



A History of the Polish Association of Ballarat *1952-2018*

and migrant stories of resilience and survival



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Collated by Wanda Mann (Skirzynski)

Published January 2024

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DEDICATION

For our brave mums and dads who migrated to Australia and settled
in the Ballarat region in the early 1950s.

CONTENTS

Chapters have been written by Wanda Mann (Skirzynski) unless shown otherwise.

Front Cover	
Title Page	
Dedication	
Contents	1
Foreward – by Dr Elizabeth Cham	3
Ch1 Preamble	5
Ch2 Nicolaus Copernicus	9
Ch3 Nicolaus Copernicus Hall	11
Ch4 Important Polish Catholic Influences Our Lady of Częstochowa Pope John Paul II	35
Ch5 The Early History of Polish Migration to Ballarat	38
Ch6 A Short History of the Polish Association of Ballarat 1952-76 by Bronisław Brodziak and Jack Burcon -- An original document written for the opening of Nicolaus Copernicus Hall, including a short history of the Association, and the programme for the opening on 14 August 1976	47
Ch7 Condensed History of Poland with 25th Anniversary of Polish Association in Ballarat by Bronisław Brodziak and Jack Burcon -- An original document written for the 25 th Anniversary of the Polish Association of Ballarat	49
Ch8 Jack Burcon Reflects – As told to Wanda Burcon after 1994 An original document written in gratitude to Jack's loving wife, and in gratitude for the plaque of appreciation presented to Jack for services rendered, and wishing the new committee and members every success	55
Ch9 The Polish Association 1994–2018 -- by Wanda Mann (Skirzynski) Irena Green (Młynarczyk) reflects on <i>The End of an Era</i>	60
Ch10 Polish Priests in Ballarat 1952-2014	77
Ch11 Why did the Association finally end?	100
Ch12 Winding Up – 2017-2023 1. Ballarat District Scouts 2. Berry Street School 3. Ballarat Health Services 4. St John of God Hospital 5. Eastern District Polish Association 6. City of Ballarat bench seats at Lake Wendouree 7. Her Majesty's Theatre seating	105
Ch13 Kosciuszko-Redan Soccer Club – by Marjan (Mac) Rynkiewicz	117

CONTENTS CONTINUED

Ch14 Polish Family Stories -- Recollections and Memories

Ch14.1	Zdzisław Marian (Jack) Burcon, OAM – as related by Alice Burcon to Wanda Mann Burcon Background History – A Memoir by Wanda Burcon	147
Ch14.2	Młynarczyk Jan and Cecylia 1945-2019 -- by Irena Green (Młynarczyk)	182
Ch14.3	The Ciężki Family – by John Ciężki	189
Ch14.4	The Majda Family Story – by Richard Majda	208
Ch14.5	The Wach Family – by Ken and John Wach and Daniela Jeffery (Wach)	218
Ch14.6	Adam and Antonina Skirzynski -- by Wanda Mann (Skirzynski)	223
Ch14.7	Michael Yaworowicz – a dapper gentleman – by Wanda Mann (Skirzynski)	237
Ch14.8	The Stodolny Family – by Kazia Iwanowski (Stodolny)	244
Ch14.9	We'll call her Valdi – by Valdi Cham	255
Ch14.10	In my words & how I remember – by Ricky Ryan – Rischarda (Rysia) Pamuła	267
Ch14.11	The Izydorczyk & Wojdat Family Story – by Irene Iwanowski (Izydorczyk)	288
Ch14.12	My story as a migrant child – by Maria Crawford (Marysia Buczek)	298
Ch14.13	Anna and Stanisław Dron -- by Stasia Stubberfield (Stanisława Dron)	307
Ch14.14	Interview with Roman & Teresa Skrypko – by Valdi Cham – 29 June 2007	327
Ch14.15	Gordon Thurling – Graphic Artist -- by Wanda Mann (Skirzynski) and Gordon's family	343
Ch14.16	William (Bill) James Byrne – by Wanda Mann as told by Bill Byrne	352
Ch14.17	Felicity Stehlik – by Wanda Mann (Skirzynski)	358
Ch14.18	Szapiel – Stanisław and Maria – by Bernard Szapiel	360
Ch14.19	The Rynkiewicz Family – by Mac Rynkiewicz	371
Ch15	Bibliography	412
Ch16	References	412
Ch17	Acknowledgements	413
Ch18	Disclaimer	413
	Appendix A -- Polish Families in Ballarat -- Polish Association Members	414
	Appendix B -- Funeral Booklets	416
	Back Cover	

FOREWORD

Wanda Mann (nee Skirzynski) has compiled a Memoir that will provide gold for future historians of Ballarat and scholars of Australia's rich multi-cultural society. One hundred and thirty Polish families settled in the famous gold rush town: nineteen of their descendants have contributed to this remarkable record. Their migration stories and that of their parents illustrate the pain, trauma, alienation and hardship suffered by the large number of post-war migrants who helped create a new Australia. The narratives also document the opportunities they embraced for themselves and particularly for their children. These are migrant stories of great stress, the devastation of the war, poverty, survival and prosperity.

An invaluable feature of this memoir is the large number of evocative photographs that accompany these stories. They vividly bring to life the significant cultural events and important religious occasions that helped this displaced community maintain a strong sense of identity. This visual archive demonstrates how quickly this resilient group adapted and integrated into the social, political and community life of Ballarat.

An additional strong theme throughout these stories is the vital role the Catholic Church and Catholic faith played in the lives of these migrants. On Sunday, they gathered at St Patrick's Cathedral for midday Polish mass and afterwards congregated outside catching up on news and gossip. This Memoir provides detailed portraits of all the priests who ministered to this congregation, including their long-time priest Father Fr Władysław Ziółkóś who served from 1952 until his death in 1966. His life was described as one of service and faith.

Many clustered close together in what became known as 'Little Poland' in Sebastopol. We can speculate as to why they settled in this part of Ballarat: the land was cheaper, they felt more secure living with others they knew close by, it lessened the language barrier and helped alleviate their homesickness. So it is no surprise that when they decided to build a communal hall, they chose a site in Sebastopol.

After settling into their new home, leaders of the Polish community determined to build a venue and create a place where people could gather and enjoy familiar food and drink, speak their native tongue, take pleasure in each other's company and provide hospitality for their guests.

This community venue became Nicolaus Copernicus Hall, named after Poland's illustrious scientist and mathematician. It was built by voluntary labour and with voluntary donations and was opened on Saturday 14 August 1976 in Orion Street, Sebastopol. The Ballarat Courier reported the event and featured photos and congratulations from dignitaries including State and Federal members of Parliament and the Lord Mayor.

For the next four decades the Hall was a venue for celebrating Polish National Day (3rd May), social functions, meetings, dances and shared meals. It provided a space for belonging and for the formation and blossoming of various Polish clubs, including the Scouts, Soccer Club, Youth Club and Mother's Club. Many remember the Hall as being the centre of social life and it was described as 'our cherished hall'. It was decorated with symbols of Polish culture such as the White Eagle with a Crown and portraits of Copernicus (1473-1543).

The Polish Association was established long before the Hall had been thought of. As early as 1956 a Polish Association float was featured as part of the Ballarat Begonia Festival Parade. Boys and girls were dressed in Polish costumes portraying a strong sense of cultural identity and simultaneously displaying a sense of integration into the new community. Throughout its life, the Ballarat Association also had strong links with sister Associations in Melbourne and Geelong. These lasting connections and cordial relationships with many community and ethnic groups were established by the Association's long-term President, Jack Burcon, who served from 1952-1992. For this dedication and hard work, he was awarded an OAM in 1982.

My own memory of the Hall was the celebration of the annual Opłatek (traditional Polish Christmas) in 1986. It was a memorable occasion. The venue was packed, women had cooked a delicious Polish feast, St Nicholas called out children's names and they came forward for their presents. Towards the end of the festivities, a young locum priest from Poland spoke. After praising all of those who had helped create such an unforgettable occasion, he went on to say, what a wonderful afternoon it had been, and he lamented that these practices and traditions were no longer observed in Poland.

These migrants were celebrating rituals they remembered from their Poland, a pre-war Poland. A version of Poland abstracted from the real thing, these traditions were built on distant memories, on recreation of place. Intact beautiful images of Polish tradition were held onto in their minds, frozen in time, frozen in a moment.

Sadly, due to an ageing population, declining membership, and lack of interest by the second and third generations, the Association unanimously agreed to start the process of winding up in 2017. The following year (June 2018) Nicolaus Copernicus Hall was sold to Scouts Victoria and the proceeds were carefully distributed to seven prominent Ballarat health, social and cultural organisations.

After the war there was a realisation by Australian policy makers that the country needed to 'populate or perish'. Both the Federal and State governments developed big infrastructure plans necessitating in 250,000 jobs needing to be filled.

Unlike today's refugees, these 'displaced persons' were welcomed. Most were probably unaware that they were the beneficiaries of an extraordinary act of public policy. Arthur Calwell, as Minister of Immigration had convinced the Chifley Labor Cabinet to bring migrants not only from Britain, but also from Continental Europe. Professor Jerzy Zubrzycki declared this pivot guarantees Calwell is known as the 'father of multiculturalism' and that this visionary policy fundamentally changed Australia. During the next eight years (1947-1954) one hundred and seventy thousand displaced persons made Australia their home, including 60,000 who were Polish.

The 'Calwell Scheme' provided free passage to Australia for refugees and their families, in return males had to commit to work for two years wherever the government sent them. They were paid for this work. After a short stay in Bonegilla, my father Jozef, like others in this collection, was sent to Ballarat to help build the White Swan Dam.

These Polish migrants, once they adjusted, were very grateful for the opportunities Australia provided them and their children. While their success was certainly due to hard work and frugality, it was equally due to the social architecture Australia provided. As well as benefiting from a visionary migration policy, they benefited from an enlightened labour policy that ensured they were paid a basic wage when they found work. This had been instituted in law by the Harvester judgement in 1907, when Justice Higgins determined that working men should be paid a wage that would allow them to support a family of four children and a wife.

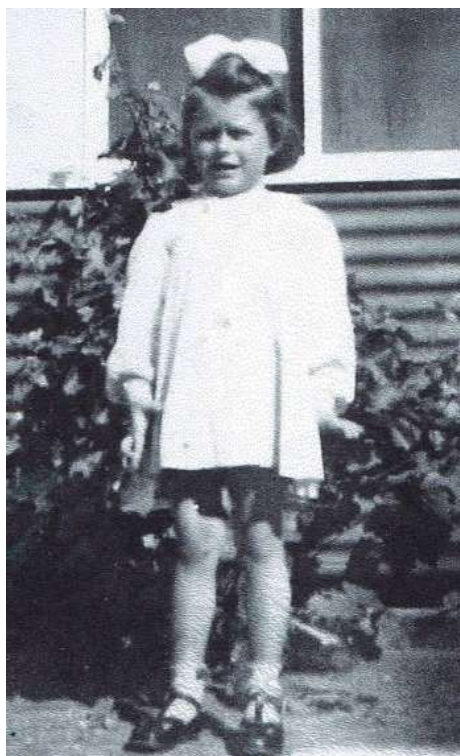
Unlike today, they were also the beneficiaries of cheap land and housing. My parents, like most in this collection, were able to purchase a block of land within two years of arrival. Initially they erected a shed and a few years later they were able to purchase a house. Decades later, due to the Whitlam Government's enlightened tertiary education policy, some of their children, including me, were extremely fortunate to receive a free University education.

Wanda Mann is to be congratulated on compiling such an important collection of migrant stories. They provide an insight into how a resilient group of Polish people left behind fear, suffering, chaos and desperation and found a good life in Australia and contributed to it being a more diverse and interesting country. They are an important part of the tapestry that forms the history of modern Australia.

Dr Elizabeth Cham 28 June 2023

CHI PREAMBLE – by Wanda Mann (Skirzynski)

The Polish Association is an important part of Ballarat's history in terms of community, culture, connection and contribution. In this book, I, Wanda Mann (Skirzynski), wish to present and preserve that vital history by illuminating and recounting the written and oral history that exists from the first generation, and the living history that exists within the second and third generations, from a knowledge base of personal experience and opportunity.



I feel privileged to provide the *voice* for many written and oral histories. It is a tribute to our Polish parents and their generation, highlighting a love of old and new, and highlighting homeland challenges faced and overcome throughout their life journeys.

Left: Wanda Skirzynski (Mann), Bonegilla migrant camp: circa 1951.

There's a sense of urgency to *put pen to paper* as I realise our predecessors and original descendants die incrementally, and invaluable information and tangible history is lost and forgotten. My generation (the second generation) is mostly retired and ageing and I feel that many of the potential contributors were intimidated by the *task at hand*. During 2020-22 the third generation was too busy surviving the COVID-19 world pandemic. Also, they lacked vital knowledge about the Polish Association, some even cutting ties with their ethnicity, or lacking the intrinsic desire to see the value of recording this Association history and personal life stories.

When the atrocities of World War II were over, the migrating Poles were given minimal support on their arrival in Australia. Most completed their compulsory two year work contracts, toiling *hard* for their remuneration. They *paved* their own way, with limited English, supporting their families, desperate to find suitable jobs once their migration contracts had expired, as social benefits were not available.

They had arrived in Australia with few possessions, thus initially money was a pressing issue. Isolation from family and friends meant the migrants had no one to turn to, because families had been fragmented and left behind in Poland. Life in Australia became a difficult, exhausting journey for mere survival, yet they did survive and prosper.

Our parents (as did most migrant parents) passed on their diligent work ethic and ability to be resourceful and resilient. More importantly they recognised the intrinsic value of education for their children to open up career opportunities. Our parents wanted and demanded a better life for their children. This *great expectation* resulted in professional growth and advancement; teachers, business owners, government employees, accountants, medical personnel, engineers, builders, plumbers and electricians are now making significant contributions to their respective communities.

It seems as if I have always been Polish and a part of the Polish Association, however, as a child, my journey wasn't easy -- I desperately wanted to be Australian. Since my family's arrival in Ballarat when I was about eight years of age, in the early 1950s, my parents were drawn like a magnet to the Polish Association -- it gave them a sense of belonging, personal help, comfort and Polish connection with like-minded people.

Surprisingly I pulled away, resenting being *dragged* to Polish gatherings, celebrations and obligatory attendances. As a young child, while walking down Sturt St, towards the hospital precinct (as we lived in Ascot St Sth, Central Ballarat, and had no car), I stayed well behind my parents, pretending not to be their daughter. I felt highly embarrassed by the loud Polish chatter and the obvious evidence of their ethnicity.

Unfortunately for me, I was chosen by the Polish Association to deliver a small prepared speech in St Patrick's Cathedral Hall to welcome the Apostolic Delegate when he visited Ballarat in 1958. I was attending St Joseph's Primary School at the time and felt overwhelmed and uncomfortable. In later years I realised the importance of this auspicious occasion.



Above: I Wanda welcoming the Apostolic Delegate to Ballarat with a small speech: April 1958. L-R: Bishop O'Collins, the Polish Prelate (Apostolic Delegate) Archbishop in Exile of the Polish Diaspora Jozef Feliks Gawlina (Rome), Monsignor Fiscalini, Fr Ziółkós. Richard Majda holding flowers, then myself (Wanda Skirzynski), & Bernard Szapiel.

Now many years later I couldn't be prouder of my Polish heritage, being the daughter of Polish migrants, a former member and Office Bearer of the Polish Association, and a part of Ballarat's Polish community. Seen in this context, the Ballarat Polish Association was a vital part of the Polish migrant life journey in Australia. Long before multiculturalism was embraced, the Polish Association played an important role in bridging community, culture and ties to both Poland and Australia -- it enabled that connection which in turn leads to contribution to the society we live in.

Poland's National Anthem *Dąbrowski's Mazurka – Poland Is Not Yet Lost* -- written by Józef Wybicki, is the national anthem of Poland – and it includes the following wording:

Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła, Kiedy my żyjemy.

The English translation means:

Poland has not yet perished, So long as we still live.

The opening lines sum up the Polish spirit to survive. Poland will continue to live on in the Australian community while its descendants hold on to the Polish spirit.

Stasia Stubberfield (Dron), a Polish migrant child, living in Ballarat in the 1950s, now living in Redcliffe, Queensland, writes:

We were a community and there is a story to tell. I am glad there is something being planned to preserve the history of our Polish community, as it is a history for future generations.



Above: An early migrant family gathering: circa 1955. I, Wanda (in centre), with my mother (Antonina), & father (Adam), & the Zajac family (Ballarat), & the Holc family (Castlemaine), & possibly the Laskowski family (Campbells Creek).



Above: My mother (Antonina Skirzynski) and I with our first car a green Ford Prefect: 1965.



Above: I, Wanda, taught at St Thomas More, Alfredton, from 1980 to 1983.



Above: The original staff when St Thomas More, Alfredton, started in 1980.

Annette Ciężki is John Ciężki's Aussie wife -- the Ciężki family is mentioned in Ch14.3.

Kathy Ritchie, St Thomas More's first school secretary, penned *A Short History of St Thomas More School, Alfredton* – as at July 2017. She wrote about the school's humble beginning....

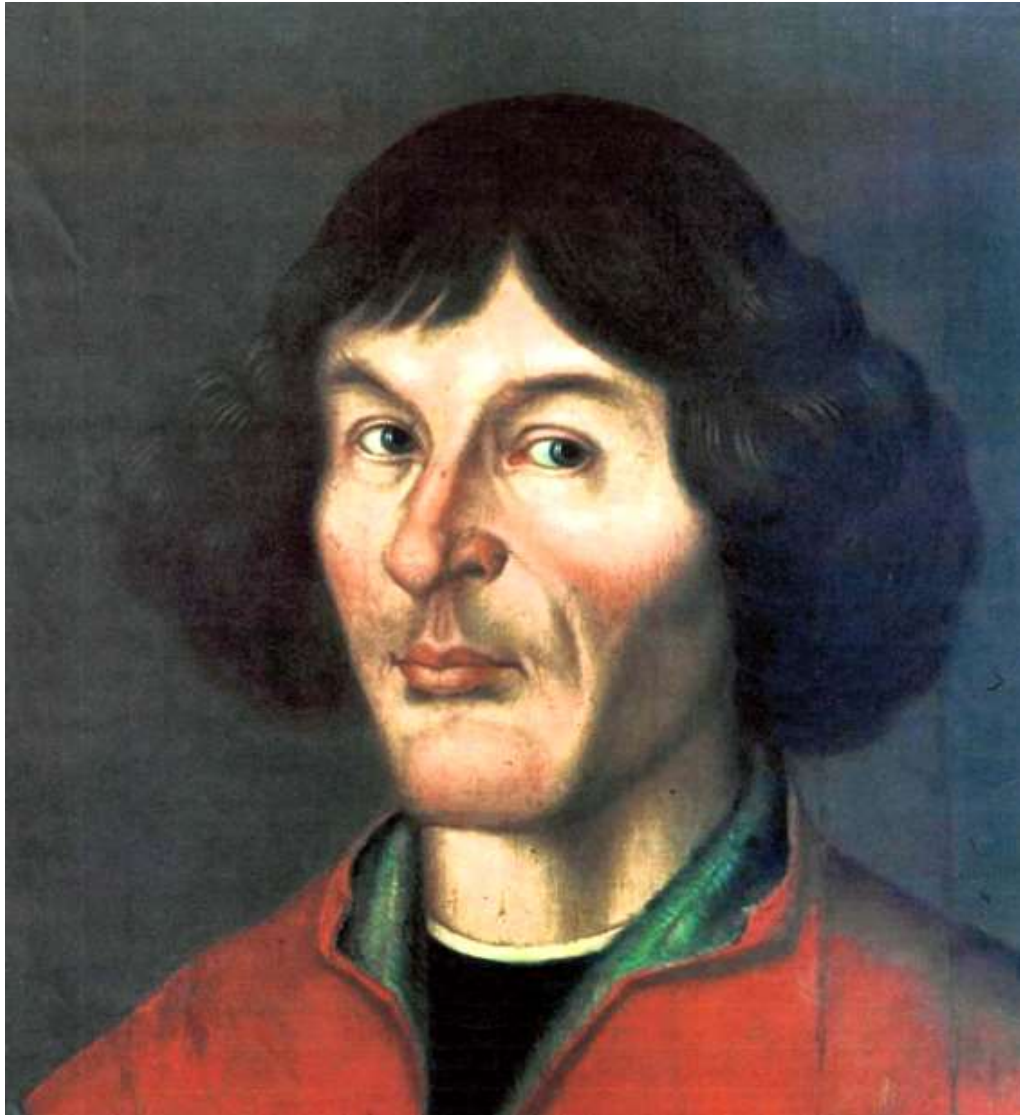
The school's first Principal, Sr Jacqueline McGilp IBVM and four lay staff commenced operation with a school student enrolment of 80 children representing a total of 60 families from the area. At that time our school looked out over bare paddocks, with no trees, the wind in winter was a force to be reckoned with.

Kathy Ritchie died on 26 April 2022 – RIP.

CH2 NICOLAUS COPERNICUS

In 1971 the Polish Association purchased land for a proposed hall, to be named *Nicolaus Copernicus Hall*, after *Mikolaj Kopernik (Nicolaus Copernicus)*, who was a Polish astronomer and medical doctor. He was one of the eight "*great figures of Poland's culture and history*"¹. Copernicus established the theory that the Sun is in the middle of the solar system and the planets go around it (heliocentrism), rather than the Earth being the centre of the universe.

He was born in 1473 in Toruń, dying in Frombork in 1543, at 70 years of age. He studied at Kraków, Bologna, Padua and Ferrara. Astronomy, Canon Law, Economics, Mathematics, Medicine and Politics were his fields of interest. He was a multi-talented individual, and he was involved in Church affairs.



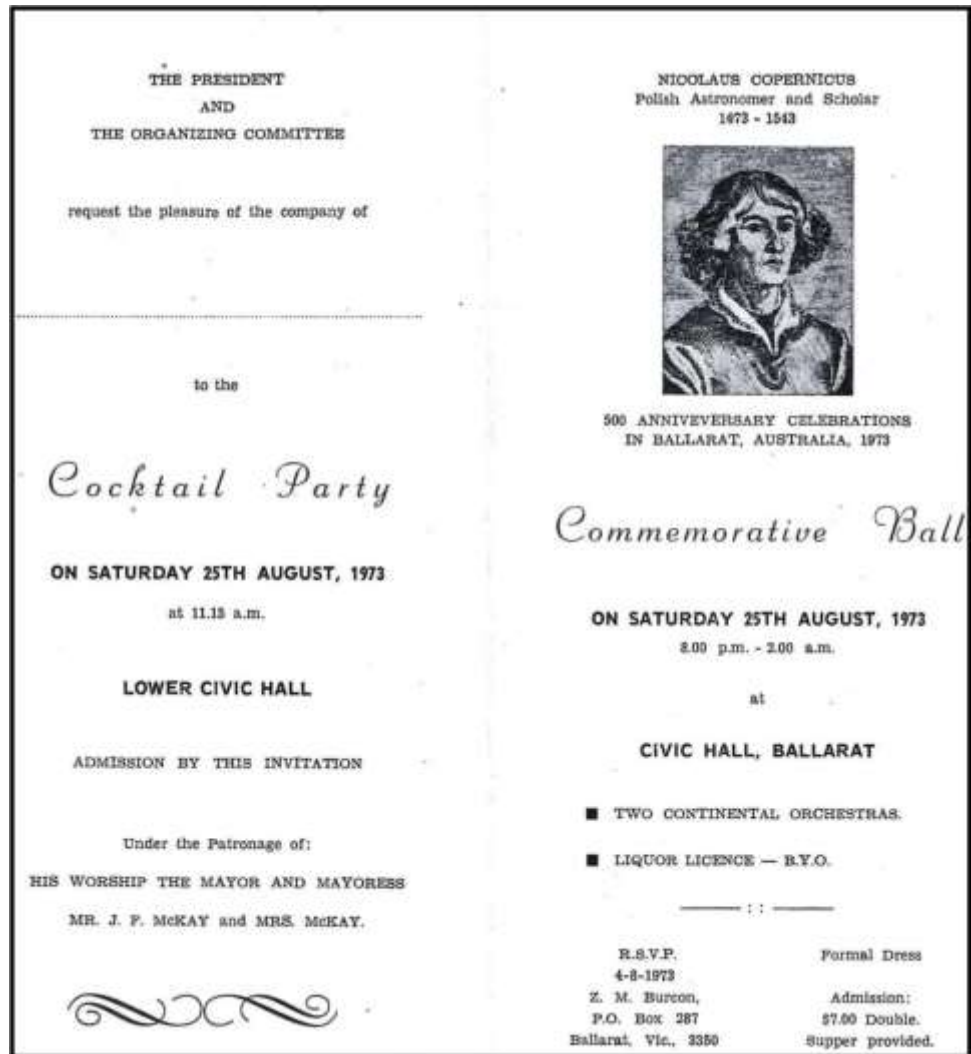
Copernicus held "*various Church positions in the Diocese of Warmia*", and he was "*in charge of the defence of Olsztyn Castle against (the) Teutonic invasion*"² in 1520.

In 1517 he espoused the *Quantity Theory of Money*, a key concept in monetary economics. Just before his death in 1543 Copernicus' book *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* was published. This was a major pioneering contribution to Science. It established his legitimacy in scientific discovery.

1 The Face and Faith of Poland, Special Supplement to April 1982, Vol. 161, Pages 419A & 419B.
An Essay By Nobel Laureate Czesław Miłosz.

2 A Guide to the History of Poland, 966-2016, page 27.

In 1973, on the 500th anniversary of Copernicus' birth, a Commemorative Ball was held by the Polish Association, to raise funds for the three blocks of land that had been purchased in 1971 for the proposed Polish hall (Copernicus Hall).



A print of Copernicus had pride of place in Copernicus Hall, as can be seen in the above two photos, which are from a video taken on 20 July 2007. We see Daniel Andrews, the Victorian Minister Assisting the Premier on Multicultural Affairs, addressing the Ballarat Polish community, with Jan (Studzinski) Bedggood presiding.

CH3 NICOLAUS COPERNICUS HALL

The Polish hall (now the 7th Ballarat Sebastopol Scout Group hall) was situated at 26-28 Orion St, Sebastopol, Ballarat. It was built on a three-block allotment purchased in May 1971. Two blocks faced Orion St and one faced Yarrowee St. Today the hall has a heritage listing. In the 1950s the displaced Poles had triumphed separation, loneliness and depression, through companionship and mutual help, adjusting to a different environment and culture. In the 1970s they now looked outwards, reaching towards the Polish community and beyond, with inspirational creativeness.

Below: Opening of Copernicus Hall: Saturday 14 August 1976.



In 1971, the Polish Association saw a need for a dedicated *community house* for its members -- the decision to build was met with enthusiasm and elation. The hall would be used for social events, shared meals, meetings, small dances, light entertainment and indoor sports. Larger numbers of members could be catered for, and it would be a Polish House, welcoming the war displaced Poles and their descendants. There were plans to include a billiard table, library and Polish school.

In 1976, the Association had 50 members representing a community of some 300 people, both young and old. Donations were collected from members over several years during the 1970s -- Stanisław Jurkowski from Geelong donated the first \$100. Interest-free loans were obtained. A select group of members carefully chose the land for the hall -- Jack Burcon, Frank Rynkiewicz, Stan Eliaz, Kaz Mroczkowski and Tad Jarecki.

Frank Rynkiewicz, a retired builder, was the supervisor and guiding force behind the project. He was an experienced builder and Copernicus Hall stands as a monument to his skills. At an inspection for the sale of the hall, comments were made praising the hall's sturdiness and its ability to survive well into the future.



Andrew Majda and Stan Szapiel with Frank Rynkiewicz supervising.

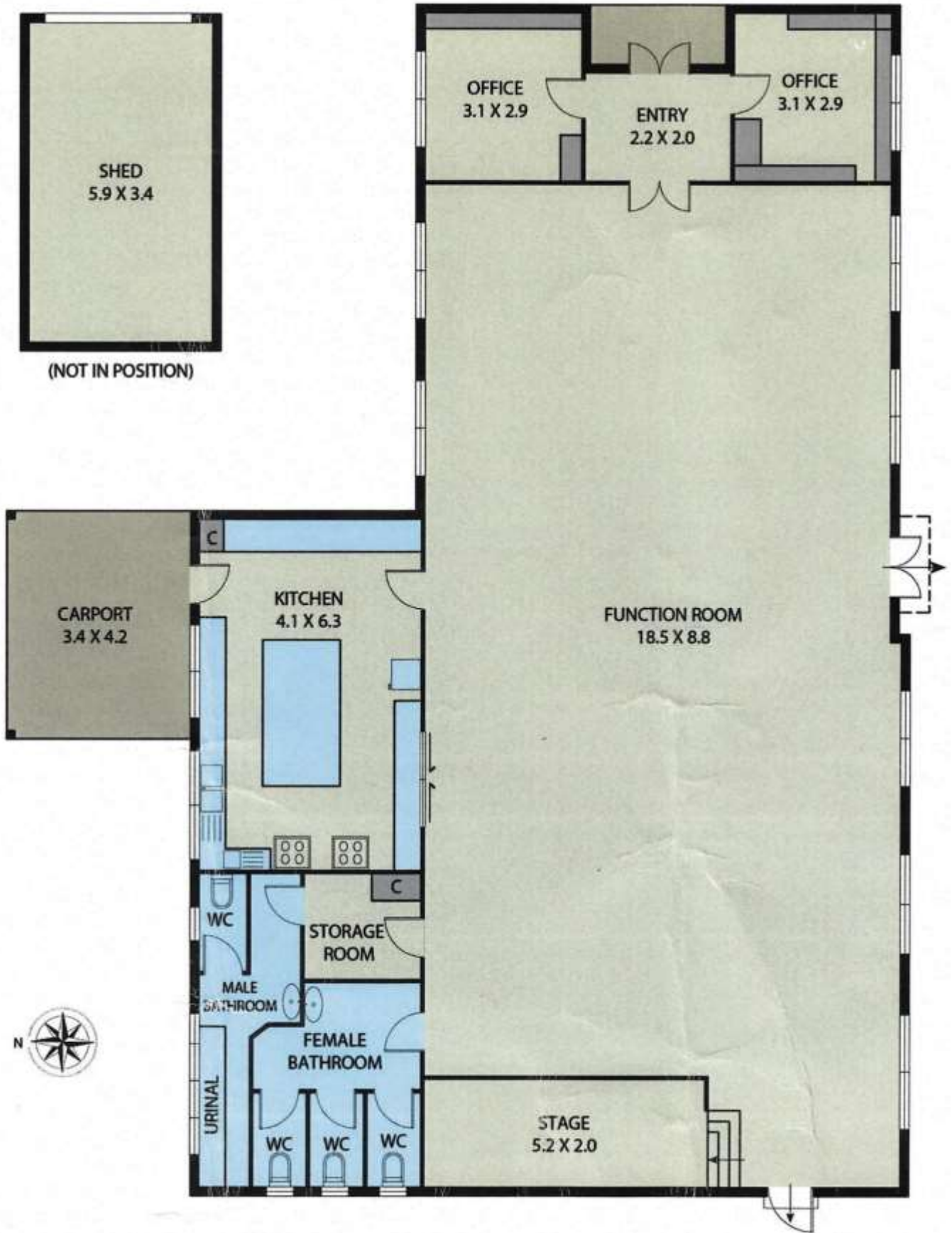
Volunteers Frank Rynkiewicz spent five or six days a week on site, for a period of 18 months, and supervised many working bees. Frank and many volunteers donated their time willingly, and only plumbing and electrical tasks were outsourced. The labour costs were a fraction of the overall cost. It was remarkable that the cost of the hall amounted to only \$18,000, and in 2018 it was sold to the Scouts for over \$300,000.

Built In Two Stages

The hall was built in two stages, and later the outdoor carport, BBQ area and shed were added. The multi-purpose function room had a billiard table and a sturdy stage. There was a first-class kitchen equipped with stainless steel benches, spacious cupboards, and a wooden trolley -- Ted Franczak built the steel framework. There were two office rooms -- one included the library, filing cabinets and the sound equipment -- while the other was used for general storage and a spare fridge.

Left: Frank Rynkiewicz and Stan Szapiel finishing the tables and benches for the kitchen.





Plan of Copernicus Hall.

The wrought iron gate on the front fence opposite the main door was a sight to behold! Ted Franczak made the sturdy gate which has stood the test of time. The gate honours and commemorates Nicolaus Copernicus.



Above & below: A sun radiates out at the centre of the gate, illuminating Copernicus' Heliocentric Theory. The words on the gate, Dom Polski, mean Polish House.



Frank Rynkiewicz, Andrew Majda, Stan Szapiel and Jack Burcon.



Opening Copernicus Hall was opened by Mr W F (Bill) Stephen MP, on Saturday 14 August 1976. What an achievement for the Ballarat Polish community!



The unveiling of the plaque, and the cutting of the ribbon.



Mr Bill Stephen, MLA, officially opens the Nicolaus Copernicus Hall in the presence of the president of the Polish Association of Ballarat, Mr Jack Burcon (right) and several hundred members of the Polish community and their guests.

Mr Stephen said Polish people had enriched Australia with their culture and traditions.

One of their greatest traditions was their fierce desire for freedom, particularly of religion, speech and movement — a freedom which we must continue to fight for today, he said.

There was a challenge to retain this great tradition they had cherished over the years.

Australia was a relatively

CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY

The Courier, 16 Aug 1976

young nation and had appreciated the addition of their old cultures.

He hoped they had found Australians had co-operated with them on most occasions and had made them feel at home here.

The building of the hall involved many frustrations and much effort, but was now successfully completed.

He hoped it would enable the Polish people to have greater in-

volvement in the community, to enlarge their circle of friends to bring them together and greatly enhance their lives.

The president of the Good Neighbor Council, Cr A. Harris, said the Polish community had worked very hard to build the hall. It was a pleasure to join with them in their happiness in opening this building.

The Polish people had settled in the community extremely well





Mr. / Mrs.

kindly accepts
is unable to accept the invitation to :

OFFICIAL OPENING from 4.30 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.
 COCKTAIL PARTY at 7.30 p.m.
 ANNUAL BALL from 8.00 p.m. to 2.00 a.m.

(Please Tick the Square relating to the Event you will attend)

— A DONATION WOULD BE APPRECIATED —

POLISH ASSOCIATION OF BALLARAT,
P.O. BOX 287, BALLARAT, 3350.

R.S.V.P.
31st JULY, 1976

NEW CENTRE FOR POLISH COMMUNITY

The Courier, 16 Aug 1976

The Polish community's new centre — the Nicolaus Copernicus Hall — was opened on Saturday with congratulations, presentations and celebrations of traditional Polish hospitality.

Mr Stephen, MLA, unveiled a commemorative plaque and cut ribbons with the national colors of red and white when he officially opened the hall before a gathering of several hundred members of the Polish community and their guests.

The excellently appointed hall in Orion street, Sebastopol, built with voluntary labor by members of the Polish Association of Ballarat, was decorated with the flags of Poland and Australia, symbolising their old land and their new home.

Young girls in national dress and Polish Scouts added to the color of the occasion.

DECORATION

During the ceremonies which followed, the representatives of the Polish government in exile in London, Mr J. Leczycki, awarded the high honor of the Cross of Merit to Mr Z. M. Burcon, president of the Polish Association of Ballarat for the past six years.

Mr Burcon said he was proud to belong to the small but devoted group of Polish people in Ballarat and grateful to them for their support which had led to this honor.

A number of commemorative plaques were presented to people who had made a significant contribution to the welfare of the Polish Association in Ballarat.

They included Mr Stanislaw Jurkowski of Geelong, one of the first financial supporters for the clubrooms; the Mayor, Cr M. J. Brown; three former Mayors — Cr J. F. McKay, Sir Arthur Nicholson and Cr A. C. Rizzoli; and the president of the Good Neighbor Council for a number of years, Cr A. M. Harris, the Mayor-elect.

The Polish Association also received a number of gifts for the new hall.

On behalf of the Good Neighbor Council, Cr Harris presented a wall clock which was fixed in place by Ballarat town clerk, Mr F. J. Rogers.

Sir J. M. Bialowieyski of the Polish Federation of Victoria presented a gold medallion commemorating the 500th anniversary of Copernicus, also a painting and commemorative book.

A plaque from the Pologna Soccer Club was presented by Mr M. R. Ostrowski, and a painting was given by a former Ballarat resident, Mr Frank Kicinski.

The carpet in the foyer and anterooms was

donated by Cr Roy King of Sebastopol, who was thanked for his generosity.

Tribute was paid to the many people who had supported and worked for the project, particularly the building supervisor, Mr Frank Rynkiewicz.

The many speakers were introduced by Mrs Sofia Franczak.

The deputy Mayor of Sebastopol, Cr J. Collins, said the people of Sebastopol were very proud to have such excellent clubrooms in their area.

He congratulated the Polish community on their fine effort. He said they had done all the work themselves.

Congratulations were also extended by the president of the Polish Federation of Victoria, Mr K. Lancucki.

The secretary of the Polish Association of Ballarat, Mr B. Brodziak, moved a vote of thanks to all who had helped build the centre. This would enable the Polish community to build a better life for themselves and for future generations, he said.

The celebrations continued late into the night with a cocktail party followed by the Polish ball at the Civic Hall. — See Page 8.



Photos above: Ted Franczak and his wife Zofia and daughter Helen. Zofia was treasurer of the Association during construction. Ted made the metal frames for the kitchen table and benches.



Photos above: Preparing meals in the well equipped kitchen in the early years, and in later years.

Photos below: A print of Copernicus, in black and white, held pride of place above the stage.



Bust of Copernicus On 28 August 1978 the owner of ODRA Travel Agency, Melbourne, Marian Zarzycki, donated a bust of Copernicus to the Ballarat Polish Association (bust can be seen on far right in the photo below). At that time Jack Burcon was an agent for ODRA in Ballarat.

The national flag of the Republic of Poland was placed on the wall to the right of the stage. The flag has a white top and a red bottom, the colours defined in the Constitution as the national colours of Poland. The Polish Coat of Arms bearing a white eagle with a gold beak, talons and crown on a red background was hung up on special occasions (see photo below).



Fr Nikel receiving a Christmas gift from St Nicholas, with two devils looking on. The bust of Copernicus is on the far right



The 3 Seasons playing at a function in Copernicus Hall.

In about 1980 Jack Burcon commissioned Gordon Thurling, a local Ballarat sign-writer and graphic artist, to make and paint two Polish emblems and the Coats of Arms of 10 Polish cities, for the hall.



Fr Henry Nickel

Photo: One of Gordon Thurling's Coats of Arms can be seen between the two windows.



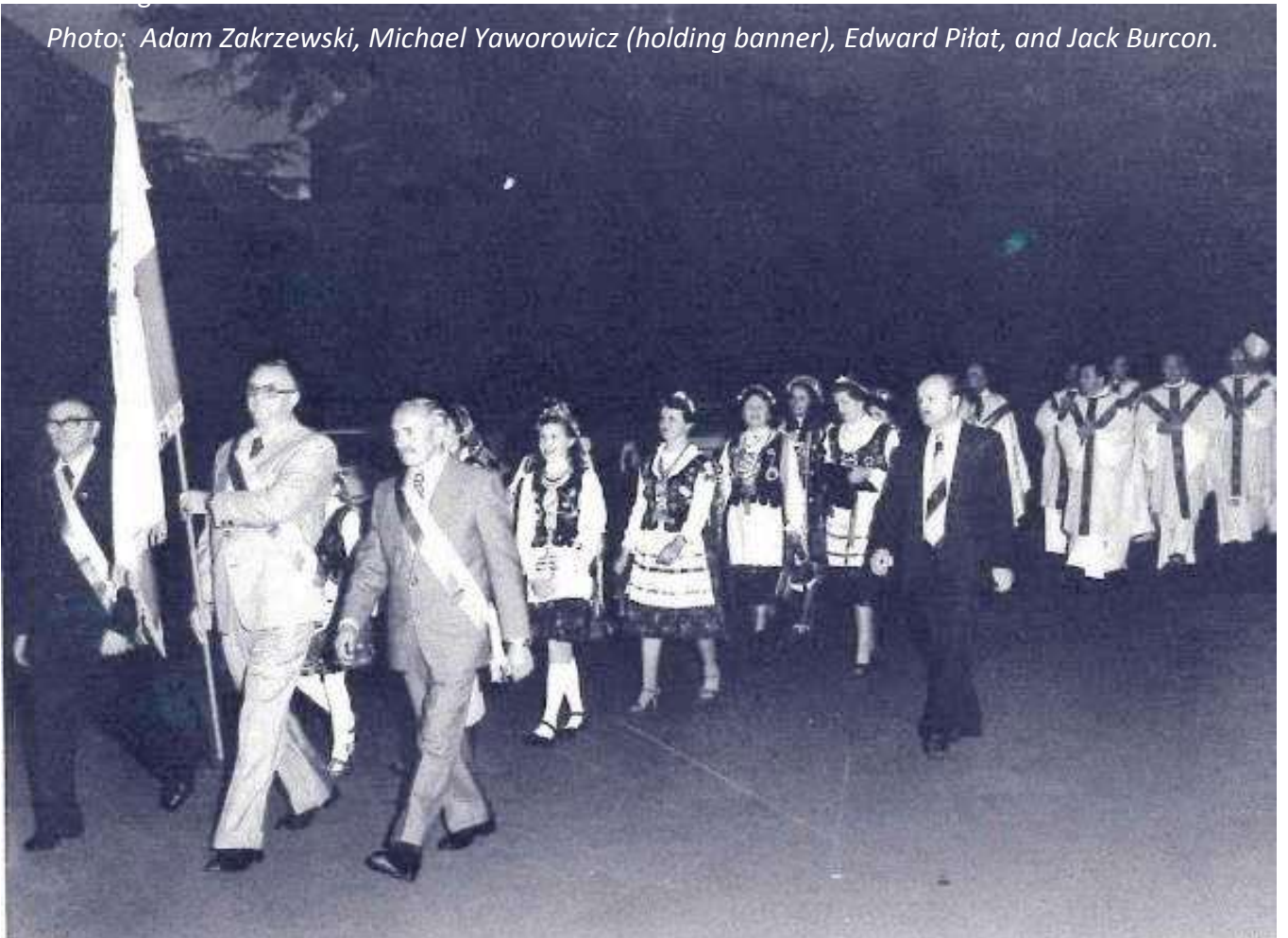
Above: Photos of functions at the hall.

