobbies included doing a bit of woodwork; pottering about in the shed making pot plant stands and small decorative wooden items.

Then I sold the family home we had purchased in Avondale Heights as it was too large and purchased a unit in East Keilor. I used to live independently until I couldn't look after myself and went to Rosary Home where I have lived for the past five years.

I now live at Kalyna Care. I still like to watch the wrestling on television as well as old movies, especially Westerns and action films. Some of the games shows are ok!

*Mr. Charlie Sacco passed away on 9th May 2013. May he rest in peace.*

## HALINA HILDEBRAND

HALINA WAS BORN IN POLAND ON THE 18TH OF NOVEMBER 1953  
AND GREW UP UNDER A COMMUNIST REGIME.



Halina was the fourth child of Maria and Bronislaw Hildebrand. Her father was the Director of a communist farm, her mother stayed at home. She was born in Poland on the 18th of November 1953 and grew up under a communist regime. Life was hard. To earn money she had to work on a farm where males and females did the same, tough work. Even when Halina was only fourteen, she was working on a farm digging soil and doing heavy and strenuous work to the extent that she began to suffer from sciatica. Her mother would massage her back to give her relief from the pain.

Her school days were punctuated with working holidays; helping on her parent's farm and doing cooking and cleaning around the house. At school she was required to learn how to operate a machine gun and would attend and participate in competitions. But the weapons were heavy and caused her pain in her shoulders.

Halina did not socialize very much; a curfew imposed by the communists ruled that everyone had to be home by a certain time. Her main interest was in reading books. When she was a little girl, she had three dogs and even slept with them in the kennel sometimes!

Halina has lived in Australia for forty years. At the age of eighteen, her uncle Edward and aunt Halina paid for her to migrate. She was living with them at the time and they were more like parents to her with whom she could discuss anything. Halina felt very lucky coming to Australia even though she still had to work hard. She says, however, that life here could not be compared to life in Poland at the time when she migrated.

By the time Halina arrived by plane in Melbourne on the 18th September 1972, she had experienced an eventful journey. She had departed Poland on the 15th, stopping over in Beirut just before war broke out there. She spent the night at a hotel and just before midnight, headed for the airport. Sitting in the terminal, she and another man sitting next to her were approached by soldiers who escorted her to the plane. While Halina was not frightened by soldiers, the man sitting next to her was. Her flight stopped again in Sydney before touching down in Melbourne where she was met by an aunt and uncle. She lived with these people for the next one and a half years.

Her first job in Australia was that of making clocks for passenger vehicles which she did for two and a half years.

Then she worked for the next fifteen and a half years in production control and planning for a German company. She liked her job there so much and was so well respected by her employers that she says, if she had her time again, she would work for them once more. When Halina became ill, the factory workers and the bosses collected funds to buy her a scooter on which to travel around.

Halina experienced a stroke and contracted multiple sclerosis. However, she has returned to visit Poland and finds it has changed so much. The people she once knew are all grown up and even the buildings are difficult to recognize due to re-building. Likewise, her former friends did not recognize her and many people stared at her. However, Halina has spent most of her life in Australia where she has seen changes in the country and herself.



## JEAN MATHEWS

JEAN MATHEWS IS AN INDEPENDENT, LIVELY, GRACIOUS LADY WITH A WONDERFUL SENSE OF HUMOUR! HERE IS HER STORY.



I am a third generation Anglo-Indian by birth and I was born Audrey Jean in Moradabad, India on 3rd September 1929. My father Patrick Barnard worked for the East Indian Railway and my mother, Gwendolyn (née Elloy) did not work. I was the second eldest of their five children; I had three brothers and a sister.

When I was a girl, my family life followed all the British traditions rather than the Indian ones as our social circle was mainly British and European. We used to dress up in the latest western fashions, read British literature and go to the Anglo-Indian and Bingo clubs. I never did wear a sari all the time I was there. That would be unheard of! We had servants and maids who looked after us.

My childhood was so interesting! At the age of eight, I was sent to a boarding school. That's really young, isn't it? But, that was normal; all the Anglo-Indian children went to Boarding Schools and the Sisters looked after us.

You see, my father was away so much with his work for the railway, that it was better for us to be in one place at school. I thought school was fun; I really enjoyed it. All our teachers were English except for one Indian man who taught Sanskrit. I wore a navy blue bibbed tunic with a white blouse underneath and Bata school shoes – very British! We had maids and servants even at school.

My favourite subject was Botany; I loved picking the flowers and dissecting them and seeing how they were made and my teacher was lovely. I know the teachers were strict but they had to be! Doing well in English was compulsory; if you didn't pass your exams in English then you had to stay down a year. They wouldn't let you progress at all. So, we all learned English very well! We did sport every day; hockey, badminton, basketball and so on.

One of the things we did at school was put on plays, you know, three act plays and Shakespeare. Our teachers thought they would help our confidence. We had to read plays by Shakespeare and I can remember being in Romeo and Juliet and As You Like It. Sometimes, our parents would come to see us in the plays. Shakespearian plays were also a part of our curriculum and we were examined on them. You had to pass!

My brothers were boarded at a school not far from me and they were allowed to visit on Saturdays. When the boys went anywhere, they had to march;

to church, to school, they were well-disciplined! My little brother was only six when he was at boarding school. Because it was such a hot climate, we had a sleep after lunch until it got cooler for us to do our school work again later in the afternoon. My little brother used to sneak out of his school and get into bed with me! My brothers knew all the girls and they were very popular!

The best day of the week was Saturday – pocket money day! – and the day when sellers came to the school selling ice-cream, pastries and toffee. What treasures! I would save my money and my little brother would give me his money to save. Together we had a lot to spend on goodies!

For three months of the year we had school holidays and during this time I joined in the Girl Guide activities. Before the Girl Guides, I was a Bluebird and I loved it! We would trek up into the hills singing Girl Guide songs and make all our camp things like tripods from branches for our billy tea. We would trek all over the place! On Mondays the band would play and for special occasions we would dress up for dances – even in fancy dress sometimes.

When I think about it, childhood was the best time of my life. You don't appreciate it when you are a child, only when you can look back and think about it. I had a lovely childhood.

When I left school at seventeen I decided to become a nurse. Most of the other girls trained to be teachers or secretaries but I wanted to be different and do

something to help the sick or mothers with their new babies. Besides, I wasn't cut out to be anything else. I trained in Agra at the Agra Medical College for India and it took me three and a half years to earn my qualifications.

Back in those days you had to live at the hospital if you were in training or if you worked there. The matrons were strict but funnily enough the second Matron I worked under happened to be an old friend from my boarding school and so we got on very well. She was still strict! I remember the first time I was in the operating room. An eye operation was in place and I fainted to the floor. I was also very much affected experiencing death for the first time but after a while I learned to cope with this, as nurses have to do.

It was when I was doing training that I met my husband. We used to go to socials and dinner dances and it was at one of these that we met. He was in the Air Force and nurses were popular! We went out in gangs and paired off. I got Anthony John Mathews and of course, he changed my life! We were married in Agra in January 1950 at St Paul's Church when I was twenty-one. I wore an embossed, white taffeta dress. We lived in Agra for a while and then moved to Calcutta.

I left the hospital, had a little break and then worked as a private nurse through an agency in New Delhi. It was during this time that I worked for the Royal family, the maharani or dholpur (queen mother), who would send for me to work night shift, which I did for two years with not a day off for myself. They collected me in a chauffeur driven car and I would sit by the bedside holding hands and reading my Mills & Boon

books to fight off the night. They treated me so very well and I think I must have been very special to them because they never forgot me. I was even invited to a family wedding!

My husband and I had seven children. Arlene was born in Agra. Tragically, I lost two children. All my children were born in India. By the early seventies, opportunities for my children were not hopeful and we decided to migrate to Australia. We already had some family who had migrated here and they sponsored us. We migrated in shifts! To be quite honest, I was doing very well nursing and earning good money so I was not too keen on moving. But, I had to think of my husband and my children's future. At that time, if you couldn't bribe someone to give you a foot in for a good job, you didn't get anywhere. My husband left for Australia in 1973. Then, Ralph and Linda left before they were eighteen and classified as adults which would have made migration politically difficult. I followed with the remaining children in 1976.

The Indian government would only let us out of the country with \$7.00 in our pockets. We travelled from Delhi to Mumbai on to Perth. My children, (Carol especially remembers this!) saw their first can of cool drink and

packet of salt and vinegar crisps at the airport. So many things were going to be so very different and new! From Perth we went on to Sydney and we missed our flight to Melbourne. By the time we eventually got to Melbourne we had no money left at all.

My husband had obtained work in the aviation industry at AWA and in 1977 I started work with Australia Post sorting and dispatching, a job I continued to do for the next 15 years. During the 1990's, I did volunteer work; at the Sacred Heart Mission's op shop in Ascot Vale, for St. Monica's Women's League helping elderly citizens to get around and for the Family Care Sisters collecting donations for women in distress.

In my spare time I used to read a lot of newspapers, magazines and books and I liked to do the daily crossword. Sometimes, I would go out with the Social clubs of which I was a member and I am an avid Essendon Football team follower!

My children, Arlene, Ralph, Linda, Christine, Darren, Carol and Jacqueline have, of course, formed a significant part of my life and now my grandchildren are the highlights of my life! I have 12 of them and they all visit me! Now I am retired, I am enjoying meeting and socializing with other retired people and being independent.