A special ceremonial Polish banner was kept at the hall, and was used on auspicious occasions. Jack Burcon, the President of the Ballarat Polish Association, designed the impressive banner and bought materials to have it made by Maria Jurczak Słomczewska. Jack and his wife, Alice, donated it to the Ballarat Polish Association. The banner was displayed on National Day celebrations at St Patrick's Cathedral, and in later years at St Aloysius Church, Redan.

Photo: Displaying the banner.



Photo: Adam Zakrzewski, Michael Yaworowicz (holding banner), Edward Piłat, and Jack Burcon.



Polish Bishop visits Ballarat

The mission of the Catholic Church in Poland was to mediate between the Government and the people, the pastor of the Poles in exile, the Most Rev Szczepan Wesoly, said in Ballarat.

"The situation in Poland is difficult in the sense that between the Government and the nation is a lack of confidence. The mission of the church is to try to bring these two parts to talk and discussion," he said.

One of the main problems was that the Government had not abided by its 1980 agreement with Solidarity.

The Church has said the Government should respect that agreement.

"That is the only way to gain the confidence of the people," the Bishop said.

As well as being a mediator the church was publicly expressing what the Polish people felt, he said.

Bishop Wesoly was in Ballarat for a few hours to celebrate a special mass, bless a banner, and attend a dinner.

He said the mass in Polish at St Patrick's Cathedral with nine other priests. More than 100 Poles attended the mass and later the dinner at the Polish Hall in Sebastopol.

Seven years ago Bishop Wesoly officially blessed the hall.

Many people dressed up in regional Polish costumes for the visit.

Bishop Wesoly works from Rome and is currently touring Australia and New Zealand as representative of the Polish Primate, Cardinal Glemp.

The banner was donated by the president of the Polish Association of Ballarat, Mr Jack Burcon, and his wife.



● Polish Bishop Wesoly blesses the banner donated to the Polish Association of Ballarat by its president, Mr Jack Burcon, and his wife.

Blessing the banner was one of the Bishop's duties when he visited Ballarat this week. He also gave a special mass at St Patrick's Cathedral and attended a dinner of the Polish Association at the Polish Hall in Sebastopol.

Bishop Wesoly is the pastor of all Poles not living in Poland and represents the Polish Primate, Cardinal Glemp.

*Above: Bishop Wesoly blessing the banner donated by Jack and Alice Burcon.
The Courier 1 October 1983.*

Building Copernicus Hall in 1974-76 -- mainly by volunteers.





Aniela and Stanislaw Filipiak were regular volunteers





*Frank Rynkiewicz, Kaz Walczak, Richard Jarecki,
Tad Jarecki, Andrew Majda, unknown*

Below: Frank, Andrew, Stan & Jack Burcon



Tad Jarecki, Andrew Majda, Frank Rynkiewicz.





Above: Andrew Majda



Andrew Majda

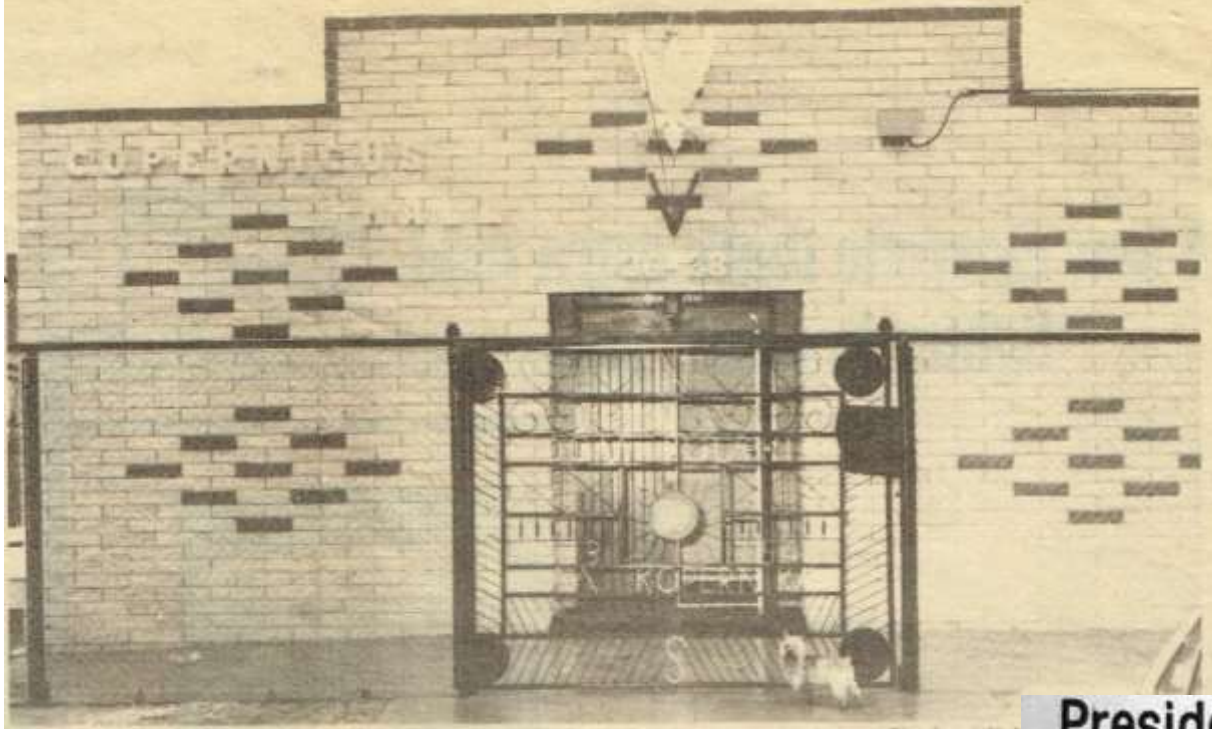


Jack Burcon laying tiles.

Back: Edward Piłat, Richard Jarecki, Stanisław Filipiak, Frank Rynkiewicz, Alex Kawa, Michael Burcon, Jan Danski, Wally Kitlowski. Front: Stan Szapiel, Bronisław Brodziak, Tad Jarecki



OPENING OF POLISH HOUSE



COMMUNITY WORKED HARD FOR A CENTRE

The opening of the Nicolaus Copernicus Hall tomorrow by Mr W. F. Stephen, MLA, will be the climax of years of planning and hard work by the Polish Association of Ballarat.

Some three years ago the association decided to provide a permanent community centre for its people.

After several unsuccessful attempts to acquire sites they were able to buy the Orion street property — and planning began in earnest.

Funds were collected by donations and interest free loans. For 18 months members have donated their time and labor un-

der the supervision of Mr Frank Rynkiewicz.

With the exception of specialised work such as electrical fittings and plumbing, the hall has been built entirely by voluntary labor, cutting costs to a fraction.

The building comprises a multi-purpose hall with a firstclass kitchen equipped with stainless steel benches and trolleys and spacious cupboards.

There are also two cloakrooms, one of which incorporates a library and sound equipment.

The beautiful wrought iron gates at the Polish community centre were made by Mr Ted Franczzak, who also made the framework for the kitchen equipment. The gates commemorate the association's patron Nicolaus Copernicus and the words "Dom Polski", which means Polish House.

The opening ceremony will be very colorful with girls in national dress and the Polish Scouts in their uniforms.

Presentations of medallions and decorations are expected to take place during the ceremony.

Distinguished guests will include parliamentary and council representatives, the president of the Polish Federation of Victoria, Mr K. Lancucki, and the delegate for the Polish Government in Exile, based in London, Mr J. Leczycki.

A place of honor will be given to Cr J. F. McKay, regarded as a special friend of the Polish Community.

The opening which will include refreshments and entertainment will be followed by two gala social functions — a cocktail party in the Civic Hall and the Polish Ball.

President six years



President of the Polish Association of Ballarat, Mr Jack Burcon, (above), has held this office for six years.

The opening of the hall will be a triumph after years of planning and hard work.

Mr Burcon, who works for the Victorian Railways, came to Australia in 1950.

After 18 months working in Sydney as a book-keeping clerk, he came to Victoria to be reunited with his parents as his father was working on the Rocklands Dam project.

The family moved to Ballarat in 1951.

Apart from five years in Melbourne he has lived here ever since.

He has three children — a daughter born in Melbourne and two sons born in Ballarat.

Shortly after the birth of his daughter, Mr Burcon was called up for National Service and is proud of the fact that he served with the Australian Army, working in communications.

He was a foundation member of the Polish Association of Ballarat in 1953.

Dedication of one man

The Nicolaus Copernicus Hall will stand as a tangible reminder of the dedication of one of the Polish Association's members — Mr Frank Rynkiewicz, building supervisor — pictured beneath the eagle emblem.

Mr Rynkiewicz, a retired builder, has spent five or six days a week for the past 18 months working voluntarily on the building of the hall, using his own skills and supervising working bees on Saturdays.

The hall cost about \$18,000 to build, but without the voluntary work these costs would have been trebled at least.

Mr Rynkiewicz came to Australia in 1949. After some time in Queensland he moved to Ballarat, where he worked as a builder. He constructed many private homes and Housing Commission homes.

In 1964 he bought the Royal Exchange Hotel, which became a popular centre for his many friends, but had to retire six years later for health reasons.



Copernicus commemorated

Nicolaus Copernicus, after whom the hall is named, was a Polish astronomer, who lived from 1473-1543.

He gave the world the Copernican theory of the solar system — that the earth rotated daily on its axis and that the planets revolved in orbits around the sun.

He studied mathematical science at the University of Cracow and acquired some skill as a painter.

Though he did not take orders, he was closely associated with the Church. He studied astronomy in Bologna, lectured in Rome in 1500, and the next year entered the medical school at Padua.

After returning to Poland, he lived at the episcopal palace of Heilsberg as physician to his uncle, the Bishop of Ermeland.

After his uncle's death in 1512 he retired to Frauenberg, where he continued to work for the diocese and to exercise his medical skills.

He drew up a currency reform scheme in 1522 and a new system of astronomy by which man's outlook on the universe was fundamentally changed.

During the years of settlement, three Polish chaplains have guided and supported the association's work — the late Fr W. Ziolkos, Fr Z. Grodz and Fr J. Krasocki.

Three years ago the association became concerned that the older generation was gradually declining. To provide for the future they decided to establish a Polish community centre.

They hope the hall will be a cultural centre, that interest in Polish music and arts will increase again.

The hall will be used for meetings, small dances, light entertainments, indoor sport such as billiards and table tennis and a youth centre with a library and Polish school.

THE COURIER, Ballarat, Friday, August 13, 1976 Page 11

OFFICERS

They are president Mr Z. M. Burcon, vice-president Mr K. Mroczkowski, secretary, Mr B. Brodziak, treasurer, Mr A. Majda, librarian, Mr E. Pilat, caretaker, Mr A. Kawa, board members, Mr F. Rynkiewicz, Mr W. Kitlowski, Mr M. Lewicki.

Past presidents include E. Gzik, J. Cacek, J. Fugiel, W. Kitlowski, K. Ciezki, T. Jarecki, R. Skrypko, K. Mroczkowki and J. Pamula. President Jack Burcon's daughter Teresa also assists in a secretarial capacity, producing notes and information required in English.

Old culture in new land

The Polish Association of Ballarat was formed 23 years ago as a charitable, national and cultural organisation with the aim of making its people feel at home in their new land without losing the traditions of their old country.

Today the association has about 50 members representing a community of some 300 people, young and old.

The influx of Polish migrants after World War II was at its peak from 1950-52. Many experienced sadness though separation, loneliness, the language barrier and a different life style.

Almost immediately they began organising this association to provide companionship and mutual help, and to help them adjust to a totally different environment and culture.

The association has been a success from the outset.

Their many activities include celebrations of Polish National days, concerts, social events

such as balls, sporting activities, picnics, personal help in the community and cultural interests such as support for the Polish Youth Orchestra.

Polish language schools have been conducted, also children's summer camps at Healesville.

They support the Polish Soccer Club, Kosciuszko-Redan, volleyball and other sports.

A Boy's Scouts group, still very active, was formed by Mr Z. Drzymulski. There is also a Youth Club and a Mothers' Club which caters for social functions.

Three major annual functions are the New Year's Eve cabaret ball, the fancy dress masquerade ball in March and the annual Polish Ball in August.

Some of the plaques at the Hall

Contributors To The Hall



Association Presidents



Mothers Club Presidents



Honorary Members





Above: Community Service Award, 1977.



Right: Relief for Poland Appeal, 1983.

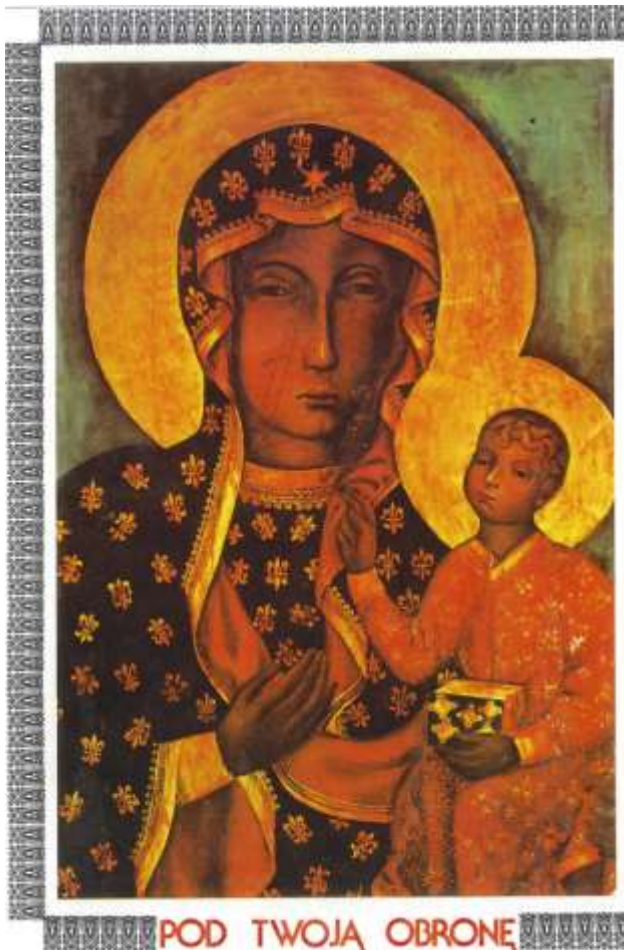
Below: Bronze Plaque on front of Hall.



CH4 IMPORTANT POLISH CATHOLIC INFLUENCES

Our Lady of Częstochowa

Our Lady of Częstochowa (the Black Madonna of Poland) is the very famous painted icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary and child Jesus. The history of the icon is the history of Poland. It is steeped in tradition, apparently painted by St Luke, the Evangelist, on a piece of wood from the *Last Supper* table. Our Lady of Częstochowa is a symbol of hope and faith for the Polish, Catholic nation. Mary, Mother of God, is the Patroness and Protectress of the Poles, the Queen of the Crown of Poland. The Feast Day of Our Lady of Częstochowa is 26 August.



Since 1382 the icon's home has been St Paul's *chapel* in Jasna Góra (Bright Hill) Monastery, Częstochowa, Poland. It is a popular world pilgrimage site. The above photo is from the Wikipedia page for the Monastery, and it was taken by Jerzy Szota (Yureksz).

"Pod Twoją Obronę" means *Under Your Protection*. It seems Our Lady of Częstochowa has protected Poland on a number of occasions through the centuries, thus preserving the Polish faith and saving Poland from capture and servitude.

Held in high esteem, the icon remains a very powerful symbol of Poland's Catholic faith and has often held *pride of place* in many Australian Polish migrant homes; a reminder of the Polish homeland and Catholicity, and the fight for freedom of religion, speech and movement. Wikipedia has a page called *Black Madonna of Częstochowa* with the following words....

The legend concerning the two scars on the Black Madonna's right cheek is that the Hussites stormed the Pauline monastery in 1430, plundering the sanctuary. Among the items stolen was the icon. The Hussites tried to get away after putting it in their wagon, but their horses refused to move. They threw the portrait down to the ground, and one of the plunderers drew his sword upon the image and inflicted two deep strikes. When the robber tried to inflict a third strike, he fell to the ground and writhed in agony until his death. Despite past attempts to repair these scars, they had difficulty covering up those slashes as the painting was done with tempera infused with diluted wax.

This portrait miraculously saved the monastery from capture by a Swedish anti-Catholic invasion in 1655. On 1 April 1656 King John II, Casimir Vasa, made the Lwów Oath, placing the Polish Commonwealth under the protection of Our Lady, and proclaimed her Queen of Poland.

POLISH CELEBRATION

LIGHT DECEMBER, 1976

Ballarat has a sizeable Polish community, friendly and integrated but preserving its ancient loyalty and culture. Led by its president, Mr. Jack Burcon, and energetic chaplain, Fr. Joseph Krasocki, it had a celebration recently, when Bishop Wesoly, in charge of Polish migrants throughout the world, came to open its newly erected community centre, Copernicus Hall, in Sebastopol.

Before the blessing His Lordship, who represents the valiant Cardinal Wyszynski celebrated Mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral. Afterwards he was joined by Bishops Mulkearns and O'Collins. All three were welcomed by girls in national costume, and after planting three commemorative trees joined in the luncheon served by the Mothers' Club to about 130 people. Even the exterior of the hall was gaily decorated with flowers and the intertwined flags of Poland and Australia.



Help of the half defeated, House of Gold,
Shrine of the Sword and Tower of
Ivory:
Splendour apart, supreme and aureoled,
The Battler's vision and the world
reply.

This was a part of Belloc's greeting to Our Lady of Czestochowa, one of Poland's patrons. He had a passionate love for Poland — understandable to any Christian who knows its history of battles fought and betrayals endured, in defence of the faith.

Bishop Wesoly during his blessing mentioned the role of Our Lady of Czestochowa in helping to protect Poland in times of crises, and he repeated the following part of Belloc's famous ballad.

Pope John Paul II

Pope John Paul II was a spiritual beacon for Poland and its people -- Poland is predominantly a Catholic nation. Pope John Paul II clearly deserved to be included as one of the eight "*great figures of Poland's culture and history*"¹.

Poland, situated in the centre of Europe, has always been a country of incredible faith in the path of adversity and partition. Duke Mieszko I, the Duke of Poland, is considered the de facto creator of the Polish state sometime before 963. He adopted Western Christianity in 966. His son became the first King of Poland in 1025. At this time, Poland was prosperous and secure, with a government and political system of its own -- a free and liberal system shone through -- its Latin religious roots were strong and lasting. Kraków's University was established in 1364 and Italian influences were reflected in printing presses and art relics.

In the 16th Century (the Golden Age) Poland became a *Republic*, with a parliament, where the elected king acted as President -- freedom became a valued right for its citizens. "*The principle of unanimity*" was chosen "*to protect the minority of one*"². Religious freedom included the acceptance of the Jewish faith -- Catholicism, literacy and artistic endeavours flourished.

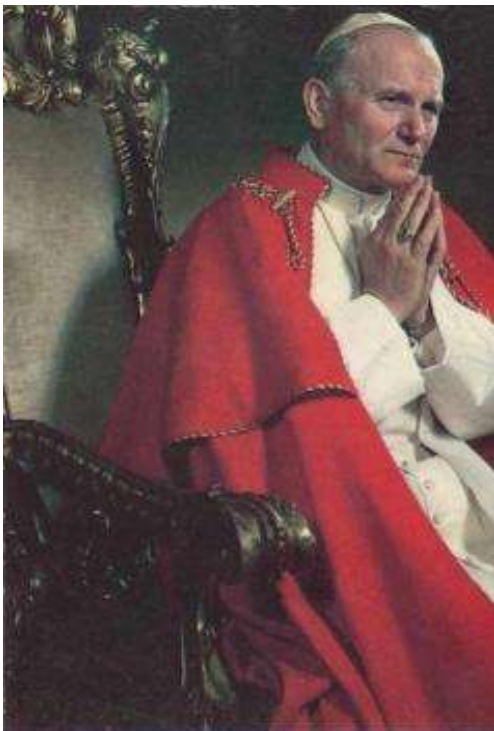
This liberal approach was Poland's downfall in 1772, 1793 and 1795. Poland was "*reluctant to vote for taxes, beyond the bare minimum*"³ and thus lacked the substantial army needed to repel the modern armies of Prussia, Russia and Austria. Poland was carved up and in 1795 erased from the map! Miraculously, the Polish people preserved their national identity.

After World War 1 (1914-1918), on 11 November 1918, Poland regained its independence, due "to the collapse of all the occupying powers and efforts made by the Polish people".⁴ Prior to then, Poland had been partitioned by the occupying powers Germany, Russia and Austria. Unfortunately Poland's independence was short-lived due to the outbreak of World War 2 (1939-1945), when German and Soviet occupation saw Poland again floundering for survival. Poles remained true to their beliefs, and they rallied against the German atrocities.....

*"Poland was trying to alert the world to the German atrocities and the extermination of the Jewish population. The international community's reaction was one of disbelief and passivity."*⁵

The Germans were defeated but, at Yalta, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin placed Poland under Russian authority and influence. Russia was to allow free elections in Poland, but this was not adhered to. The Polish United Workers' Party, a communist party, had Soviet support and ruled Poland for four decades. The communists initially enjoyed popular support due to land reform, a rebuilding program, and progressive social policies, but the popular support eroded and Poles were angered because of repressions, economic difficulties, indoctrination and the lack of individual freedoms.

Lech Wałęsa led the union strikes that enabled the Solidarity movement in 1980. It heralded the fall of communism, and the return of full democracy in Poland in 1989, Wałęsa becoming President in 1990. This led to the demise of Communism in Central and Eastern Europe, and the gradual break up of the Soviet Union in 1988 to 1991.



Pope John Paul II was a vital part of the support and encouragement for the Polish Solidarity movement. The Polish people saw him at the very centre of the fight for freedom of religion and other freedoms.

Karol Józef Wojtyła was born in 1920 in Wadowice, Poland. He died on 2 April 2005. Friends describe him as an athletic boy, and he worked in a chemical factory while studying. He was a poet and an amateur actor. He joined the priesthood, became an auxiliary Bishop, then Archbishop of Kraków, and the Cardinal priest of San Cesareo in Palatio (1967-1978).

The Polish people rejoiced at his election as Pope in 1978. He used his speeches during 1979, 1981 and 1982 to advocate for Polish democracy, to right the wrongs, lack of justice and menaces plaguing communist Poland. He travelled widely and visited 129 countries, including Australia in 1973, 1986 and 1995.

Pope John Paul II was canonized as a saint in 2014, and he is the patron saint of World Youth Day.

Pope John Paul II was a shining beacon of light throughout Poland's dark communist rule. He remains intertwined with Polish history, being remembered for bringing about a peaceful revolution. He always believed that Poland could be truly free, and his strength and spirit helped renew Polish democracy.

The first generation of Ballarat Poles saw the need for the subsequent generations to understand the historic background of their native Catholic Poland, and to maintain a connection in the current era.

Pope John Paul II was the star that guided Poles in Poland through difficult and dangerous times. Freedoms of religion, speech and movement are freedoms worth fighting for.

1 & 2 & 3 An Essay by Nobel Laureate Czesław Miłosz (see Bibliography).

4 & 5 A Guide to the History of Poland 966-2016 p67 & p82.

CH5 THE EARLY HISTORY OF POLISH MIGRATION TO BALLARAT

There are many narratives and personal accounts that form the Polish Association's history, and this book includes some of these. The migrant families had different experiences and reasons that coloured their need and desire to travel *to a far-away foreign country*, Australia. Most came here with optimism whilst hoping to make a better life for themselves and their families.

When the war ended in 1945, decisions had to be made carefully. Would the displaced Poles return to their beloved country Poland, or travel to America or Australia? For most, returning to Poland was not an acceptable option, because the Russians had *moved in*. Australia was portrayed as a *lucky country*, where anyone who worked hard would succeed, so this choice was very enticing.

Between 1947 and 1953 men and women were offered a two-year contract to work in Australia under the Australian Government's Displaced Persons scheme, which allowed Assisted Migration for 170,000 migrants to come to Australia. Since migrating Poles were guaranteed work, they were happy to make the long, tedious voyage, to a new and unknown country.

After arriving in Australia in the 1950s, many families temporarily stayed at the Bonegilla migrant camp, near Wodonga, Victoria. The army huts were rudimentary, made of corrugated iron, and not designed to accommodate families. Women and children were kept apart from the men, who had their own barracks. The women used boxes and clothes etc to make screens to provide privacy for their family units.

While at Bonegilla, some men were put to work at Cairn Curran Dam, near Castlemaine. Some were sent to the Snowy Mountain Scheme, building pipelines, dams, aqueducts, tunnels, pumping and power stations, to divert water for irrigation, and to provide hydro-electricity for many towns and cities. These labouring jobs were for a period of two years, and the workers were away from Bonegilla for a week or two at a time before returning to their families on weekends if they were lucky. Meanwhile, many of the women worked in the kitchens and dining halls, and on general camp duties.

The Ballarat Polish community in effect began in 1950 when men were sent from the Bonegilla migrant camp to serve their two year contract in the Ballarat district where they lived in work camps, and women and children lived at the Mildura migrant camp. Families began moving into rented homes in Ballarat in 1951, before the two year contracts ended, and the Association was formed in late 1952.

Initially the Ballarat families flocked together for company, comfort and shared past experiences. Some needed help with financial and legal matters, as many had arrived with limited English and were unable to navigate Australian customs and norms. The Polish Association helped to *bridge the gap* between the new arrivals and the Australian community.

- Ch7 mentions that *"The real exodus of Poles from Germany took place in the years 1949-1952. 200,000 Poles settled in Australia and Ballarat received about 100-150 families"*.
- Ch8 mentions that Jack Burcon believed that in 1952 *"there were 70 families settled in Ballarat and surrounding districts"*
- Ch3 notes that *"In 1976 the Association had 50 members representing a community of some 300 people, both young and old"*
- Appendix A lists approximately 130 Polish family names – many of these were members of the Ballarat Polish Association in the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s, and there might have been a few other families that were overlooked, especially in nearby towns.



Above: Kitchen Hands & children at the Mildura migrant camp: 1951. Franciszka Stodolny shown fs.

Why did so many Poles settle in Ballarat? Many fought in World War II as soldiers in the Polish army, and after being captured had become forced labourers in Germany, working on farms or in factories, because the German nation needed labourers to fill a void created by the conscription of young German men. Consequently, the Ballarat settlers were mainly labourers with limited education -- World War II had intervened and robbed them of precious opportunities. In Ballarat there was a shortage of workers at the Railway Workshops, MB Johns (a valve manufacturing foundry), the White Swan Dam, Sunnyside Woollen Mills, the Ballarat Paper Mills, the Paddle Shoe factory, the Ballarat Mental Hospital, St John of God Hospital, and the Ballarat Base Hospital. Taxi work was also an achievable work option. Hotel work was sought by many migrant women as they felt confident working in hospitality, having worked for German families during the war.

It's not surprising that after the contract work ended some of the families initially remained in the areas they had become familiar with. Some of the workers at Cairn Curran Dam, near Castlemaine, especially the younger ones, moved to the larger cities of Ballarat, Bendigo and Melbourne. Some stayed in Castlemaine, where work was available at the Castlemaine Woollen Mills, and the Castlemaine Sewerage Project had just begun. Some that settled in Castlemaine, including the Skirzynski, Dziuba and Klicki families, later relocated to Ballarat. Other families that settled in Castlemaine were -- Kotlarz, Walichowska, Kulerski, Smołak, Laskowski, Walczynski, Sosnowski, Lucjan, Kruesinski, Cicolinski, Sikora, Holc and Sokolowski. The Zakrzewski and Czochara families settled in Maryborough. The Rabendas lived in Welshmans Reef and later settled in Newstead. The Rabendas were a large family -- unfortunately Feliks Rabenda and one of his sons, Feliks, were both killed in a motorbike accident in 1957. The Młynarczyks and Oparskis shared a house in Welshmans Reef, and, when Government funding ran dry at Cairn Curran Dam, the Młynarczyks moved to Newstead and later to Ballarat, while the Oparskis moved directly to Ballarat.

On arrival in Ballarat many Polish families gravitated to other Poles who had settled in the Borough of Sebastopol. This became a pronounced Polish community, known as *Little Poland*. The Buczek, Buzo, Stodolny, Fugiel, Sztojko and Skrypko families settled in Alfred St. Mr Charlie Welsh, a respected policeman in Ballarat was the only true Aussie living amongst the Polish migrants. He was often asked why he didn't move house. His response was, "*I would never move, it's the best place ever!*" It must be noted that he certainly enjoyed a vodka or two with his Polish neighbours -- he was enamoured with their sincerity, generosity and hospitality.

The Sztojko family later built a new home for themselves one block away in Alexandra St, and the Lewicki family moved into the Sztojko family's previous home. The Borecki, Jaskulski, Kosiekiewicz and Wach families also lived in Alexandra St, and the Cham family had built a new home in Kent St nearby. The Skrypko family moved from Alfred St to a newly built home nearby in Rubicon St.

The Kawa family lived across the street from the St Aloysius Church, which was halfway between *Little Poland* and the Burcon area. In later years St Aloysius became the official place of Polish worship.

The Jack Burcon family settled in Essex St, Ballarat. Jack was a pivotal figure in the Polish Association. The Kowalewskis purchased a house around the corner, in Ripon St -- Halina Kowalewski was Felicja Burcon's sister (Felicja was Jack's mum). Other Polish families in that area in the early years included the Pamuła, Klicki, Skirzynski, Oparski and Adrejczuk families. The Płotecki, Jaworowicz (Yaworowicz) and Gradkowski families lived further north, closer to Sturt St, the main street in Ballarat. The Skirzynski family also initially lived in that locality, before relocating to a house in Surrey St, which happened to be closer to the Burcon family.

There was also a *Little Poland* in Albert St, Sebastopol, at the end of the tramline, near the Royal Mail Hotel. Here we had the Caceks, Olszewskis, Pileckis, Danskis, and Józef Pieczka (Czech)(a bachelor, who had been a friend with the Dańskis in Germany). In 1954 this community was joined by the Rynkiewicz family who had moved from Townsville -- Frank and Irena Rynkiewicz moved in with the Olszewskis (Irena's mum and dad), while Frank built a house a small distance along Albert St. In 1955 the Nykoluks moved from central Ballarat into a new house that had been built by Frank Rynkiewicz, in Albert St, across the road from the new Rynkiewicz home. Jarosław Nykoluk was married to Daniela Nykoluk (Irena Rynkiewicz's sister). At least 14 of the Polish families that lived at the Stuart migrant camp, near Townsville, ended up living in Ballarat. These included the Andrejczuks, Caceks, Drons, Dziubas, Havlins, Jakiels, Jaroczeks, Mytyks, Olszewskis, Pileckis, Poltoraskys, Popovics, Walczaks and Rynkiewiczzs. Many of these families lived near the Cairn Curran Dam project, near Castlemaine, before moving to Ballarat.

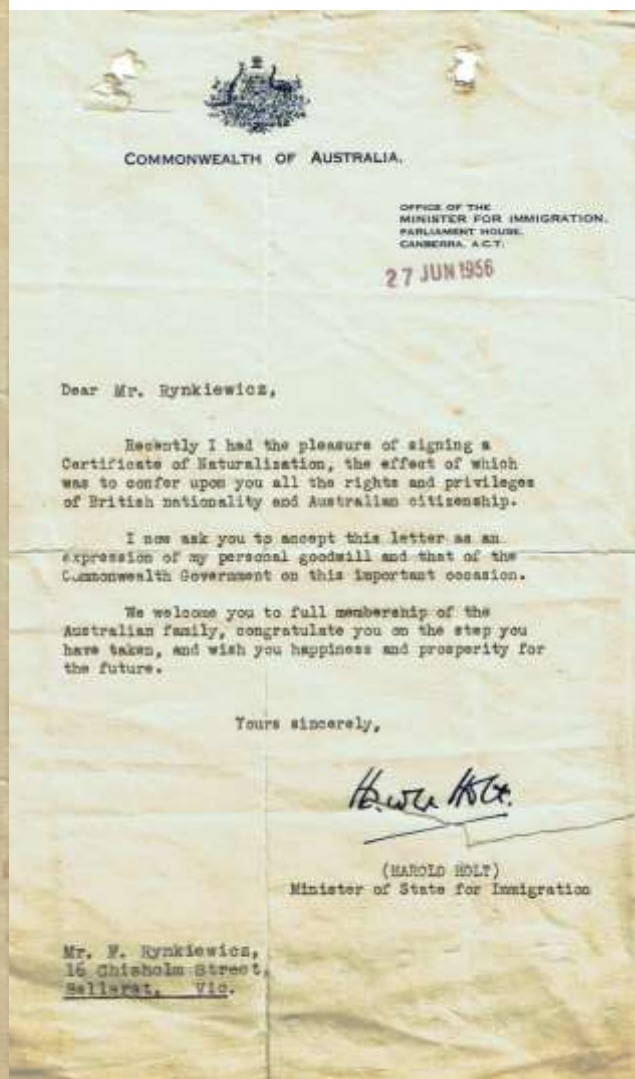
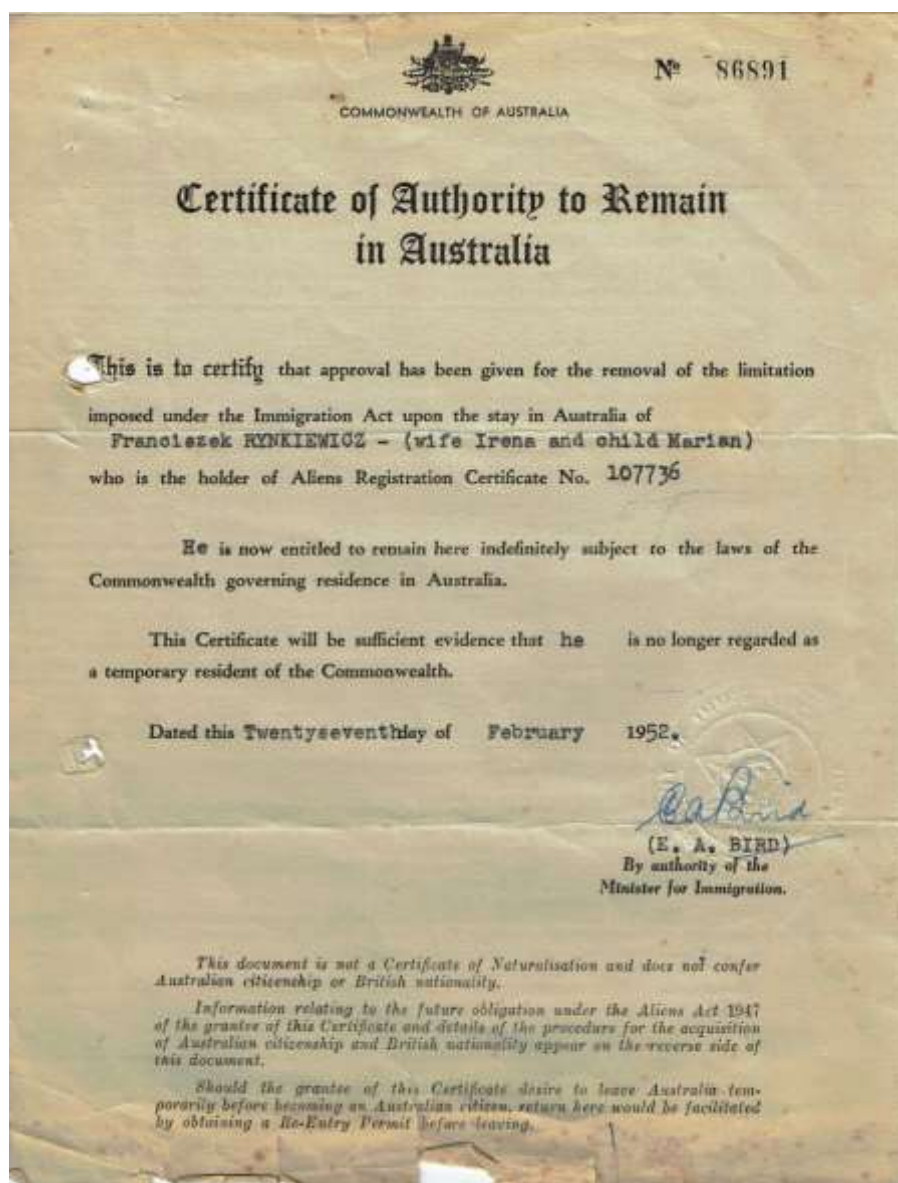
There was also a *Little Poland* in the Wendouree area, which included the Pzekwas, Szapiel, Anioła, Majda, Piłat, Młynarczyk, Maciąg, Wojdat, Izydorczyk, Klicki, Rynkiewicz, and Kaciczak families, and later joined by the Nykoluks, Franczaks and Skrypkos.

The migrants wanted to be self-sufficient. Many had worked on German farms -- they were resilient, hard-working, forward thinking people, aiming to be successful in their new life. Challenges and disappointments were familiar to them. They preferred to purchase houses with larger areas of land so that they could grow lots of vegetables. Often potatoes were grown in the front garden in preference to a manicured lawn. This action bewildered and amused many local Australians. Frank Rynkiewicz sometimes owned vacant blocks that were used exclusively for growing potatoes for Irena's (his wife) extended family.

As the migrating families filtered into the Ballarat community, the Polish Association membership grew, and its roll expanded. The Association celebrated the 21st anniversary of its inauguration in 1974 (see photo next page), although strictly speaking that anniversary was in late 1973.

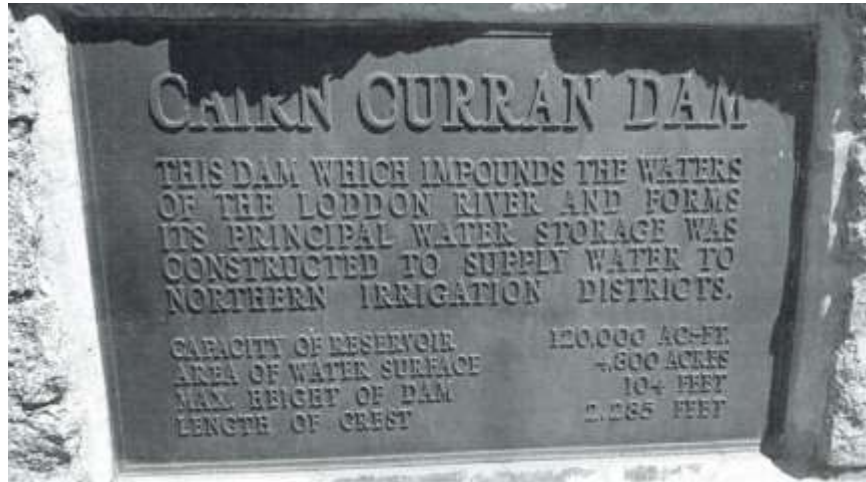


Some important Migrant Documentation

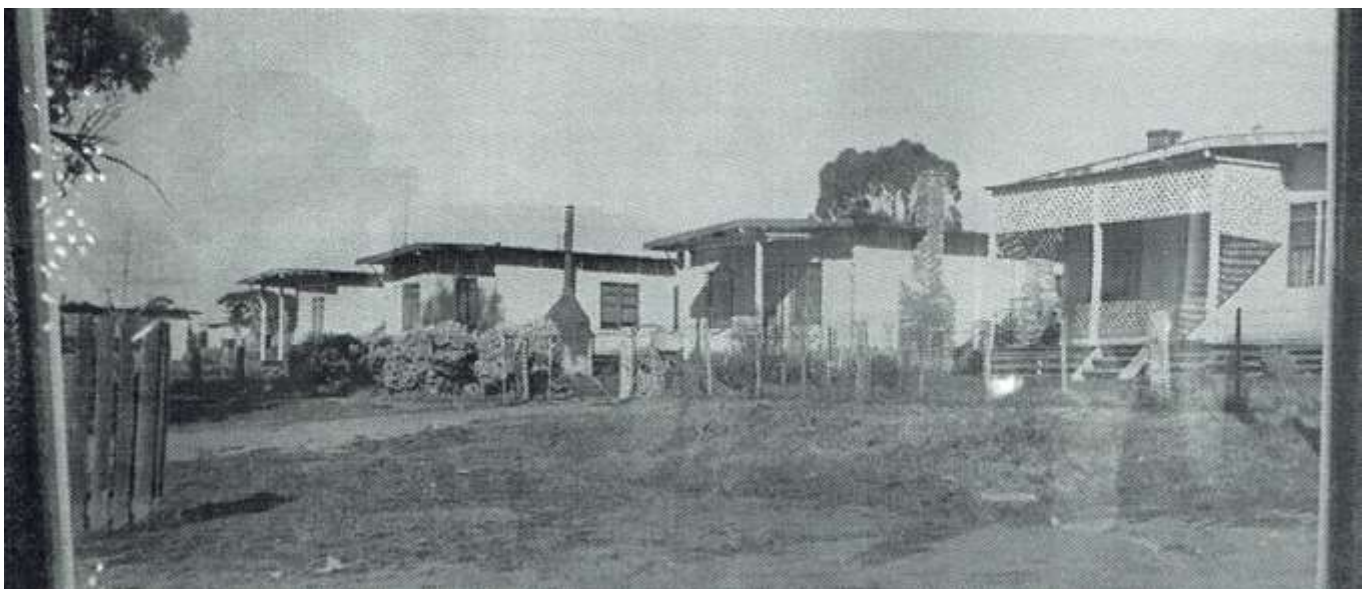


A nostalgic visit to Cairn Curran Dam on 23 October 2018

After the closing of the Polish Association in Ballarat in 2018, a group of former members decided to re-visit the Cairn Curran Dam – where their fathers had worked.