# STEFANIA DEMKIW

MEMORIES WITH MOM



Stefania Demkiw arrived in Melbourne, Australia on 31st May 1949 with her husband Piotr and son Michael. They had sailed aboard the Skaugum from Naples on 2 May 1949.

*Olga, Michael and Ray tell of their mother's life*

Stefania was born in the village of Oprilivtsi, near the town of Ternopil, Ukraine. Although Stefania still has family members living there, she has never returned to her home.

Stefania's father was the village vet and ran the tobacconist shop in the village.



He also grew vegetables and fruit trees. At harvest time, it was fun to climb the trees and pick the apples. Harvest was celebrated at church in the village and, as is the custom in many European countries, a festival was held to which families took the fruits of their labour that would be given out to poor families. Stefania helped on the farm; there were a lot of mouths to feed. With ten children in the family it was important that everyone did their part. Sadly, Stefania's father died when she was a mere six weeks of age and the burden of rearing a large family fell to her mother. Everyone helped; it was hardly a choice. In spite of the hard work, Stefania still remembers that her brothers used to tease her and so they had their fun times as children.

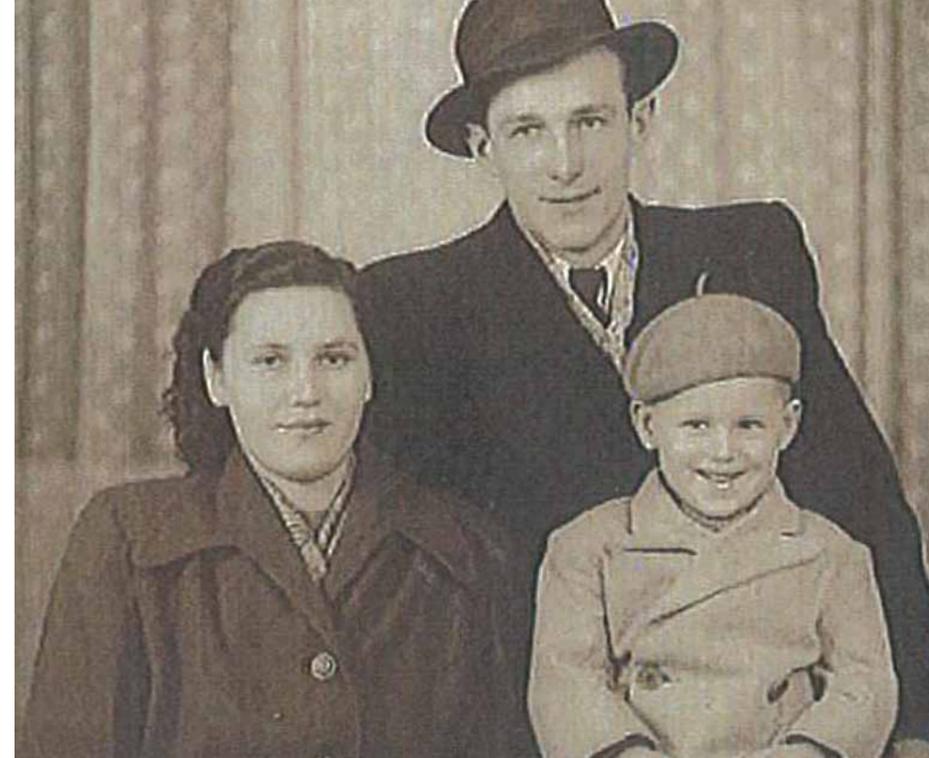
Stefania went to school until she reached fourteen. She liked school; it was a good place to be and she was a good student.

About the age of eighteen or nineteen, the Germans came to the village and rounded up young people to take them to Germany as forced labourers. It was an awful experience. She travelled by cattle car and then found herself working on a farm as a cook in southern Germany not far from the town of Isny. She made friends and they used to meet on a Sunday afternoon and spend time chatting in the town square.

During heavy bombing, Stefania recalls hearing the shells explode in the town of Ulm in the distance. She learned to cook German-style.

The farmer used to take his horse around the farm and one day it stepped on the family cat, killing it. He took the cat to her and ordered her to cook it. When the farm workers asked what she was cooking for dinner that evening, she replied, "Meow!" Only the farmer turned up for dinner and, pulling out the cat's leg, he intentionally made meowing sounds as he bit on it!

When Stefania talks about these stories, she can't help smiling and laughing.



Stefania met her husband Piotr in Germany through friends. He was an honest, funny and attractive young man, a bit of a rascal even! He was a cobbler by trade and made shoes for Stefania and others which he sold. About forty people attended their church wedding. Stefania borrowed a dress and shoes for the ceremony, she wore flowers in her hair and they celebrated at a restaurant.

After marrying in 1946, Stefania and Piotr lived with a lady known as Tante Frina from whom they rented a room. Their first son, Michael was born. Not long after, they migrated to Australia, chosen because Australia accepted migrants with children. When they arrived, they stayed at the migrant hostel at Bonegilla. Olga was born in 1953 and Ray in 1956.

Stefania learned to speak and read English from her children and she used to go to the library in South Melbourne to pick up books to read. The community formed strong bonds and the men helped build each other's houses. The Demkiws lived in Niddrie.

Piotr worked at Albert Park and Stefania at the Repatriation Centre. At the age of fifty, Stefania decided to return to work as a waitress at the trots which she loved. She stayed there for twenty years.

Stefania loved to play cards but her friends say she was the worst at card games! Sunday afternoons were always a get together time and her son Michael used to play the piano accordion for everyone.

In June 2006, her husband passed away after a battle with prostate cancer. He spent four weeks in hospital before his passing and he and Stefania celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary there.

Stefania's legacies are her children, eight grandchildren and two great-grandsons.





## MARIA KOZARUK

MARIA WAS BORN IN YAVORA, L'VIVS'KA OBLAST, WESTERN UKRAINE, A SMALL VILLAGE NOT FAR FROM LVIV.



Maria was the seventh and youngest child in her family. Her father, who farmed a small holding, died before she was born and her mother brought up the children. Maria lost a brother and sister when they were children and she was the only child to come to Australia after World War II.

At the age of 18, Maria was taken by the Germans to work on a farm and she never returned to Ukraine. Farm life was hard. Working for nothing was hard. There was little to eat; for breakfast there was porridge and for other meals black coffee, soup, potatoes and condensed milk. Maria doesn't drink coffee today. It was during this time that Maria made life-long friends, the Czuj's.

Mrs Czuj was just fifteen when Maria met her in Germany at the camp where they lived.

She used to scratch the walls, crying with despair. Maria looked after her and told her, "You'll be ok. Take things slowly. I will look after you." Maria became the saving grace of this young woman's life and when the Czuj's migrated to Australia, they continued their strong friendship.

Maria met her husband Peter in the German camp, where they lived for nearly four years while they worked on the farms. After the cessation of war, they moved to a DP camp in the American Zone and stayed there for another five years before migrating to Australia. Maria says they could have migrated to Brazil, America or Canada but to go to America you had to have relatives living there, so they chose Australia.

Peter migrated first. He sailed on the Charlton Sovereign and arrived in Sydney on the 29th October 1948.

Maria soon followed on board the Wooster Victory and she arrived in Sydney on 15th March 1949. She had experienced a very rough, twenty-nine day voyage and was sick most of the time. She even asked for sauerkraut to help her with sea-sickness!

Once in Australia, they married in 1950 in Victoria and, in 1952, Peter bought land and began to build them a home; a bungalow where the family lived for six years. They lived in Warracknabeal, a wheat belt town situated between Horsham and Hopetoun. Peter worked in a flour mill and Maria became nanny to three children of a doctor's family. Her daughter, Anna, was born in 1950 and Maria worked until the birth of her son Roman in 1960. In 1972 a work accident prevented Maria from continuing her working life as she was badly injured with a fractured skull and partial loss of sight. This also meant that she was unable to continue with her gardening although one of her legacies are the amazing peonies that she used to cultivate. Maria loves to spend time with her family and her grand-daughters.





## GOTTFRIED JESENKO

GOTTFRIED WAS BORN IN SLOVENIA ON THE 12TH SEPTEMBER 1931.

His mother, Maria, was a housewife and his father, Frank, a pastry cook. He has a younger brother called Victor who resides at the Burnside Retirement Village. Their parents are both deceased and lie at rest in the Altona Cemetery.

His early childhood was very hard; it was war time and there was never enough food. He attended primary and secondary school and then finished an apprenticeship in carpentry.

At school he enjoyed writing, art and skiing. On Sundays he attended church and socialized in the Slovenian community. He has worked as a carpenter all his life starting with work in a factory when he was young. Although the pay was not always great, he says that he has had a fulfilling career.

He married Agnes (née Cvetko), who currently lives in another nursing home in Delahey, and they have been married for 59 years. Agnes lives in a nursing home in Woorak, Sunshine. They were married in Austria. He and Agnes arrived in Australia on board the Toscana in 1957. It was a long, rough trip but they arrived safely on 24th December 1957. His parents, Maria and Frank and my brother Victor had migrated to Australia before him, so they stayed with them for several years in West Footscray.

Agnes and Gottfried got their first jobs at Colvan Chips, followed by numerous other jobs over the years at Spalding Sunshine and Gud Ryco, to name a couple.