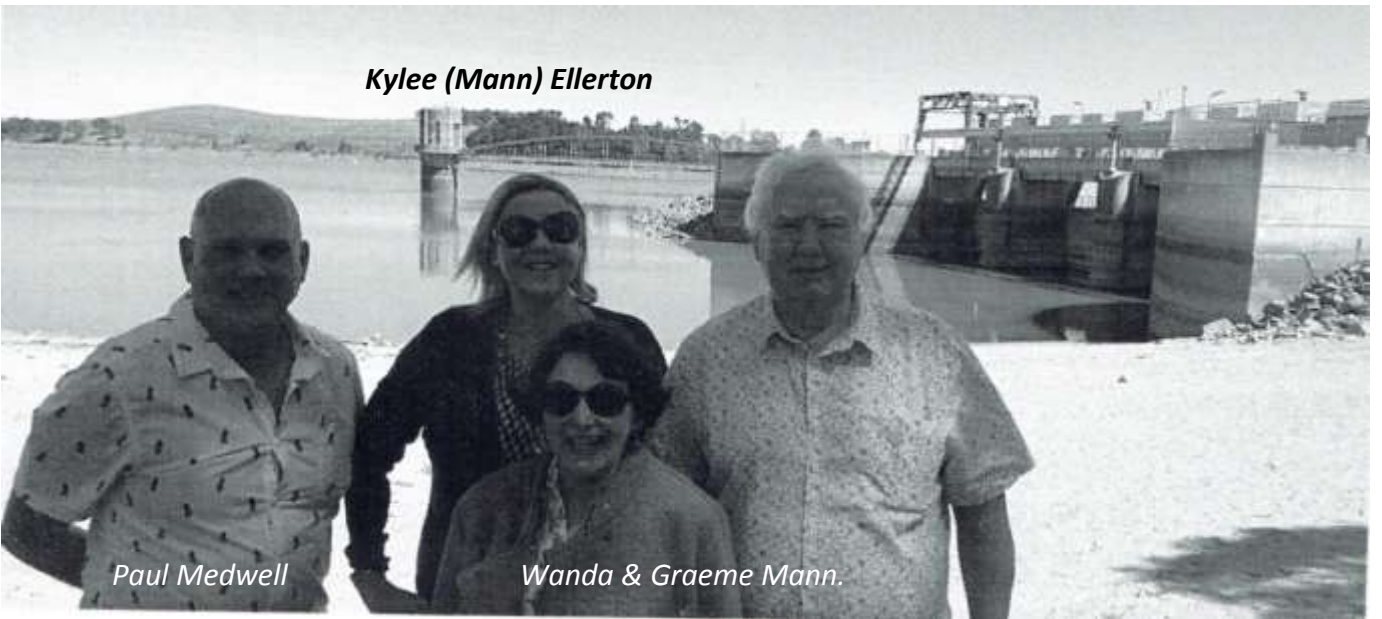


Some photos of life at the Cairn Curran Dam project, circa 1951, at the on-site museum.





*Back: Mark Thornton, Andrew Fedorowicz, Kylee Ellerton, Graeme Mann, John Marcinec
Amanda Richmond, Ted Zabinski. Front: Joanne Thornton, Ollie, Irena Green
Wanda Mann, Christina Marcinec, Elizabeth Zabinski.*



Kylee (Mann) Ellerton

Paul Medwell

Wanda & Graeme Mann.



*Above: Lunch at Palmhouse Bed & Breakfast, Maldon, during our nostalgic visit.
Amanda Richmond, & Andrew Fedorowicz were our hosts.*

Cairn Curran Dam Project, near Castlemaine: 1950 *Photos courtesy of Bill Sikora.*



Migrant Workers Miss White Swan

THE COURIER
21 JULY 1950

Though a number of New Australians for employment at the White Swan reservoir project were expected to arrive in Ballarat last Wednesday, they had been sent to Ararat instead, it was revealed at the meeting of the Water Commission yesterday.

Migrants worked on tree clearing for the pipeline, and the installation of the pipeline.

Some time ago the commission applied to the Federal Government for allocation of 80 New Australians for the White Swan works and on urgently required sewerage extensions.

tralian labor to Ballarat, and to bring under his notice the fact that several of these workers were sent to Ararat.

Delay in the arrival of these workers prompted the commission to bring the matter under notice of Cr A. C. Pittard, MP.

At yesterday's meeting a letter from the Minister for Labor and National Service, Mr Holt, MP, was forwarded by Cr Pittard. The Minister stated that the matter of expediting the arrival of the workers was being investigated.

The engineer-in-chief, Mr A. E. Stohr, said that while this information was satisfactory up to a point, the labor position at the White Swan works was serious, and completion of the project next year would depend on the availability of New Australian laborers.

He added that the commission had been awaiting the arrival of these workers since last February. He had also learned that those expected to arrive in Ballarat last Wednesday had been sent to Ararat for employment in light industry.

Further Approach

It was pointed out that the CRB and other local authorities were awaiting the arrival of New Australians to ease the labor shortage.

Cr A. W. Nicholson referred to the fact that New Australians who had been working on the Bellarine water scheme at Geelong, which was now almost completed, should be available for work in other centres.

At the suggestion of the chairman, Cr J. C. Rowe, it was decided on the motion of Cr Nicholson, seconded by Cr F. J. Cutts, to again request Cr Pittard to press for an immediate allocation of New Aus-

Pipe Lines Started At White Swan

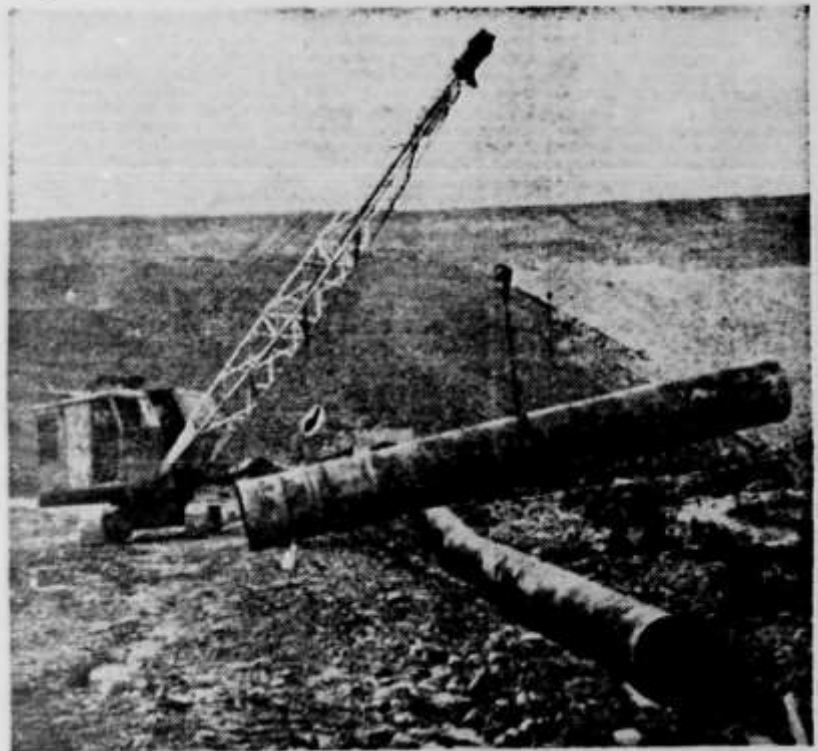
A five-man gang has started another phase of the White Swan reservoir project. They are installing 2½ miles of steel piping to link up with the existing mains at Brown Hill.

The new reservoir's capacity is 3,000 million gallons, from which will be drawn city supplies. Water will flow from Pincott's through an existing pipe into the White Swan and then through the new 42-inch pipe into the system now used.

Each pipe is 30 feet long. A hundred and thirty-five are the large size, and weigh a ton and a half each. The 316 of 30-inch diameter are not much lighter.

The smaller pipes will be used chiefly to link the line through the 650-foot-wide main embankment with the control tower, which will regulate the flow of water at the reservoir.

● Below: Against a background of the 110-foot-high embankment, a movable crane is shown lifting a section of the 2½-mile pipe-line leading from the reservoir.



The Cour

BALLARAT, WEDNESDAY, JULY 4, 1951.

NA's Help Build Rocklands Dam

In a Corner of the Western District 170 New Australians, Balt Migrants, Provide the Unskilled Labour for Rocklands Dam, a Wall of Concrete Which in Three Years' Time Will Hold Back 264,000 Acre-feet of Water

By HELEN C. COULSON

THE DAM will block the path of the Glenelg River some 26 miles from its source in the Victoria Gap in the Grampians Ranges.

Work at Rocklands, which lies about 45 miles north of Hamilton, was begun at the end of 1940, but only a few houses had been built by January, 1942, when the RAAF took over the camp. Resumed by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission in 1946, the camp today is a thriving, self-contained unit, consisting of 65 houses for married men, and 290 huts, which house single workmen. It has its own water supply, church, school, and a fine weather-board hall, as well as facilities for all kinds of sport.

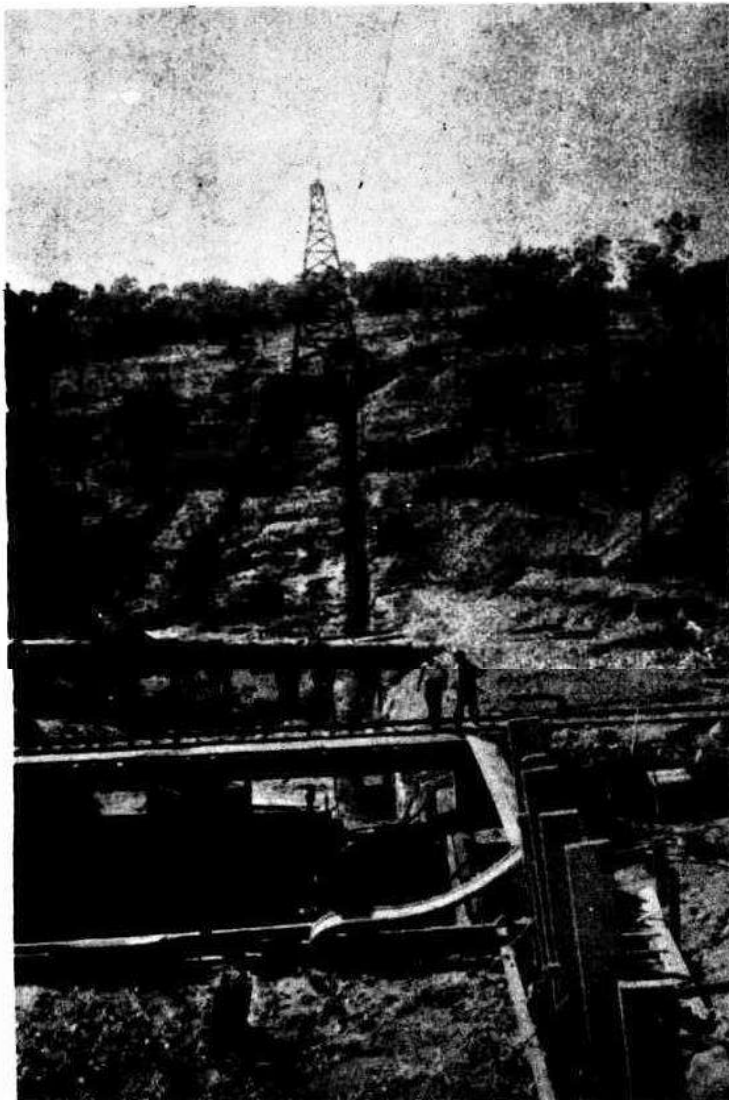
Immediate purpose of the reservoir is to make the water supply of the Mallee and Northern Wimmera independent of any other scheme. At present these areas are served by water which travels about 100 miles from the Goulburn Valley along the Waranga Western Channel, but when Rocklands is complete, this Goulburn Valley water will be released to give increased supplies to Tongala, Rodney, and Rochester districts. If the flow into the reservoir is sufficient (and records taken over an eight-year period indicate that it will be) long-range plans will include extension of present irrigation areas, in which case Rocklands will be the means of supplying life-giving water to every corner of the Mallee.

THREE MAIN FACTORS —

those which influence the choice of site for any reservoir—combine to make Rocklands an ideal situation. Most important is the flow of the stream to be dammed, and at Rocklands an annual rainfall of 26.5 inches, plus catchment from the Black and Grampians Ranges, ensures a steady flow. Foundations are equally important, and it is not merely by chance that those which will lie beneath the massive wall of concrete are of solid stone.

Nor is it simply a piece of good fortune that the right type of stone for making concrete is to be found near by. These things, together with the fact that the topography calls for a concrete construction rather than any other type, influenced engineers and surveyors of the Water Supply Commission in their selection of the site.

A staff of 27 directs the activities of some 400 workmen, gangers, and foremen on the job. About 170 of these are displaced persons — known throughout the camp as Balts. While many of them do come from Baltic countries, there are also Czechs, Poles, Russians, Yugoslavs, and Rumanians, with names as varied and difficult to pronounce. Schewschuk (Latvian), Wysozkj and Radosavljevic (Yugoslav) are typical examples.



SCENE AT SITE OF ROCKLANDS DAM, showing cable tower and trench ready for construction of core wall. In centre is diversion conduit carrying normal river flow, and a naval dockyard crane. Partly filled "paddocks" of concrete are shown in the foreground.

Language, of course, is the main difficulty, and while many speak three or four languages, English is seldom included in their repertoire, although German is usually common ground. Regular English classes conducted in the camp should soon overcome this barrier. In the meantime, a 19-year-old Lithuanian acts as unofficial interpreter. He speaks seven languages, and thinks that should be enough, even for the recent newcomer with whom he could make no headway.

"I speak to him in German, Russian, French, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, and English," he said in disgust. "After that, he can go to blazes!"

Before they became NA's, they followed a variety of occupations. Most are artisans, but several claim to be

civil engineers, and there is at least one lawyer, dentist, and industrial chemist in the camp. Officials found convincing proof of the latter's occupation among migrants' luggage; his 21 packing cases of scientific apparatus, all "goot German glass."

Although many men are employed on contributory works, such as the sawmill, powerhouse, workshops, and quarry, most are engaged at the site of the dam; in stone crushing, concrete mixing, sand washing, or in the actual construction of the dam. (The concrete wall is the "dam"; water retained by it the "reservoir.")

First step in the damming of the stream is the erection of a "coffer dam," behind which the main structure is built later. It is a square,

box-like area—pumped dry—and traversed by a diversion conduit which carries away the normal flow of the river. Removal of overburden from the floor of the coffer dam comes next, and once suitable foundations are reached, workmen drill holes into which upright pipes are later driven. After the first pour of concrete these pipes—which help form the framework of the concrete construction — are filled under pressure with a grout mixture, which seals fissures in the rock foundation and thus prevents seepage. These in turn are sealed, and the concreting begins in earnest.

A small loco draws buckets of concrete from the mixing plant to the 80ft head tower of the cableway, which spans practically the whole work. Each bucket (containing 60ft of concrete) is raised from the ground to the flying fox by a steam winch. Later, the dogman, who rides on the bucket, lowers and manoeuvres it into correct position, and by the operation of levers which release gates on the bottom of the bucket, controls the discharge of concrete into the "paddocks."

AN ADDITIONAL WALL of concrete, known as "core wall," is being built out from either end of the main construction to the sides of the river valley. Made of concrete 2 feet thick, and packed on either side by rock filling, its purpose is to prevent water seeping through at the ends of the main wall during flood periods. Incidentally, although the works have been flooded several times — notably during the Western district floods in March, 1946—little damage has been done. At such times men work above the swollen river until the area can be pumped dry and normal work resumed.

No story of Rocklands is complete without mention of the tunnel being excavated through a hillside several miles from the site of the dam. This is part of the outlet channel system and its purpose is to obviate the necessity for cutting a deep open channel through the hill. The tunnel, approximately 8ft in diameter, is being worked from both ends, and a present half the eventual length of three-quarters of a mile has been excavated.

When the last cubic yard of concrete is placed in position at Rocklands, and a mighty wall of concrete 103ft high and 70ft thick, holds back 25 square miles of reservoir, water for the Mallee and Northern Wimmera will pour through the outlet channel at the rate of 500 acre feet a day. When that day comes, water consumers in the far-off Goulburn Valley as well as farmers in the dry north will bless the construction of Rocklands Dam.

CH6 A SHORT HISTORY OF THE POLISH ASSOCIATION OF BALLARAT 1952-76

A short history of the Polish Association of Ballarat.

In August, 1974, the Polish Association of Ballarat, celebrated the 21st anniversary of its existence. At that time, we provided you with a general history of its origin, now we repeat this history for your benefit in a more condensed form.

The influx of the Polish migrants after the II World War was at its peak during the years of 1950-52. Almost immediately members of the Polish Community began organizing themselves into a Polish Association. Reasons for this was :- their loneliness, language barrier, a different life style and the need for adjustment into a totally different environment and culture.

The association proved to be a success from its very beginning. The aims of the association were and basically still are anti-political (although concerned in local political activity) and the objectives are :- charity both in national and cultural affairs. Many activities, including celebrations of Polish National Days, concerts, balls, personal help in the community, picnics, outings for recreational purposes, have been organized.

Support has been extended to sporting activities e.g., soccer, volley-ball etc., Polish language school, and provisions for Summer Camps with the aid of the Federation of the Polish Association of Victoria has been staged. A Mothers Club, a Youth organization, and a Boys Scout s Group has been incorporated into our Association. The Association also works closely with the B Ballarat and Sebastopol City Councils, the R.S.L. and Good Neighbour Council.

In 1972-73, the Association made a very serious decision. It realized that the older generation of Polish migrants was gradually lessening in numbers with each year. The Committee, through a general meeting, looked at the future with anxiety and with the approval of all the Polish Association Members, decided to provide some permanent community centre for its people.

To fulfill these hopes, we began to build a cultural centre. The time was not in our favour for inflation greatly undermined our funds. Nevertheless, by community effort and sheer will power to succeed, the task has been completed. We must praise the energy and determination of our committee members, especially our president Mr. Z.M.(Jack) Burcon and our building supervisor, Mr. Frank Rynkiewicz, without whom this would not have been possible. We are thus now, in a proud position to announce the opening


of the


Nicolaus Copernicus Hall,
26-28 Orion St., Sebastopol.

The task is not yet fully completed. We still need to finish the outside recreational and parking areas, and furnish the interior recreational area with equipment e.g. billiard table, table tennis etc., but the hall itself can already provide shelter and fulfil the immediate needs as an entertainment centre.

By the opening of this hall, we hope that we shall be able to continue to achieve the aims and desires of the Association of our people, not only for the older generation, but also for the care and enjoyment of our young Australians of Polish Descent.

We are sincerely grateful to all who have, in any way, contributed to the success of this long awaited hope, as a means of continuing a united and treasured culture.


.....
B. Brodziak
Secretary.


.....
Z.M. (Jack) Burcon.
President.

P R O G R A M M E .

Polish Association of Ballarat
26-28 Orion St.,
Sebastopol 3266

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14, 1976, 4.30 p.m.

1. Arrival of the official party.
2. Official welcome by the President of the Association
Mr. Z.M. (Jack) Burcon.
3. Official opening and address by Mr. W.F. Stephen M.P.
4. Occasional address by Cr. J.F. McKay.
5. Address by special guest.
6. Vote of thanks by Mr. B. Brodziak.

All are cordially invited to inspect the Nicolaus Copernicus Hall, and to share light refreshments.

CONDENSED HISTORY OF POLAND

with

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF POLISH ASSOCIATION IN BALLARAT

Because more and more local, State and Federal Governments show their interest in multi-national societies which are emerging in Australia and which cannot be side-stepped, we, as a Polish Association in Ballarat, now celebrating our 25th Anniversary, for better understanding of the whole complex, would like to go into some detailed causes of our forced wanderings.

As we belong to a totally different group of Slavonic Nations, a group which never did have much understanding, so we must start from the beginning:

Historically speaking, Poland, as a Kingdom, emerged from legends and tales in the year 966 AD - on that date our first King, King Mieszko, was baptized with all his subjects, and, as a Christian State, came under the protection and influence of the Holy Roman Empire.

Poland, geographically speaking, does not belong to Eastern Europe as we know it today, but always has been referred to as a Central European country. Throughout the centuries Poland has been a rampart and last bastion of western civilization, efficaciously defending the rest of Europe from the hords of Mongols, Tartars, Turks and Russians.

With this constant onslaught, Poland started slowly to lose control of the vast territories which she possessed - the peak of our successes being the years 1683 - 1696. From that time a succession of weak, elected Kings, especially from the Saxon Line, brought about a decline. It was obvious that the Country had fallen into chaos and disorder.

In the year 1772, on the initiative of Prussia, the first Partition of Poland took place. (Our Neighbours: Carica Catharina of Russia, Frederick the Great of Prussia and Empress Maria Teresa of Austria). The shock of it accelerated the internal reform movements in Poland.

On the 3rd May, 1791 the so-called "Four Years Debating Parliament" ratified a new Constitution, which mainly:

- Abolished supremacy and privileges of the ruling class of Nobles
- Proclaimed complete equality of all classes
- Established a Ministry of Education (the first in Europe)
- Gave peasants freedom of movement and the right to buy land
- Declared tolerance of the minorities in law and religion (but Roman Catholicism was, in general, proclaimed the State Religion)
- and, most importantly -
- The Monarchy was declared hereditary rather than elective.

By this act of liberalization, Poland put into jeopardy wide-spread systems of Feudalism, further antagonizing her neighbours in whose minds there did not exist such advanced reforms. To squash them they renewed their conspiracy and, in two successive moves, partitioned Poland (1793 and 1795).

Two well-known and distinguished names must be mentioned as defending the last two Partitions, those of Generals Kazimierz Pulawski and

Tadeusz Kosciuszko, who, with their armies, could not stop the invasions. This act of lawlessness witnessed by the rest of the western world, did not provoke any protests. Only one protest came from an unexpected part of the world, namely, our defeated enemy, the Turks, which through all of our 150 years of bondage, kept the Polish Ambassadorial Post open as a protest of the barbaric interference. Nothing could oppress, nor, through their chauvinistic administration, de-nationalize or destroy the Polish Nation.

The oppressors were defeated by the actions of the 1st World War, and through the 13th paragraph of President Wilson's clause of the Armistice, Poland won the right to form a new State. Even then this Declaration has been just on paper.

The borders of Poland have been established by an uprising in Great Poland (Western Part) and by three successive uprisings in Upper Silesia, but the Great Entente did not accept the conquest of the uprisings in Silesia and the greater part of the rich coal and industrial regions were returned to Germany.

In the East, the Prime Minister and great Politician of England, Mr. Lloyd George, suggested, unjustly, the popular (in the west) so called "Curzon Line". The Bolshevicks, encouraged by this lack of decision, invaded Poland. Their hords were miraculously stopped on the east side of the river Vistula, and from there, driven back deep into Russian territory - it was they who asked for a truce and, by the Riga Treaty, we established the eastern borders.

Poland devastated by the movements of Russian, German and Austrian armies without any monetary reserve thanks to the Hoover Plan, slowly and painfully started to rise. The Nation worked hard and with great sacrifices. To replenish empty treasury coffers people offered all the gold in their possession. In the short twenty years of sovereignty, we have been forced to build from swamp land a new and modern seaport, Gdynia, because the West decided to exclude the port of Gdansk (Danzig). With the help of French finance, we built a railway running north-south and connecting the Baltic Sea with the small part of Silesia which we possessed. We built a new heavy industrial complex in central Poland and we repaid all our financial obligations to the last penny.

As you can see from this sketchy history of ours, the struggle for freedom was considerable. The Western Powers never intended to give our Nation a chance - a Fair go - and they did not recognize what would be important to them (and to us) a strong, well balanced buffer Poland. Instead they sympathized with defeated Germany. Because of this blatant blunder of 1918, not just Poland as a Nation, but all of the World erupted in one bloody massacre of the second World War and the result - a divided, hostile World.

In this continuing history of ours, we think we can exclude our part and the contribution of our Government in exile in London, the success of our armed forces in the air, on the sea and on the land (although even these achievements were played down by historians of the 2nd World War) but generally the facts are well-known and fresh in the memory.

We shall ever retain in our memories:

- the Horror of Warsaw
- the terrible destruction of greater parts of Poland
- the murder of 20,000 Polish Officers and intellectuals in the forest of Katyn-Russia
- the forced deportations of our people to forced labour camps in Germany or to the gas chambers of the infamous concentration camps

These horror stories the West are trying to forget, even ignore, even though we came to terms as "losers" - the West tried hard to put the blame on us.

Why do we expose these sad times of our memories? Certainly not for pity sake because we do not need pity. We do not ask for privileges, we do not provoke any disturbances or noisy protests etc.

We lost a further five years in an unproductive stay in the Displaced Persons Camps in Germany before the West decided what to do with this embarrassing problem. Disappointment after disappointment came and no one had any trust in the Western powers any more.

The real exodus of Poles from Germany took place in the years 1949 - 1952. 200,000 Poles settled in Australia and Ballarat received about 100 - 150 families.

Almost immediately members of the Polish community began to organise a Polish Association - there was an obvious need for such an organisation. The reasons being:

- New environment
- Language difficulties
- Homesickness
- A totally different way of life

The Polish Association began in mid 1953 with great success. The sound motif to form such an Association so early has been fully justified. Our rules stand firm as an anti-political (internal) Organization. We still think that, as an ethnic group suppressed by the Soviet, we must express our views from time to time in a cultural way, by which we mean written declarations of our Organizations to the Authorities and by Commemorative Celebrations.

Since 1969, with the understanding and help from our Local and State Government and also the media in the form of press, radio and television, we have kept the Australian public well-informed, sympathetic and helpful. From the beginning the Polish association was very active. The committee, during that time, did not change much and most of the men responsible for this are still in office.

Even though we have numerous occasions for National Days, we have concentrated on the month of August in each year (the exact date being the 15th of August) but we keep the date flexible on account of accessibility of the Hall and we must shift it to a weekend.

Of course we cannot stage a full, public celebration every year and most of the time we restrict our celebrations to the Polish Community of Ballarat, but we do hold an Annual Ball to which the Public are enthusiastically invited.

There have been occasions for full-days celebrations. Apart from the above celebrations in 1969, on the:

- 25th August, 1973 - The 500th Anniversary of Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1973). In this celebration we did have the privilege to be host to our Civic Dignitaries.

We have been honored by the attendances of:

- The Bishop of Ballarat, The Most Reverend R.A. Mulkearns
- Bishop O'Collins
- Bishop W. Rubin of Rome who is the delegate of the Polish Primate outside of Poland and is also the Secretary of the Synod of Bishops in Rome.

- 10th August, 1974 - The 21st Anniversary of the Polish Association.

- 29th September, 1974 - The Visit of the Premier of the Polish Government in Exile in London, Dr. Alfred Urbanski.

This joint venture, together with the Federation of Polish organizations in Victoria, was organized by a special Committee of Polish Associations - as well as financed by it with the full co-operation and courtesy of

the Mayor of Ballarat, Cr. M.J. Brown (Reception at the City hall), and visit and Dinner for all our Australian and Polish Guests at the Sovereign Hill Historical Park and a Dinner at the United States Hotel at Sovereign Hill by courtesy of the Director of the Park, Mr. D. Kennard.

14th September, 1976 - Opening of the Polish Club Rooms
- "COPERNICUS HALL" at 26-28 Orion Street,
Sebastopol by Mr. W. Stephen M.L.A.

2nd October, 1976 - Blessing of "Copernicus Hall"
by the Administrator of World Polish Migrants,
Bishop Sz, Wesoly of Rome.

5th August, 1978 - 25th Anniversary of the Polish
Association in Ballarat (a full day celebration).
The Program for this grand occasion is attached.

Most of our celebrations have been incorporated with the 15th August, 1920 National Day, which was the Polish Soldiers Remembrance Day and now incorporates the Miracle Battle of Vistula 1920, the Uprising of Warsaw 1944 and the Battles of the 2nd World War - the Battle of Britain and the Battles of Tobruk, Mt. Cassino, Bologne and Arnheim.

Since 1969, on the invitation of the Ballarat City Council, a delegation of our Polish ex-servicemen have taken part in the Anzac Day procession on the 25th April in each year and the laying of a Wreath ceremony at the Cenatoph on Remembrance Day, which is always held on the 11th day of November in each year and commenced on the 11th November, 1918 and celebrates the 60th Anniversary of the Armistice as well as our Polish National Day.

Apart from these celebrations we provide concerts (Polonez from Melbourne) dances and balls and at present, the Polish "Copernicus Hall", is the centre of our Social evenings, meetings, and occasional films.

As we grow over the years, we will provide shelter and financial help for our Youth Club, our Soccer Club and our Scout Troop. Our auxiliary Mothers' Club is also very active and extremely helpful in their voluntary capacity. Its members are working with great sacrifices - the same must be said of all our members and of our Committees, who, with our dedicated President, work under strain and personal sacrifice. We work and hope, not only for the Polish Association, but for the good of our Polish Community of Ballarat and the name of Poland.

Our charitable activities involve:

The Polish Missionaries in Indonesia, New Guinea, Africa
Our Sister Organizations in Sydney, Essendon and South
America

Donations from the Polish Association have been made to:

The Ballarat Children's Home
Girl's Home
Chichester Organization
Legacy
Red Cross
The victims of the tragic bushfires at Streatham

In the complicated times of to-day's permissive society, we, as a group, are facing this same problem as every other community or charitable organization. Up to the present we have stood firmly on our own feet without any help from outside our Association. To gain stability, without losing ground, and to contribute to the welfare of our community, is no time for slackness and constant vigil and watch must be maintained. We hope that the future generations of Australians of Polish origin can be depended upon to take over from the older generation the responsibility of continuing to cultivate our traditions and customs which are so dear to our inheritance. Through this Association and by fulfilling our objectives, we hope to give Australia a well-assimilated and justly proud people, who, of the Polish origin,

shall become good Australian citizens.

During our times in our new and adopted country we did have Polish Chaplains who cared for our well-being - the late Fr. W. Ziolkos, the co-founder of our organization, especially in the times of our settling-in to our new county from 1953 till his death in 1966.

Fr. Z. Grodz continued the work for two years.

Fr. J. Krasocki, has supported us since 1968 and is an active member of our community and works as an honorary member of our Association.

THE PRESENT COMMITTEE OF THE POLISH ASSOCIATION 1970-1978:

President	Z.M. Burcon	1st Secretary	B. Brodziak
1st Vice-President	T. Jarecki	2nd Secretary	M.T. Burcon
2nd Vice-President	K. Walczak	Treasurer	K. Mroczkowski
1st Caretaker	Fr. Rynkiewicz	2nd Caretaker	K. Walczak
Librarian	Mrs. H. Bobi k		

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE: Mr & Mrs M. A. Yaworowicz.

BOARD:

Chairman: Mr ~~& Mrs~~ F. Rynkiewicz
Members: T. Franczak and M. Lewicki

TRUSTEES:

Z.M. Burcon, Fr. Rynkiewicz, K. Mroczkowski, T. Jarecki, S. Eliaz

PROTOCOLANT: B. Brodziak

PRESIDENTS OF THE POLISH ASSOCIATION 1953-1978:

1952-53	E. Gzik (Deceased)
1953-54	J. Cacek
1954-55	J. Fugiel
1955-57	W. Kitlowski
1957-60	K. Ciezki
1960-61	T. Jarecki
1961-65	K. Ciezki
1965-66	T. Jarecki
1966-68	R. Skypko
1969-70	W. Kitlowski
1970-70	J. Pamula (three months)
1970-	Z.M. Burcon (still in office)

1968-69 K. Mroczkowski

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the help, support and encouragement given to us during our 25 years from the following Australians:

The Bishops of Ballarat - Bishop O'Collins, Bishop R.A. Mulkearns
Monsignor Fiscalini
Ballarat City Council - The Mayors of Ballarat:

Cr. J. Brown (1969)
" Sir Arthur Nicholson
" J. McKay
" A.C. Rizzoli
" A. Harris (Chairman of Good Neighbour Council)
" Jessie Scott
" J. Chisholm (now in office)

The Town Clerks of the City of Ballarat:

1969-1977 - Mr. F. Rogers
Mr. Ian Smith (now in office)

The Curator of the Botanical Gardens - Mr. T. Beaumont

The Mayors of the Borough of Sebastopol:

Cr. R. King
" Collins

Sebastopol Borough Engineer: Mr. J. Lan

Parliamentarians:

Federal: Hon. G. Dudley Erwin M.P. (retired)

Mr. Jim Short M.P.

State: Hon. Murray Byrne C.M.G. (retired)
Mr. A.T. Evans M.L.A.
Mr. W.F. Stephen M.L.A.

The Past and Present Presidents and Secretaries of the R.S.L.
The Police Commissioners of Ballarat.

The Media:

Ballarat "Courier"
The Gazette (now known as the Ballarat "News")
3.B.A.
B.T.V. 6

Traffic Officer: Mr. J. Sorrell (Deceased)

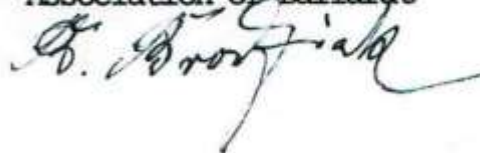
And also numerous organizations, Ethnic Groups of Ballarat, Federation of Polish Organizations in Victoria, Polish S.P.K. Melbourne and Geelong and also the many distinguished citizens and firms for the great help, co-operation and assistance that they have given to us over the years, without which we would not have succeeded in our endeavours and attained the goals which we set for ourselves.

It would be impossible to mention all the very good people who have helped us in any way, and if we have failed to name any particular person, it is not that we have forgotten them, but that they are too numerous to mention. Thank you to one and all.

Z.M. BURCON
President of the Polish
Association of Ballarat



B. BRODZIAK
Secretary of the Polish
Association of Ballarat



Ballarat
3rd June, 1978.

CH8 JACK BURCON REFLECTS (as told to Wanda Burcon after 1994)

1952 – The migrant camps closed down, and Polish migrants settled in various towns, Ballarat being just one of these.

Late 1952 – A Polish Chaplain, Fr Władysław Ziółkós, was assigned to the Polish community, thanks to the late Bishop O'Collins' forward thinking and insight.

At that time, Mr Kitlowski and myself went around the Polish community in order to achieve a close-knit community. At that time there were about 70 families settled in Ballarat and surrounding districts.

November 1952 – The Association was officially formalized. I (Jack) was serving as a member of the committee. Mr E Gzik was elected as the first President. I served in a variety of positions, including auditor and later as Vice President.

1970 – I was elected President and retained that position until 15 May 1994. During that time, the Association grew and then dwindled as aged members died.

One of the early memorable functions was the first Masquerade Ball, which was held in the Civic Hall, to raise money for the building of the Polish Hall. This gave way to many New Years Eve Balls which became an annual event for many years.

The first International Ball was a great success. Close relationships were made with the Croatian, Italian, Dutch, Ukrainian, Latvian, German and Austrian groups, as well as many other nationalities in Ballarat.

A youth club was flourishing and a Polish Scout movement evolved. The Polish community were represented in the local Soccer Association, and Volley Ball, and in a number of sporting activities in Victoria.

1974 -- One of the great high-lights of this era was a visit from the President of the Polish Government in Exile, from London, Mr Edward Raczynski, who was given a civic reception by the then Mayor of Ballarat, Maurice Brown. The official dinner was held at the United States Hotel in Sovereign Hill.

1970-76 – We purchased land in Sebastopol and built our Polish Hall known as Copernicus Hall. The hall was built by Polish volunteers, under the supervision of builder Frank Rynkiewicz.

The opening of the Hall in 1976 was conducted by MP Mr Bill Stephen. Official guests included many Bishops, Priests, scouts and representatives from Melbourne, Geelong and other Victorian towns. There was a representative of the Polish Government in Exile, from England.

This Hall has been used for a variety of purposes since being built – Polish school, wedding functions, social evenings and formal dinners.

The Mothers Club that had been formed in 1967 continued to operate successfully, working in close contact with the Association.

Trees have been planted in commemoration of various celebrations by Bishops J P O'Collins, Mulkearns, Wesoly (Rome), Kurtz (Papua New Guinea) and the Provincial of the Order of Society of Christ. Fr J Krasocki, a former Polish Chaplain, has also been a contributor.

1976 -- At the Botanical Gardens, a tree was planted to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Polish Association and the 25th anniversary of the first year of the settlement of Polish migrants in Ballarat.

1982 – A public meeting was held in the Town Hall to form a committee for the *"Help Poland Live"* Appeal whereby Mr Murray Byrne was nominated as President. As a result over \$18,000 was raised. A great contributor to this cause was the Ballarat Catholic Diocese.

1984 -- Mr K Sabbat, the second President of the Polish Government in Exile, was also another distinguished guest years later, where several people were decorated with the Polish Cross. These decorations were presented to notable citizens of Ballarat including Mr Murray Byrne, Bishop Mulkearns and Mr Kevin Flecknoe. This took place in the Reception Room of the Town Hall.

1989 – A plaque was installed at the tree that had been planted at the Botanic Gardens in 1976, the plaque commemorated the 50th anniversary of Germany attacking Poland on 1 September 1939.

Close co-operation was maintained between Local Government and State and Federal Parliamentarians, as well as the Polish Federations in Melbourne and Geelong.

Each year, we have faithfully attended and participated in Anzac Day ceremonies, Remembrance Day and Polish National Day.

I, myself have been honoured by being awarded the OAM in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for my work for the Polish and ethnic groups of Ballarat.

I have also received a number of Polish decorations from the Polish Government in Exile, for which I am very grateful.

During my time as President, there have been many people with whom I have worked closely to bring about a good reputation for the Ballarat Polish community, contributing to the Australian culture in Ballarat.

The popular saying often used is :- *"To be a good Australian stems from being a good Pole"*.

1994 – After 24 years as President, the time has come where younger Polish-Australian citizens are interested and eager to continue the traditions of their Polish heritage.

I am very grateful for the plaque of appreciation presented to me on 19 June, for Services Rendered as President of the Polish Association of Ballarat 1970-1994.

My deepest gratitude must be extended to my loving wife, Alice, who has patiently supported me throughout these years.

I wish the new committee and its members every success in this venture. May they follow in the steps of those who have travelled before them, so that the Polish Nationality will proudly remain alive within the Polish Association of Ballarat.







CH9 THE POLISH ASSOCIATION 1994-2018

In the 1990s the Polish Association was plagued with uncertainty -- the founders realised that young Poles could not be enticed to become members, and the original founding members were getting old. There was dissidence within the leadership and it looked like the Association might have to shut its doors.

In May 1994 the committee stood down. In a flyer dated the 10 June 1994 the new committee invited members to a free barbecue and meeting. The new committee members were listed as -- Jadzia (Jan) Bedggood (Studzinski) President, Richard Kornas Secretary, Kazia Iwanowski (Stodolny) 1st Vice President, Irena Green (Młynarczyk) 2nd Vice President, and Elizabeth Skrypko (Pamuła) Treasurer.

In their annual Newsletter dated May 1994 – May 1995, the new committee wrote:

"1994–1995 has been a year of continuity as well as change for the Polish Association of Ballarat. In May 1994, at our Annual General Meeting, Mr Jack Burcon, Mr Pamuła, Mr Yaworowicz, Mr Mroczkowski and Teresa Koleczko, after serving the Polish Community for many years stepped down from their positions and a new, young committee was elected. We the

newly elected Committee would like to congratulate each one of you for your hard work over many years. Your loyalty and dedicated service to the Polish Community will not be forgotten. The Committee is working hard not only to raise money for the maintenance/upgrading of the Polish Hall and paying of bills but also to ..

- *upkeep the traditions of the Polish people*
- *build harmonious relationships within the Polish community*
- *provide social gatherings/get-togethers for the enjoyment of the young and old*
- *try to keep the Association alive for future generations, so that our heritage will continue and will not be forgotten."*

The Ballarat Courier. Date 27-6-'94

Polish stalwart calls it a day after 24 years

By LEANNE MIDDLETON

Polish Association of Ballarat president for the past 24 years Zdzislaw (Jack) Burcon was presented with a plaque at a luncheon to recognise his years of service.