They lived in a lovely home in Kensington for a number of years but due to circumstances they lost their home. Vicki was born there. From there, they moved to a cousin's house in Yarraville. After that, they moved to a flat in Duke Street, Braybrook while waiting for a housing commission home. Finally, they settled in a house in South West Sunshine and later bought it.

Their life was commonplace, with its struggles and ups and downs. They enjoyed outing's with the Slovenian Club and were active members in the Church. They liked to take the girls out to the zoo, to Luna Park and other places when they were little.

They have two daughters, Sonja and Victoria, three grandchildren, a girl and two boys, and five great grandchildren. He has never returned to Slovenia.

Gottfried has always been interested in classical and international music. His other interests include gardening, drawing and painting. He used to play the piano accordion and his latest interest was using the computer.

When his wife suffered an accident and later became ill with diabetes, dementia and other ailments, Gottfried learned to cook, take care of the house and do the shopping. His daughters thank him for looking after their mother.



# LINDA OGNJANOV

YESTERDAY'S STORIES MAKE US WHO WE ARE TODAY.



LINDA OGNJANOV  
IN LOVING MEMORY OF MY HUSBAND JOHN.

I was born in England on the 13th December, 1960. I am the 4th child out of six; I have four brothers and a sister. My father's mother lived in Australia and it was upon her suggestion that my parents migrated aboard the First Star when I was only four years old. My grandmother told us that this was the 'lucky country'.

Lucky country or not, when we first arrived there was never much money and I remember having to sleep on a blanket on the floor. It didn't matter to any of us as long as we were all together and my mother made sure we ate healthy meals every day. Sometimes, Mum would buy cupcakes for us all to share and on these days it felt like Christmas because it was such a special treat. We were a very close family and I don't ever remember being smacked as a child. Believe me, the look from either Mum or Dad was enough to stop us doing whatever we were doing!

Two of my brothers were musically gifted and appeared on the Young Talent Time show, a variety show that had begun on channel ten in 1971 hosted by Johnny Young. My brothers featured in the press and quite often nothing that was written was the truth. My Dad was always worried that the media would discredit the family in some way just to get a story, so we had to stay quiet in case something we said was taken out of context or completely changed.

Dad also didn't like us having friends over to stay and we always had to go to bed early. I remember lying in bed listening to children playing out in the street and I was jealous. Little did I know that they were jealous of me because I was Jamie and Derek Redfern's sister! When I think back, I know that I was the lucky one after all.

I was still at school when I began working for Woolworth's at the checkout counter. I worked most days after school and on Saturday morning and loved what I did. However, when elderly people could not afford to pay for the things they needed, I started making up the difference out of my own pay. I felt so sorry for them. Word must have got out about this because my line was always full even when other registers were free. I had to leave, so went to work in Forge's in the children's department.

At seventeen I met the love of my life, John and we married. John was enlisted in the Australian Air Force. Three months into our marriage I fell pregnant with our son Mathew. It was a difficult birth and Mathew was rushed to Mercy hospital with respiratory problems so severe he wasn't expected to survive. However, our prayers were answered and he made a miraculous recovery. John and I were blessed to have another baby boy, William.

My doctor told me that I could not have any more children and even though this was upsetting, John and I still felt blessed that we had the two boys whom we loved dearly. Shortly after William's birth, John was posted to Malaysia for two and a half years.

We had our ups and downs. Seven month old William was involved in an accident, landing on his head incurring a fractured skull. The hospital doctors expected him to be brain damaged and to not survive the night. However, we prayed for him and the next morning brought amazing news of his full recovery. Once again, our prayers had been answered.

While we were in Malaysia we heard horrific stories of baby girls being sold to Chinese pimps for the prostitution trade. Equally horrific were stories that deformed babies were left to die in garbage bags on the side of the road. People we knew had actually witnessed this horror happening. Apparently, there were many pregnant women looking for someone to adopt the babies they could not afford to keep.

Saddened by this, John and I decided to investigate the prospect of adopting a baby, even though we had two boys under the age of four at the time. We were introduced to a woman looking for someone to adopt her unborn baby. Five months later, little Rachael was born and we took her into our care. However, a few weeks later, Rachael was taken from us. We were devastated and prayed for her safety. We were then approached by another woman asking us to look after her baby when it was born. Although we were unsure as to whether we could go through this again emotionally, we agreed despite the fact that keeping the baby was in doubt.

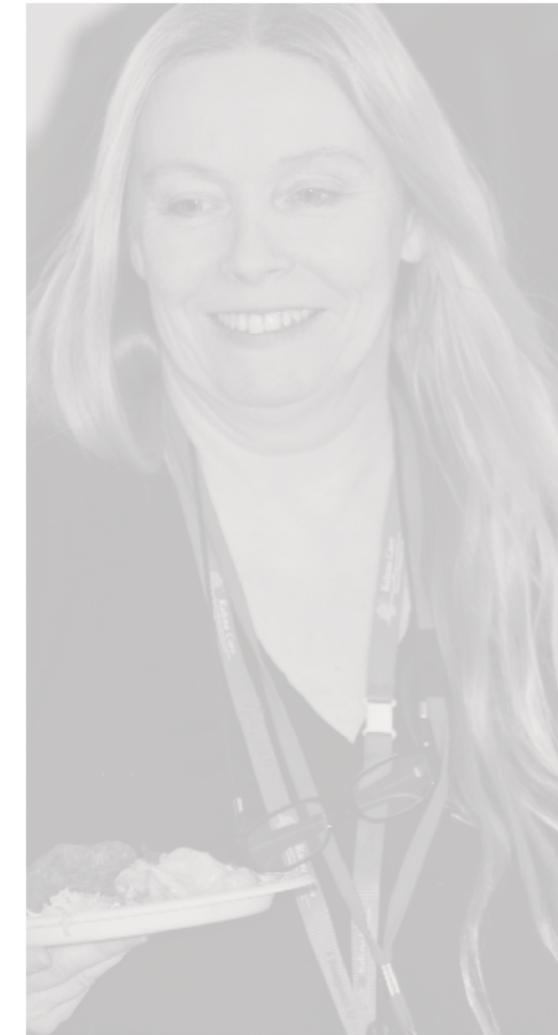
We thought at least we could try. A few weeks later we were given a baby girl who we named Nicole.

Within days of Nicole's arrival, baby Rachael was returned to us. Once again, our prayers had been answered. Without a second thought, we decided to try to adopt both girls; the option of choosing one above the other was out of the question.

The adoption process was an emotional rollercoaster; one problem followed another. We had the girls one minute, and then we didn't. The fact that Rachael took on a fit when her aunt removed her from us was her saving grace. She was returned to us when doctors diagnosed retardation. The mother begged us to take Rachael to Australia. Were it not for the wonderful news that the initial diagnosis was incorrect, this would never have seemed possible. We never did tell the aunt the truth.

The stress and worry of it all took its toll on John and I. Never a man to be easily upset, John was so emotionally drained that he broke down shaking and in tears. I prayed for him; I was so worried about the state he was in. Imagine how it felt then, when he came home not so long after, saying he had won the lottery! He picked me up and swung me around and cried, 'Everything is ok!'

John's faith was incredibly strong and he shared with me a dream he had had wherein he was told miracles would happen for us. I believed everything he told me; he had never lied to me before and I trusted him completely. My mother came to Malaysia to help us during the adoption process but unfortunately injured her foot on her first night. Whilst she could not help us practically, she was there for our support.



John's faith continued to inspire me and keep our spirits up. We still needed miracles.

Passports to Australia seemed impossible to obtain. In order to get one you either had to be an Australian citizen or have lived in Australia for three years in order to become one. A Malay passport was impossible for one of the girls as her mother was an illegal immigrant. So began a string of problems that saw us make visit after visit to the Australian Embassy by ourselves in Malaysia and by my father in Australia. John's situation with the Air Force was also dire; he couldn't stay in Malaysia but was obliged to return to Australia at their command otherwise he would face arrest.



As if matters could not be any worse, my mother was arrested because her visa had expired. She was hand-cuffed, finger printed and taken away by the authorities who seemed to be making an example of her. They confiscated her Australian passport. With a lot of persuasion and a bit of money, the police allowed my mother to leave on the proviso that she never return to Malaysia. I later learned that the Air Force had helped in her release, even going so far as to contact the King of Malaysia. A month before our scheduled return flights to Australia, John received a request to go to Kuala Lumpur to pick up some paper work from the Embassy. Strangely, there was a package there and he returned home holding two Australian passports and two Australian citizenship certificates for both girls. This was unheard of; surely this couldn't be done. And yet it was. Another miracle. Upon our return to Australia, we fostered several children but when one was returned to the very family that had beaten her black and blue, we decided to leave the foster care program. Twelve years later, I found that I was pregnant again and our beautiful daughter Lauren was born. Unfortunately, John began to experience ill health and gave up his fencing business too

tired to continue with its heavy workload. His blackouts and heart problems were a constant worry to me in spite of the fact that his doctors had assured him that nothing was apparently wrong on his tests. I had started work at an aged care centre and I loved it. John found himself a different job involving driving a forklift. It was while I was at work one day that I received a phone call from John's work saying that he had passed out while driving the forklift. The forklift had continued its journey, even turning on its own, and this was inexplicable. John recovered but I worried about the stress he was under. In 2009, my mother passed away. I had lost many residents who I had become close to working in aged care but nothing prepares you for the loss of a parent and I became too ill to continue work. John returned to his fencing business but again experienced severe heart conditions and had to have a stent inserted. He was happier after that and would say when he woke "This is the Life!" and smile and smile. It was not long after that I experienced a nightmare foreboding the death of two people and it was so awful that I nearly woke John from his sleep. Unfortunately, I never did get the chance to talk to him again as