Mr Burcon, one of the association's founders, stepped down as president last month to make way for the younger members.

Mr Burcon came to Ballarat in August 1961. Many other Polish people were settling in the area after migrant camps closed and he and Wally Kitlowski contacted about 70 families to develop a close-knit community.

Mr Burcon said Catholic Bishop J P O'Collins assigned Polish Chaplain W Ziolkos to Ballarat to help form the association, which started in 1952, led by president E Gzik.

After terms as auditor and vice president, Mr Burcon became president in 1970.

He said a memorable event during his long term was the first of many masquerade balls, held to raise money to build the Polish Hall and an international ball which helped the group develop close ties with other ethnic groups in Ballarat.

Mr Burcon said the association bought land in Sebastopol in 1971, and with the help of Polish volunteers and builder Frank Rynkiewicz, Copernicus Hall was opened in 1976.



Zdzislaw (Jack) Burcon: 24 years head of the Polish Association of Ballarat.

The association also formed a mothers' club, soccer association, volleyball club and Scout group.

Mr Burcon said the Polish Government in Exile visited the association several times, decorating Ballarat people in 1984 with the Polish Cross.

Mr Burcon, who worked with the Railways for 41 years, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his work with the Polish and ethnic groups of Ballarat. He was grateful for his wife Alice's support and he wished the association's new committee well.

In the May 1994 Newsletter, Fr Henry Nikel received a special thanks for his support, for attending functions, and for communicating the Association's messages to the community. Also, Adam Zakrzewski was thanked for carrying out the *thankless job* as caretaker of the hall -- his dedication was reflected in his willingness to drive from Maryborough to Ballarat to carry out this task conscientiously.

A younger executive was now leading the Association – and many older members stayed on to give support to the younger recruits -- Roman Skrypko and Kazimierz Mroczkowski gave guidance and encouragement. However, some original members found it difficult to accept the younger leadership and the different approach, and chose to leave the Association.

The 1994–1995 year was a year of growth and enthusiasm. There were now 45 paying members, an increase of 33. A Constitution was being finalised and the Polish Association's calendar was well rounded with events, money raising and outings. Events included a Polish Mass to celebrate *The Miracle of the Vistula* on 15 August, a Father's Day dinner dance, an Ethnic Day (at the Sebastopol Community Centre Fair Day on 30 October), a Pokies bus trip, Remembrance Day (11 November), a supper dance, Oplatek, a New Year's Eve Dance featuring two bands, Southern Rain (Richard Kornas), and The Flamingos (Joe & Justin Parks), Australia Day, and a Mother's Day dinner dance. Money was raised for the painting of the hall, and \$510 was raised for Polish flood victims. There were two hall bookings for weddings. The increased membership made it possible to support the many activities and events.

From the membership peak of 49 in 1995, again, there was a gradual decline over the next ten years, as some of the younger members lost their enthusiasm, and left the Association. The stalwarts were Irena Green and Jan Bedggood, who stayed at the helm, steering the Polish Association into the Twenty-First Century.

Kazia Iwanowski had been an active member since the age of 17, and was involved in the setting up of the Polish Youth Club in 1966–67 with Richard Majda and Jack Fugiel. Kazia was also the President of the Mothers Club from 1987 to 1995, and then Treasurer of the Mothers Club until she left the Association in the early 2000s.

Felicity Stehlik was a member of the Association from 2001 to 2011, and was Secretary for a few years around 2005, at which date she published the third book of a trilogy, as mentioned in Ch14.17. Krystyna Burcon, Stefan Burcon's daughter, was Treasurer for a short time.

In about 2003, it was decided that the Mothers Club should be amalgamated into the Association. Roman Skrypko, a long-time member, and now caretaker of the Polish hall, suggested a Seniors Club. This did not come to fruition, as membership of the Association was once again diminishing, and the committee decided a small sub-group was unnecessary. Consequently a split occurred and Roman Skrypko and some other members left to form a Polish Seniors Club. The committee members of the newly formed Seniors Club were Roman and Teresa Skrypko, Kazia Iwanowski, Wanda Biała and Frank Różycki (photos next page).

The Association again survived the division, although its strength declined, and once more new members were sought and encouraged to join. I, Wanda Mann (Skirzynski), was enticed to take up the position of Treasurer in 2001, and mostly remained in that position until the hall was sold in May 2018. Irena Green and Jan Bedggood also remained in executive positions, serving the elderly Polish community, until the end. Their dedication and perseverance is to be admired.



Above: Some of the new Polish Seniors Club activities.

Below: The celebration at the ending of the Polish Seniors Club in May 2016.



In about 2015 Jack Fugiel became the caretaker of the hall, and fulfilled his obligation with diligence and care. Mary Dick (Sliwa) and Steve Dick became active in the Association, and added a younger dimension. Their children (Rebecca and Natasha) became involved, and it was a time when second, third and fourth generations played a part in the Association's activities. Mary's cooking abilities were appreciated, and Mary's mother, Klara Sliwa, had some inspirational ideas, such as a liaison with the BRMC (Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council), because she was interested in cultural affairs.

As with any charitable organisation money was always an issue, so, in 1996 the committee reluctantly decided to sell Lot 5, in Yarrowee St, behind Copernicus Hall, to ensure the survival of the Association and hall. Lot 5 was one of three contiguous vacant blocks purchased in 1971. The settlement occurred on 18 May 1997, and the injection of funds allowed the Association to survive (with added fundraising) until 2018.

In about 1997, the Polish Association became an incorporated entity--a non-profit organisation; whose main aim was to serve and look after the Polish community--reaching out to the wider community.

In the early 2000s the Association applied for and obtained a Seniors Government Grant, which was used for the purchase of a new refrigerator, kitchen equipment, the replacement of fencing around the hall, and the installation of new electrical wiring.

Ted Urbanski joined the Association in 2006 and remained a part of it until his death in 2017, aged 96. He made the shelving for the Polish library in the front storeroom, and he arranged the books with diligence and care. Being a very kind and obliging gentleman, he was ready to help when the need arose. Ted made two small carved tables -- I (Wanda), as Treasurer, made sure that I placed the two tables at the entry of the hall, whenever I was collecting admission fees, to show the Association's appreciation and gratitude for Ted's generous gift.

John Wieruszewski came to Ballarat from Queensland and joined the Association in 2006. He had a charismatic charm and we were hoping to gain from his enthusiastic approach. He became Treasurer in 2008 for a short time, then for family reasons left the Association soon after.

Mention should be made of our long time auditors, Jan Piątek, and later, James (Jim) Wilson (a retired Commonwealth Bank manager) -- now both deceased. We owe them thanks for their generosity and diligence.

The social calendar revolved around hearty Polish monthly Sunday lunches at the hall, cooked by members in the kitchen. Keeping the meal costs low was always a priority as members were mainly elderly retirees. Nutritious freshly prepared meals included soup, a main meal and sweets -- tea, coffee and soft drink was available. There were many occasions where typical Polish fare was provided, including cabbage rolls, a chicken soup called Rosół, chicken schnitzel, sauerkraut, pierogi and krusti. Nadia Studzinski often provided a tray of the most delicious apple or plum cake. Antonina Yaworowicz (my mum) enticed the dessert eaters with her soft, jam doughnuts. The Association had a liquor licence, BYO alcoholic drinks were permitted, and the older members enjoyed a drink or two with their meals.

Bus trips to the Melbourne Casino raised money for the Association. Members enjoyed a flutter on the pokies, and were treated to a delicious smorgasbord for lunch. There were bus trips to the Albion Polish Club in Melbourne for lunch. Also, the government gave small grants which subsidised a number of bus trips for barbecues and picnics for Polish seniors.

L-R. Mary Dick, Jan Bedggood, Wanda Mann, Martina Bedggood, David Bedggood, Kazia Iwanowski.



L-R. Kylee Ellerton, David Bedggood, Antonina Yaworowicz, Wanda Mann, Jan Bedggood, Mary Dick.



A bus trip to the casino



Important dates included Mother's Day, Father's Day, and a traditional Polish Christmas (Opłatek), and as already mentioned there was usually one Sunday lunch in each month. The Opłatek celebration was a special occasion and the highlight of the year, and was eagerly anticipated and very well attended. A Polish Father Christmas (St Nicholas) was the pivotal and essential ingredient in making the Association's Christmas a big success.

St Nicholas wore a special, traditional Polish St Nicholas costume. A long, white garment with long sleeves bordered with lace, was tied at the waist with a gold cord. A red and gold cape, with gold braided trimming, was draped over the garment, enhancing the total appearance. A crozier (staff) was carried portraying importance and might, and a white mitre was worn on the head. This costume resembled a type of ceremonial garb worn by bishops on important Church occasions and celebrations.

In most years Michael Yaworowicz, an original member of the Association, took on the role of St Nicholas, performing the unenviable task of handing out the Christmas presents to the boys and girls. Sometimes adults were presented with gifts as well. Michael performed as St Nicholas with pride and aplomb, loving every minute. He carried out this task diligently for many years until he passed away in 2015, at the age of 87.



Above & below: Michael Yaworowicz as St Nicholas.

A number of young girls and boys dressed as angels and devils. Angels wore flowing white gowns, adorned with wings and halos. Devils wore black costumes, black head gear with red horns, and carried a pitchfork. Devils prodded the older children and adults with their pitchfork, but not the younger children, who could be easily frightened.



An adorned Christmas tree lit up with lights and decorations set the scene for an enjoyable Christmas meal. The nativity scene had pride of place at the base of the Christmas tree, highlighting the religious Christmas theme. The Polish tradition was to break and share bread (the Christmas wafer) before the multi-course dinner meal was served. In Ballarat the wafers were usually blessed by the Polish priest, who sat at the main table. The breaking and sharing of wafers signified the togetherness of the Polish community and the forgiveness of any grievances.

Left: Irena Green & Wanda Mann leading the singing of Christmas carols at the Opłatek.



After the Copernicus Hall was built in 1976 all of the Opłatek celebrations were held in this hall. The photo below was taken at an early Opłatek in about 1957 at St Georges Hall, where most of the functions and dances were held in the early years of the Polish Association.

Right: Maria & Mieczysław (Michael) Maciąg, Michael Maciąg, St Nicholas (Michael Burcon), Roman (Ray) Maciąg, Danuta and Stefan Przekwas (holding Denise Maciąg).



The Maciągs moved to Cleveland, Ohio, in about 1966. Maria died in 2019 aged 96. Mieczysław died in the 90s. Michael jnr. died in 2002 aged 55. Ray died in 2008 aged 64. Ray's sister Olga (Maciąg) Berndt died before 2008. Ray's sister Denise is still living.



Attendance at Anzac Day and Remembrance services was continued by the new committee. Anzac Day was commemorated at the Ballarat, Sturt St Cenotaph and for a short time at the Dawn Service in Sebastopol, in support of Jan Piątek, who was a member of the Sebastopol RSL.

Left: Remembrance Day opposite Ballarat Town Hall. Jan Bedggood, Mary Dick, Irena Green, Rebecca Dick, Wanda Mann.

The Polish flag was raised outside the Ballarat Town Hall on Remembrance Day, 11 November, each year – this happens to be the same date as Polish Independence Day. The President of the Polish Association made a speech, and members of the Polish community gathered around the flag remembering Polish involvement in the First World War, and its effect on Poland and its people.

Right: Attending the Dawn Service on Anzac Day in Sebastopol: Wanda Mann on right.

When the BRMC (Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council) was established, some of the Association's members, Elizabeth Gerken and I (Wanda Mann), helped to paint their new meeting place in Norman St, Wendouree. The Polish Association was soon affiliated with this new Council, and attended functions organised by this fledgling group. During the Ballarat Begonia Festival, Polish Association members joined with other BRMC members to decorate floats and march in the Begonia Parade, dressed in national costumes.



Left: A BRMC float in the Begonia Parade.



Below: Our President Irena Green (in red) accompanied by Klara Sliwa & children dressed in Polish costumes on the day of the Begonia Parade.





Left: Michael Yaworowicz, Irena Green & Antonina Yaworowicz on the day of the Begonia Parade.

Members of the Polish Association formed friendships with the Italian community during this time, and Italian meals were enjoyed at the Italian Club. On Australia Day, 2001, the different nationalities joined together to support the New Australians being Naturalised. The various national groups had photo and artefact displays at View Point, Lake Wendouree.

Below: In Polish costume at View Point, Lake Wendouree. L-R. Teresa Skrypko, Monica Iwanowski, Irena Green & Wanda Mann.





Above: Kazia Iwanowski, Teresa Skrypko, Wanda Mann.



Hall Celebrations

The Polish hall was available for hire, and many birthdays and special events were celebrated in the comfortable, well set up hall. However, new Council hire rules were introduced, impacting the hall's suitability for hiring purposes, especially at night. Daytime hire was less stringent, and funeral receptions were sometimes held in the hall.

Left: Stan Szapiel's 90th birthday.



*Danuta Pzekwas & Michalina Raczek at her birthday celebration.
Michalina (our oldest member) almost reached 100 yrs.*



Dancing and fun have always been part of the Polish culture. Dancers slid across the polished floor to the sound of Joe Park's Polish band. Richard Kornas also had a band, that provided music that appealed to the younger generation. However, new Council regulations limited noise after 11pm, and neighbours complained about parked cars, and noisy patrons. Attendances at dances dwindled, and eventually no more dances were held.

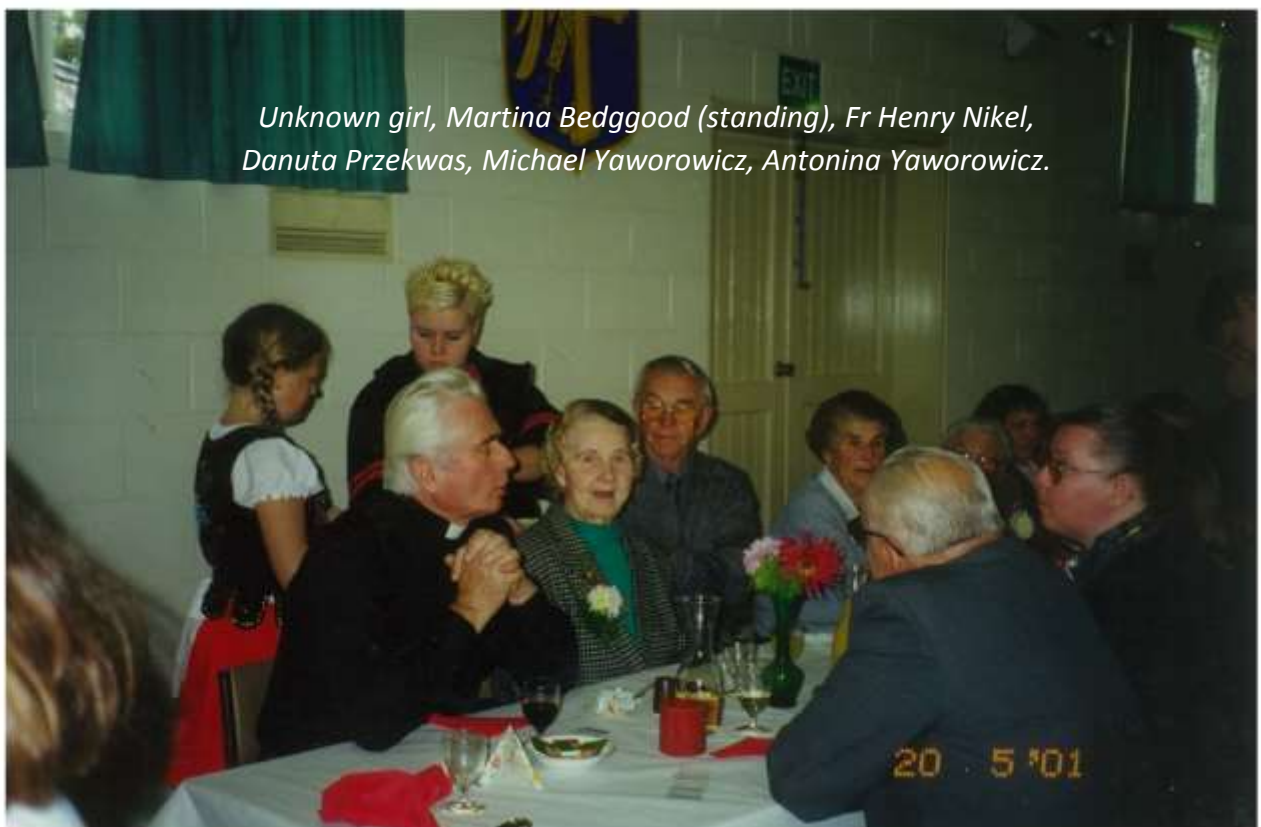
As time passed and hall running costs increased it became evident that membership was dwindling, and the maintenance of the hall became an issue. Money raising ventures were discussed, and Hapkido, Playgroups and Markets were considered and established. For many years the hall was hired to a line dancing group, and they performed at the last function at the hall before the hall's sale

There was an outside Boot Market initially, and then inside markets became a regular feature. These were held on the last Saturday of the month, and became very popular with the locals, members and the general public -- new and second-hand goods were sold. The kitchen sold sought after egg and bacon sandwiches, made by Jan Bedggood. Klara Sliwa made the best, delicious, Polish doughnuts. Other Polish delicacies such as pierogi and krusti (chrusciki or angel wings) were trialled but were found to be problematic, as more time and effort was required to prepare this fare.

Enjoying Sunday lunches at the hall



Patrik Iwanowski, Roman Skrypko, Helena & Stan Fugiel, Wally Iwanowski.



Unknown girl, Martina Bedggood (standing), Fr Henry Nikel, Danuta Przekwas, Michael Yaworowicz, Antonina Yaworowicz.

Michalina Racze & unknown lady.



Zofia Walczak & Alex Kawa.



Left: Irene Iwanowski, Helena Izydorczyk (Irene's mum), Franciszka Stodolny.

Below: Afternoon Tea : L-R: Felicity Stehlik, Klara Sliwa, Jan Bedggood, unknown, Mary Dick, Wanda Mann, Antonina Yaworowicz.



The market ladies became an extension of the Polish Association, and many laughs, discussions and jokes were shared. Some market ladies became members of our Association and bolstered our membership, some attending our dinner functions.

The committee of the Polish Association could not have survived until 2018 without the help and support of our first, second, third and fourth generations. Family members gave us the strength to continue to thrive. A special thank you goes to Lisa Young and Joanne Thornton (Irena Green's daughters), Natasha and Martina Bedggood (Jan Bedggood's daughters), and Kylee Ellerton (my daughter).

We thank Ted Zabinski for his life-long support of the Association, and our loyal Australian member Bill Byrne needs to be acknowledged also.

With heartfelt gratitude, we applaud our forefathers for their generous spirit and tenacity, coping with assimilation into a new country. Their foresight enabled them to establish the Polish Association with courage and determination.

The Association may not have been perfect – squabbles and disagreements sometimes affected smooth progress, and individual differences needed to be accommodated.

Each generation has incrementally gained from previous generations. Society has benefited from overseas travel and interconnection with countries and peoples. The third and fourth generations are no longer tied to their ancestor's *apron strings* – they have become independent and free thinking, and have made their own decisions on religion, politics and social matters. The legacy of the Polish Association continues with our future generations -- a legacy that fosters generosity, concern for others, service and togetherness in the wider community.



Above: The committee and some other members at a BBQ at the Skrypko home. Rear L-R: Nadzia Studzinski, Antonina Yaworowicz, Kazia Iwanowski, Wanda Mann, Franciszka Stodolny, Danuta Przekwas, Jan Bedggood & Teresa Skrypko. Middle: Michael Yaworowicz, Frank Studzinski, Stan Szapiel & Cecylia Młynarczyk. Front: Irena Green, Roman Skrypko & Jim Iwanowski.

IRENA GREEN (MŁYNARCZYK) REFLECTS ON “THE END OF AN ERA” OF THE POLISH ASSOCIATION OF BALLARAT

After World War 2, mainly during 1949 and 1950, many Polish families migrated to Australia to start a new life, leaving behind family and friends. After being sent to many areas of the country, some happily made this lovely city of Ballarat their home.

Almost immediately the Polish community began organising themselves into a Polish Association. A community initiative that would help to alleviate the loneliness, language barrier, a different lifestyle and the need for adjustment into a totally different environment and culture. They gathered in the St Patrick's Cathedral Hall in Dawson St after Sunday Mass, and they also held various functions there for many years.

In 1971 the Polish Association executive committee had a vision to provide a permanent centre for the growing Polish community. To do this, members knocked on the door of Polish families on pay day for donations to buy land and build a hall, now the Copernicus Hall.

Through community effort, willpower, energy and sheer determination of the committee, their vision was fulfilled. On Saturday 14 August 1976 the NICOLAUS COPERNICUS HALL, 26-28 Orion St, Sebastopol, was opened.

The Copernicus Hall proved to be a success from its very beginning. Celebrations of Polish National Days, concerts, balls, Mother's Day dances, Father's Day dances, Opłatek (Christmas Lunch), also personal help in the community, picnics, and outings for recreational purposes were organised, and in later years the Community Market.

During 2015-2018 the Executive Committee began evaluating the future of the Polish Association and its hall. The Committee and its Members agreed that the significance and purpose of the Association and hall had died with its Foundation Members and an ageing Polish community, along with declining numbers -- and the younger generation were no longer interested in taking on this legacy.

The Polish Association had served its purpose -- the hall was a meet and greet place, a place of belonging for its early Polish migrants, and later a Social Hub for the wider Polish/Australian community, and now after 42 years had become financially unviable. It was time to say good-bye to an era. With a sense of sadness it was unanimously agreed to "Wind Up" the Polish Association of Ballarat. The proceeds from the sale of the hall rightly belonged to the many Polish migrant families who donated money over many years for the purchase of land and the building of the hall. The specially formed "Wind Up Committee" decided that the proceeds be donated back into the Ballarat community, and that a special donation be made to the Eastern Districts Polish Association ("Syrena"), Rowville, Melbourne.

I would like to acknowledge each of our past Presidents and its Executive Committee Members, and the Polish Kitchen Mothers group who all played a significant role in the *history* of the Polish Association of Ballarat, and to all the volunteers who helped make each function, project or event possible.

In my 23 years on the Executive Committee I have been lucky to have worked alongside some wonderful people. I would especially like to acknowledge Jan and Wanda for their friendship and unwavering support during my term as President and the "Wind Up" process of the club. No organisation runs solo – in the background is an amazing team of committed, supportive people, and a bunch of wonderful volunteers who together make things possible.

A huge thank you to all our Polish, Australian and multicultural Members, and their families and friends, and volunteers for their support of the Polish Association over many years under my leadership. It has been both a privilege and an honour to have served the Polish Community of Ballarat.

Executive Members 2018:

Irena Green (Młynarczyk) President

Jan Bedggood (Studzinski) Secretary

Wanda Mann (Skirzynski) Treasurer



Polish Independence Day 11TH NOVEMBER

Members of the community dressed in National Polish Costume at a Mass officiated by Fr. Henry Nickel



Left to right:
Jadzia Bedgood, Jozef Parks (Polish Musician from Geelong), Irena Green

POLISH CULTURE DAY DISPLAY at Ballarat Fine Art Gallery

Organised to co-incide with **26 MAY, 1996** Rare Polish Posters Exhibition.

Left to right: Jadzia Bedgood, Wanda Mann, Irena Green



28 NOVEMBER, 1999

Polish Mass held at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne commemorating 50 years of Polish Immigrants to Australia



1999
(Left to right:
Irena (Mlynarczyk) Green - President, Roman Skrypko, Karimierz Mroczkowski



CH10 POLISH PRIESTS IN BALLARAT 1952-2014

From 1952 to 2014 Ballarat had three residing Polish chaplains (Fr Władysław Ziółkós)(Fr Józef Krasocki)(Fr Henry Nickel), and was ministered by a number of visiting Polish chaplains.

1950-1951 – Fr Władysław Ziółkós was the resident chaplain at Mildura migrant camp.

1952-1966 – Fr Ziółkós was the resident chaplain at Ballarat until his death in 1966.

1966-1969 – Fr Zenon Grodz ministered in Ballarat from Melbourne.

1969-1978 – Fr Józef (Joseph) Krasocki was the resident chaplain at Ballarat until his death in 1978.

1975-1982 – Fr Ignatius (Ignacy) Smaga ministered in Ballarat from Geelong.

1982-1988 – Fr Zenon Broniarczyk ministered in Ballarat from Geelong.

1987-1987 – Fr Stanisław Rakiej ministered for a time during a visit from Adelaide.

2001-2007 – Fr Józef Migacz ministered in Ballarat from Geelong, when Fr Nickel was not available.

1988-2014 – Fr Henry Nickel (Henryk Nikiel) was the resident chaplain in Ballarat, until he retired in 2014.

Fr Władysław Ziółkós – 1952-1966

The Polish people who migrated and settled in Ballarat in about 1950 needed a Polish priest to minister to their needs. The Poles had survived dislocation, stress, trauma and alienation. They needed reassurance, acceptance and someone with authority guiding and shaping their religious Catholic lives, someone who understood their experiences and background. Bishop O'Collins, the bishop of the Ballarat Diocese from 1941 until he retired in 1971, recognised this need, and Fr Władysław Ziółkós, was transferred from Mildura to minister to the Ballarat Polish community in 1952.

According to Bronisław Brodziak's written history (this is in the possession of Wanda (Skirzynski) Mann), Fr Ziółkós lived in Mildura on his arrival to Australia, and migrant women and children in the Mildura migrant camp were in his care for the short time they spent at the camp.

Fr Ziółkós was born in Poland on 5 February 1905, ordained on 22 June 1930, and died in Ballarat on 7 March 1966. Fr Ziółkós' grave inscription (see photo below right) includes the following words....

CZYNIĆ INNYM DOBRZE BYŁO POTRZEBA JEGO SERCA

which means -- doing good to others was in his heart.



The photo on left and the article on the next page are from the magazine Light, April 1966. The article adds credence to a life lived in service and faith.

Father Wadislaw Ziolkos

Tall, dark-complexioned, with a great head of iron grey hair and strength in every line and feature of his face and figure, he was to most Ballarat parishioners only a "migrant chaplain"; but there was much more to Father Wadislaw Ziolkos.

He was Polish and his own life reflected the strength and suffering of Poland. Born at Brzozow in the shadow of the Carpathians, he was ordained in the Cathedral of Przemysl in 1930. From the outbreak of war in 1939 until 1941 he was in hiding from the invading Germans, spending much time in Franciscan monasteries. In 1942 he asked his bishop for permission to resume his work in the diocese, but after six months he was arrested by the Germans. For three years he was in various prisons and concentration camps. His chief occupations were burying the Polish dead—usually from ill-treatment—and hauling logs through a 12 feet depth of snow. In 1945 he was liberated by the Americans—from the infamous Dachau. He was never able to drive a car afterwards: his hands and wrists had been permanently injured from being suspended by the thumbs—a favourite torture technique of the Gestapo. He experienced also the agonising "Aeroplane treatment." For five years after the war he worked, under Archbishop Gawlina, as a chaplain in the Polish camps in Germany. In 1950 he volunteered to work among the Polish people in Australia. He was at Bonegilla, Mildura, and finally in Ballarat. His mother died before the war, his father was killed in the war, and a brother survives in Poland.

To the migrants he gave the devoted service and the strong leadership they were accustomed to in Poland. He was a man of deep faith, high intelligence, inflexible moral standards—with a disarming affection for children. He cherished the hope of returning to a Poland freed from Communist tyranny and restored to its pristine devotion to religion and culture. But when told of the cancer that would end his life in a few months he received the news philosophically, almost with sang froid.

Restless in hospital, he gladly accepted the invitation of the Burcon family, a young couple with three children, who nursed him devotedly in the last months of his life. He died on March 7 — with a prayer to the Mother of God on his lips.

The solemn Requiem Mass in the Cathedral was a revelation to Ballarat parishioners of how the dead are buried in centuries-old Catholic countries. Fourteen Polish priests came from all the States. Office and Mass were chanted by priests and choir, but the Poles added their own dirges — including Chopin's Funeral March chanted movingly after the Consecration. Father J. Kacki was celebrant, Father L. Jaroszka deacon, and Fr. J. Krasocki sub-deacon. Rt. Rev. Mgr. W. Dzieciol was Assistant Priest. Fr. J. Janus preached the panegyric. It must have been deeply moving, for the Polish parishioners were in tears and even Australians were deeply affected. At the end of the absolution Most Rev. J. P. O'Collins who presided at the throne spoke briefly in English, outlining the life and sufferings of Fr. Ziolkos. He was, His Lordship said, a priest even before he was a Polish Priest, and Ballarat clergy and parishioners joined his countrymen in honouring his memory and mourning his loss.

Grief was over when the ceremony at the grave was completed. The rest of the day was festal — with the community rejoicing because their priest was in heaven and friends new and old — including His Lordship — were invited to join in the traditional celebration in Polish-Australian homes.

Fr Ziółkós celebrated mass, performed baptisms and marriages, heard confessions, visited the sick, and conducted funeral rites and house blessings. He became an integral part of the Polish community -- sharing meals, attending social gatherings, giving advice, solving problems, and being a confidant and friend – being in effect a part of the family in some homes. He is credited with being the co-founder of the Polish Association, supporting and guiding the fledgling Association.



Above: Fr Ziółkós enjoying home hospitality: circa 1957. Standing: Wanda Skirzynski (girl), Roderick Klicki (boy), Stan Niziorski (boy), Kazimierz Niziorski (holding bottle), Leonard Burcon (holding bottle). Sitting: Władysława Eliaz, Stan Eliaz, Adam Skirzynski, Stan Klicki, Fr Ziółkós, Wally Kitlowski, Antonina Skirzynski (hidden), Jan Kowalewski, Anna Jarecki, Tad Jarecki (holding his son Richard).



Left: Christening of Daniel Różycki: Franciszek (Frank) Różycki, Nancy Różycki (Aussie wife), Fr Władysław Ziółkós.



Photo right: Franciszek (Frank) Różycki, Fr Władysław Ziółkós, Tadeusz (Ted) Zabinski (Godfather), Stefaniya Jakiel (Godmother).



Above: Christening of Halinka Jaskulski: Rear L-R: Jozefa Fugiel, Władysław Borecki, Franciszka Stodolny, Wasyl (Walter) Sztojko, Olga Kusiakiewicz, Aniela Kulman, Zofia Sztojko.

Seated: Roman Skrypko, Katarzyna Sztojko, Fr Władysław Ziółkós, Janina Borecki, Józef Kusiakiewicz.



Above: Rear L-R: Stanisław Stodolny, Jozefa Fugiel, Olga Kusiakiewicz, Władysław Borecki, Franciszka Stodolny, Wasyl (Walter) Sztojko, Aniela Kulman, Ludwik Jaskulski (holding Halinka), Józef Kulman, Zofia Sztojko. Seated: Roman Skrypko, Katarzyna Sztojko, Fr Ziółkós, Janina Borecki, Józef Kusiakiewicz.



Above: Christening of John Olszewski: 1962.

Rear: Józef Olszewski, Stanisław Cacek, Jennifer Pilecki, Pawel Andrejczuk, Peter Rynkiewicz, Józef Cacek, Barbara Rynkiewicz, Marjan Rynkiewicz, Stanisław Olszewski, (girl) Pilecki, Danuta Rynkiewicz, Stanisław Rynkiewicz, Fr Władysław Ziółkós, Julian Pilecki, Irena Rynkiewicz.

Front: (girl) Pilecki, Danuta Cacek, Janina Cacek holding her daughter, (girl) Pilecki, Karolina Olszewski, Aniela Andrejczuk, Anna Olszewski (Andrejczuk) holding baby John, Frank Rynkiewicz, Czesława Rynkiewicz, John Olszewski holding Janina Rynkiewicz, Maria Pilecki.

St Patrick's Cathedral in Ballarat became the centre for Polish worship. Polish migrants were grateful for deliverance to a free, democratic country – and they clung to religion and Catholic religious observances. Church attendees were expected to wear their best clothes. Ladies mostly wore dresses with waists and were always beautifully groomed. Men usually wore suits or jackets, and polished laced-up shoes. There was pride displayed in clothing attire.

The invention of an artificial fabric (Nylon) by Wallace Carothers (1896-1937) enabled the migrant ladies attending mass (after 1950) to wear dresses and blouses made of soft, transparent, flowing nylon material. An underskirt or undergarment was worn to stop transparency. Nylon garments were often elaborately embroidered with flowery designs and shapes. Cardigans with embroidered flowers were often worn. Women wore hats -- or sometimes a veil or small mantilla, in black or white.

Reverence for the Church and priests was entrenched in the Polish psyche. Polish hymns rang out in St Patrick's Cathedral, and together with a Polish Gospel reading, and a Polish sermon, kept the Polish identity and spirit alive for five decades, validating the importance of the celebration of the Polish mass.

Strict observance to Church rules and obligations became the norm. Prior to the rule being changed by the Conference of Bishops in 1966, Catholics didn't eat meat on Fridays. Herring with onion on rye bread, or cooked fresh fish was a common Friday meal. Families that could not afford fish made homemade yoghurt and boiled potato. As time passed, Aussie fish and chips was adopted by many Catholic families, as they continued abstaining from eating meat, strictly following Catholic observances. It was obligatory for Catholics to attend Mass every Sunday, and even if people felt unwell, they attended Mass, as missing Mass was widely regarded as a grave or mortal sin.

In the early 1950s the preparation for Holy Communion began at midnight the night before mass -- all food and drink including water was forbidden --fasting was a church requirement -- breakfast was consumed after Sunday mass. In 1953 the rules were relaxed to allow water and medicine. Some years later the rules were relaxed again to require three hours of fasting, which was easier to follow. Nowadays no fasting is required.

Reverence for the consecrated host continues in our Catholic faith. Originally, the host, once consecrated, could not be touched by the laity, and the *body of Christ* was placed on the tongue by the priest. Now the host is simply placed in an overlapped hand, making sure it is held tightly so that it doesn't fall to the floor. An affirmation of faith follows – the priest says *Body of Christ* when the host is given, and the recipient says *Amen*. Since Vatican-2, in 1964, regulations eased. In about 2006 wine was offered as well as the host, but Covid-19 put a stop to the sharing of the chalice.

First Holy Communion Girls and boys made their first Holy Communion in about Grade 2, after numerous lessons conducted by nuns. This was a momentous occasion that remained etched in many minds. Girls and boys walked reverently down the aisle to receive the consecrated host. Girls wore white dresses and white veils, and wore a medal on a ribbon worn as a pendant -- a type of asparagus fern was often placed in the veil by Polish mums, and often girls had artificial flowers on a band holding the veil in place. Boys dressed smartly in school uniforms, and wore their medal and ribbon on their left lapel. After the Holy Communion girls and boys were ushered into the school hall where the nuns had prepared a special breakfast for this milestone occasion. Photos were taken, classmates celebrated, and merriment, laughter, and loud child chatter created a celebratory atmosphere which was contagious. After, Polish families continued to celebrate at home with family and friends -- often inviting the Polish priest, even if another priest had performed the ceremony.



Easter was a special, unmissable, religious celebration. Usually on Easter Saturday each family prepared Easter Baskets of food. Hard boiled eggs, often elaborately decorated by children, were surrounded by Polish fare. Rye bread, Polish sausage, ham, Babka Easter cake (a cake-bread cross, filled with rum-soaked raisins, excessive egg yolks and a unique bundt shape), salt, pepper, butter and horse radish were placed on a doily in the basket, ready to receive a special blessing from the Polish priest. In Ballarat, often a central home was chosen for the blessing ceremony, and Polish customs were rigidly adhered to. The basket of food was shared within the family after Sunday Mass. The following information was obtained from the Wikipedia pages for the Polish *święconka*, and the pages for the Easter Egg.

Święconka, meaning the blessing of the Easter baskets, is one of the most enduring and beloved Polish traditions on Holy Saturday during Easter. The tradition is said to date from the 7th century in its basic form, the more modern form containing bread and eggs (symbols of resurrection and Christ) are said to date from the 12th century. Baskets containing a sampling of Easter foods are brought to church to be blessed on Holy Saturday. The basket is traditionally lined with a white linen or lace napkin and decorated with sprigs of boxwood (*bukspan*), the typical Easter evergreen. Poles take special pride in preparing a decorative and tasteful basket with crisp linens, occasionally embroidered for the occasion, and boxwood and ribbon woven through the handle. Observing the creativity of other parishioners is one of the special joys of the event. In some communities, the priest visits the home to bless the foods, or Poles visit the church on Holy Saturday, praying at the Tomb of the Lord (the fourteenth and final Station of the Cross). The Blessing of the Food is a festive occasion. The three-part blessing prayers specifically address the various contents of the baskets, with special prayers for the meats, eggs, cakes and breads. The priest or deacon then sprinkles the individual baskets with holy water. The foods have a symbolic meaning:

- eggs - symbolise life and Christ's resurrection
- bread - symbolic of Jesus
- horseradish - symbolic of the bitter sacrifice of Christ
- lamb - represents Christ
- salt - represents purification
- ham - symbolic of great joy and abundance.

The Easter egg symbolises the revival of nature, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are various types of egg decoration technique. In the past only women decorated eggs. Men were not allowed to come inside the house during the process, as it was believed that they could put a spell on the eggs, and cause bad luck. On Easter Sunday, before the ceremonial breakfast, these eggs are exchanged and shared among the family at the table. This is a symbol of friendship, similar to the sharing of the *Oplątek* (Christmas wafer) on Christmas Eve.

Christmas Fr Ziółkós was always invited to the Association's Christmas dinner (*Oplątek*), and was seated at the front of the hall in *pride of place*. He blessed the *Oplątek* wafers, which had been placed carefully on each table. The breaking and sharing of the wafers signalled the beginning of the Christmas meal. A Polish Happy Christmas/*Wesołych Świąt* echoed through the hall. All grievances were forgotten in this auspicious moment. The following information was obtained from the Wikipedia page for the Christmas Wafer.

Christmas wafer (Polish: Oplątek) is a Catholic Christmas tradition celebrated in Poland, Lithuania, and Slovakia during *Wigilia* on December 24. The unleavened wafers are baked from pure wheat flour and water, are usually rectangular in shape and very thin; they are identical in composition to the altar bread that becomes the Eucharist at the consecration during Mass in

the Roman Catholic Church. The Oplátky wafers are embossed with Christmas-related religious images, varying from the nativity scene, especially Virgin Mary with baby Jesus, to the Star of Bethlehem.

Before partaking of the Christmas Eve meal, the family gathers around the table. The eldest member holds a large wafer and breaks off a piece to begin the ritual. The remaining wafer is passed on to another member while a prayer for loved ones is said. This continues until everyone at the table has a piece of the wafer. Finally, each family member gives wishes to every other family member, consuming a piece of wafer, broken off the wafer piece of the person to whom they were giving their wishes.

The custom began in Poland in the 10th century and is practiced by people of Polish ancestry around the world. It is considered the most ancient and beloved of Polish traditions. The Christmas wafer symbolizes the unity of the family, which many consider to be the main pillar of society. According to beliefs, the bond of unity should exist between family members. The father is seen as the link in the unbroken chain of One Body, One Bread, One Christ, and One Church, while other family members join him in this eternal procession. The wafer also symbolizes forgiveness and reconciliation.

Social and family gatherings and celebrations From the beginning of Polish migration to Australia, social gatherings played a huge part in the Polish community's formative life. Most family units consisted of only the mum and dad and one or two very young children, and few included grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles and aunties. Hardly a weekend went by without some kind of gathering or celebration. Food and beverages featured high on the agenda. Laughter, jokes, vodka, rosół (Polish chicken soup), sauerkraut, pierogi (Polish dumplings), borscht (beetroot soup), herrings, meats and breads helped to create a happy, jovial meal atmosphere. Apple or plum slab cake and Pączki (donuts) were dessert favourites. Fr Ziółkós was often included in these gatherings and celebrations, as can be seen in many photos in this book.



Fr Ziółkós died of cancer in Jack Burcon's home on 7 March 1966, where Alice, Jack's wife, cared for him in the last three months of his life. During that time many priests and bishops visited Fr Ziółkós at Jack's home. He was layed to rest at the Ballarat New Cemetery, on 10 March 1966. School children, clergy and the Polish community, gathered at St Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat, for the funeral, showing respect and gratitude for a life of service. Pall Bearers were Mac Rynkiewicz, Michael Maciąg, Ken Wach, Richard Majda, Eric Oparski and Roderick Klicki.



Fr Karol Warzecha did not carry out any official duties in Ballarat, but he was the priest ministering to the Stuart migrant camp near Townsville in 1951, and many of the families who settled in Ballarat were from that camp. These included Olszewski, Rynkiewicz, Pilecki, Cacek, Andrejczuk, Dziuba, Jaroszek, Poltorasky, Popovic, Jakiel, Havlin, Mytyk, Walczak, and Dron. Most of these, and Fr Warzecha, had sailed on the Skaugum from Naples to Newcastle on 29 November 1949, then by train to the Greta migrant camp. Many of the men were required to work in northern Queensland, and in early 1950 their families moved from Greta migrant camp to the newly opened Stuart migrant camp. Fr Karol was also briefly chaplain at Geelong in 1974-75, before retiring to Poland.

Fr Karol with Anna Olszewski (Andrejczuk), and young John Olszewski, when Fr Karol visited Ballarat in 1963.