I woke to find he had died in his sleep. Lauren and I suffered the most dreadful shock and there was nothing we could do to save him. I felt completely broken and felt helpless as I watched my children suffer. As I waited for the ambulance to arrive, I wondered how I could survive a life time if I couldn't handle the seconds that were passing. I was in despair. After John's death, I had to take care of finances and prayed to God to give me the perfect job to help pay the mortgage so I could keep our home. At twelve years of age, I still had Lauren to look after and I was concerned about going back to work. William and Nicole moved back home to help me. They were my rock when I really needed someone. Then, a few months later, I was offered work at Kalyna Care. Yet another miracle had happened and I have never looked back. Here I could look after my family and make sure other people were looked after as well. My Lauren is a gift from God to assure me that life goes on and I am very proud of her. Kalyna Care is now part of my family and I feel very blessed to be working here.

## MANNY STAMATOPOULOS BOARD MEMBER

Manny Stamatopoulos is one of our newest Board members. He joined the Board of Kalyna Care in 2012. Manny has a long history of being a director in not-for-profit organisations as well as being a director in Public and listed public companies. Manny was excited to be asked to join the Board at Kalyna Care because he has a lot to offer in terms of his knowledge of the not-for-profit sector as well as his business acumen.

He has a Greek background and tells us that the Greek community is very similar to the Ukrainian community in terms of thinking and the desire to make progress and future provisions for their communities. Manny's parents, like many Ukrainians, came to Australia with only the shirt on their backs, not knowing where they were really going or what they would be doing. He understands the hardship faced by post-war migrants and the hard work they have done to get where



they are today. He understands the need for the next generation to now provide for those early migrants.

## HALJA BRYNDZIA BOARD MEMBER



I have been a member of the Board of Kalyna Care since April 2012. My previous involvement was as a member of the Stakeholder's Committee and through this I learned how Kalyna Care is governed. I am involved with Kalyna Care because my mother lives here. She has been a resident since April 2010. Like many people, my mother thought she would always be able to live in her own home until she passed away and that was her wish. However, as she aged she contracted Parkinson's disease and it became much too hard for her to cope with living in a large house and dealing with everyday functions such as preparing meals. My mother herself decided to enter aged care and the only choice was Kalyna Care; because it is Ukrainian the decision to do so was easy.

She already knew some people who lived here and she would be able to speak her own language with peers who were all similar in terms of age, background and health. Being on the Board at Kalyna Care enables me to be in touch with my mother's environment and be involved with an aspect of our community that, by and large, people do not come into contact with until they need it. The Ukrainian community is fortunate to have this facility for its elderly people. I greatly admire the vision and tenacity of those few people who foresaw such a need and set about establishing what was then called the Ukrainian Elderly People's Home. It was not an easy task and my predecessors on the Board worked hard to realize its creation.

Today, Kalyna Care faces new challenges, as does the aged care industry and its allied health services. This is one of the reasons why Kalyna Care has evolved into a multicultural facility. Nonetheless, its Ukrainian origins and connections are still strong and it is still a home for many of our elderly, whether they have family or not. I grew up in Seymour, Victoria. Ukrainian was the only language spoken at home and there were a few other Ukrainian families in town. We made our own life and travelled to Melbourne to visit friends and

go to church on various occasions throughout the year. We would also go to Plast camps of the Ukrainian Scouts Association which I enjoyed. In the seventies, we moved to Melbourne and became part of the broader Ukrainian community. I made a lot of friends through Plast and because I was now living in Melbourne, I was able to see them more often. We all principally connected through Plast or CYM (Ukrainian Youth Association) or dancing groups, choirs and church. As we grew older and made choices about school and jobs, travelled, and married, contact was either maintained or it waxed and waned. This is no more than the fabric of life and underpinning it was our Ukrainian community. People come and go, but at some stage one feels that one should contribute a little more constructively, and I felt I could be useful working on the Board of Kalyna Care. There is a lot to learn and, as our parents age, I believe that we become more aware of how the ageing process may affect ourselves. For the present though, the challenge is to maintain and ensure that our Ukrainian elderly people have a home in which they do indeed, feel at home.

#### 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 over 25 years of teaching, lecturing and mentoring in schools and colleges in Australia and the USA. She has travelled to over 28 countries and has lived and worked in three and is currently settled in Victoria.