Below we have a photo of Anna at her Confirmation at St Brigid's Church in Stuart, with Bishop H E Ryan and Fr Karol. Anna's future husband John Olszewski is far left.



Fr Zenon Grodz After the death of Fr Ziółkós in 1966 Fr Zenon Grodz ministered to the Ballarat Polish community for two years, driving from Melbourne each week. Fr Grodz was born on 17 April 1923 in Wilno (Poland), now called Vilnius (Lithuania). In later years Fr Grodz was mentioned in the booklet:

The Polish Association in Wollongong Inc. Commemorative Bulletin 1956-2006

which says that the blessing of the foundation stone for the Polish School extension project was conducted by Fr Zenon Grodz on 28 Jan 1996, and the opening was on 26 May 1996. Fr Grodz died on 5 Sep 2004, aged 81, and his grave is in the Macquarie Park Cemetery, North Ryde, NSW.

Fr Józef (Joseph) Krasocki became chaplain to the Ballarat Polish community in 1969, and ministered until he died in 1978. In the early years of the Geelong Polish community, Fr Krasocki commuted from Melbourne to minister in Geelong from 1950 to 1954. In Melbourne, in 1952, he was the first official diocesan Polish chaplain, which included the multi national Williamstown migrant hostel where the predominant nationality was Polish. In 1952, Fr Joseph Krasocki said Mass in the Polish language at the 'Old Mechanics' Hall' (an old dump), St Albans. In later years, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Fr Krasocki again celebrated Mass at St Albans every Sunday, at the new Sacred Heart church, at the invitation of Fr Reis. Light reported on Fr Krasocki's appointment to Ballarat in September 1969.

Polish Chaplain for Ballarat

A recent appointment to Ballarat is the chaplain to the Polish community of Ballarat and the Diocese — **Father Joseph Krasocki, S.D.B.**

Father Krasocki was born in 1905 at Irkutsk in Siberia, during the Russian-Japanese war. He was educated in a Polish orphanage school in Odessa, and in the seminary at Krakow, in Poland, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1935.

He served in Warsaw, and in other parts of Poland until the outbreak of war in 1939. Then, as a result of the Communists' deal with Hitler, he found himself in Lithuania. He spent four years there, and then got back to Germany, where he worked for five years among Polish exiles in prison and in displaced persons' camps.

Father Krasocki speaks English, German, Lithuanian and Italian, as well, of course, as Polish. His address is St. Columba's Presbytery, 802 Armstrong St. North., Ballarat. Phone 2-4737.

"Light" Sep. 1969



Above: Fr Krasocki sometimes presided at functions at Copernicus Hall.

Blessing of Copernicus Hall, and planting of three trees



Above: Clergy at the blessing of Copernicus Hall: 2 Oct 1976. Three commemorative trees were planted by Bishops O'Collins (Ballarat, retired), Mulkearns (Ballarat) and Wesoly (Rome). Fr Fiscalini & Fr Krasocki & Mr Jarecki are on the right. Watching at left rear is the tall Fr Ignacy Smaga (Geelong).



Photos above: Fr Krasocki and Bishop O'Collins doing some spade work.



Above: Plaques at the three trees planted on 2 October 1976: & the plaque at a fourth tree planted by Bishop Wilhelm Kurtz (New Guinea) on 22 November 1986.



Above: The official table after the blessing of Copernicus Hall, and the planting of three trees. On that day, the Visitor's Book was signed by: Bishops Szczepan Wesoly (Rome), Mulkearns (Ballarat), and O'Collins (Ballarat, retired), Monsignor Fiscalini (Vicar General, Diocese of Ballarat), Fr Krasocki (Ballarat), Fr John Kelly (St James), Fr Brian Finnigan (St Patricks), Sr Wanda Burcon (Convent of Mercy), Sr Helen Murphy (Loreto Abbey) and Sr Denise Desmarchelier (Mary's Mount). Also present was Fr Ignacy Smaga who ministered in Geelong from 1975 to 1982

The Saga of Father Joseph Krosocki R.I.P.

On Sunday, September 10th Father Joseph Krosocki died in St. John of God Hospital, Ballarat. He had been chaplain to the Polish community and member of the Cathedral staff since 1969. He missed by little more than a month the joy — in this life — of hearing his fellow countryman proclaimed Pope, as John Paul II. He was actually ordained in Krakow, which was the see of Cardinal Wojtyla.

Indeed, until his last years there was little of joy, except of the deeply spiritual kind, in the life of Father Krosocki. He was born in 1905, in Siberia, (a place of ill-omen even then), where his parents had migrated in search of work. He was the second son born to the family, and was barely a year old when his mother died, and he was placed in an orphanage. He was never again to see his father, brother, or any close relation.

At the outbreak of World War I the orphanage, run by Polish nuns, was forced to move to Odessa, a Russian port on the black Sea. In 1922 the Sisters, seeking a safer site, came to Rome. Here Joseph met a Polish Salesian and confided to him his "impossible dream". The priest sent him back to Poland. There, in spite of turmoil, he completed his secondary schooling and in 1925, at the age of 20, entered the Salesian novitiate. He came to Krakow for his

seminary training and was ordained there in 1935.

In 1939 Germany invaded Poland and Father Joseph found himself one of thousands of refugees wandering throughout the country, homeless, hungry and exhausted. Eventually he escaped to Lithuania. Here he resumed his priestly work — as a stranger struggling with a new language and adapting to a new way of life.

At the end of the war he was again a refugee, fleeing now from the Communists. He came to Berlin — following the hordes of his countrymen into refugee camps throughout Germany. He shared their life, their plight, their hopeful expectations, and brought them the consolations of the faith.

In 1950 — still on the run from Communists — he came to Australia. After a short term at Bonegilla he was transferred to Melbourne and was soon in his first parish — St. Albans, with a large migrant population. He built church and school, went far beyond parish boundaries to minister to his countrymen, and stayed for 20 years. In 1969 he came to Ballarat, joined the Cathedral staff, and became chaplain to the strong Polish community.

Parishioners quickly became familiar with the portly, bustling, white-haired and popular "Father Joe," but few knew the grim history behind the gallantry, the gallantry of true Christian soldiers — which stands out best against

the blackest backgrounds. Children and youth were the chief objects of his solicitude, but he was open to all.

May 31, 1975 marked the 40th anniversary of his ordination. Celebrations centred on the Mass. Parishioners generally, priests, religious and laity, showed their appreciation. Bishop Mulkearns and Fr. P. Culligan, Adm., expressed their thanks, and his countrymen told how much his ministrations meant to them — exiles from their native country who were learning to love a new homeland.

In June of this year a cataract called for surgery; but Father Joe postponed it in order to take his part in the Polish Association's anniversary celebrations (reported in last *Light*). The operation was successful but doctors found further internal surgery necessary. Again he survived, but the worn-out physique could no longer support the indomitable spirit, and he died on Sept. 10th.

Some 68 priests travelled from as far as New Zealand, Sydney and Melbourne to concelebrate his Requiem Mass, and religious of many orders, including Polish nuns from Adelaide, were part of the congregation in the crowded Cathedral. In the absence of the Bishop (in Rome on his *ad liminal* visit), Mgr. L. S. Fiscalini V.G. was principal celebrant and preached the homily. Father Krosocki was buried in the grounds of the Salesian monastery at Sunbury.



Father Joseph Krosocki (left) with Bishop Wesoly from Rome, and Messrs. F. Rynkiewicz and Z. M. Burcon, Ballarat.

Funeral of Fr Krasocki



Above: Funeral of Fr Krasocki, at the Salesian Monastery, Sunbury: 17 September 1978. Jack Burcon is the pall-bearer on the right. The far mourner who is first in line to the right of Jack appears to be the very tall Fr Ignacy Smaga from Geelong.



Fr Ignatius (Ignacy) Smaga After Fr Krasocki's death in 1978, the Polish community was ministered by various visiting priests, until Fr Henry Nikel assumed the position of Chaplain in 1988. Fr Smaga, who ministered in Geelong from 1975 to 1982, frequently visited Ballarat. Fr Smaga came to Sydney from Poland in 1974, and made rapid progress in English, and then went to Brisbane, then Tasmania, before taking over in Geelong from 1975 to 1983, after which he went to Bowen Hill in Queensland, and was then transferred to Wellington in New Zealand. In 1994 he returned to Australia to Marayong in NSW, then in 2001 went to Keysborough in Melbourne. In 2019 Fr Smaga developed cancer, and he returned to Marayong where he died on 18 June 2019.

Fr Zenon Sylwester Broniarczyk Ministered in Geelong from 1978 to 1988, and frequently ministered in Ballarat, and continued to visit Ballarat after Fr Nickel became chaplain. In later years Fr Broniarczyk served in Sydney, where he died on 10 June 2017, aged 69 (born 19 Dec 1947).



Above: Rear: Stanisława Danski, Zofia Walczak, Antonina Yaworowicz. Seated: (young lady), Fr Zenon Broniarczyk (Geelong), Jan Danski.

Above right: Bishop Wilhelm Kurtz (New Guinea) & Fr Broniarczyk at Copernicus Hall: 1986.

Right: Bishop Kurtz & Fr Broniarczyk: 1986.



Fr Stanisław Rakiej The very tall Fr Rakiej ministered briefly in Ballarat when he visited Victoria from Adelaide during 1987. He was born in Poland on 3 Oct 1939, and was ordained 15 May 1974. He ministered in Australia and NZ from 1977 to 1992, and was the first priest in Coogee (May 1980). Fr Rakiej transferred to the USA in 1992, and died in Pompano Beach (Florida) on 27 Feb 2021. He had a brother in Poland, Fr Zbigniew Rakiej.



Fr Henry Nikel (Fr Henryk Nikiel) assumed the position of Chaplain in 1988. Fr Nikel was ordained in Poland in 1964 and became a missionary priest serving the people in Papua, New Guinea, in the 1970s and 80s. Fr Nikel then ministered to the Australian community in Sydney, Canberra and Launceston. He was appointed to the Diocese of Ballarat, Wendouree Parish, in 1988, serving the Polish community, Lakeside Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth Centre. In about 1991 Fr Henry was appointed to the Cathedral Parish, whilst continuing his previous chaplaincies. Following in Fr Ziółkós' footsteps, Fr Henry continued his ministerial duties with diligence and empathy. In 1988 St Aloysius Church, Redan, became the Polish centre for Catholic worship – previously, since 1952, the center had been St Patrick's Cathedral.

Below: A snippet from the St Patrick's Cathedral Parish News: March 1991 – Welcome: Fr Henry Nikel

★ **WELCOME** ★
 ★ *FR. HENRY NIKEL...* ★
 ★ *It is my privilege, and indeed a* ★
 ★ *pleasure, to introduce our latest* ★
 ★ *addition to the Parish Team -* ★
 ★ *FR. HENRY NIKEL.* ★
 ★ *Born in Poland in 1937, Fr. Henry was* ★
 ★ *only seven when World War II ended.* ★
 ★ *He joined the Divine Word Missionary* ★
 ★ *seminary in Poland in 1956 and was* ★
 ★ *ordained into the priesthood in 1964. He* ★
 ★ *spent the next three years working in* ★
 ★ *parishes in Poland, but as a member of* ★
 ★ *a missionary order he was always* ★
 ★ *prepared for an overseas posting. On* ★
 ★ *September 1, 1967, he arrived in* ★
 ★ *Australia and was appointed full-time* ★
 ★ *Polish Chaplain at Queanbeyan, near* ★
 ★ *Canberra.* ★
 ★ *In 1971 he once again answered the* ★
 ★ *missionary call and accepted a ten-year* ★
 ★ *appointment to the Diocese of Wewak,* ★
 ★ *Papua New Guinea. He returned to* ★
 ★ *Australia in 1981 to undertake general* ★
 ★ *parish work in Launceston, Tasmania, and* ★
 ★ *as Chaplain to the small Polish community* ★
 ★ *there. In 1985 he was recalled to the* ★
 ★ *mainland in charge of the S.V.D. Community* ★
 ★ *House at Epping, Sydney, a position he* ★
 ★ *held until his appointment to the* ★
 ★ *Wendouree Parish mid-1988.* ★
 ★ *At Wendouree, Fr. Henry undertook all* ★
 ★ *aspects of parish work, including* ★
 ★ *Chaplain to the Polish community and* ★
 ★ *the Lakeside community, a position* ★
 ★ *he still holds. With his move into our* ★
 ★ *parish in January, he has also become* ★
 ★ *Chaplain to Q.E.G.C.* ★
 ★ *A "true blue Aussie", Fr. Henry became a* ★
 ★ *naturalised Australian in March 1971.* ★
 ★ *Among his hobbies he lists - birds* ★
 ★ *(the feathered variety, I am assured !),* ★
 ★ *walking, reading..and soccer (I guess* ★
 ★ *we can overlook this one weakness ??)* ★
 ★ *If you have not yet introduced yourself* ★
 ★ *to Fr. Henry, be sure to do so soon. You* ★
 ★ *will find him a person with a great sense* ★
 ★ *of humour and humanity. WELCOME TO OUR* ★
 ★ *PARISH FATHER..I hope we will make you* ★
 ★ *feel at home.* ★
 ★ =====



Fr Józef Migacz was the chaplain at Geelong from 2001 to 2007, and during that time he visited Ballarat when the Ballarat chaplain Fr Henry Nikel was not available. Fr Migacz came to Brisbane from Poland in 1983, and was then transferred to Dandenong, Marayong, Adelaide, Geelong, and Ardeer, and now ministers in Hobart.



Above: Fr Nickel hosting Fr Zenon Broniarczyk (Geelong): L-R: Michael Yaworowicz, Fr Nickel, Kazimierz Mroczkowski, Stanisława Danski, Fr Broniarczyk, Fr Stanisław Wrona (hidden), Jack Burcon.
 Below: we see Wanda Biała, Wally Kitlowski & Fr Stanisław Wrona.



St Aloysius Church, Redan, became the Polish centre for Catholic worship in 1988 (*Photo below*).



Above: Preparing for a Polish Independence Day (11 November 1918) mass at St Aloysius Church. Maria Kornas (Sztajko), young lady, girl, Kaz Mroczkowski, Michael Yaworowicz at rear, Irena Green, Jan Bedgood, Richard Kornas.



Above: Fr Nickel at a Polish Independence Day mass, Roman Skrypko far right.

Below: Fr Nickel at a celebration at Copernicus Hall.





The split in the Polish Association in early 2000, mentioned in Ch9, created a dilemma for Fr Henry. Fr Henry's allegiance was challenged, and he tried to follow a conciliatory path, but this was very difficult, and unfortunately it didn't always please both groups. He was unable to close the rift. Polish masses at St Aloysius ceased in about 2010, because firstly the older generation died away and dwindled in number after 2000, and secondly some members preferred to attend their local churches. Fr Nickel then conducted masses at St Columba's Church, Ballarat North.

Fr Nickel retired due to ill health on 12 April 2014, and returned to his homeland Poland, where he died on 4 March 2015. A Memorial Mass for Fr Nickel was held at St Patrick's Cathedral on 13 March 2015, followed by afternoon tea at St Patrick's Hall.

FAREWELL TO FR HENRY NIKEL

After 23 years in the Cathedral Parish and 47 years in Australia, Fr Henry Nike has returned to Poland to retire. Fr Henry came to the Cathedral in January 1991 and was a faithful chaplain to the aged care facilities of the Ballarat Health Services as well as Ballarat's Polish community. Fr Henry had also been chaplain to Lakeside prior to its closure. In recent years Fr Henry has celebrated the Latin



Mass each Sunday @ St Columba's Ballarat North. Over the years Fr Henry has been a generous member of the presbytery community, celebrating 12.05

pm Masses and being on call for after hours emergencies. He was farewelled at a gathering on April. As a parting gift to express his gratitude to the Cathedral Parish, Fr Henry has given \$30,000 to the Parish. This will be used to commission sculptor Louis Laumen to create a statue of St Patrick for the niche at the entrance to the Cathedral. Thank you Fr Henry!



Father Henry Nickel SVD.

After embracing the Australian way of life for over a quarter of a century Father Henry has decided to retire from active ministry, due to ill health and return to Poland. During this time Father has endeared himself to a huge number of people in a variety of communities.

After being ordained as a priest for the Society of the Divine Word, a missionary order of priests, and ministering in his native land, Poland, Father Henry broadened his horizons to spend time as a missionary priest in Papua, New Guinea. He ministered to the New Guinea people from the early nineteen seventies to 1988 when he came to the Ballarat area. This was the beginning of our long and beautiful association with the talented Father Henry Nickel and the Diocese of Ballarat. He was first appointed to the Parish of Wendouree as chaplain to the Polish Community, Lakeside Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth Centre. Father Henry worked tirelessly ministering the Sacraments, offering pastoral care, service and friendship to a very broad cross section of the Ballarat Community.

In 1990 Father Henry moved from Wendouree to take up residence in St Patrick's Cathedral Presbytery and continue his valuable work in the various centres, as well as taking on many roles within the Cathedral precinct. Father Henry's generous nature was evidenced by the manner in which he assisted with Masses and Parish tasks when the priestly bodies were stretched beyond human possibility. Father Henry was very accommodating in assisting in any ministry role whether it be administering Sacraments, conducting funerals or purely offering support and advice. His generous support had no limits.

He could be classed as quite a scholar as he was well informed, not only on Church matters, but has a broad understanding of many secular and religious issues. He is multi-lingual, in being able to converse in Polish, English, German and Spanish, as well as the native dialects of New Guinea.

Father Henry was always content with the simple way of life, with his feathered friends, his dearly loved birds for his constant companions. He was a familiar sight on the Ballarat streets taking his long, daily walks at quite a fast pace around Lake Wendouree, Victoria Park or the tree lined streets of the city. Father Henry was always well presented and cut a fine physical figure with his perfectly groomed head of hair and dapper persona. If we searched for one fault with Father Henry it was his concern for the pigeons of Ballarat. He regularly purchased sacks of feed for the hungry birds that we considered pests, but he lovingly cared for. His one cry was that they were starving as he filled their bird bath with seed each day and made sure there was water for them to drink. It took a lot of convincing to cease this practice.

His regular priestly ministry to the many Queen Elizabeth Centres was nothing short of remarkable. He provided Eucharist on a weekly basis to a large number of residents and built up friendships not only with the Catholic residents but offered the hand of companionship to all the aged and infirmed. This often extended to the resident's families. Many family members felt so privileged to have Father Henry preside at their loved ones funeral.

As a brother priest, Henry, I thank you personally for all you have been to our Parish community and the Diocese of Ballarat and wish you well for your retirement in your homeland. God bless.

Gary A Jones.

Fr Jones was with the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat.

Homily at Memorial Mass for Fr Henry Nickel SVD, Ballarat, March 13, 2015

In our Mass today we are praying particularly for Fr Henry Nickel. Now that his earthly life has come to an end, we pray that God will welcome him into the joy of eternal life. Fr Henry prayed for so many people during his years of service as a priest. Today we pray for him. As we remember Fr Henry, we can also draw inspiration from his life of dedication to God. His life can inspire us in the way we live our lives. The Scriptures that we have heard touch on some of the aspects of Fr Henry's life.

The reading from the book of Genesis referred to God's call to Abraham to leave his country and his family and travel to the land that God would show him. God made a similar call to Fr Henry and he was willing to leave his homeland of Poland and travel to the other side of the world. As with the young man referred to in today's gospel, Jesus called Henry to give up his possessions and seek rather treasure in heaven. He joined the missionary society of the Divine Word and began a life of mission.

Altogether he spent 47 years ministering in Papua New Guinea and Australia. For most of those years he was serving the people of our diocese of Ballarat.

Father Henry came to Ballarat in 1988. Right from the start he was generous in accepting a range of ministries. He was assistant priest at Wendouree. He was also chaplain to Lakeside psychiatric hospital and chaplain to the Polish community. As members of the Polish community here today would remember well, Fr Henry celebrated a 5pm Vigil Mass for the Polish Community at St Aloysius' Redan each week for many years.

In 1991 he moved to the Cathedral. He continued his existing chaplaincy duties and also took on further chaplaincy to what was then the Queen Elizabeth Home which later grew as part of the aged care facilities of the Ballarat Health Services. He faithfully visited the elderly in the various homes around Ballarat and celebrated Mass for them.

Throughout his years at the Cathedral, Fr Henry celebrated this 12.05 pm weekday Mass, especially on Mondays to allow the other priests to have a day off. He celebrated Mass with the Loreto Sisters at Mary's Mount and in Webster Street. In recent years, Fr Henry became the regular celebrant for the Sunday Latin Mass which is celebrated at St Columba's Ballarat North.

As the Ballarat ministry district grew, Henry continued to be very generous in his service. He celebrated Sunday Mass wherever he was asked. This included Masses at Rokewood, Beaufort, Linton, Skipton, Smythesdale, Snake Valley, Sebastopol and Redan.

Following his return from sabbatical in July 2013, at the Divine Word Missionaries renewal centre in Nemi, outside Rome, Father Henry was in poor health and his health continued to decline. Happily he had good support from those around him. I give thanks particularly for the care shown by Jacinta Westbrook who was such a wonderful support to Fr Henry during this time. He also received great care during the time he spent in Nazareth House.

He decided to return to his homeland of Poland and he went back there in April 2014. As it happened, he was to have only a brief time in retirement. He had reached the stage that St Paul had reached as we heard in the second reading: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." He passed away on March 4.

We pray in this Mass that Fr Henry will rejoice for ever in the company of the Lord he has served. We pray too that we might draw inspiration from the witness of his life. We pray that we too might serve the Lord with a generous heart day by day.

Bishop Paul Bird C.Ss.R.

CH 1 | WHY DID THE ASSOCIATION FINALLY END?

By the end of 2017 the conversation to end the Polish Association was raised several times. It was not a discussion the committee wanted to have -- Irena Green, Jan Bedggood and I (Wanda Mann) had been at the helm or had been members for 20 years or longer, and the hall had become an integral, important focus of our lives. Ending the Association was a foreign concept -- the committee would no longer be preparing dinners, organising markets, meetings and social events -- our focus would become the impending plan to shut the doors of our beloved hall for the last time.

The beginning of 2018 crystalised the plan and it became a reality. Our loyal, long serving Australian member, Bill Byrne, was approached for advice and guidance. Since the Polish Association was an incorporated organisation, we were bound to follow the rules and regulations surrounding closure. Some research followed and a forward plan was finally adopted.

Again, history was repeating itself.... the Polish Association, started by the early migrants, and led by the enterprising Jack Burcon, faced a similar challenge 24 years earlier. Members were older and less healthy -- many had died and membership was dwindling. The communist regime in Poland fell in 1990, and Poland joined the European Union when the EU was formed in 1993. Fewer Poles came to Australia, and fewer came to Ballarat, preferring the bright lights and work opportunities of Geelong and Melbourne.

By 2018 the second and third generations had lost interest, and few felt the need to be a part of the Polish Association. Why?

The second generation in the 50s, 60s and 70s wanted desperately to be Australian -- they had endured the name-calling and isolation. Many now had Australian husbands or wives, and children, and were following the Australian way of life -- valuing and enjoying sport, holidays, barbecues and peer socialising.

The first and oldest generation had been great parents, encouraging their children to stay at school, aim high, achieve great results in order to have a substantially better quality of life, and greater access to life's opportunities. In the 50s and 60s Australian women usually stayed at home after marriage, while migrant women, who had to contribute to family income, led the growth of working women in the Australian community.

Australia's educational requirements had changed over seven decades, and more options for education have opened up. By 2018 most adolescents were completing Year 11 and Year 12. Tertiary education was a definite possibility, for women as well as men, and University was well within reach. Work choices had expanded exponentially, due to technological advancement. Since the 80s women have more opportunity to follow their dreams, to practise a profession and gain personal satisfaction.

The first generation had done a fantastic job preparing our generation for assimilation into Australian society. This assimilation along with the passing of the first generation caused ties with Poland and Polish traditions to be weakened and diluted with each generation, and the Association lost its relevance.

On 11 March 2018, we held a *thank-you lunch* for our monthly Saturday market stallholders -- a *thank-you* cake, made by Kylee Ellerton, was cut and enjoyed by the attendees. The Association was very grateful for their loyalty and participation in the monthly markets held in Copernicus Hall -- these markets helped raise some of the much-needed funds to sustain our Association.



Above: The monthly market stallholders at the thank-you lunch, with Klara Sliwa, Wanda Mann and Jan Bedggood.



The thank-you cake.



One of our monthly Saturday markets.



Klara Sliwa, making Polish doughnuts for the market.

The article below, *Polish Club Winds Up*, appeared in the Ballarat Courier, after an interview with Irena Green, the Polish Association President. Luke Kauzlaric took the two photos of the committee, Irene Green (Młynarczyk), Jan Bedggood (Studzinski) and Wanda Mann (Skirzynski), standing behind the gates and next to the Polish eagle emblem.

2 THE COURIER Monday May 07, 2018

NEWS

Polish Club winds up

BY BRENDAN WRIGLEY

FDR newly arrived Polish immigrants fleeing the atrocities of World War II, 26-28 Orion Street Sebastopol provided a welcome sense of community in a distant land.

Copernicus Hall, aptly named after the esteemed scientist and mathematician, has been at the centre of life for the hundreds of Polish families who settled in Ballarat after fleeing to Australia.

However on Saturday more than 40 years of Polish congregation will come to a close when members of the Polish Association of Ballarat finally put their treasured home away from home up for auction.

Association president Irena Green said for decades the hall provided a sense of family for a people who in many cases had left their loved ones behind.

"Because they were displaced people they needed a place under one roof," Ms Green said. "It was really a place of gathering and a place of belonging, because they had left all of their family and friends behind and they had no money and no language."

While the hall itself was opened in 1976, it was the result of more than two decades of fundraising by some 200 Polish families who had left their homeland and set-

tled in Ballarat.

Families would make a weekly donation to the organisation which was put towards purchasing the Orion Street block and constructing the building.

However since the 1990s the hall's use dropped away as former members become more integrated into wider Australian society.

Ms Green said the decision to sell had been made due to a declining membership and the fact a new generation of Polish descendants no longer relied on the hall as a community hub.

The site was rejuvenated by a second generation of Polish descendants around the turn of the century, however in recent years members have seen attendances dwindle to little more than their direct family members.

"It's the end of an era and there really is no purpose in continuing as the Polish Association anymore," Ms Green said.

The remaining members have pledged to put the profits of the sale to charity, most likely somewhere in the health sector.

The money was to always stay in Ballarat because the money was donated by those Polish families, its not ours," Ms.Green said. "The idea is Australia and Ballarat gave a life to our parents so now we want to help by giving back".



CLOSING: Polish Association of Ballarat president Irena Green, secretary Jan Bedggood, and treasurer Wanda Mann outside Copernicus Hall. Picture: Luke Kauzlaric



An afternoon tea was organised for 11 May 2018 -- this was to be the last function at our much loved hall -- past and present members were cordially invited to attend. Historically relevant photos were on display. There was a boot scooting demonstration, and many memories were shared by those present. Our president, Irena Green, gave a very moving speech --it was a nostalgic event.

Ray White Real Estate held the auction of our cherished hall on Saturday 12 May 2018, and our hopes were high. As the hall has a middle level heritage overlay, and has a significance to the City of Ballarat, the Association was hoping the sale went to a person or group that would value and appreciate our hall. Luckily it was sold to Scouts Victoria for the 7th Ballarat Scout Group. There was a combined sigh of relief. A scout group had been part of the original Polish Association.



The Polish Association Scout Group



Above: The Polish Association Scout Group: Zdzisław Drzymulski presenting a banner to Tad Burcon, at a camp at Licola, Victoria: circa 1974.

Above: Tad Burcon presenting badges to Joseph Kawa, Frank Stodolny, Stan Kawa, & Mark Burcon, at Lake Burrumbeet.

The 7th Ballarat Scout Group

The Scouts were delighted with their acquisition, and they were excited to announce that on Saturday 12 May they acquired a hall in Sebastopol. On 3 June 2018, the Ballarat Courier published the following article written by Brendan Wrigley....

Sebastopol Scouts finally find a new home. *Its been more than a decade in the making, but the Sebastopol Scouts now finally have a building which they can call home..... "If you were running a competition for a scout building, this would win", Mr Jeffrey said of Copernicus Hall..... The scouts will officially take over the Orion Street Hall on July 11 but intend to keep many of the historic elements in the building, including the distinctive gates at the entrance.*

The Scouts' grand opening was held on 4 October 2018.

Below: A photo from the Scouts' Facebook page (by permission of Roger Jeffrey).



CH12 WINDING UP – 2017-2023

Starting in 2017, Irena Green, our President, ably tackled the many requirements and hurdles that had to be addressed to achieve the closure of the Polish Association, and the sale of Nicolaus Copernicus Hall.

A special committee was formed, which included some members and the current executive. They decided on concrete measures, proceeding in a positive way, to achieve the best results -- including the appointment of a liquidator to control the financial aspects and ensure transparency.

The committee and organisation were adamant that the proceeds of the sale of the hall were to benefit the community of Ballarat, and have a Polish connection. The committee decided to make the following seven grants.

1. Ballarat District Scouts (Scouts Victoria).
2. Berry Street School.
3. Ballarat Health Services.
4. St John of God Hospital.
5. Eastern District Polish Association.
6. City of Ballarat – bench seats at Lake Wendouree.
7. Her Majesty's Theatre -- seating.

In addition, \$6000 was allocated for the writing and publication of this book – *A History of the Polish Association of Ballarat 1952-2018 and migrant stories of resilience and survival* -- and possibly the creation of a power-point presentation.

1. Ballarat District Scouts

Scouts Victoria purchased our precious hall, and the Association decided to give back \$10,000 of the proceeds, for an urgent electrical upgrade, and possibly for additional storage for scouting equipment.

The District Commissioner, Roger Jeffrey, now retired, sent the following email regarding the history of scouting in Sebastopol, and the purchase of Copernicus Hall. Roger also advised that the electrical upgrade consumed the whole of the grant.

Early Scout records indicate that Scouting existed in Sebastopol from as far back as 1909. There have been various scout groups in Sebastopol.

From 1966 7th Ballarat Sebastopol Scout Group has operated from a large number of temporary homes in Sebastopol. These include the Carmel Welsh Church Hall, the old Sebastopol Primary School, Marty Busch Reserve, MR Power Park at 180 Grant St, the warehouse behind Sebastopol Coles Supermarket at 222 Albert St, and finally the Sebastopol Masonic Lodge at 173 Albert St.

After 15 years of adapting to a range of facilities and challenging logistics, the Group made the decision to close at the end of the 2017/18 financial year. Lack of a space to call their own had worn the Group down.

The purchase of the Copernicus building in June 2018 brought 7th Ballarat Scouts back to life. This is their first permanent home. Ever!

The Copernicus Hall is an ideal sized building in an ideal location for 7th Ballarat Scouts. The main hall is large, double brick, well lit, the kitchen is of a commercial size, the toilets are more than

ample, the land is large enough for outside games, and there is space outside for storage containers. Of all of the Scouting halls in the Ballarat Scouting District, this facility is the best designed, the best built and the best set out, for Scouting purposes.

The Group has grown from 4 youth members in 2018, when Scouts Victoria purchased the hall, to 70 youth members at the beginning of 2020. The scouts in the South Western part of Ballarat are eternally grateful to occupy this hall. The hall is now proudly registered on the Scouts Victoria asset register as The Copernicus Hall.

The 7th Ballarat Sebastopol Scouts want to acknowledge the generous gift of money to the Group, from the Ballarat Polish Association. The Association allocated the money, for the upgrading of the electrical switchboard to modern safety standards.



Above: Copernicus Hall. Below: Scout BBQ at hall (2020) by permission of Scouts.



Above right: A photo of the travelling scout abseiling tower, by permission Roger Jeffrey and Scouts. This tower was a part of the scouting activity on the day that the scouts took possession of Copernicus Hall. Lots of children, scouts and neighbours were able to use the tower, giving them a scouting experience.

2. Berry Street School

Education was a major priority in the Polish community, being highly valued by the older Poles -- their descendants have benefitted from the education Australia has provided. The Poles were quick to realize that education was invaluable in helping to foster progression in wealth and job opportunities, and it was always a high priority. Berry Street School, Sebastopol, which plays a crucial role in stopping the cycle of family violence, and strives to transform the lives of children within the community, through education, was chosen as an appropriate recipient.

On 14 June 2021, Damien McKee, Assistant Principal of Berry Street School, reported details of Berry Street School's educational model, and details of their use of the Polish Association's "*generous grant*" of \$10,000. The grant had been allocated by the Association towards "*a therapeutic outdoor recreation and learning area*". A copy of Damien McKee's report is shown on the next page -- photos of the work in progress and a recent photo are shown below.



The Berry Street School is an independent school, supporting vulnerable young people. The Ballara campus is in regional Victoria, so despite the COVID-19 restrictions placed on Victorians and in particular Metropolitan Melbourne, students have had less disruption to their face-to-face learning than those in public school across the state.

Young people come to the Berry Street School with histories of severe child abuse and neglect, including multi-generational disadvantage and trauma. The school offers these students who are at the point of being excluded from mainstream school, with a viable education alternative. The Berry Street School delivers an educational model that focuses on addressing the specific needs of disengaged young people through a trauma informed and positive education process that prepares them to engage in learning.

With a generous grant of \$10,000 from the Polish Association of Ballarat the school has created a therapeutic outdoor recreation and learning area. The project helped us to engage students using hands-on learning techniques. Together they worked as a team to create a multi-use learning space with a focus on reducing stress and anxiety, the nature of the space will help students to continue to develop healthy coping strategies, de-escalate emotional outbursts and work on self-care.

Each Monday from the beginning of term two 2020, through to the beginning of term four, all the students were engaged in a 'hands on learning' day. The focus for the day was on the construction of our garden project and the beautification of the surrounding areas. Activities included bricklaying, planting of shrubs and plants, moving soil and toppings, demolition of old workspaces, cooking, filming and reporting on the activities. The entire project was embedded into the school curriculum.

The learning area required a safe and comfortable setting. Shade sails were erected, paving laid so that students could sit, relax and enjoy a different learning experience. Throughout the project student input was considered and supported. As a result, they decided to establish an indigenous reflection garden at the rear of our school. The area benefits from full afternoon sun and students all agreed that native plants which were resistant to drought would be a good choice. They continued this theme and planted some native shrubs at the front of the school property which would make it more attractive to the local community, a place they can be proud of.

In December 2020, the area was opened by The Honourable Member for Ballarat, Catherine King. The school had also benefited from government funding to complete the work as well as fencing and shade sails. Collectively, this has provided our students with ongoing education and support. We would like to thank the Polish Association for the generous donation that enabled this to happen.

Case Study – Gina*

Gina is a student from a significantly under resourced family. She experiences high levels of anxiety due to an unsafe home life involving drugs, alcohol, violence and exploitation. Her attendance is sporadic, and her low self-esteem has impacted on her learning throughout her school life. Gina has always been a quiet girl and she had never discussed with staff a pathway beyond school.

During our garden project Gina's attendance at school centred around our hands-on learning days. She shyly started working on some bricklaying and woodwork projects relating to our garden project and by the middle stages of the project her attendance was 100%. Gina has since openly discussed her desire to pursue a trade and work as a bricklayer or carpenter. She is eagerly pursuing further training in these trades now and her motivation for school has increased dramatically.

*All names are changed to protect privacy

3. Ballarat Health Services

Substantial grants were allocated to Ballarat Health Services, and St John of God Hospital, as these two hospitals play an important, integral role in the health of the Ballarat community. As a society, we all benefit from good, progressive health services. As some time had passed between the sale of the Polish hall and the allocation of monies, due to COVID-19, the hospitals needed to change their initial choices of some medical equipment, to suit their changing priorities and timelines. Sarah Masters (Head of Fundraising and Engagement, Ballarat Health Services), sent the following email, advising that they had purchased three pieces of equipment, (1) a new resuscitation mannequin name Ziggy, (2) a Long Colonoscope and (3) a Long Paediatric Colonoscope.

The Ballarat Polish Association donated \$143,000 to Ballarat Health Services for lifesaving equipment. This generous donation was expended on three key projects throughout the hospital.

The first project being in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), here is some information from Courtney Rowe who is the Nurse Unit Manager in ICU.

As primary responders to all medical emergencies within the hospital, the ICU team (both medical and nursing) require access to resuscitation training equipment to maintain skills for basic and advanced life support.

The current equipment was damaged beyond repair and is no longer supported. It was in use for 20+ years and was no longer current to address the needs of staff to support patients.

The proposed equipment was evaluated by nursing and medical colleagues to determine the most appropriate options for the ICU requirements.

The proposed equipment aligned with the other resuscitation training equipment used in the organisation.

Generosity from the Polish Association meant that the ICU received a new resuscitation mannequin named 'Ziggy' in memory of surgeon Dr. Zbigniew Religa.

One of the difficulties in a health service is that there are sometimes essential pieces of equipment which are largely invisible but which play a vital role in making sure disease is caught before it becomes life threatening. The second two pieces of equipment which were purchased through the generosity of the Polish Association were a Long Colonoscope and Long Paediatric Colonoscope. The Perioperative/ Day Procedure Units remain indebted to the association for taking the time to consider and to support the purchase of these two vital pieces of equipment.

Ballarat Health Services has served the Ballarat and Grampians community since the laying of the Foundation Stone for the Miners Hospital on 25 December 1855. The original hospital was funded half by government and half by community donation.

We are proud to continue to serve our community and to be the recipients of support from the community. Thank you to the Polish Association of Ballarat and the Polish community.

Irena Green and Wanda Mann met Sarah Masters, and Chris Gerakiteys (Marketing Coordinator – Fundraising), at Ballarat Base Hospital on Thursday 18 August 2022. This meeting had been delayed due to the Covid pandemic. The group visited the Critical Care department, where Fiona Coates

(Clinical Nurse Educator), demonstrated the use of Ziggy, the resuscitation mannequin. Ziggy had interchangeable parts that could be used for staging various emergencies, eg. heart attacks, and Ziggy could be transformed into Iggy (female), to simulate a pregnancy emergency, as well as many other kinds of emergencies.

Then the group visited Karen Ryan (Registered Nurse) at the Perioperative & Day Procedure Centre, who showed Irena and Wanda the *Long Colonoscope* and the *Long Paediatric Colonoscope*. Karen said that these new Colonoscopes were technically much more advanced than all of their older Colonoscopes.

Sarah and staff thanked Irena and Wanda for the generous donation by the Polish Association of Ballarat, and showed a plaque that was going to be put on display. Later that day Chris Gerakiteys sent the following email and a number of photos that were going to be included in their monthly newsletter.....

Dear Wanda and Irena,

It was lovely to meet you both today – thank you for taking the time to come and see the impact of your generous donation. I also wanted to pass on some messages we received from the staff whose departments you donated to. Fiona, the Clinical Nurse educator who demonstrated Ziggy/Iggy said:

I really enjoyed meeting the lovely Irena and Wanda. They were such delightful ladies, a real pleasure to have met them. I was so grateful for their donation and also for the opportunity to pass on our thanks.

And from the Perioperative & Day Procedure centre (the scope donation), Gayle, the Nurse Unit Manager said:

Apologies that I also wasn't available to meet with these wonderful members of our community. I remember how excited Karen and I were when we received the funding to get these scopes. Also how disappointed that we couldn't physically thank them at the time. I just want to formally thank the Polish Association for their generous assistance with the funding.

I have attached some photos, I do hope you find them useful for your book. Please stay in touch, and let us know if we can ever be of assistance. Please pass our sincere thanks onto the other members of the Polish Association, whose generosity is very much appreciated.

Best, Chris Gerakiteys

Marketing Coordinator – Fundraising, Grampians Health.

On Friday, 19 August 2022 – from Irena Green

Dear Chris,

How lovely to hear from you and to read the lovely comments of appreciation. I haven't spoken to Wanda yet but I would like to have your comments quoted " " with your permission to be included in the book. A big thank you to ALL that were present yesterday, for taking time out of your busy schedules to meet with Wanda and I, and spend some time with us. I was so impressed with the amazing "ziggy/iggy", and so in awe with the demonstration of ziggy, and equally impressed with the scopes. I felt at peace knowing that the Polish Association were able to provide the much needed funding to upgrade the much needed "ziggy and scopes" that will make a positive difference to the many who come through your doors, and save lives.

Thank you for the photos, much appreciated
It was lovely meeting you all, and thank you for your kindness in appreciation of our donation,
but believe me the pleasure is all ours. I wish we could have given you more.
God's blessing to all at BHS in whatever capacity, we appreciate you -- you all do AMAZING
work.
In deep gratitude, Warm regards, Irena Green

The photos below are of Ziggy and the Colonoscopes, and the top three photos on the next page show details of an acknowledgement plaque made by Grampians Health.





End of an Era

After the devastation of World War 2, many Polish families migrated to Australia to start a new life. While they left behind family and friends, Australia was a land of dreams, a land of freedom. Many families settled in this lovely city of Ballarat and were happy to make this their new home.

Almost immediately the Polish Community began organising themselves into a Polish Association. They gathered in the St. Patrick's Cathedral Hall in Dawson Street after Sunday Mass, and where they also held functions for many years. This Association helped new migrants settle into a totally different lifestyle, environment and culture – helping overcome homesickness and language barriers.

The Ballarat Polish Community continued to grow. By 1972, the Association, under President Jack Burcon, decided a permanent community centre was needed. With a vision to buy land and build a Polish Hall, the association members knocked on the door of every Polish family to ask for donations.

The vision of the Association was fulfilled through community effort, energy and determination. On Saturday, 14 August, 1976, the NICOLAUS COPERNICUS HALL, 26-28 Orion Street, Sebastopol, was opened.

The new hall hosted celebrations of Polish National Days, concerts, balls, Mother's Day and Father's Day dances, Oplatek (Christmas) Lunches and community markets. The Association continued to support and strengthen the community with provision of personal help, picnics and outings.

Over 60 years after the Polish Association began in Ballarat, the 2015-2018 Executive Committee began evaluating the future of the Association. With an aging Polish community and declining membership, the Association decided to close. For 42 years, the Nicolas Copernicus Hall was a place for the Polish community to meet and build friendships. With a sense of sadness, it was unanimously agreed to 'Wind Up' the Polish Association of Ballarat.

It was time to say good-bye to the end of an era.

As the hall was built by donations by Polish migrant families, it was decided the proceeds of the sale of the hall would be donated back to the Ballarat Community.

Thank you to all our Polish, Australian and multicultural members, past and present and their families and friends for their support over many, many years. It has been a privilege and an honour.

Serving Executive Committee Members from 1995-2018
Irena Green, President, Jan Bedgood, Secretary, Wanda Mann, Treasurer

Grampians Health – Ballarat
wish to acknowledge the
**Polish Association of
Ballarat**
for their generous donation of \$143,000.
**Your kindness has touched
the lives of many.**

Irena Green (Młynarczyk) had suggested Ziggy as an appropriate name for the resuscitation mannequin in honour of Zbigniew Eugeniusz Religa, a prominent Polish cardiac surgeon and politician. Wikipedia advises that Zbigniew was born in Miedniewicz on 16 December 1938 and died on 8 March 2009. He completed his medical studies at the University of Poland, trained in vascular surgery in New York, and cardiac surgery in Detroit. In 1987 he conducted the first successful heart transplant in Poland, the patient being Tadeusz Zytkeiwicz, who outlived Dr Religa. In 1995 Zbigniew was the first surgeon to graft an artificial valve created from materials taken from human corpses. In 2004 he and his team were awarded a *Brussels Eureka Award* at the World Exhibition of Innovation, Research and Technology, for their development of an implantable pump for a pneumatic heart assistance system. He is recognised as being a pioneer of heart transplantation in Poland.



4. St John of God Hospital

On 21 June 2021, Mick Ryan, Assistant Director of Nursing at St John of God Hospital, sent the following email and photo to detail the use of \$120,000 towards a Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy unit, and consumables.

Hi Wanda, it's Mick Ryan from St John of God Hospital here. The donation from the Polish Association went towards a Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy unit (photo attached) and the consumables required for its use. This has allowed us to keep patients closer to home that we previously may have needed to transfer to Melbourne. Again, thank you so much for your amazing donation.
Regards,
Mick



5. Eastern District Polish Association

From its inception, the Polish Association remained connected to Poland. Polish traditions and beliefs were sought out, thus extending community ties. The Polish communities of Geelong and Melbourne were visited and patronized, therefore it was not unusual for the Polish Association of Ballarat to offer help when needed. The Eastern District Polish Association, in Rowville, Melbourne, approached us for financial assistance to remodel the front entrance to the Polish House Syrena, to improve access for their elderly and disabled patrons, and to upgrade their kitchen. They gratefully acknowledged the grant on a plaque on their building.

Below: Wanda & Jan & Irena & members of the Eastern Districts Polish Association, at the remodelled front entrance.



6. City of Ballarat bench seats at Lake Wendouree

A grant of \$2,400 was made to the City of Ballarat for the erection of two bench seats at Lake Wendouree, near Forest St. The seats have plaques commemorating the Polish Association of Ballarat.



7. Her Majesty's Theatre seating

A grant of \$3,000 was made to the City of Ballarat for four seats at Her Majesty's Theatre, as a part of the theatre refurbishment. These seats are numbered -- Stalls C13, H15, K16, and Dress Circle A24. The seats have plaques commemorating the Polish Association of Ballarat.



CH 13 KOSCIUSZKO SOCCER CLUB (1955-1990)

by Marjan (Mac) Rynkiewicz

Stan Wach (1955) played for the RAF SC and for the Paper Mills SC during 1953 and 1954, in the Ballarat Soccer Association. In 1955 Stan formed a new club, the Kosciuszko SC, which had a new home ground at Victoria Park. Over the years the club had a mixture of players of various nationalities, mostly Polish. It was Stan's wife Helena who suggested the name (probably from the name of Australia's highest mountain), and the colours (red and white)(the Polish national colours). The Polish Association probably contributed financially to the new club in the first year. I think that there was a semi-official connection between the club and the Association, and that some club business was dealt with during the Association's monthly meetings, at least in the early years. The club's annual awards presentations were held during the Association's Saturday dances, and club trophies were on permanent display at Copernicus Hall.

The Kosciuszko team before their first game (Victoria Park)(1955)



*Above: Rear: Peter Steiner (German), Jarosław (Sławko) Nykoluk (Ukrainian)(my uncle), Svetan (Nick) Nikolovski (Yugoslav), Walek (Wally) Kitlowski, Sergio Bielski (Ukrainian), Ted Zabinski.
Front: Stan Wach, Stan Wojdat, Jack Burcon (goalkeeper), Steve Burcon, Frank Różycki.*

Old Goals In the above photo the goalposts and crossbar look very old. If this was a new venue then we would expect new posts and crossbars, or at least a new coat of paint. However, the grass near the goal looks non-used -- an old soccer venue would have a worn bare area (made by the goalkeeper) in the middle of the goal, which becomes a muddy patch in wet weather.

Kosciusko or Kosciuszko In the 1950s Kosciuszko SC was sometimes spelled Kosciusko SC because Mt Kosciuszko was named Mt Kosciusko up until 1997. Wikipedia says that....

.....*The mountain was named by the Polish explorer Strzelecki in 1840, in honour of Polish-Lithuanian freedom fighter General Tadeusz Kościuszko, because of its perceived resemblance to the Kościuszko Mound in Kraków, Poland..... an artificial mound... in commemoration of the Polish national leader.... modelled after Kraków's prehistoric mounds of Krak and Wanda. A serpentine path leads to the top.... It was completed in November 1823.... Kościuszko Mound is one of Kraków's four memorial mounds, consisting of two prehistoric mounds.... and two modern ones....*



Above: The Kosciuszko team: Victoria Park: circa 1955. The opponents might be Ballarat City SC. Rear (Kosciuszko): M Egresits, Peter Steiner, Wally Kitlowski, (player), Sergio Bielski, Steve Burcon. Front (Kosciuszko): (player), Sławko Nykoluk, Stan Wach, Jack Burcon (goalkeeper), Frank Różycki.

Cricket Pitch In the above photo we see a patch of sand in the background, covering a concrete cricket pitch. In the 1950s Victoria Park had many cricket pitches, these were concrete topped with a layer of grey malthoid, today pitches are topped with green artificial grass. The temporary sand layer enabled soccer during winter.

Home Grounds For some unknown reason, in about 1959, Kosciuszko moved its home ground from Victoria Park to Binney Reserve (Black Hill), and then in about 1965 moved to Morshead Park (Redan). In the 1950s the other soccer grounds in Ballarat were Trekardo Park (Pleasant St)(home of Paper Mills and home of Ballarat City), Prince of Wales Park (Gillies St)(home of Wendouree), the RAAF (aerodrome)(home of RAAF), and Russell Square (Humffray St Nth)(home of Jadron and later Croatia). In the late 50s, Ararat SC were based in Ararat, and Creswick SC were I suppose based in Creswick (but I had never heard of Creswick SC, they did not exist when I started playing in 1961). I don't know where Thistle SC had its home ground, perhaps they shared Prince of Wales Park. Today, at the aerodrome, the soccer pitch and the goals (and lots of old buildings) still exist, but no soccer is played there.

The Courier (10 July 1954) mentions only four teams – (1) Paper Mills (home ground at Trekardo Park), (2) Thistle, (3) Ballarat City, and (4) Wendouree (home ground at the Pony Club, ie Prince of Wales Park). Campana and Wach were mentioned as playing for Paper Mills. The Kosciuszko SC was not mentioned, so it is safe to say that the Kosciuszko team did not exist in mid 1954.

The Kosciuszko team at Trekardo Park (1955)



Above: Rear: Frank Różycki, M Egresits, Peter Campana (Italian), Carl Campana (Italian), E Kofler (Hungarian)(or Austrian), Steve Burcon. Front: Jarosław (Stawko) Nykoluk (Ukrainian)(Mac Rynkiewicz's uncle), Stan Wojdat, Jack Burcon (goalkeeper), Stan Wach, Peter Steiner (German).

Substitutes In the above photo (and in other photos) we see 11 players. Where are the allowed two substitute players? I think that the teams didn't bother to have substitutes in the 1950s. In the 1970s the two substitutes were often two players who had already played in the seconds game preceding the main game (the firsts), but the Ballarat league didn't have a seconds game during the 1950s. Old documents show that during 1965 there were some seconds games if teams agreed, starting at 1pm, but I don't remember any such 1pm games during my era (1961-67). No-one liked being a substitute. Sometimes, after the time and trouble of travelling to say Geelong, and later back, a substitute might not get a run until the last minutes of the game (or not at all), unless someone was injured. In 1964-67 Kosciuszko rarely had a substitute at Geelong games, but usually had a substitute at Ballarat games.

Peter Steiner Richard Majda watched some games when Richard was about 8yo. Richard remembers that Peter Steiner used to take the penalty kicks, he had a strong kick, and nearly broke the net each time.

Right: The Ballarat Courier, July 1955.

SOCCER
 Jullana 3 drew with Kosciuszko 3.
 Goal scorers: Jullana: Stoffels, Jhon Vugt, C. H. Naus
 Kosciuszko: Nykoluk, Kitlowski, Belskyl.
 Best players: Jullana: Sloodhaak, Stoffels. Kosciuszko: C. Campana, Belskyl.

Kosciuszko training at Trekardo Park & Victoria Park (1955)



Above left: Steve Burcon, Carlo Campana, Peter Campana, Frank Różycki and Stan Wojdat.

Above right: Ted Zabinski posing for a photo at Stan Wach's place.

Soccer Balls You won't see a nice new ball in a training photo from the 1950s. You are unlikely to see a new soccer ball in any 1950s photo, and even in the 1960s it was rare to have a new ball for a game. Balls were say yellow when new, and then we used light brown shoe polish to try to keep the ball water proof, hence balls were soon big (stretched) and dark (as can be seen in the above photos). New balls (leather) got heavy when wet, and older balls got very heavy. I played at center-half-forward (ie full back), and had to head the ball lots, which we now know can eventually cause brain damage (repetitive subconcussive head injury). Today modern balls are synthetic and light (and don't absorb water as much as leather), and modern rules allow lowish pressure, but brain injury remains a worry. My main worry was that (being fullback) I was involved in every skirmish near the goals, and my groin was a magnet for the ball, and was bruised and sore for the whole of every soccer season (for the whole of every year actually).

Footy Boots In early photos many of the players appear to be wearing big heavy Aussie-Rules footy boots. Proper light-weight soccer shoes must have been hard to get. Footy boots had a big hard nose, good for kicking, and good for kicking shins and ankles (we all soon learnt to wear shin guards). Standard continental soccer shoes (and shoes in general) are too narrow for me (I have wide feet). In 1973 I happened to find a secondhand pair of footy boots (in Benalla) that had been widened (shortened actually) by a professional cobbler.

Photos Many of the old photos in this chapter are from Ted Zabinski's family album. Photos were also kindly supplied by Harry Arts, Ken Wach, Jack Fugiel, Richard Majda, Peter and Mac Rynkiewicz, Alice and Wanda Burcon, and Martin Vissers.

Ted Zabinski was also a good oarsman – his four-oar team won an event at a major regatta at Lake Wendouree in Ballarat in about 1960. And Ted played high grade competition table-tennis.

The Kosciuszko team at Creswick (1956)



Above: Rear: L Bilic, Frank Różycki, Jarosław Nykoluk, Nick Nikolovski, Nick Ivetic (Yugoslav), Ted Zabinski. Front: Stan Wach, John Burns, Stan Wojdat (goalkeeper), Pieter Weidenhaupt, Steve Burcon.



Left: The goals are temporary. I think that this is at Creswick. Perhaps the football was on Saturday (footy goals can be seen in the background) and soccer on Sunday. Or perhaps the ground was used for school footy midweek.

Winter Jersey In the above two photos the team is wearing the long sleeved winter jersey. This jersey was

red and white but had a different pattern compared to the summer jersey seen in the earlier photos. We sometimes wore these same old winter and summer jerseys when I played in 1960-67.

Nick Nikolovski Nick's wife Norma told me that Nick played in 1954-55-56. He might have played for Jadron SC (Yugoslav) later. In the 1970s Nick coached North United juniors -- this was the Macarthur St (State) Primary School, which had joined with the nearby St Columba's (Catholic) Primary School. Nick's boys played for North United junior and later senior teams, and later perhaps for Victoria Park (Vultures) SC.

Pieter Weidenhaupt Ken Wach told me that Pieter had been in Germany with Ken's dad Stan Wach, and that Pieter and other German players used to visit the Wachs. Stan could speak German.

The Kosciuszko team at Trekardo Park (1956)



Above: Rear: Ted Zabinski, Peter Campana, (player)(Ukrainian)(from Castlemaine), Carlo Campana, E Kofler, Frank Rózycki. Front: Steve Burcon, Stan Wach, Julio Santillo (Italian)(had fruit shop in Sturt St), Pieter Weidenhaupt (German, taxi driver), John Burns (older brother of Eddie Burns who played some games with Kosciuszko in 1961-63).

East-West Pitch The practise-goal (seen on the left) was used for midweek training. The game-goal (seen far right) was on the eastern side of the park. There is a large deep open council storm drain behind that goal, and fetching the ball was a pain. The western game-goal was also a problem, shots at goal often went onto the road (Pleasant St). Today we would install high barriers behind goals to stop the ball, the solution (in about 1960) was to relocate the east-west goals so that the pitch ran north-south (which is the present layout in 2023).

Internationals (1957) I spent a few days at the Ballarat Eureka Center library looking at microfilms of old Ballarat Courier newspapers from the 1950s. I found that for the 1957 season Kosciuszko had changed its name to the Internationals, probably at the request of the large number of non-Polish players.

Sam Lenkic (See photo next page) Sam's daughter in law told me that Sam died in 2020, when he was 82yo. Sam had younger brothers Lou (Sławko) and Mario who might have played soccer in later years. Sam played for Vikings SC (Croatian) in later years.

Soccer Draw

City v Jullana, Trekardo Park, Vlissers; RAAP v Kosciusko. RAAP, Reece; Wendouree v Thistle, Prince of Wales, Oliver

The City-Jullana clash should provide thrills, as the teams battle for league leadership. Jullana has hit top form lately, and City will need its best form to win.

Kosciusko will not be able to take things easy against RAAP, which has improved each week, but should win.

Wendouree and Thistle will provide a close game, and a draw seems likely.

TEAMS.

Kosciusko: Kojdat, Zabinski, Burcon, Bozceki, Campana, Eggerista, Belskij, Wittig, Steiner, Nykoluk, Wauch.

City: Johnstone, Cowley, Aitken, Oliver, W. Smith, Aberdeen, Lobley, De Vries, Van Derne, Hor Khoo, Skinner, Higgins.

Jullana: M. Vugt, Stoffels, Vandoren, John Ruyg, G. Verstenbos, J. Vorstenbos, P. Naus, C. Naus, H. Naus, K. Naus, J. Steenhuis.

Thrilling Soccer Tie

City and Jullana fought a thrill-packed soccer tie at Trekardo Park on Saturday, and by dropping one point each, left the league wide open.

Jullana was first to attack, and caused a surprise when it took the lead. City pressed with fast, open play, and Smith second Jullana goal was one fore half-time.

On the resumption, both teams played hard, with no quarter asked or given. The second Jullana goal was one of the best seen at Trekardo Park for a long time.

Ruyg, at outside left, crossed a long, low ball, which was misjudged by a City defender, and outside right, Stenhouse, running in, scored.

It was not until the 85th minute of play that City equalised through Van Derne. Goalkeeper, Naus, and Stoffels played well for Jullana, while City, with no stars, was well served by Lobley and Van Derne.

City, 2 (Smith, Van Derne) tied with Jullana 2 (Stoffels, Stenhouse).

Wendouree, 3, d Thistle, 1.

Kosciusko, 8, d RAAP, 0.

The League table:—

City, played 11, won 8, lost 1, drew 2, goals for 49, goals against 13, points 18; Jullana, 10, C, 1, 3, 48, 12, 15; Kosciusko 10, 7, 2, 1, 53, 15, 15; Wendouree, 11, 3, 8 0, 23, 46, 6; RAAP, 10, 2, 8 0 23 58, 4; Thistle, 10, 1, 9, 0, 16, 73, 2.

The Kosciuszko team (the Internationals) at Victoria Park (1957)



Above: Rear: Nick Ivetic, Samce (Austrian), Frank Różycki, Cecil Kendall (English, played for Ballarat Seniors 1980 when 58yo), B Lukic (Croatian), Ted Zabinski. Front: David van Oorschot (Dutch 16yo), Eddie Van Oirshot (Dutch 17yo), John Van Oirshot (goalkeeper Dutch 21yo), Steve Burcon, Stan Wojdat.

John Van Oirschot told me recently that he played for Kosciuszko in 1956-57-58, later for Wilhelmina (Dutch). He doesn't remember his brother Eddie playing at all. Eddie (now deceased) became president of Redan Football Club. John remembers that Janek Gordon (Polish) who ran the Royal Exchange Hotel made John drink a yard of beer but John could only get halfway through it. My dad (Frank Rynkiewicz) was the Licensee of the Royal Exchange Hotel in 1964-70, after Gordon took over a Hotel in Richmond. Ted Zabinski told me that Jan Gordon (Polish) adopted that English name when he had a pub in Horsham, but Ted couldn't remember Jan's original Polish name.



Floyd & Gawronski Cup (1959) I thought that Kosciuszko did not field a team in 1959 and 1960, but the club won a trophy in 1959 (see photos), and the trophy was on display in Copernicus Hall. The trophy was donated by Frank Floyd and Roger Gawronski, possibly for an annual Geelong versus Ballarat Polish soccer match, and Kosciuszko was the first winner. Kosciuszko did not have a team in 1960, and perhaps the trophy was then forgotten. Henry Szkuta (Geelong), has no record of any Polish soccer team in Geelong until Polonia SC in about 1963. Perhaps it was Geelong that did not have a team. Kosciuszko played against Geelong's Polonia SC in 1966 and 67,



and in later years against Geelong's Syrena SC, but the trophy was forgotten. Floyd and Gawronski are today not known in Geelong or Ballarat. Roger Gawronski died in Tasmania on 2 Feb 2020.

Ballarat Internationals (1960)

The Courier Friday 1 July 1960 mentions eight teams – Ararat v Jadron, Ballarat Rovers v Wendouree (Trekardo Park), YCW v Croatia (Prince of Wales Park), Ballarat International v Ballarat City (Binney Reserve). So, in 1960 Kosciuszko changed its name to Ballarat Internationals, similarly to 1957.

Kosciuszko Juniors at Trekardo Park (1958)



Above left: Rear: Ken Wach, (boy), (boy)(possibly Herman Hovens), Alex Zabinski (Ted's brother), Wally Gradkowski, Eddie Burns. Front: Jack Fugiel, Stan Fugiel, Martin Vissers (goalkeeper), Richard Majda, J Burns.

Seniors' Jerseys The juniors are wearing the seniors' jerseys and shorts, much too large for most. Notice the old changing shed. This was shifted to the Kosciuszko ground at Morshead Park in about 1966. Notice that in 1959 the goal is near the changing shed (ie on the west side of Trekardo Park), and a shot at goal can go onto the road (Pleasant St). This east-west alignment of the pitch was changed to north-south in the 60s. I remember dad taking me to watch Kosciuszko seniors play at Trekardo Park in about 1956, and I remember that the pitch ran east-west.



Right: Spectators: Danuta Przekwas, Maria Maciag, Marianna Szapiel, Antonina Skirzynski.



Kosciuszko juniors at Fawkner (1960)



Rear: Stan Wach, Martin Vissers, Rod Klicki, Harry Arts, Michael Maciag, Theo Arts, Richard Majda, Frank Rynkiewicz. Front: Eric Oparski, Mac Rynkiewicz, David Evans (goalkeeper), Ken Wach, Eddie Ellsbury.

Adidas This was my first game for Kosciuszko. I am wearing new Adidas soccer shoes, which grandpa gave me for my 13th birthday. I soon outgrew them, and then I wore them for about one year too long. Our opponents wore sneakers because of the hard summer pitches (but we were not that smart).

Kosciuszko versus Ardeer at Trekardo Park (1962)



Kosciuszko versus Ballarat North Tech (1961) Trekardo Park



Above: Rear L-R: Mr Bogovic, Mac Rynkiewicz, Harry Arts. I attended North Tech in 1959-62. Mr Bogovic (Yugoslav)(Physical Education teacher, Ballarat North Tech) organised the game because there was no official soccer play at North Tech in those days. North Tech started in 1955, became co-ed in 1969, the name was changed to Midlands Secondary College in the late 1980s, and that campus was closed in 1992 (except that Years 11 and 12 continued until 1999) when three schools "amalgamated". There is no school at that site today.

Kosciuszko versus School of Mines and Industries Ballarat (1962)



Chui Hon Wing (Captain) is in the centre with our Captain Harry Arts. Chui and Prasad (2nd from left) played for Kosciuszko in 1962. Bernard Szapiel (6th from right) makes a rare appearance here. In this game Chui was involved in a collision, and he swallowed his tongue. We did not know what to do, but we rushed Chui to the Ballarat Hospital and he survived.

Binney Reserve (1961-1964) When I started playing senior soccer in 1961 Kosciuszko had its home ground at Binney Reserve (Chisholm St, Black Hill), but we trained at Trekardo Park which was more central. Binney Reserve had no shed or toilets. In 1964 Kosciuszko played some of its home games at Trekardo Park because the goals at Binney Reserve had been vandalised. Perhaps the locals resented that (alien) soccer had squeezed out their (native) football. Binney Reserve was a small football oval used by the adjacent Black Hill Primary School. The photos below show the team and spectators at Binney Reserve in 1961-64.



Above: Spectators at Binney Reserve: circa 1962. We see Maria Łyszczarz (Melbourne), Urszula Wisniewski (Melbourne), Bolesław Łyszczarz, Franciszek Kornas, Toey Kornas, Krystyna Wach, Daniela Wach, & Ken Wach. Ken Wach might be on

the sideline because he had a back injury. The Łyszczarzs, Wisniewskis and Rynkiewiczzs lived in the Stuart migrant camp (near Townsville) in 1950. The Rynkiewiczzs (and 14 other families from Stuart) settled in Ballarat, the Łyszczarzs and Wisniewskis (and others) settled in Melbourne.

Sawdust As can be seen in the photo of the spectators the sideline needed refreshing. I can remember helping to mark the lines, we used sawdust from the local sawmill on Black Hill. 127

Kosciuszko won the Taylor's Cup (1962) Trekardo Park.

Below: Rear: Mac Rynkiewicz, Harry Arts, Eddie Elsbury, Eric Oparski, Roderick Klicki, Chui Hon Wing. Front: Prasad, Steve Burcon, David Evans (goalkeeper), John Wach (mascot), Ken Wach, Michael Maciagg.



Below: Kosciuszko won the Henderson Shield (1963) Trekardo Park

Rear: Frank Rynkiewicz, Giuseppe Micich, Harry Arts, Mac Rynkiewicz, Herman Hovens, Ken Wach, Ivan Kurelja, Stan Wach. Front: Martin Vissers, Richard Majda, Eric Oparski (goals), Jack Fugiel, Theo Arts.



**Kosciuszko
(1964)**

*Includes
G Micich
Ray Maciag
L Marian
Mal Tudorovic
B Oal*



Below: Kosciuszko juniors (1964)



Above: Rear: Bernie Skrypko, Richard Juzwin, Peter Rynkiewicz, Kaz Fugiel, Dominic Micich, Richard Jarecki, Richard Kulman, Sjaak Weyers. Front: John Ciężki, Bolek Cham, Josh Kulman, Richard (Bubsie) Fugiel, George Ciężki. Coached by Stan Wach.

Below: Kosciuszko juniors (1968) *Players include Richard Jarecki, John Franczak & John Wach. Frank Różycki & Wally Kitlowski (both played in 1950s), Ed Piłat, Jakob Pamuła (played in 1960s).*



Morshead Park (1965-1990) In 1965 Kosciuszko moved from Binney Reserve to the south-west corner of Morshead Park. Today that area is vacant and unused. In 1861 Morshead Park was the Ballarat Miner's Race Club, used for trotting and harness races, today called Bray Raceway. Today there is also a Greyhound Track.

In 2014 the government and council jointly funded a multi pitch regional soccer facility on the eastern side of Morshead Park. This has three full size fully lighted soccer pitches, and some smaller practise pitches, and a 500 seat stadium with a 250 guest function center.



Our old Morshead Park ground was of a lower standard than the regional facility. We had a tall pole with two bright lights for training, with a training goal under the lights. Our clubhouse (changing room) was the old timber shed from Trekardo Park. There were no showers, no running water, and no toilets. Our soccer pitch was probably a flattened old mullock heap from a goldmine. It had native grass, and had no provision for watering. The surface was hard, and a fall guaranteed a loss of skin, but at least it never got very muddy.

New name Kosciuszko Redan SC (1970)

Kosciuszko changed its name to Kosciuszko Redan SC in about 1970. Below are two photos taken at training at Morshead Park in that era. We see Peter Rynkiewicz, George Studzinski, and Richard Jarecki.



Mac's last game for Kosciuszko (1971) My last year in Ballarat was 1967. In Jan 1968 I started work for the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission in Kerang. I played a few more games with Kosciuszko in 1968-71, if I was in Ballarat and if they needed me. The photo is i think my last game



with Kosciuszko. I forget the name of the opposing team, their ground was near the Geelong docks. We were late for the game because we got lost in the docks, & the referee gave the whole team a yellow card for being late.

Photos of visiting Polish teams



Above: Glenroy SC. Stan Slazyk (holding the flowers) is married to my cousin Danuta Rynkiewicz.

Below: Ardeer SC. Ryszard Łyszczarz (goalkeeper)(in black) and I were at Stuart migrant camp in 1950.



Below: Sunshine SC.



Above and below: Polonia (Melbourne) SC 1970. I played with Polonia in 1969.



Below: Polonia (Geelong) SC.



Polish soccer carnivals at Lara (KSC won 1974)(U13 won 1976)



Polish soccer carnivals at Morshead Park (KSC won 1972 & 1973)



300 at Polish sport day in Ballarat

It was a great day for the Polish at Moorshead Park on Saturday.

Polish soccer teams from Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat competed for cups in a special day organised by the Kosciuszko Soccer Club, Redan. Volleyball matches were also played.

About 300 people attended to enjoy the matches, a barbecue and refreshments.

Soccer details: Final: Keilor 4 d Ardeer 0; loser's final: Kosciuszko - Redan 3 d Geelong 0. Referee was Mr A. W. Payton.

Volleyball — Men: Lechia d Serena, Geelong, 15-5, 10-15, 15-13, 15-11. Lechia d Kosciuszko - Redan, 15-5, 15-4.

Women: Serena A d Serena B two sets to one. Best players: Serena A: Helen Walsh, Angela Urnayak. Serena B: Virginia Porzia, Pat Marden.

• Captain of the Kosciuszko soccer team, Harry Arts, receives the winning trophy from Mr Jack Blackmore.

The Victoria Park Vultures (1983-2023)

Leisa Kawa told me that Leisa and her husband Stan were on the committee in about 1983 when Kosciuszko Redan SC (seniors)(home ground Morshead Park) merged with the Pleasant St Primary School juniors (school is next to Lake Wendouree) and formed the Victoria Park Vultures SC. The Soccer Association favoured the merger because they wanted all teams to have both seniors and juniors. The Ballarat City Council favoured the merger (and the move to Victoria Park) because of new housing development in Alfredton near Victoria Park.



The new team colours were blue, red and white (see photos below). Pleasant St PS were blue, or blue and yellow (see photo on left). Kosciuszko were red and white. Leisa said that at the time of the merger the Morshead Park ground did not have any toilets, boys could relieve themselves behind a corrugated iron wall, and girls had to hold on, whereas today the Victoria Park complex has the best of everything (see photos below).

In 2023 the club is called The Victoria Park Vultures Football Club (now called football not soccer). There are two soccer pitches and a number of junior soccer pitches (used for cricket in summer). Bolac Cham had originally contacted the Pleasant Street PS to ask if he could coach their team, and then Bolac realised that a *merger* would be a good solution for both teams. *Facebook photos below by permission Vultures FC.*



Mac's memories of St Columba's PS and young Harry Arts

St Columba's In 1954-56 I attended Drummond St Christian Brothers primary school (now St Patricks PS). Then we (the Rynkiewiczzs) shifted across town from Sebastopol to Black Hill, and I attended St Columba's in 1956-58. At all Ballarat schools, at lunch, during the footy season, the boys kicked footys end to end in the school play area (keeping clear of kids playing marbles etc). In 1957 dad presented me with a soccer ball for my tenth birthday. I remember when he proudly brought the ball out of hiding, when we were all in our lounge room, and he kicked the ball, and it bounced off the walls and ceiling, but somehow didn't break anything. I brought the ball to school every day, and some of us boys preferred to kick the soccer ball around, rather than joining in the end to end footy.

Harry Arts In 1958 Harry Arts came to St Columba's. The Arts family were recent migrants from Holland (1956), and had shifted to Ballarat from Mt Gambier (South Australia) where the government had sent Mr Arts to work for the Forestry Commission for two years. Harry could not speak English very well, and looked funny in his Dutch clothing (leather braces and heavy duty shorts). I was the best soccer player until Harry arrived, and I wasn't very happy about being N^o2. Each lunch break Harry and I formed two teams, and we used bins for goals. The playground was congested, so, we would all rush four blocks up the road to Marks Reserve and we played our lunch-time game there, and then we would rush back. Today I notice that Marks Reserve is not used for any sport, even by the nearby Ballarat North PS. And St Columba's doesn't have its own junior soccer pitch, but it does have one soccer goal in its yard, and does provide soccer balls for use at lunch breaks. From time to time St Columba's enters soccer teams in girls and boys soccer events, and includes soccer in its after school program (busing children to the Ballarat Futsal Center or to a soccer complex).

Fortuna In later years (1961-67) Harry and I played many games in the same team (Kosciuszko) or in opposing teams (Wilhelmina)(Fortuna). Today I sometimes bump into Harry at our supermarket, and we have a chat. Harry's youngest brother Leo married my cousin (Helen Franczak), and I see Leo at family gatherings. A bunch of ex-players (Harry Arts, Theo Arts, Jack Fugiel, Gerry Rykers and others) play bowls at the Sebastopol Bowls Club each week. I visited them recently, and we talked about the old days. Theo and Leo played for Kosciuszko juniors or seniors (and later for Wilhelmina and Fortuna). I nearly forgot, my teammates Bernard Szapiel, Richard Majda and Michael Maciąg were my schoolmates at St Columba's, and in junior grades we also had Peter Rynkiewicz, Theo Arts and Leo Arts (eight Kosciuszko players in all). Lots of Polish boys were my schoolmates at Drummond St Christian Brothers primary school in 1954-56, but only four played soccer for Kosciuszko, these were myself, Eric Oparski, Ken Wach and Stan Fugiel.

Hollandia Theo told me that in about 1959 there were three Dutch teams in Ballarat -- Hollandia, Juliana, and Wilhelmina (I had never heard of Hollandia). Hollandia disbanded, then Juliana disbanded, and Wilhelmina's last year was 1964. Fortuna-65 SC was formed in 1965, and their home ground was on an oval next to and belonging to the Mt Clear Primary School. Fortuna-65 SC changed their name to Mt Clear SC (possibly at the request of the school), but in about 1968 the school *kicked them out* and they moved to Trekardo Park.

Mac's memories of soccer and football I remember dad (Frank) taking me to watch some of the Kosciuszko games in the Ballarat League in about 1958 when I was 11 and dad was 45. Some of the Kosciuszko players were dads in their 30s, including my uncle Sławko Nykoluk (Ukrainian). Stan Wach was I think the playing Captain-Coach. Mr Vissers (Dutch) was often the referee. Back in the 50s the teams were mainly ethnic – English, Scottish, Yugoslav, Croatian, Dutch, German and Polish. A couple of the Polish spectators were hotheads and sometimes gave the refs a hard time if they reckoned that the ref had treated Kosciuszko badly. I remember one ref jumping a barbed wire fence to get away. Smart refs probably parked their cars for a quick getaway.

Stan Wach started a Polish junior team in about 1958, and I joined in 1960. I remember my grandpa (Józef Olszewski) presenting me with my first pair of soccer boots (Adidas), which I wore for at least one year too long, having outgrown them pretty quickly. In those days the studs were leather, and were nailed on. Soon we could get boots with screw-in rubber studs, and later the boots had the present moulded sole design. The junior team had lots of friendly games with Polish junior teams in Melbourne (Ardeer, Fawkner and Glenroy etc). My dad and Stan Wach always taxied us in their cars.

I think that the Kosciuszko seniors did not field a team in 1960. In 1961 the junior team became the senior team, and oldtimers Stan Wach (coach) Steve Burcon (captain) and Stan Wojdat came out of retirement and joined in to help. Initially our home ground was Binney Reserve (Chisholm St, Black Hill), one block from where us Rynkiewicz's lived in 1956-59, but Kosciuszko never trained at Binney Reserve, we always trained at Trekardo Park. At Binney Reserve we used sawdust to mark the lines (which were of course a sawdust colour). Binney Reserve was a small ground. One day Wally Gradkowski (our goalkeeper on that day) booted the ball and (with a tailwind) scored a direct goal when the other goalee misjudged the bounce (possibly the only goal that Wally ever scored). On one occasion the ref stopped play because of the hail and we sheltered under the pines (my little legs were blue from the cold). In one game (at Binney) Croatia (a team of giants) beat us 15/0. I think our first win was a 3/2 win against Ararat, when I (Macka) scored my first senior goal. Keith Davidson scored our other two goals. I heard that a soccer scout was watching and that he wanted Keith to play in Melbourne.

In about 1961 the old Polish dads challenged the juniors to a game, at Trekardo Park. I forget the score, the juniors won, but not by much. My fat old dad (Frank) played, so, I had the pleasure of playing against him. This was probably the only soccer game that he ever played in his life. I was 14yo, and dad was 48yo (not very old)(today I am 75yo). Our dads must have been very sore the next day.

In one game in Ararat Stan Wach jumped to head the ball and an Ararat player headed Stan in the face and broke Stan's nose. Stan said that it was deliberate, and took the players off the field, but we eventually went back and finished the game (which we as usual lost). Stan spent the night in hospital, and next day we visited, but we met Stan exiting the lift (going home)(nose in plaster).

In 1962 we were short of players (as usual). Four of our players (Ken Wach, Rod Klicki, Bernard Szapiel and Eric Oparski) studied Art or Engineering at the Ballarat School of Mines, and they arranged for four fellow students to play for us. Two were from Thailand (Chui Hon Wing and Prasad). David Evans (a tall Aussie), became our goalkeeper, probably the best goalkeeper of that era (David soon left us to play semi-professionally in Melbourne). And there was Edward Elsbury (another Aussie). As it happened, three of our team (Mac Rynkiewicz, Richard Majda and Michael Maciąg) enrolled at SMB in 1963 and 64.

Eric Oparski took David Evan's place in goal after David moved to Melbourne. Eric was a natural, he won the club's and the Association's best and fairest a number of times. In later years Eric played some games in goal for Polonia in the State League when Polonia were waiting for the arrival of their new goalie.

In 1964 Jacob Pamuła took over from Stan Wach as (a playing) coach. At about that time the Ballarat Soccer Association merged with the Geelong Soccer Association to become the Ballarat and Geelong District Soccer Association. The Ballarat City soccer team entered a team in Division 4 of the Melbourne Metro League, and won their way up to Division 2.

In 1965 we played a friendly game of soccer against the Golden Point Football Club, which surprisingly was a 1/1 draw. It was difficult to play soccer against football players, they don't know much about the game (they attacked the player rather than the ball). And when they kicked at the ball they usually took a big swing with a murderous follow-through (we soon learnt safety-first). At halftime there was a long distance kicking contest, using an Aussie Rules ball. Stan Wach selected our kickers, and when he found

that he was one short he looked around and saw me and asked me. Anyhow I ended up winning. Kicking a footy isn't easy, but I managed to kick a long *mongrel punt* that won the day, and I still have the trophy. Funny, Golden Point asked me to play football, but I didn't take up the offer. Dad hated football, he said that it looked stupid, and that it was a "*convict game*", using a "*pig's bladder*".

Harry Arts told me a funny story regarding his mum (Wilhelmina, who everyone called Moeke) and my dad (Frank). Kosciuszko were playing Mt Clear, and our player Michael Maciąg crashed into Harry, who retaliated. Harry noticed that this started a fracas between spectators on the sideline, and Harry saw my dad bounce Harry's mum with his belly, knocking her backwards a few paces. Moeke was a pretty big gal herself. At the time Harry was of course upset, but years later sees the funny side of it. That was the first but not last time that dad used his fat belly during an argument.

In 1966 Kosciuszko moved to Morshead Park. My last year in Ballarat was 1967, because in January 1968 I started work for the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission in Kerang. I played a few more games with Kosciuszko in later years if I happened to be in Ballarat and if I was needed.

In 1968 I switched codes for one year and played Aussie Rules football with Kerang in the Northern District Football League. I remember that in my first game for Kerang (versus Koondrook) I was on the bench, and one of our players was punched and retired injured. The coach looked at the bench and pointed to me to go on. I received a handpass from our winger David McLeish, and I half turned and kicked a long goal with my first kick in senior football. I ended up kicking four goals and one point, and funnily enough the game was a draw. I was picked in the firsts every game after that. David McLeish ended up playing for South Melbourne in the VFL for many years.

In 1969 the SR&WSC relocated me to Frankston, and then Werribee, and then to Melbourne. I trained with Polonia SC who played in the State League. I didn't get picked to play for the firsts – I was a centre-half-forward (full back)(sweeper), and they had a Polish professional at centre-half-forward.

In 1972 I was relocated to Benalla, and so I played for the Benalla SC. Funnily enough this was a mainly Polish club. There was a large Polish presence in the region, because Benalla was the site of a large migrant camp that ran from 1949 to 1967. Migrants also came from Bonegilla migrant camp and from Rushworth migrant camp.

In 1976 my job involved a relocation to Tatura and so I played for the Tatura SC, a mainly Italian club. Funny, in 1972/73 Hugh Rattray from Ballarat was captain-coach of Cobram SC, and I was captain-coach of Benalla SC, and in one game Cobram beat Benalla 2/1, Hugh having scored their two goals, and I having scored our solitary goal. When walking off I jokingly said to Hugh – "*well done, you beat me*". I had previously played against Hugh at the Olympic Soccer Stadium in Melbourne in 1969, when he played for Melbourne SC reserves, and I played for Polonia SC reserves. Melbourne beat us 1/0, and Hugh kicked their goal. And naturally I had played against Hugh in Ballarat in 1964-67 when he played for Ballarat City SC. So, I had locked horns with Hugh in three different soccer leagues.

During 1970-78 I had played soccer for Benalla (we won one cup in 1973) and Tatura (we won one cup in 1976). And I played Aussie Rules for King Valley FC (runners up 1971), Tatong FC (2 premierships, 1972 and 1973) and Rochester FC. The football was on Saturdays, and the soccer on Sundays, and the soccer games were often on a football ground, sometimes the same ground that I had played on the day before. There was a danger that by playing football on a Saturday I might intentionally handle the soccer ball (a foul) when playing soccer on the Sunday, but that never happened.

Kosciuszko SC Players

1962. Giuseppe Micich, Raymond Maciąg, Michael Maciąg, Richard Majda, Ken Wach, Macka Rynkiewicz, Wally Gradkowski, Mladen Tudorovic, Eric Oparski, Jack Fugiel, Stan Wojdat, Steve Burcon, Stan Wach.

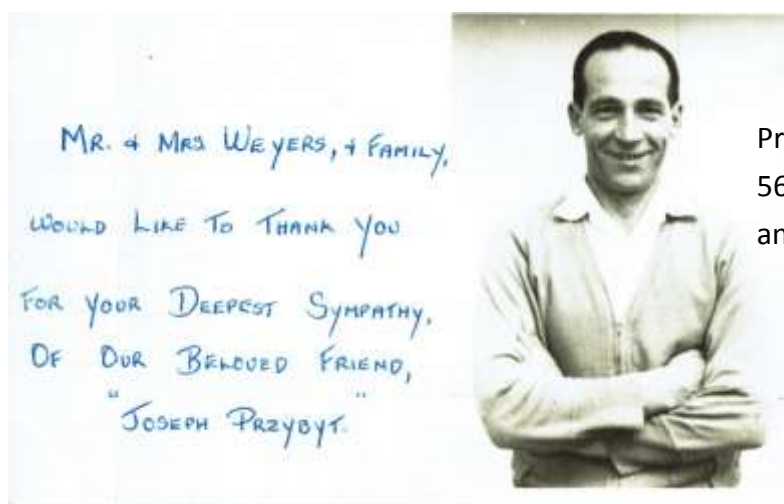
1963. Harry Arts, Theo Arts, Chui, Prasad, Dave Evans, Roderick Klicki, Martin Vissers.