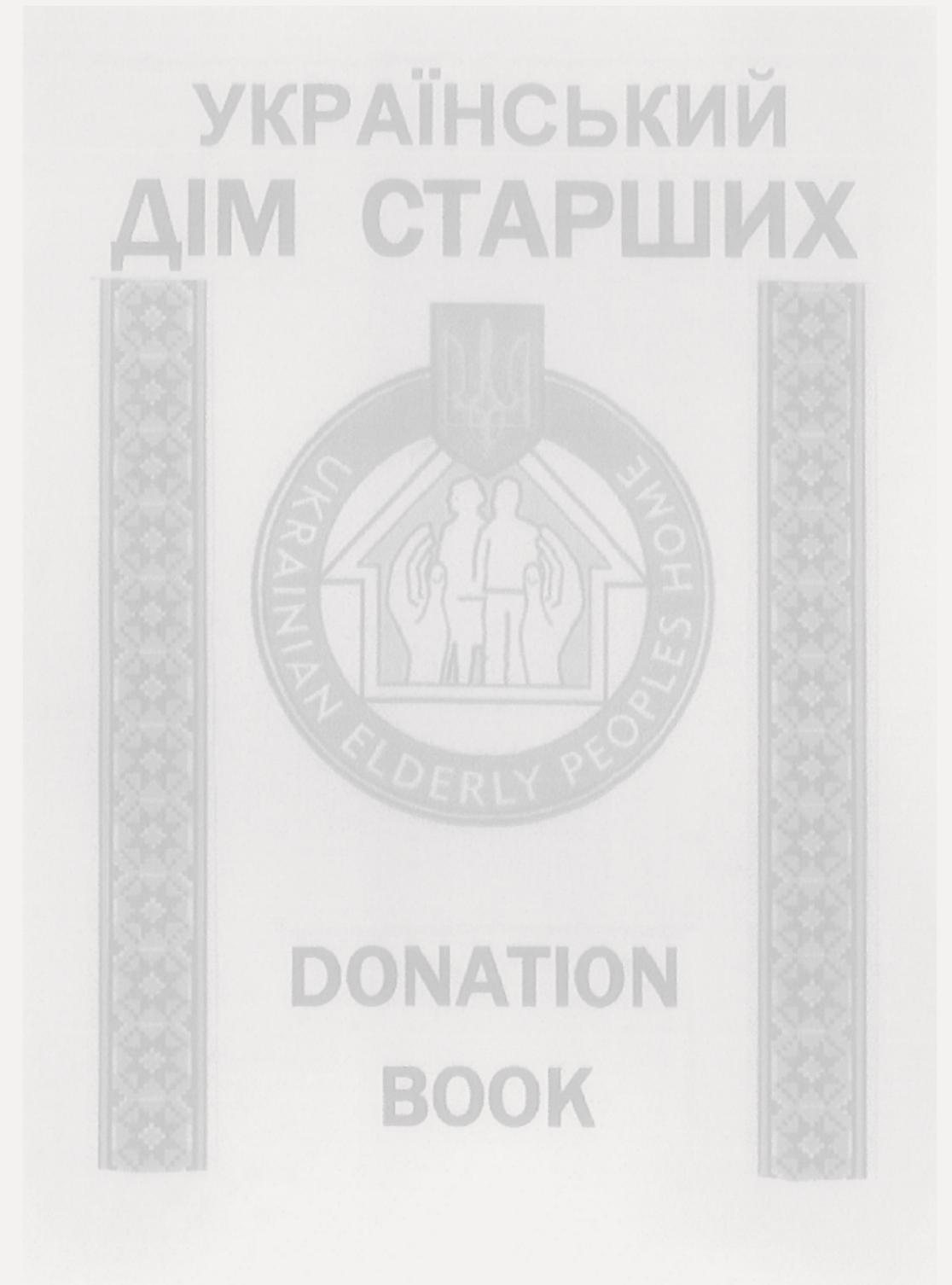
Monique has been responsible for several newspaper and year book publications in the past and her passions are oral history, music, art and travel.

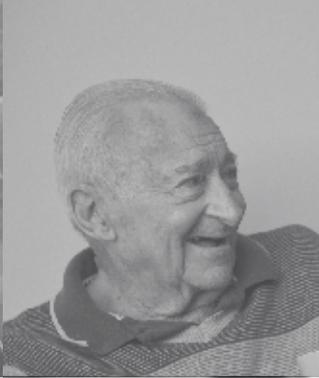
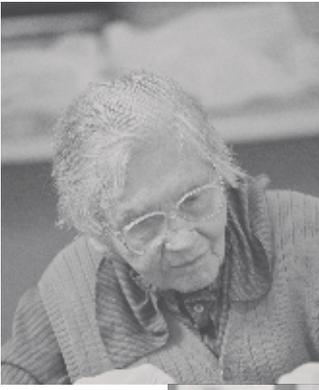
Monique researched and produced *YOUR STORY 2012: DESTINATION DOWNUNDER* for Kalyna Care.

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*.

Monique is a member of the Fellowship of Australian Writers.





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