1964. John Pal, Beniamino Dal Ben, Jacob Pamuła (coach), Peter Tranter, Joseph Oparski, Herman Hovens.

1965. Casimar Fugiel, Luka Kuric, Aldo Bulic, Luka Madzo, Luka Poljak, Domenico Micich.

1966. Hank Batstra, Joseph Kulman, Peter Rynkiewicz.

1967. G Studzinski, Bolek Cham, Tom Perovic, Sjaak Batstra, B Capovic, F Różycki, B Micich, R Fugiel.



1972 Joseph Przybyt

President, Kosciuszko SC, died 23 June 1972 aged 56. Such a nice guy, a sad day for the club. Joe was an uncle of long time player Jack Weyers.

Below: Wendouree SC (1967) We see J McConnell, Martin Vernvoort, D Morris, Schofield, Jim Bull, J Thornton, Jock Blackmore, R Arnold, R Bull, I Bruce.



More photos and snippets





1962





Kosciuszko juniors (1962)



The Kosciuszko Soccer Team won the Henderson Shield in 1963



Kosciuszko teams 1964

Victorian Country Soccer Fed

KOSCIUSZKO S.C.

BOCEN	Michael
DASZKOWSKI	Salvio
BLUEL	Aldo
BULIC	Aldo
CHAM	30.11.15
DAL BEN	Beniamino (see above)
FUGIEL	Casimir
FUGIEL	John
GRADONSKI	Walter
HOVENS	Norman (4th class)
KLICHI	Radomir
KULMAN	Joseph
KURIC	Luka
MACIAS	Michael
MACIAS	Raymond
MAJDA	Richard
MICICH	Domenico
MICICH	Giuseppe
MICICH	Ulrich Lomo
OPARSKI	Eric
OPARSKI	Joseph
PAL	John
PANULA	Jacob
PEROVIC	Anthony
POLJAK	Luka
POZDER	Duro
PRPIC	Vlado
RYNKIEWICZ	Peter
RYNKIEWICZ	Marjan
SKRODOW	Ljubo
TRANTER	Peter
TUDOROVIC	Marko (11th class)
WACH	Ken
Wach	Stanley

Goalkeepers 1964

P. Micich 11PP
 K. Wach 11111
 H. Tudorovic 11
 B. Dal-Ben 1P
 M. Rynkiewicz 11
 S. Macias 111
 L. Marjan 11
 H. Hovens 111

3. H. BASTA
 2. R. MAJDA
 1. P. MICICH - 1

First Game 4/4/64
 Corio B vs Kosciuszko

E. Oparski
 M. Macias
 K. Wach
 R. Majda
 M. Rynkiewicz
 J. Oparski
 S. Wasiant
 V. Gratonowski
 J. Fugiel
 P. Micich
 J. Panula

Kosciuszko vs Corio B
 5 3

R. Majda 2
 K. Wach 2
 M. Rynkiewicz 1

18/4/64
 Kosciuszko vs Corio A
 at Corio. Marianne Rd. Corio

E. Oparski
 K. Wach
 R. Majda
 P. Micich
 B. Dal-Ben
 L. Marjan
 M. Tudorovic
 J. Fugiel
 W. Gratonowski
 S. Macias
 M. Rynkiewicz

Kosciuszko Corio A
 3 8

B. Dal-Ben 2 1 Marjan
 L. Marjan 1

28/4/64
 Kosciuszko vs Warrnambool
 Hr. Geary Grounds

E. Oparski
 R. Majda
 W. Gratonowski
 M. Rynkiewicz
 M. Macias
 B. Dal-Ben
 M. Tudorovic
 P. Micich (not eligible for 3 weeks
 on injury, illness, etc.)
 J. Fugiel
 K. Wach
 J. Oparski
 R. Majda J. Pal
 P. Panula L. Marjan

Kosciuszko Warrnambool
 2 4

K. Wach 1
 L. Marjan 1

2/5/64
 Kosciuszko vs Geelong A
 Geelong Sports, Marianne Rd. Geelong

E. Oparski
 R. Majda
 W. Gratonowski
 K. Wach
 B. Dal-Ben
 M. Tudorovic
 J. Fugiel
 J. Oparski
 M. Macias
 M. Rynkiewicz
 J. Panula R. Majda & one
 Substituted
 P. Panula & one

Kosciuszko Geelong A
 3 3

K. Wach 1
 M. Tudorovic 1
 one goal

9/5/64 Kosciuszko vs Ararat
 Ararat at Tasmannia Park on 9th week
 of 11th round of E.S. League

E. Oparski
 K. Wach
 M. Rynkiewicz
 S. Wasiant
 M. Macias
 W. Gratonowski
 R. Majda
 M. Tudorovic
 B. Dal-Ben
 J. Fugiel
 J. Oparski
 J. Panula

Kosciuszko Ararat
 1 0

M. Rynkiewicz 1

10/5/64 Kosciuszko vs Bannockburn
 at Tasmannia Park

K. Wach
 E. Oparski
 M. Tudorovic
 M. Rynkiewicz
 W. Gratonowski
 R. Majda
 M. Macias
 R. Majda
 H. Hovens
 J. Fugiel
 P. Micich
 B. Dal-Ben
 S. Wasiant
 J. Pal

Kosciuszko Bannockburn
 2 5

J. Micich 1 Marjan
 S. Macias 1 111

Kosciuszko vs Geelong Scottish
 at Geelong

K. Wach
 E. Oparski
 M. Rynkiewicz
 M. Tudorovic
 R. Majda
 M. Macias
 W. Gratonowski
 H. Hovens
 J. Fugiel
 P. Micich
 B. Dal-Ben
 S. Wasiant &
 J. Pal

Kosciuszko Geelong Scottish
 2 5

K. Wach 1
 H. Hovens 1

Kosciuszko vs Warrnambool
 Tasmannia Park, Bannockburn

K. Wach
 E. Oparski
 W. Gratonowski (injury
 starts in 1st)
 M. Macias
 R. Majda
 P. Panula &
 S. Wasiant
 M. Rynkiewicz
 J. Panula
 P. Micich
 J. Fugiel
 R. Majda
 K. Wach &

Kosciuszko Warrnambool
 1 7

M. Tudorovic 1

14/5/64 Kosciuszko vs Bell Park
 Tasmannia at Geelong

K. Wach
 E. Oparski
 W. Gratonowski
 R. Majda
 R. Macias
 M. Macias
 J. Panula
 M. Tudorovic
 J. Fugiel
 H. Hovens
 M. Rynkiewicz

Kosciuszko Bell Park
 0 8

Kosciuszko vs Corio B. 20/5/64
 at Geelong

E. Oparski
 J. Fugiel
 R. Klichi
 M. Macias
 M. Rynkiewicz
 R. Majda
 J. Panula
 R. Majda
 S. Wasiant
 M. Tudorovic

Kosciuszko Corio B.
 2 2

H. Hovens 1
 P. Micich 1 Marjan

Kosciuszko vs Corio B. 27/5/64
 at Tasmannia Park, Bannockburn

E. Oparski
 K. Wach
 M. Macias
 R. Majda
 M. Rynkiewicz
 M. Tudorovic
 P. Micich
 R. Majda
 J. Fugiel
 J. Panula H. Hovens
 B. Dal-Ben & Marjan
 W. Gratonowski

Kosciuszko vs Corio B.
 2 2

H. Hovens 1
 P. Micich 1 Marjan

1/7/64
 Kosciuszko vs Geelong A

E. Oparski
 K. Wach
 J. Panula
 M. Rynkiewicz
 M. Tudorovic
 R. Majda
 R. Macias
 M. Macias
 J. Fugiel
 P. Micich
 H. Hovens

Kosciuszko Geelong A
 1 6

Hovens 1

1/7/64
 Wilhelmina & Kosciuszko
 at Mt. Clear

E. Oparski
 K. Wach
 M. Macias
 R. Majda
 M. Rynkiewicz
 M. Tudorovic
 P. Micich
 R. Majda
 J. Fugiel
 J. Panula
 H. Hovens

Kosciuszko Wilhelmina
 1 2

M. Macias 1
 M. Rynkiewicz 1 (with his own goal)

Kosciuszko teams 1965

3-4-65
Geelong (P) Kosciuszko 1

- 1 Oparski
- 2 R. Hajda
- 3 J. Fugiel
- 4 B. Chlisch
- 5 M. Rynkiewicz
- 6 K. Naeh
- 7 M. Maciag
- 8 R. Rhetel
- 9 M. Tudorowicz
- 10 M. Luka
- 11 Johnny

10-4-65
Kosciuszko v Lunenburg (4)

- 1 Oparski
- 2 R. Hajda
- 3 J. Fugiel
- 4 B. Chlisch
- 5 M. Rynkiewicz
- 6 K. Naeh
- 7 M. Maciag
- 8 J. Naeh
- 9 M. Tudorowicz
- 10 M. Luka
- 11 H. Batetra

17-4-65
Ballarat City v Kosciuszko (P)

- 1 Oparski
- 2 Hajda
- 3 Fugiel
- 4 Chlisch
- 5 Rynkiewicz
- 6 Naeh
- 7 Maciag
- 8 Rhetel
- 9 Tudorowicz
- 10 Luka
- 11 Batetra

1-5-65
Bel Park 1 v Kosciuszko 2

- 1 Oparski
- 2 Hajda
- 3 Fugiel
- 4 Chlisch
- 5 Rynkiewicz
- 6 Naeh
- 7 Maciag
- 8 Rhetel
- 9 Tudorowicz 3 p 1
- 10 Luka 2 p 1
- 11 Batetra 3 p

8-5-65
Kosciuszko v Hondony 2

- 1 Oparski
- 2 Hajda
- 3 Fugiel
- 4 Chlisch
- 5 Rynkiewicz
- 6 Naeh
- 7 Maciag
- 8 Batetra
- 9 Tudorowicz
- 10 John
- 11 Aldo Blues 2 gol.

11/str 3
Geelong Hawks v Karara 1

- 1 Oparski
- 2 Hajda
- 3 Fugiel
- 4 Chlisch 1 gol
- 5 Rynkiewicz
- 6 Naeh
- 7 Maciag
- 8 Batetra
- 9 Tudorowicz
- 10 John
- 11 Aldo

ALDO BLUES

3
Kosciuszko v Carair 0

- 1 Oparski
- 2 Hajda
- 3 Fugiel
- 4 Chlisch
- 5 Rynkiewicz 1
- 6 Naeh
- 7 Maciag
- 8 Batetra
- 9 Tudorowicz
- 10 Luka MADZO 1
- 11 Aldo

2/9/67 0
Bel Park II v Kosciuszko 9

- 1 Oparski
- 2 Hajda
- 3 Fugiel
- 4 Chlisch
- 5 Rynkiewicz
- 6 Naeh
- 7 Maciag
- 8 Batetra
- 9 Tudorowicz
- 10 Luka Chlisch
- 11 Aldo 2 g 1

3/6/71
Fortuna v Kosciuszko 0

- 1 Oparski
- 2 Hajda
- 3 Fugiel
- 4 Chlisch
- 5 Rynkiewicz
- 6 Naeh
- 7 Maciag
- 8 Batetra
- 9 Tudorowicz
- 10 Luka
- 11 Aldo

Snippets from the Ballarat Courier 1974 & 1975

11-2 win for Redan soccer side

Kosciuszko - Redan soccer side defeated North Geelong B 11 to 2 in their soccer match on Sunday.

C. Payton kicked eight of the team's goals. After only five minutes North Geelong was in front with a shot the Redan keeper G. Smith was unlucky not to save.

Redan fought back and by half time the score was 5-1 in its favor.

Redan's backline of G. Maksacheff, M. Novak, P. Rynkiewicz and P. Brightly played well all day, frustrating many of the attacks made by the North Geelong team.

Kosciuszko defeats Geelong C

Kosciuszko - Redan Soccer Club defeated Geelong City 6-4.

C. Payton, playing an inspiring coach's game, scored four goals, one from a penalty.

His first two goals came from solo efforts.

The fourth goal came from a direct free kick. The goalkeeper lost concentration after being distracted by a dummy run from J. Pilat. Seeing this C. Payton placed an excellent shot in the top left hand corner.

The other two goals came from a display of determination of going after the ball. The goals were scored by P. Smith and J. Pilat.

The Redan backline consisting of K. Davis, M. Novak, P. Rynkiewicz, P. Brightly and G. Maksacheff, played well.

G. Smith, Redan's goalkeeper, despite having four goals scored against him, played a terrific game, pulling off many fine saves.

During the second half Redan attacked many times with winger P. Van Doren crossing many fine balls that the inside forwards were unlucky not to reach.

PILAT SCORES HAT TRICK FOR REDAN

A hat trick by John Pilat helped Redan Soccer Club to victory in an exciting game at Moorhead Park on Sunday. Redan was host to Barwon City, a new team in the Western Victoria Soccer League.

The game opened with some fast play and Barwon having first stab at goal. A fine save by Redan's goalkeeper prevented a score.

Two minutes later a fast breakaway down the left wing by Keith Blackmore found Peter Brightly and he calmly chipped the ball inside for Mark Batetra to goal with a fine left foot drive.

A free kick taken by Mick Dobler had the ball to John Pilat. He was unmarked and goal.

From then Redan controlled the game. Calm defensive play by Blackmore, Rynkiewicz and Maksacheff kept the strong Barwon forwards at bay.

Redan's third goal came from a solo effort by John Pilat. He took on two opponents, rounded both and goal-ed with a shot into the top left corner of the net.

Barwon appeared rattled until a fast breakaway and a mistake by R. Jan's defence let the Barwon centre forward through to score a goal.

Both defences then tightened up. However Batetra took the ball on his half and went through Barwon's defence and a perfect pass found Charlie Payton and he headed a goal.

DEFENSIVE

Early in the second half Barwon applied pressure but it was shortlived. Barwon then went defensive and it seemed a mistake as it allowed Redan too much room in midfield.

Peter Smith collected the ball and sent it to Pilat for a goal.

Smith played a fine inside forward's game and controlled the ball well.

With five minutes' play left Batetra goal-ed, then Brightly gathered the ball and pushed it to Pilat who broke away and scored his third goal.

Score: Redan 6 d Barwon City 1. Redan - Best: Pilat, Batetra, Blackmore.

Redan players are finding it hard to make the team with O'Brien, Novak, Trigger and Jettic on the sidelines.

BALLARAT SOCCER SETBACK

Ballarat's hopes of remaining in third division metropolitan soccer received a setback on Saturday when it was defeated by promotion seeking Brighton.

Ballarat had an excellent first half marred by missing several opportunities and on one occasion R. Fugiel put the ball over the cross bar from five metres out.

Shortly before half time Ballarat put the ball into the net, but the goal was disallowed because the goalkeeper was fouled.

E. Oparski, Ballarat goalkeeper, brought off some brilliant saves with most of Brighton's shots coming from outside the penalty area.

Ballarat began the second half with A. Whitehead, R. Fugiel, A. Doig, and G. Holly-wood combining well.

Brighton's back line stood firm and with a breakaway a goal was scored early in the half.

This shattered Ballarat's confidence and Brighton scored again.

Ballarat was further demoralised when right back J. Thornton was carried off the ground after clashing with a Brighton forward.

Heavy rain in the second half caused players to make mistakes, but Brighton appeared to adapt more easily to the conditions.

Best for Ballarat were: Oparski, L. Arts, Berry and R. Fugiel.

Brighton roses defeated Ballarat.

Brighton used excellent passing and left the Ballarat defence continually on the wrong foot.

Brighton scored three times in the first half and scored another within seconds of the start of the second half.

The final score was Brighton 4 d Ballarat 0. Best for Ballarat: J. Fugiel, Higgins, Boyd, C. Fugiel.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PAST

1958 Creswick, RAAF, Wendouree, Ballarat City, Jardon, Wilhelmima, Villiers Ararat, Kosciuszko, Juventus, Villiers - Withdraw - Croatia - Takes Villiers Place Wilhelmima- League Champions - Ballarat City - Runner up.
 1959 Creswick, Kosciuszko, Wendouree, Ballarat City, Jardon, Croatia, Juventus, Wilhelmima, Ararat.
 1960
 1961 Ballarat Soccer Club entered Victorian Amateur Soccer Association M. Peel, J. Smith, R. Smith, J. Stoffels, Horst Korn, Willie Drutzel, Benny Dalben, Aldo Ferri, Malden Tudokovic, Ian Gow, David Gow, Ivan Kurelja, J. McEwen, P. Powers, H. van Rooij, A. Verberne, H. Arts, T. Arts, H. Batstra, W. Birmingham, S. Burcon, F. Campbell, R. Davidson, S. Fraser.
 Ballarat Champion of 4th Division Provisional League

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PAST

Ballarat Amateur Soccer Association
 President Secretary Treasurer
 1952 R.R. J. J. J.
 1953 R. J. J.
 1954 J.S. J. J.
 1955 P. J. J.
 1956 J. J. J.
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 2021 J. J. J.
 2022 J. J. J.
 2023 J. J. J.
 2024 J. J. J.
 2025 J. J. J.
 2026 J. J. J.
 2027 J. J. J.
 2028 J. J. J.
 2029 J. J. J.
 2030 J. J. J.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PAST

F. Gellie
 J. Heikens
 W. Jones
 T. Freeman
 T. McCue
 D. Krydos
 D. Saunders
 A. Paschke
 D. Malton
 K. Chandler
 S. Lawrence
 B. Perovic
 C. Healdner
 D. Jones
 T. Raloff
 D. Vincent
 G. Callery
 L. Ellis
 M. Abernethy
 S. Chelton
 C. Lewis

Ballarat and Geelong Soccer Association 1966 - 1970
 I. Aberdeen
 R. Arnold
 M. Arts
 T. Arts
 H. Batstra
 K. Bates
 J. Bate
 S. Bakajsky
 W. Birnie
 R. Broomer
 D. Brown
 A. Bulch
 S. Burcon
 F. Campbell
 R. Campbell
 S. Dalton
 K. Davidson
 R. Downey
 W. Drutzel
 A. Fern
 J. Fraser
 P. Gan
 M. Gibbon
 M.T. Galt
 G. Gow
 D. (Ginger) Gow
 J. Taylor
 J. Thornton
 J. Tsatsaris
 M. Tudokovic
 A. van Bovenall
 H. van Rooij
 A. Verberne
 M. Vastrebosch
 A. C. Vinter
 T. White
 E. Wood
 J. Fugiel
 P. Rykaczewski
 M. Hyrkaewicz
 G. Stadelinski
 C. Fugiel

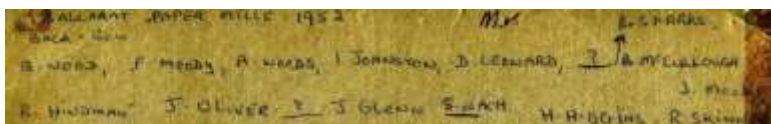
Ballarat Amateur Soccer Association from 1952 - 1961
 T. Scott
 A. Shave
 A. Coates
 B. Gardner
 T. Thornton
 J. Mitchell
 J. Mason
 T. Knapack
 J. Blackmore
 C. Swift
 J. Healdner
 J. Gerrard
 B. Schuurs
 J. Rogg
 J. van den Hoek
 P. Wedemeyer
 J. Stoffels
 J. Taitzke
 T. Simpson
 M. Peel
 R. Hydenham
 J. Newton
 S. Bekich
 J. McEwen
 D. Gavan
 J. Haddon
 G. Nauk
 M. van Gaars
 R. Coats
 L. Aberdeen
 J. Oliver
 P. van Bovenall
 H. van Rooij
 S. Burcon
 S. Dalton
 K. Bates
 J. Bate
 S. Bakajsky
 W. Birnie
 R. Broomer
 D. Brown
 A. Bulch
 S. Burcon
 F. Campbell
 R. Campbell
 S. Dalton
 K. Davidson
 R. Downey
 W. Drutzel
 A. Fern
 J. Fraser
 P. Gan
 M. Gibbon
 M.T. Galt
 G. Gow
 D. (Ginger) Gow
 J. Taylor
 J. Thornton
 J. Tsatsaris
 M. Tudokovic
 A. van Bovenall
 H. van Rooij
 A. Verberne
 M. Vastrebosch
 A. C. Vinter
 T. White
 E. Wood
 J. Fugiel
 P. Rykaczewski
 M. Hyrkaewicz
 G. Stadelinski
 C. Fugiel

Ballarat Amateur Soccer Association
 1962
 1963 Paper Mills, Verla, Ballarat City, RAAF
 1964 Paper Mills, Wendouree, Thistle, Juliana, Ballarat City, RAAF, Kosciuszko
 1965 Juliana, RAAF, Kosciuszko, Ballarat City, Wendouree, Thistle, Juliana, Thistle, Creswick, Kosciuszko, Wendouree, Ballarat City, RAAF
 1966 Kosciuszko, RAAF, Creswick, Ballarat City, Wendouree, Wilhelmima, Junior Club - Wendouree, Creswick, Wilhelmima, Kosciuszko

Ballarat Soccer Club
 Founding members of R.S.S. 99 V.F.F.
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REFLECTIONS FROM THE PAST

1969 J. Woods resigns as coach. Mr. Malcolm Peel appointed as coach.
 1970 Coach - M. Thorpe 1970 M. Thorpe resigned trustees Bill - J. Vissers temporary coach.
 1971 Coach T. Cunningham - Injured Bill division 2 merger of Ballarat United Soccer Club.
 1972 Coach E. Opatich - Injured Bill division 3 M.L.
 1973 Coach M. Doon resigned & Whitehead Injured 12th division 3 M.L.
 1974 Coach H. Arts - Injured
 1975
 1976 Coach L. Hays division 4 M.L. - Injured 3rd division 4
 1977 Coach P. Thorne last Metropolitan division 4
 1978 Coach D. John Stone
 1979 Coach H. Arts Professional League division 2 Injured Bill
 1980 Coach H. Arts Professional League division 2 Injured 7th
 1981 Coach H. Arts Injured 3rd P.L. division 2 promoted
 1982 Coach H. Arts P.L. division 1
 1983 Coach H. Arts and F. Tongue Professional League
 1984 Coach F. Tongue
 1985 Coach F. Tongue
 1986 Coach F. Tongue
 1987 Coach H. Arts
 1988 Coach C. Draper
 1989 Injured Bill place division 2
 1990 J.M. Vissers - Grandstand built - 1992 named by Vissers family
 1991 Coach J. Bull - Injured 4th P.L. division 2
 1992 Coach J. Bull
 1993
 1994
 1995
 1996
 1997 Coach H. Arts
 1998 Coach H. Arts
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Ballarat United (1972)



Geelong League (1964) In about 1964 the Ballarat Association amalgamated with the Geelong Association to form the Ballarat Geelong and Districts Soccer Association (later called the Western Victoria Soccer Association). We played at six soccer venues in Geelong (Bell Park)(Indesco)(Corio)(Geelong)(Geelong Scottish)(Polonia). The team always stopped for a beer at Batesford on the way home from a Geelong game -- we all wore our bright red Kosciuszko SC track-suits, and we joked that the SC stood for Ski Club. Today the Geelong Regional Football Association is the governing body of soccer in Geelong, and has about 25 local major seniors venues with teams in about 16 senior divisions including Melbourne Metro.

Ballarat League (1976) In about 1976 the Ballarat District Soccer Association (or Ballarat District Senior Soccer League) was formed, and the teams were Ballarat, Forest Rangers, Creswick, Maryborough, BIAE, STULS, St Patricks College, Langi Kal Kal, Sebastopol Vikings, Wendouree Wanderers, and East High. Kosciuszko left the Geelong league and joined the Ballarat league in about 1978. Today in 2023 we see dozens of full sized and junior soccer grounds around Ballarat, especially at schools.

Melbourne League (1968) In the 1950s and 60s the Ballarat City SC home ground was Trekardo Park. The members formed a new club (Ballarat SC) in 1968 to play in the Melbourne league, and their home ground was Llanberris Reserve (also used by Ballarat Athletics), and in 1973 their home ground was Trekardo Park. In 1998 Ballarat SC changed its name to Ballarat United SC, and in 2005 to Ballarat Red Devils. From 2014 their home was Morshead Park Stadium, also known as the Ballarat Regional Soccer Facility. In 2016 the Ballarat Red Devils disbanded (for financial reasons) and the newly formed Ballarat City FC took its place.

Below: Mt Clear SC (formerly Fortuna) win 1968 Cup

Rear: M Noy, T Saunders, T Perovic, Gerry Rykers, Harry Arts, A Cimera, J Ruyg, M Cimera, P De Groot.
Front: Herman Hovens, Leo Arts, Theo Arts, M Boersma, J Stoffels, Willy Hoerst, Frank Kuypers.



Ballarat Soccer Club - 1961



Back L-R - J. Vissers, J. Webster, D. Gow, J. McEwan, J. Smith, J. Stoffels, I. Kurelja, W. Horst, J. Oliver.
Front L-R - M. Peel, B. Smith, A. Ferier, B. Oal, P. Powers.

Juliana Soccer Club - 1954



Back L-R - Mr Ruyg (Sen), J. Vissers, T. van den Hoek, T. van Bommell, A. Sloothaak, H. Gibcus, J. Ruyg, T. van der Linden.
Front L-R - B. Schuurs, Joe Ruyg, H. Geeritson, A. van Berkel, J. Stoffels.

Below: Juliana team Henderson Shield (1953)



Het was in het voorjaar van 1953, dat wij plaatjes konden tonen van een Nederlands elftal in het buitenland, i.e. Frankrijk. Ditmaal komt er een Nederlands elftal van veel verder op onze sportpagina: dat van The Ballarat Soccer Club Juliana uit Australië. Deze club werd niet alleen kampioen van de Ballarat League, maar won daarop ook de beker. Dat er, behalve in de naam, geen woord Engels bij is tonen de namen, die staande van l.n.r. zijn: J. Vissers, A. van Berkel (beiden LONGA), A. Sloothaak (Sparta Loenen), J. Gerritsen (Achilles, Hengelo), B. Schuurs (MCC, Nijmegen), J. Stoffels (SCB, Bemmel), A. Kuipers (Lenig en Snel, Den Haag). Zittend van l.n.r.: J. v. d. Hoek (Abekowald, Abcoude), Joop en Jan Ruijg (Ankeveense Boys) en P. van Bommel (VSV, Valkenswaard).



RAAF SC team (1954) Rear 4th from left, John Glen (Captain). Rear 3rd from right, Leon Bilic (watchmaker, had a small shop near the arcade going into the old Britannia Picture Theatre in Sturt St)(Leon played for Kosciuszko in 1957). At left front, a Malaysian player (he worked on old war planes).

Gold Museum, Ballarat ~ showcasing Ballarat's history

Name/Title
Sporting Trophy.

About this object
A silver, Ballarat South Soccer/football trophy dated 1884. The trophy has a cupid on each handle. It has a timber base and a silver lid with soccer balls on it. There is also a soccer player for the lid which is placed inside the cup.

Date Made
1884

Collection
Local History

Object number
2012.0237



CH14.1 ZDZISŁAW MARIAN (JACK) BURCON, OAM

As related by Alice Burcon to Wanda (Skirzynski) Mann.

Jack lived by the motto: "a good Australian stems from being a good Pole"

Jack Burcon was born in Sitaniec, Poland, on the 2 February 1934, and died in Ballarat on 29 September 2011, after a long illness. Jack was the son of Felicja and Leonard. He was one of five children; Kazik (Mick), Waldek (Stefan), Tadeusz (deceased) and Wanda. The Burcons sailed from Naples on the General M L Hersey, disembarking in Melbourne on 27 April 1950, then going by train to Bonegilla migrant camp. The family were respected and admired in the Ballarat Polish community.



Above: Felicja's and Leonard's IRO photos.



Kazik (Mick)



Zdzisław (Jack)



Waldek (Stefan)



Wanda



Jack's schooling in Poland was limited, as he had completed only two years when his education was interrupted by World War II. The family was forcibly taken by the Germans and incarcerated in a concentration camp for three weeks, then taken by truck to Germany, moving to a few different camps. It was fortunate that some German camps had Polish schools operating, and Jack completed Year 7.

Left: Jack in Scout uniform in Germany.

The Burcon family (mum, dad and four children) along with another 1329 Displaced Persons arrived in Melbourne aboard the General M L Hersey on 25 April 1950 when Jack was 16. They stayed at the Bonegilla migrant camp then moved to the Mildura migrant camp, except for Jack and Mick who were sent to Sydney to work on the railways. Two years of contract work for the government allowed Mick and Jack to save enough money for the deposit on a house at 7 Essex St, South Ballarat, and the whole family moved there.

Rocklands Dam Jack's father, Leonard, was required to work at the Rocklands Dam project, and Mick and Jack were required to work for the Railways in Sydney. Jack worked as a Booking Clerk for 18 months, and then returned to Ballarat to join his family.

Alicja (Alice) Maria Burcon (Jarosz) Alice, her mother (Elzbieta Jarosz), and two brothers (Bogusław and Ryszard), sailed from Naples on the Goya, disembarking in Melbourne on 26 Dec 1949, then travelled by train to the Bonegilla migrant camp.



Elzbieta



Bogusław



Ryszard



Alice

Alice and Jack married on 18 August 1956, and they lived in Melbourne for five years. Alice and Jack had one child in Melbourne, Teresa (1958), and three children in Ballarat, Tadeusz (Tad)(1961), Marek (Mark)(1963), and Andrzej (Andrew)(1979)(who died at a young age).



Above: Jack and Alice married in Melbourne in 1956. Fr Janus (Polish Jesuit, Richmond) performed the wedding, and Fr Władysław Ziółkós from Ballarat attended. Rear L-R: Bogusław Jarosz & Mick Burcon. Wanda Burcon is next to Steve on the right, and Ted Zabinski is standing behind Wanda.

Railways Whilst in Melbourne, Jack worked as a Booking Clerk again, this time for the Victorian Railways. In 1958 (April to June) Jack was called up for National Service, at Puckapunyal, and he proudly remembered his additional three months training as a technician. After that, he registered as an Australian Army Reservist, attending most week-ends and once or twice weekly for a period of five years. Jack then transferred his Railways employment to his home-town, Ballarat, where he worked as a Conductor and Signaller. Jack spent 40 years with the Victorian Railways, commencing in late 1951 and retiring on 4 October 1991.



Left: Alice, Teresa, Wanda (Jack's sister), Jack, Tad and Mark: 1969.

Polish Association Jack, his mum, dad and siblings supported the fledgling Polish Association in 1952, and Jack remained connected until 1994 (see Ch9). Alice (Jack's wife) was a staunch and committed member of the Association, supporting her husband in his endeavours to ensure the Association's success. Teresa Koleczko (Jack's daughter) filled Committee roles and became the Assistant Secretary for the English language in 1976, and Treasurer in 1982. Jack was present when the Association was officially formalised, and Edouard Gzik became the first President. Jack served in a variety of positions including Auditor and later Vice-President. Fr Władysław Ziółkóś, the Polish Chaplain at the time, is credited as being a co-founder of the Association.

President It wasn't until 1970 that Jack assumed the office of President of the Association, Bronisław Brodziak became Treasurer at that time. Jack served as President for 24 years until 1994. He followed in the footsteps of the early Presidents who set an exhausting pace. In particular they were determined to make the Polish Association's Hall a reality, and Jack proudly presided at the opening of the Copernicus Hall in 1976, as already detailed in Ch3.



Left: Jack and Mr Bill Stephen, MLA, at the opening of Copernicus Hall: 14 August 1976.



Copernicus Hall Orion St, Sebastopol. Above: The Premier of the Polish Government in Exile, Mr K Sabbat, visited the Hall in January 1980.

Mothers Club Alice was a diligent and generous supporter of the Mothers Club which began in 1967. The first meeting was held in Maria Mroczkowska's house, and Maria took up the leadership role in the Club during its initial setup.

The Presidents of the Polish Association during Jack's era were as follows.

1952-53. E Gzik.	1960-61. T Jarecki.	1969-70. W Kitlowski.
1953-54. J. Cacek.	1961-65. K Ciężki.	1970-70. J Pamuła.
1954-55. J Fugiel.	1965-66. T Jarecki.	1970-94. Z (Jack) Burcon.
1955-57. W Kitlowski.	1966-68. R Skrypko.	
1957-60. K Ciężki.	1968-69. K Mroczkowski.	

Association Aims From 1970 to 1994 the Polish Association and the Polish community had, in Jack, a capable and dynamic leader at the helm. The Polish Association was a non-political, charitable, national and cultural organisation, and these principles were guarded through the years. It aimed to:

- preserve the traditions of the Polish people
- build harmonious relationships within the Polish community and beyond
- provide social gatherings/get-togethers for enjoyment of both young and old
- keep the Association alive for future generations, so that the Polish heritage would continue and not be forgotten
- raise money to pay bills and maintain/upgrade the Copernicus Hall.

Association Activities Under Jack Burcon and his Committee, the Polish Association *spread its wings* and provided help and support for the Polish settlers:

- it was a needs based Association
- it stayed connected to the Catholic Religion, nurturing contact with Polish priests

- it stayed connected to Poland (providing funds when needed, e.g. Polish floods, and for the needy in Poland) which was in effect a satellite of the Soviet communist regime
- it stayed connected to Polish Associations in Melbourne and Geelong
- it fostered involvement with the Ballarat and Sebastopol Councils
- members celebrated Anzac Day, Remembrance Day (11th November), Polish Independence Day (11th November 1918), Polish Constitution Day (3rd May), and sometimes Armed Forces Day, known also as the Feast of the Polish Armed Forces (15 August).
- it provided opportunities for concerts, lunches, Balls, outings, picnics and casino trips
- activities included – Summer Camps, a Youth organisation, a boy's Scout Group, a language group (Polish)(taught by Fr Ziółkós and later by Halina Kowalewska), and a music band group
- a Mothers Club added a much needed dimension to the Association
- volley ball teams and soccer teams came from Melbourne and Geelong to compete against the Ballarat Polish Association teams.

Association Community Work

The Polish Association was intrinsically community based and the following four examples reflect its far reaching effects at home and abroad.

Ballarat Mental Hospital The Association's community work extended to the Ballarat Mental Hospital in Gillies St. Patients were invited and picked up to attend Christmas lunch at Copernicus Hall.

Ballarat Children's Home Appeal



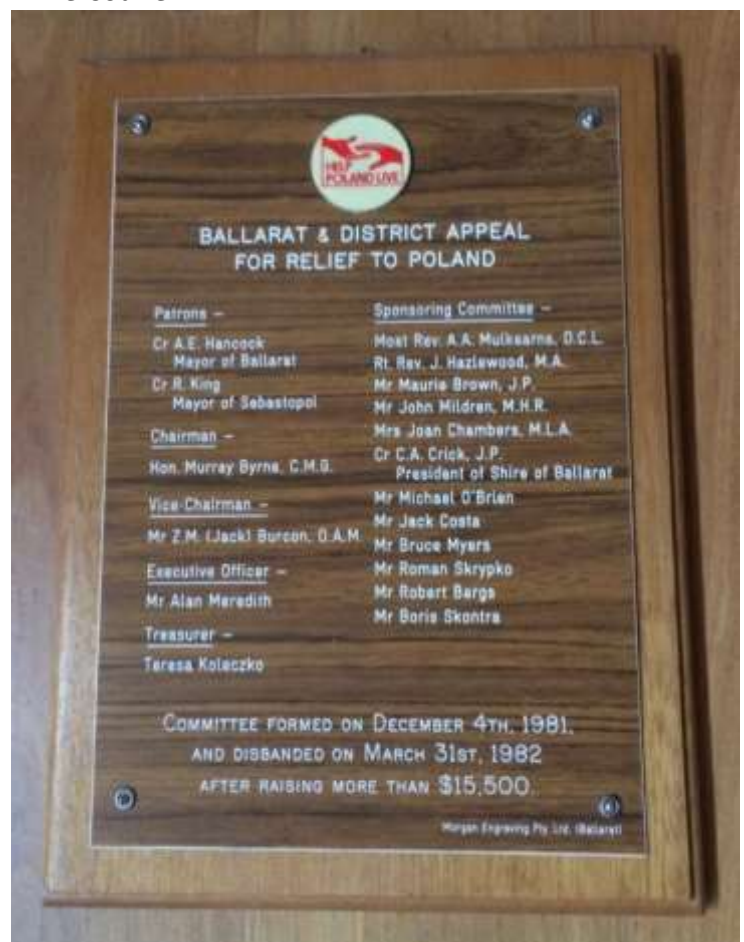
Left: Jack Burcon President of the Ballarat Polish Association presented a cheque for \$200 to the Chairman of the Ballarat Children's Home Appeal, Mr Murray Byrne, at the annual Polish ball at the Civic Hall, Sat 13 August 1977: The Courier.

Relief for Poland Appeal, 1981-82

See plaque on right -- \$15,500 was raised.

The Ryder-Cheshire Foundation

established for the relief of suffering was supported by the Polish Association. The Polish community provided funds for houses to be built for blind children near the forests of Warsaw. The Lady Ryder Memorial Trust was set up by Baroness Ryder of Warsaw CMG, OBE, shortly before her death in 2000, so that her good works could continue, a living memorial to the millions who gave their lives in two World Wars, in defence of human values.



St Georges Hall During the early years there were many occasions where the Polish Association and community held celebrations, commemorations and dances, mainly at the old St Georges Hall.

Masquerade Balls When Jack became President five Masquerade Balls were held at the Civic Hall. One Masquerade Ball was held to raise money for the building of Copernicus Hall, during a time of great inflation.



Above: A ball at the Civic Hall, 10 August 1974. Stanisław Jurkowski, Jack & Alice Burcon, (unknown) (lecturer from the University), Joanne Stopinski (Princess of the Ball), Teresa Burcon, Józef Stopinski, Andrew Stopinski, Zofia Stopinski (Geelong), Frank Rynkiewicz, Tad Burcon kneeling.

Right: 21st Anniversary Celebration cake: 10 August 1974: L-R: Jack talking to Cr J F McKay (Mayor of Ballarat 1975-76), M J Białowiejski (president of the Federal Polish Association), the Mayor Cr A C Rizzoli, & Dudley Irwin MP. Other guests at the Cocktail Party and Ball included Tom Evans MP, Cr Alan M Harris, Frank Rogers (Town Clerk), Cavaliere (Sir) John H Sorrell MBE, Ken Flecknoe (Managing Director of The Courier). The Courier Mon 12 Aug & Wed 14 Aug 1974.





The Ballarat Courier
12 August 1974



CAKE WITH POLISH EMBLEM

Cr J. F. McKay (centre) presents an anniversary cake decorated with the Polish emblem to the president of the Polish Association of Ballarat Mr J. Burcon. The presentation was made during a cocktail party which preceded the Polish Association's 21st anniversary ball. Looking on are (from left) Federal president of the Polish Association Mr M. J. Bialowieyski, the Mayor Cr A. C. Rizzoli, and Mr Dudley Erwin, MP.

BELOW: Miss Joanna Stopinski receives one of the hundreds of leis presented to guests by young hostesses Mary Kawas (left) and Debbie Payton. Later in the evening, Joanne also received The Courier sash as Princess of the Ball.



Above: Civic Hall, Masquerade Ball: 23 April 1977. Front: Mrs McKay & Cr J F McKay (Mayor 1975-76), Mrs F J Rogers, Cr M J Brown & Mrs Brown (representing the Mayor Cr Jessie Scott), Alice Burcon. Back: Mr Frank J Rogers (retired Town Clerk), Frank Rynkiewicz & Irena Rynkiewicz, Jack Burcon.

Three New Year's Eve Balls and Annual Balls were well attended and enjoyed by the Polish Community, and the greater Ballarat population added support. Two balls were later held at the Wendouree Municipal Hall in Howitt St, and after 1976 many balls and dances were held at the newly built Copernicus Hall.



Above: Standing: Zofia Franczak, Irena Rynkiewicz, Jack Burcon, Stanisława & Jan Danski. Sitting: Anna & Tadeusz Jarecki, Frank Rynkiewicz, Tadeusz Franczak, Maria & Kaz Mroczkowski, & Alice Burcon.

Cocktails before the ball



Miss Theresa Burcon, joint secretary of the Polish Association of Ballarat, was chairman at the cocktail party in the upstairs reception foyer at the Civic Hall. Miss Burcon talks with guests (from left), Mrs Byrne and Mr Murray Byrne; Mrs Short and Mr Jim Short, MP.



The Courier
12 August 1978

President of the Polish Association of Ballarat, Mr J. Burcon (second from left), was host and master of ceremonies at the commemorative ball and cocktail party celebrating the association's 25th anniversary and Poland's National Day. He was joined in a toast to the future by (from left), the Mayoress, Mrs Chisholm, Mrs Brown, Cr M. J. Brown who was honored with the Polish Gold Cross of Merit, and the Mayor, Cr J. A. Chisholm. Mrs Burcon assisted her husband as hostess and was one of the judges at the ball.

A cocktail party in the reception foyer of the Civic Hall, followed by a commemoration ball, culminated a day of celebrations for Ballarat's Polish Association, its members and friends.

More than 100 people attended the cocktail party and were welcomed by the chairman, Miss Theresa Burcon, associa-

tion co-secretary (English language).

Among apologies were Mr Tom Evans, MLA; Mr Bill Stephen, MLA and Mrs Stephen; editor of the Polish Weekly, Mr Grot Kwasnieyski and Mrs Kwasnieyski and the managing director of The Courier, Mr K. J. Flecknoe, and Mrs Flecknoe.

A special shield of honor was presented to the association's president, Mr J. Burcon, for his outstanding contribution to the Ballarat community and Polish Association. The ceremony was conducted by co-secretary (Polish language), Mr B. Brodziak.

Honorary membership shields were presented to Father J. Krasocki, Cr J. McKay, Mrs M. Mroczkowski, Mr E. Pilat, Mr L. Rizzoli, Mr A. Kawa, Mrs J. Burcon, Mr K. Mroczkowski, Mrs Z. Franczak, Cr G. Collins (Sebastopol Mayor elect), Mrs M. Lewicki and Mr T. Jarecki.

Among official guests were Mr W. Krupinski, delegate for Victoria for the Prime Minister for the Polish Government in Exile, and Mrs Krupinski, who came from Melbourne for the 25th celebrations.

Others were the Mayor and Mayoress, Cr and Mrs J. A. Chisholm, Mr Jim Short, MP, and Mrs Short, Cr M. J. Brown and Mrs Brown; Cr A. Harris (chairman of the Good Neighbor Council), and Mrs Harris; Cr J. McKay and Mrs McKay; Cr K. Lawrence, Mayor of the Borough of Sebastopol, and his

fiancee, Mrs Shirley-Smith; Cr Graeme Collins, Mayor elect of Sebastopol, and Mrs Collins.

Stage backdrop in the Civic Hall was the Australian and Polish flags draped on Gordon and Jan Thurling's painting of "The Polish Eagle."

Committee members decorated the hall with emblems of Poland's major cities, mobiles depicting the association's 25 years, balloons, tinsel baubles and streamers.

The Polish Mothers' Club excelled itself with catering and music was by "The Delicados" and "The Continentals".

Judges for the Queen and Princess of the Silver Jubilee Ball were Mrs Chisholm, Mrs Short and Mrs Burcon.

As queen they chose Mrs Hanna Schmidt and she was presented with The Courier sash made specially for the occasion in the Polish National colors.

Mrs Schmidt who was partnered by her husband, Aleksandar, arrived in Australia four months ago. The mother of two, she lives in Melbourne and was on her first visit to Ballarat. She wore a gown in the Polish colors of red and white with matching jewellery, and expressed pleasure at winning the title.

Princess of the ball, Miss Ingrid Kush, also came from Melbourne and was partnered by a Creswick man, Mr Alan Helon. She was presented with The Courier sash in blue.

Miss Kush looked glamorous in a backless red jersey fitted dress, with a sequined panel on the bodice and intriguing strap treatment at the neck. Her only jewellery was a marvellous silver "Cleopatra" necklace.

The Ballarat Courier
12 August 1978 p24

The first International Ball was held on 26 April 1980. This occasion was used to acknowledge 10 years of Jack's Presidency at a cocktail party in the upstairs foyer of the Civic Hall, where Bronisław Brodziak, the first Secretary of the Association, presented Jack and Alice with an engraved gold pen set and a leather attache case.

Below: Kylee Mann, Shane & Mandy Howlett, & Paul Mann (grandchildren of first generation parents Skirzynski & Walczak) watching the presentation -- Mrs McKay (former Mayoress) and daughter are in background.



The Courier Monday 28 April 1980 included the above photo and the following information. About 60 official guests included the Mayor and Mayoress of Ballarat, Cr and Mrs McKay, Mr Jim Short, MP, and Mrs Short, Mr Robert Knowles, MLC, Mrs Joan Chambers, MLA, the Mayor and Mayoress of Sebastopol, Cr and Mrs N Donald, the managing director of The Courier, Mr K J Flecknoe, and Mrs Flecknoe, Ballarat Town Clerk, Mr Ian Smith and Mrs Smith, representatives of Odra Travel Service, Mr M Zarzycki, and his sister, Mira, Cr and Mrs M J Brown, representative of BTV-6, Mr Roy Taylor and Mrs Taylor, the president of the Polish Federation of Victoria, Mr P Koziell of Melbourne, representative of the Polish Association of Victoria, Mr J Jablonski, of Melbourne, and Ethnic Radio personalities, Mr and Mrs Z Drzymulski.

Flags and Guests National groups present represented Britain, Croatia, Holland, Latvia, Ukraine, Scotland and the Italian Catholic Federation. The ball opened with an impressive procession of the flags of all nations represented. Frank Stodolny, Polish Youth Club president, led with the Australian flag, and other flags were in alphabetical order, with Peter Koleczko carrying the Polish flag. The flags were displayed on the stage of the Civic Hall, and the Polish Eagle emblem was the center piece.

National Costumes People from interstate, many parts of Victoria and some overseas visitors joined local residents to make up more than 400 at the ball, some dressed in national costume. The Delicadoes of Geelong and the Continentals of Ballarat provided the music, and guests were entertained by 18 dance members of the Polonez Dancing Group from Melbourne.

Commemorative Ceremonies

The Polish Association also celebrated Polish National dates with concerts and commemorative ceremonies. The fallen Polish Soldiers of WW2 were commemorated in August 1969, 1973, and 1978. Also, Remembrance Day and Anzac Day were both commemorated every year.



25th Anniversary The Association had its 25th Anniversary celebration on 7 August 1978 in conjunction with the 1978 commemoration. On that morning Mass was celebrated at St Patrick's Cathedral, followed by a wreath laying at the Cenotaph in Sturt St, and then lunch was served at Copernicus Hall.



Peter Koleczko

Alex Kawa

Jan Danski

Michael Lewicki

Michael Burcon

Adam Zakrzewski

Cocktail Party and Ball In the evening, at the Civic Hall, there was a cocktail party for special guests, followed by a commemoration ball. Teresa (Jack's daughter and Assistant Secretary) was the Chairperson of the Anniversary celebration. The Mothers Club catered for a smorgasbord supper, and music was provided by the Continentals and Delicadoes. A full day of commemoration and celebration was meticulously executed.

POLES REMEMBER THOSE WHO FELL

A TRIBUTE OF SILENCE

The Ballarat Polish Community on Saturday held day long celebrations to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Cassino.

High Mass was celebrated in St. Patrick's Cathedral on Saturday morning, and later, a colorful wreath-laying ceremony was conducted at the Cenotaph.

Saturday also commemorated the Memorial Day of Polish soldiers and the anniversary of the Battle of 1920, the Miracle of Vistula.

Members of the local Polish community were dressed in uniforms and their national dress.

The Mayor, Cr. M. J. Brown, representatives of the Ballarat branch of the Returned Services' Leagues, including acting president, Mr H. Goldsmith and other leading citizens, were present at the Cenotaph.

Honor Guard

Many of the ex-servicemen present, came in contact with Polish troops during World War Two.

A guard of honor was formed as an avenue for the official party. One Minute's Silence was observed by the large crowd in remembrance of fallen comrades.

Included among the wreaths placed on the Cenotaph was one from Cr. Brown, on behalf of the citizens of Ballarat.

On Saturday night, a commemorative concert and ball were held in the Civic Hall.



Ballarat Poles remembered their countrymen who died in the Battle of Cassino and in Poland during the Second World War with a commemorative service at the Ballarat Cenotaph on Saturday morning. It was the 25th anniversary of the battle. The wreath-laying service was part of a day-long commemoration which finished on Saturday night with a concert and ball in the Civic Hall.

With heads bowed, members of Ballarat's Polish community and the Mayor, Cr M. J. Brown, paid tribute at the Sturt street Cenotaph on Saturday morning to the Poles who died in the Battle of Cassino and in Poland during the Second World War. The commemoration ceremony followed a service at St Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat. RIGHT: Members of Ballarat's Polish community commemorated the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Cassino with a wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph. Expatriate Poles in colorful national costumes, and wearing Second World War medals, formed a Guard of Honor at the Cenotaph to remember Poles who died in the battle. The photo shows flag bearers carrying Polish and Australian flags leaving the Cenotaph after the service.

● Story and picture, Page 3

THE POLES REMEMBER



The Polish war cemetery at Monte Cassino. Italy, holds the graves of 1,072 Poles who died storming the bombed-out Benedictine abbey atop the mountain in May 1944, during the Battle of Monte Cassino.

Tulip Tree

The Association planted a Tulip Tree in the Botanical Gardens on 14 August 1976, commemorating 25 years of Polish settlement in Ballarat. The plaque was unveiled on 1 September 1989 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the German invasion of Poland.

The two photos on the left are of the planting of the Tulip Tree, and include Jack Burcon, Antonina Yaworowicz, Graeme Mann, Frank Rynkiewicz, Kylee & Paul Mann (Skirzynski).

The two photos below show the Tulip Tree in 2022.



Premier of Polish Government in exile visits



The Courier: Tuesday 31 January 1984

Polish awards presented to seven local citizens

The present century would be noted in history as the century of the greatest conflict in the history of the world; a conflict between Godless communism and the largely Christian Western culture, the Premier of the Polish Government in Exile, Mr K. Sabbat, said yesterday in Ballarat.

Now 40 years after the World War II there was still no peace in the world, and in Europe armies stood against each other ready for war.

"What is happening in Poland through Solidarity is beginning to show a way to resolve that conflict without war," he said.

Mr Sabbat, who is on a tour of Australia and New Zealand, was in Ballarat to present high Polish orders to seven local citizens, in recognition of service to Poland and to the Polish community.

The highest award, the cross of the Polonia Restituta was presented by Mr Sabbat to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Ballarat, the Most Rev Ronald

Mulkearns, Mr Murray Byrne, former Victoria Minister for Immigration, and Mr Jack Burcon, president of the Polish Association of Ballarat.

The Gold Medal of Merit was awarded to Mrs Alice Burcon, to Mr K.J. Flecknoe, chairman of The Courier and 3BA, and to Mr Roy Taylor, of BTV6, and the Silver Medal of Merit to Mr W. Kitlowski, a past president and active member of the Polish Association.

Mr Sabbat said the Polish nation, and others of Central Europe, had the right to expect the support of freedom-loving people and in fact was getting that support.

The Polish Government in Exile, which was the continuation of the Polish Government set up in London during the war, wished to recognise the service of at least some of those who had contributed to Poland, politically, morally and in a charitable way, he said.

Mr Sabbat was accompanied by the Polish Minister for Australia, Mr E. Hardy, the

Victorian Minister, Mr W. Krupinski and the president of the Polish Association of Victoria, Mr Z. P. Kozitto.

Welcoming them at a ceremony in the Town Hall reception room, the Mayor, Cr Melton Foo, said Ballarat was pleased to share in Mr Sabbat's visit to Australia.

"Many people throughout the world look to you for leadership," he said.

"We know something of your homeland and its contribution to the world in both cultural and political affairs.

"Your visit will help your people here to keep alive their hopes for the future.

"The Polish Government in Exile has a difficult task, lacking the resources of other Governments, and anything we are able to do is a great pleasure to us," he said.

Speaking on behalf of the recipients of the honors, Bishop Mulkearns said he accepted his award on behalf of all the people of the Ballarat diocese of his church.

It was a great privil-

Officials of the Polish Government in Exile stand with the Mayor and recipients of Polish awards at a presentation ceremony at the Town Hall yesterday. From left are the award recipients, Mr W. Kitlowski, Mrs Alice Burcon, Mr Jack Burcon, Mr Roy Taylor, Mr Ken Flecknoe, Mr Murray Byrne, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Ballarat, Most Rev Ronald Mulkearns, the Mayor, Cr Melton Foo, the Premier of the Polish Government in Exile, Mr K. Sabbat, the Polish Minister in Australia, Mr E. Hardy and the Minister in Victoria, Mr W. Krupinski.



The Premier of the Polish Government in Exile, Mr K. Sabbat, speaks at the Town Hall during his first visit to Ballarat. — More pictures, pages 6 and 7.

ege for all those and honored, that they should be recognised for the contribution made by various facets of the local community.

"Ballarat has a proud record, particularly in the post-war years, of welcoming people from other countries and helping them to become established here.

"The Polish people are a symbol of the division between East

and West and a reproach to the West, which went to war to liberate Poland from the Nazis and then left it to the Communists.

"The fact that we now have a Polish Pope is helping to focus the attention of the world on Poland and its problems.

"Anything we have done is no more than we should have done, but it is nice to be recognised," he added.

Fifty years on ... Polish immigrants remember



Mayor Cr Don Woodward, right, and president of the Polish Association of Ballarat Jack Burcon unveil a plaque at the Ballarat Botanical Gardens which marks 50 years since Germany invaded Poland.

By LISA WALKER

About 20 Polish immigrants gathered in Ballarat yesterday to remember that fateful day 50 years ago when Adolf Hitler sparked World War II with a surprise attack on Poland.

The events of September 1, 1939, changed the lives of millions of people.

For most of those who gathered in Ballarat it meant growing up surrounded with uncertainty, upheaval and separation from family.

Members of the Polish Association of Ballarat took part in a flag raising ceremony, laid a wreath at the cenotaph and unveiled a plaque at Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

It might have been 50 years ago, but Sophie Pamula, now of Ballarat, said: "I think the older you get, the more you remember."

Mrs Pamula was 11 when the war broke out and at 13 was "packed into goods trains and the next thing we knew we

separated right from the start. My father stayed in a factory in Poland and myself and my brother, aged 3, were put into a prison."

His family was reunited when forced into Germany in 1943 after Russia's attack on Germany.

After the war they were sent to a displaced persons camp for four years. In 1949 they were sent to Italy and the choice of a future home was between Australia, America, Canada and Belgium.

The whole family arrived in Australia only to be separated for another two years. They were scattered around the country, including Sydney, Balmoral and Mildura, while they fulfilled work contracts to pay for their fares.

Reunited once more, they decided to settle in Ballarat because it reminded them of their town in Poland with its greenery, flowers and parks.

Mr Burcon did not return to Poland until 43 years after the war ended.



Recalling the war years is Sophie Pamula, with her grandchild Jenny Skrypko, 11.

— PICTURES: Ian Wilson



Above: The plaque unveiled on 1 Sept 1989 on the 50th anniversary of the German invasion of Poland.



Above: Tulip Tree planted 14 August 1976.



Left: Jack Burcon inspecting the plaque.

The Younger Generation Accept the Challenge Jack Burcon and the older generation kept the Polish Association *alive* for four decades; from its inception in 1952, to its *apparent demise* in 1994. At the Annual General Meeting in May 1994, Jack Burcon, Jacob Pamuła, Michael Yaworowicz, Kaz Mroczkowski and Teresa Koleczko (Burcon), "*after serving the Polish Association for many years, stepped down from their positions*". See Ch9.

The reasons for this action were complex; the Association members were getting older, membership was dwindling and community integration was occurring. The younger generation seemed to lack interest to ensure the Association's survival. At first the younger generation were extremely hesitant to take on the daunting task of continuing in their forefathers' footsteps. As often happens in times of extreme need, young volunteers were finally persuaded to step in and accept the challenge -- taking the Polish Association into the twenty-first century.

Jack Burcon's exceptional dedication is recognised through his Awards:

- The Polish Scout Cross -- was awarded in Germany, on 11 December 1947
- 1st Class Gold Merit Cross -- from the Polish Government in Exile, London, on 11 November 1972
- Medal OAM -- on 26 January 1982, for work with the Polish and ethnic groups of Ballarat.

Jack lived by the motto:

"a good Australian stems from being a good Pole".



**Jack Burcon
at home**

*Grandson
Matthew
Koleczko*



*Picking and cleaning
passion fruit
and cherries.*



Jack Burcon's Presidency Years



Jack delivering his initial speech at the opening of Copernicus Hall: 14 August 1976



Jack unveiling the plaque: Mr Bill Stephen, MLA, Frank Rynkiewicz, Annie and Karolyn Franczak.

Below: Jack Burcon and Zofia Franczak (Treasurer).



Cr Alan M Harris presenting a Good Neighbour Award to Jack.



Above: Mr Jim Short (Federal Member for Ballarat 1975-80) presented a flag to the Ballarat Polish Scout Group. L-R: Tad Burcon, Joseph Kawa, Frank Stodolny, Mark Burcon, Jack Burcon, Stan Kawa, John Drzymulski (from Melbourne, Leader): The Courier: circa 1976.

19-8-1977

Wanted urgently: Polish blood

Polish people in Ballarat are to be approached to give blood urgently needed by the Red Cross blood bank.

The blood of Polish people is five times more likely than that of people of Anglo-Saxon or Mediterranean origin to have a marker which is vital in safe transfusions and organ transplants.

The president of the Polish Association of Ballarat, Mr Jack Burcon, said last night he would be approaching members on Sunday to give blood.

"I hope to persuade some of them to become donors," Mr Burcon said.

He said the association always helped the Red Cross appeal by either giving a donation, or collecting money.

The marker in the blood is a white blood cell antigen, important for successful kidney and bone marrow transplants and for safer transfusions.

A TWO PAGE APPRECIATION OF JACK'S 10 YEARS WORK AS PRESIDENT

Z.M.(Jack) BURCON

1. FULL NAME : Zdzislaw Marian Burcon (Jack)
 - 2.: DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH : 2nd February 1934
Sitaniec, Poland.
 3. DATE OF ARRIVAL IN AUSTRALIA : April 1950
 4. SCHOOLING, NATIONAL SERVICE: Primary school including year 7.
Technical school - only did three months training as a radio technician. His family was forced to move to Germany.
National service - 3 months at Puckapunyal, April - June 1958.
Registered in army reserves for 5 years. Attended most weekends and once or twice weekly.
 5. DATE OF MARRIAGE AND NAME OF WIFE: 18th August 1956
Alicja Maria Jarosz (Alice).
 6. Number of Children: Teresa Koleczko - 1958 (II Secretary)
Tadeusz - 1961
Marek - 1963
Andrzej (Andrew) - 1979
 7. PRESENT ADDRESS: 5 Essex Street South, Ballarat Vic 3350
Phone : 311726
 8. EMPLOYMENT: On arrival in Australia - railways - Sydney.
Moved to Victoria 1951. Melbourne then Ballarat
 9. COMMUNITY INTERESTS & ROLES PLAYED: President 1970 --
Commissioner of affidavits 197 .
Interpreter in Ballarat Court.
Representative of Polish community in local and government functions.
 10. AWARDS TO BALLARAT PEOPLE BY ASSOCIATION:
Bishop James O'Collins - Order from London
Cr Maurice Brown - Order from London.
Cr Lex Rizzolli - Honorary member
Cr Alan Harris - Honorary member
Hon Murray Byrne - Honorary member
Mr F J Rogers - Honorary member.
- II. History of Polish Assoc in Ballarat and roles played by Jack Burcon.
- After the II World war, the Polish immigrants were mostly demobilized members of the Polish armed forces in Exile. One result of this war was that the exiled Polish people were forced into an unfortunate situation whereby they were to remain only in the Western countries, or else return to Poland under a communist regime. The release of these displaced persons from Germany took at least five years to materialize and immigration camps were erected in various places in Australia. Such camps as Wodonga, Bonegilla in Victoria resulted. In some cases , for example Mildura and Cowra, men were separated from their families in order to work contracts imposed by the Government for the free passage from Europe. This situation lasted for a period of two years. It was after this contract that a more settlement began.
- The real exodus of Poles from Germany took place in the years between 1949-52 and took years to consolidate. In the years between 1950-52 Ballarat received many of these Poles. Almost immediately members of the Polish community began to organize a Polish Association as an obvious need; I-) Environment - adjusting to the totally different surrounding and the difficulty in "fitting in".


- 2-) Language barrier
- 3-) Homesickness
- 4-) Completely different way of life.

This association in Ballarat began in mid '53 and from its beginning was a great success. It took a firm stand and proceeded with a statute which in principle was anti - political, it's main objective being -; to become a charitable - national and cultural organization. In this way the Association was trying to assimilate and incorporate our members in the new society. The principles mentioned have been guarded throughout the years. Our efforts have been worthwhile. Many activities and celebrations have been the highlight of this Association. Many Polish national dates have been commemorated in various ways; concerts, balls, celebrations. One of many memorable events occurred at the cenotaph with a ceremony for the Fallen Polish Soldiers of World War II in August 1969-73-78.


The year 1970 started a new era for the Polish Association in Ballarat. The general meeting in that year voted in as president Mr Z M (Jack) Burcon. At the same time the community realized that the older generation of Polish migrants was gradually lessening in number with each year, and looked to the future with anxiety. With the approval of all the Polish Associations members, decided to provide some permanent community centre for its people. To fulfill these hopes, it began to build a cultural centre. The time was not in our favour for inflation greatly undermined our funds. Nevertheless, by community effort and sheer will power to succeed, the task has been completed. We must praise the energy, determination and great personal sacrifices our president Mr Z M (Jack) Burcon without whom it would have been impossible to succeed.

As we grow over the years, we are providing shelter and financial help for our Youth club, soccer club. Our auxiliary Mothers club is also very active and extremely helpful in their voluntary capacity. Its members are working with great sacrifices and the same must be said of all our members and the organizing committees, and, with our dedicated president Z.M.(Jack) Burcon. We as an ethnic group in today's permissive society is facing the same problems and difficulties as every other community or charitable organization. Up to the present we have stood firmly on our feet with help from outside the association. We work and hope not only for the Polish Association, but for the good of our Polish community in Ballarat, the good name of Poland and local worthwhile organizations.

This year 1980 we chose the 1st International Ball or rather the preceding cocktail party to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Mr Z M (Jack) Burcon's presidency. This decade brought prosperity and stability for the Polish Association. He fulfilled our expectations. He as a representative has built up a cordial and lasting relationship between the Polish and Australian authorities and the general public. This gives us hope and opportunity to grow even further. The work ahead is hard and full of sacrifices, nevertheless the challenge is there. He with his open mind, energy and support of his faithful members of the organizing committee and the rest of the Polish community can provide in the future, great benefits to all. With the help of local, sympathetic authorities, a useful co-operation between the Polish Association, the rest of ethnic groups of Ballarat and the Australian public is most desirable and possible. This in time should bring a complete and united society.



II Secretary Polish Assoc.
Teresa Koleczko



I Secretary Polish Assoc.
B Brodziak.

BURCON BACKGROUND HISTORY

A MEMOIR BY WANDA BURCON

Our Mother – Felicja Martyn

Mum was born into a farming family in Sitaniec, a small village about 10 km, from Zamosc, West Poland. She was born on 25 September 1902 in a family of seven – Milka, Janek, Felicja, Tadeusz, Halina, Zygmund and Stefan. Little is known of her early life as I did not question or discuss such matters. I do know that her mother, Jozefa, died at an early age, being accidentally buried in a pit by a heap of soil which she and her daughter Halina (12 years old) were digging. Her father, Franciszek, lived into his seventies, and died after a short illness. He was a stern, hardworking man, and I believe that after his wife died he ruled *his tribe* with an *iron rod*.

Mum often spoke of the great poverty in Poland, both during WW1 and WW2, often existing on potatoes and cabbage soup. She recalled the many times the whole family had to leave their home and hide in the nearby forest to escape the bombing by German planes. Fear was a constant in their lives.

Mum was 25 when she married my father, Leonard, on 22 August 1928. He was a handsome man who was in the air force in 1926-27. They lived in the Martyn home, where my siblings and I were born, together with my grandfather, and Mum's three brothers, until our eviction in 1944.

Her brother Janek married, had 2 children, and died not long after WW2. Tadeusz, who lost most of his eyesight during the war, died in sad circumstances of alcohol poisoning aged in his early 50s. He was badly beaten by the Nazis for smuggling leather skins. It is known a neighbour reported him. Unconfirmed gossip was that his drink had been spiked in the bar where he died. Milka married and had 2 children – Adam and Eva -- she died in Poland of old age at 93. Halina, the youngest girl, went to Warsaw in 1937 and worked as a bank teller. During the Warsaw bombings she was badly injured and her leg was scarred for life. She married Jan Kowalewski in Ballarat in 1962, and died in Ballarat in 2007 aged 89. Zygmund and Stefan (aged 18 and 17) both decided to accept the German invitation to go to Oświęcim (Auschwitz) -- they had been promised that they could work for their freedom.

Sadly, both did not survive three months -- it was not a place for work, but a death camp.

Our Father – Leonard Burcon

Leonard was born on 24 August 1904. He was one of three boys – Victor, who married and had three boys of his own -- Stanislaw, who had three girls (two died as babies). Leonard and his brother Victor were conscripted into the air-force before WW2. They were orphaned when Leonard was about 12, and I have little detailed knowledge of his parents, Antoni and Agnieszka, or of his siblings Victor and Stanislaw.

When Leonard married my mother, he lived in the Martyn home with her family, and worked as a boiler-maker in a Jewish owned company called Zipcow, which had operated in Sitaniec since WWI, until Zipcow was taken over by the Nazis.

Our Family – Sitaniec

(For easier understanding I shall use the Anglicized versions of my brother's names).

After Mum and Dad married, family life resumed at the Martyn home where I and my brothers were born. First born was my brother, Michał Kazimierz (*Mick Kazik*) in 1932 -- followed by Zdzisław Marian (Zdzichu - Jack) in 1934 -- Stefan Waldemar (Waldek --Steve) in 1936 -- Tadeusz Leszek in 1938 -- and Wanda Justyna (me) in 1943. Tadeusz died of pneumonia when he was 18 months old.

The Rotunda -- Zamosc

In 1944, three months after I was born, the Germans took over our home town, Sitaniec, and most of the populace (mainly young men) were taken to join their army. Dad, and many strong older men, were forced to stay in the village to work for the Nazis, as were a number of young girls. The elderly, and mothers with young children, were shunted into cattle trucks and taken to the Rotunda in Zamosc, a make-shift concentration camp. The Rotunda had previously been an armoury building for the Polish Army in WW1, the cells were used as storage for firearms. These cells were then used for the evacuees from Sitaniec and other villages in surrounding districts. Mum, Jack, Steve and I occupied one of these cells with many other families.

We were kept there for about three or four weeks. My young brothers, Jack and Steve, remember digging pits outside the walls of the Rotunda for the people who were shot (mainly the aged, because they were old), and pouring bags of lime into the graves. They were 9 and 7 years of age!

Mick, my eldest brother, was away from home selling one of the family cows at the time of the Nazi takeover of Sitaniec. He was 13 years old. As he came close to the township, someone told him not to go into the village as the Germans were evacuating everyone. So with the few 'zloty' he had from selling the cow, he waited in the bushes and saw his family being driven away. As they were leaving, Mum saw him from the truck, and called out to him. He ran after the truck, but it did not stop. Thinking that his entire family had been taken away for ever, he was left devastated and all alone. He did not know that Dad was still in Sitaniec. Using his initiative, he decided to seek out his aunt Halina in Warsaw.

Lodz Orphanage

At the end of our imprisonment in the Rotunda, Jack and Steve were taken away to an orphanage in Lodz, a city in Central Poland. Mum had no idea where they, and many other young children, were being transferred. Because I was only three months old I remained with her and later we were hastily transported to a Nazi camp in Poland. The reason for our hasty departure was the fact that Zamosc is situated very close to the Russian/Ukrainian border, and we would be the first area to be invaded by the incoming Russian army.

I cannot imagine nor describe the terror, anxiety, grief and helplessness, Mum and other mothers must have endured during those days of fear, uncertainty and despair.

Sitaniec to Lodz

Dad, after being left to work for the Nazis in our hometown, Sitaniec, somehow heard that his boys had been taken to the orphanage in Lodz. Before the Russians took over in Sitaniec there was much chaos and as the Nazis retreated Dad was able to escape and somehow made his way to Lodz. With continued help from strangers, he sheltered at an all-male Jewish Ghetto which was fenced off from the orphanage. With help from the woman in charge of the children, he was reunited with his sons -- Dad and the two boys met up at Lodz train station. Jack often commented that because both the boys had blonde hair and blue eyes, they had been spared from being killed. They saw many dark haired boys, thought to be Jews, taken away never to return.

Minebittel

Somehow, with little explanation as to how, the whole family was reunited in Minebittel, a German labour camp, together with some French prisoner of war soldiers. This was May 1944, I was 6 months old. My oldest brother Mick was not with us and neither parent knew where he was, or whether he was alive.

Whilst in Minebittel, Mick surprisingly arrived after walking from Warsaw where he had stayed with our aunt Halina for over a year. Dad said that Mick's shoes were worn out, his clothes in rags, and it had taken him over a month to find exactly where we were in Germany. By now he was an experienced lad of 15!

We learnt from Mick that after he saw us being transported from Sitaniec he ran after the truck for many kilometres. Crying with fatigue and despair, he had no idea what to do. Being warned not to return, he made his way 250 km through the country side to Warsaw where Aunt Halina lived. He walked, and at times hitch-hiked, and sometimes he managed to jump on a train, in his venture to survive, using the money from the sale of the cow. He stayed with Halina for over a year, and he worked in a bomb factory. Both he and Aunt Halina desperately tried to find some information from the Red Cross as to the whereabouts of his family. Once known, he was off to Minebittel.

Buchholz

Not long after we were reunited we were taken to a filthy flea ridden Russian ex-prison camp in Buchholz, where we slept on straw. Thankfully we were there only a few days.



Salzgitter

From Buchholz, we were sent to Salzgitter, a farming district, where Mum, Dad and Mick were 'employed', or rather forced to work, as farm hands. Dad and Mick were at a different farm from Mum, Jack, Steve and me. Mum and we three children lived in a so-called barn away from the owner's house. Mum and Dad worked all day, and occasionally on a Sunday we were united for a few hours. Because of the infrequency of these visits I never really got to know my father or Mick.

Left: Felicja, Leonard & Wanda: Salzgitter 1945.

In 1945 – Liberation!

After the war all of the Polish families working on farms in Salzgitter were classed as Displaced Persons while waiting to migrate or to return to Poland.

My two younger brothers, Jack and Steve, related to me years later that, when they were not helping on the farm, their job was to look after me, and, as I sat in a high pram watching them *skim stones across the pond*, my energetic excitement would often cause me to *leap* out of the pram and land on the stony ground. No wonder I blame them now for my *brain damage*!

I have no memory of our time in Salzgitter but I have photos of me at a kindergarten with other children where we sang songs and dressed up like mushrooms. There are also photos of *get-togethers* with Polish families from other farms, who were all awaiting the same fate. Some photos show that I took part in a religious festivity but that is all a mystery to me. We were in Salzgitter for almost five years.



*Above: Children with mums after a kindergarten performance: Germany 1946:
Wanda & Felicja are on the extreme right.*

Below: Kindergarten: Germany 1946: Wanda front left.





Above: The Burcon family in the veggie garden at a displacement camp on visiting day: Germany 1946.

Australia

In 1949 the family were offered a choice of returning to Poland, but, because it was now under Soviet communist rule, my parents made the decision not to return. Other options were America, Canada or Australia. No one knew much about Australia, except that it was a country far away from the suffering and chaos they had experienced. Later, when we settled in Ballarat, I became very interested in film stars -- I remember being angry and could not believe that Mum had chosen Australia over the USA!! Hence in late 1949 we were transported by various means to Naples, Italy, and in early 1950 boarded a ship to take us to our new life -- Australia.

An Adventure On The Seas

Naples

My *conscious life* of awareness and memories began on a wharf in Naples on a cold morning in March 1950, when I was six. I stood close to my family -- with other people, mostly strangers, milling around us with bags and anxious faces -- many huddled together for support and comfort. I stood there, with a smile of excitement and anticipation of a great adventure. I had been told that we were to board a *big boat* which was to take us to Australia. We children had never heard of Australia, but we did now know that it was very far away, a place where we would be safe. My brothers could sense my excitement I'm sure, and I think they too were looking forward to a new life.

No excitement for my parents!

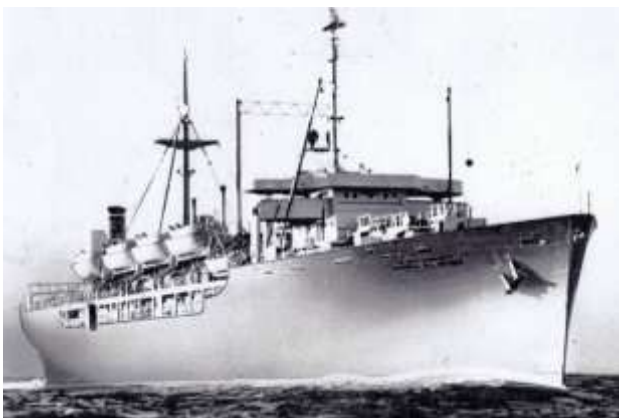
As I looked at my mother, I saw a troubled face, aged by constant pain and worry -- my father's, haggard and anxious, burdened down with hard work and responsibility. There was so much fear, worry and uncertainty in those wrinkled frowns. Little wonder! They had been through ordeals that no person should ever have to endure. Unbelievably, after years of separation, our whole family was together, standing there, each with our own thoughts, wearing every piece of warm clothing we possessed.

The smell of the wharf was new to me, salty, weedy, and quite sickening, and the boat we were to embark was enormous. I wondered how on earth this huge craft could stay on the water without sinking. It was an American ship, named *General M. L. Hersey*. I cannot remember the cabin allotted to us, but it was somewhere below deck -- but I do remember that my mother was permanently there being violently ill.

Who took our family photo on the wharf? I have no idea, but unknown to him this was the beginning of my new life -- a life which has proved to be one of unexpected self- discovery, true friendships, fulfilling achievements, and many memorable, extraordinary experiences -- a life I never imagined on that wharf in Naples! The voyage took about five or six weeks with a few ports of call, but because most of the migrants were sick or wary we did not venture out on unknown land, even for a short time.



Above: The Burcon family, waiting to board: Naples 1950.



Above: The General M L Hersey.



Right: Wanda & Leonard on board: Naples 1950.



Mick and Jack were taken on as *cooks* on board the ship, and I spent my time running around the deck, loving and revelling in everything I saw in the newness of this adventure. Dad occasionally came on deck to keep an eye on me and my 13-yr-old brother Steve, but basically the freedom I felt on that boat was exhilarating.

Left: Jack & friends on the General M L Hersey: 1950.

It seemed like an age since we left the docks in Naples, but in reality it was only a day or so, when we saw a red glow escalating towards the sky, lighting up what seemed to be the

whole universe. It was an amazing sight of red, orange, and tinges of blue, more spectacular in the evenings and at night, a fire radiating up to the heavens. Much later we discovered it was Mount Stromboli, a volcano, erupting in the sea not far from the Italian southeast coast. Never had I experienced such a sight, as all aboard watched in awe and wonderment. Our five or so weeks aboard took us through the Suez Canal, across the Indian Ocean to Perth, and then onto Melbourne.

Funerals at sea

In my ecstatic state I was usually blissfully unaware of some potentially distressing moments, but I recall vividly one such time. My mother and I were part of a crowd standing deckside with many people crying and praying. There was a flag draped over something on a thin board. I asked my mum what the lump underneath the flag was, and she replied "*a baby who had died*". I couldn't see or hear a baby, but accepted her explanation without much thought. Suddenly, to my surprise, the plank flew up and a small little white bundle slid into the swirling sea. I remember being shocked and concerned, turning to Mum saying "*Is that the baby? What will happen to the baby?*". Her very factual response had a lifetime effect on me: "*The fish will probably eat it*". This was my first experience of a funeral at sea.

The National Archives of Australia in Canberra have a record titled *Migrant Selection Documents for Displaced Persons who travelled to Australia per General Hersey (Herzy) departing Naples, Italy 31 March 1950, and this includes the following details....*

The Ship and the Voyage

The ship General Hersey was chartered by the IRO to transport DPs to Australia. This voyage was the ship's second DP voyage to Australia departing Naples on 31 March 1950 and arriving in Melbourne 27 April 1950 carrying 1335 DPs, the majority were mostly from Europe, Poland and the Baltic countries, in addition to Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia and were composed of single males, single females, married couples and family groups.

During the Voyage, Nominal Roll No 550, Bronisław Rem, 9 months, Polish, died on 14 April of Pleurisy. He was buried at sea.

Nominal Roll No 313 Father Povuls Becs and Nominal roll No 1320 Father Ivan Prasco were permitted to go direct to accommodation in Melbourne.

Stanislaw Majewski and Zenon Radomski, stowaways on the 'General Stewart' were transferred at sea to 'General Hersey' disembarked and escorted to the Commonwealth Employment Office for allocation of employment.

The passengers proceeded to the Department of Immigration Reception and Training Centre at Bonegilla by special trains which left the ship's side at 8:50 am and 9:50 am on 28 April 1950.

Later, there was a second funeral – sadly, a young woman, but this time I was more prepared for the outcome.

I do not recall being bored at sea but I know my parents couldn't wait to get to their destination and to feel the earth under their feet. For seven years they had been forcibly transported to various places in Europe, so with the same fear and trepidation they wondered why this would be any different. More camps, more uncertainty, more forced labour, more *lack of freedom*. Yet, there was always the element of HOPE!

The delight of the ship and my love of the sea with its mystery and unremitting vastness had influenced the very core of my life. Now, as an adult, I can accept the turmoil of my childhood years, and can identify it as being an integral part of this world with its natural beauty and imagery, its devastating tragedies, but also realizing the uniqueness of life.

Port Melbourne

We arrived in Port Melbourne on 25 April, but were unable to disembark because it was some sort of holiday. ANZAC Day was unknown to us. Almost everyone on board watched with anticipation from the deck on that day, but there was very little activity on the pier. We disembarked on the 27th -- where the contrast from the previous days was amazing – there were people everywhere, buzzing to and fro as if they had too much to do. There were many 'stops and starts', with much paper work which seemed to take forever. Even though we did not understand a spoken word, there were people who smiled at us and even offered us food. They had prepared 'funny' sandwiches – a piece of white bread on top of another with something in between. I was used to one piece of dark bread with *stuff on top*. Even though the funny sandwich was different, it tasted delicious, and I was very hungry. After we had our first *taste* of Australia, we were transported by bus from Princes Pier to Spencer St Station.

The train travel was long but reasonably comfortable. We each had a seat! My parents told me much later, about our travels from Poland to various farms in Germany during the war. We had been hoarded like cattle from one place to another, standing in trucks or trains all the way. So, as they sat in their separate seats, surveying this different landscape, they must have felt relieved and more positive. We travelled for many hours on that train with one stop, where we were able to walk around on the platform for a short time. We arrived at a place called Wodonga, and we, and many others on that train, were enthused about finally having arrived at our destination, and hopefully our new home! -- but no! -- more buses! -- more travel -- to a camp site called Bonegilla, some miles out of Wodonga.

Bonegilla

The Bonegilla migrant camp was made up of old army barracks, and housed many migrants of many nationalities. The accommodation was basic, but the facilities included many acceptable features, including a hospital, church, primary school (which Steve and I attended), barber, butcher, and a general store which issued linen and other necessities which were distributed to migrants by the block supervisors. All bedding and utensils which were issued to us had to be returned to the stores before we left. Any lost items had to be paid for -- how I don't know. Each person was responsible for the washing and storage of their cutlery and dishes. Housework and caring for children and laundering of clothes were part of the daily routine. Mum, as well as many women whose husbands had gone away to work, were often burdened by the needs of family in unfamiliar territory.

There was an administration/information centre which provided help with Commonwealth employment, Social Services, Customs etc.

Railways-- Sydney

I remember that my mother, my brother Steve, and I were *housed* in one of these barracks. My two older brothers, Mick, now aged 18, and Jack, almost 16, stayed with us for some time, but were then sent to work on the Railways in Sydney to fulfil our two year contract with the Commonwealth. Later they worked on the Railways in Melbourne, and remained in that employment for the rest of their lives.

Rocklands Dam -- Victoria

My father was sent to help build Rocklands Dam in Victoria, for two years, not that this knowledge meant anything to me at the time, as he was away somewhere for most of my early life.

Mum, Steve and I stayed at Bonegilla for a few months. My memory of this place is hazy, but I do remember having a picnic with many other families by Lake Hume, and even paddling in the water. Many boys played soccer and volleyball.

My time at Bonegilla migrant camp was generally happy, but I was also aware of the mistrust and fear in people's eyes especially when the siren went to call us to meals, work, recreation or other activities. Because of the many different nationalities, the people in charge of the Centre, although using some unfamiliar English, decided to use German as the common language most migrants would recognise. Hence the loud speakers and their loud sirens and verbal commands, being enforced in a strong voice in German, were interpreted as an indication of sending the new arrivals to their death.

I was too young to comprehend the reason for their distress, or for the negative effect of the sirens and commands, calling all to meals or various activities. Many years later I visited Bonegilla and watched the information video which mentioned that German was used, and I then realized why I had seen the horror on faces all those years ago. It took months for many people in this migrant camp to realise and understand that this was NOT a Concentration Camp, but the beginning of a New Life.

Mildura

After a few months in Bonegilla, Mum, Steve and I were transferred to the Mildura migrant camp.

Ballarat

In 1951 whilst we were in Mildura, Mick and Jack, who were in Sydney, somehow were able to purchase a house in Ballarat. My family thought it was a palace after the years of being displaced persons. It was basically a three bedroom timber high roofed *mansion*. Many happy days, and some not so happy, were experienced in that house. Having very little money Mick and Jack continued working for the Railways

(in different capacities) as did Dad. Steve worked at the abattoir, and I was fortunate to get an Australian education.

Each month the Polish community had a dance night at St Georges Hall, just around the corner from our house. I loved these nights as it was a time not only to learn to dance, but also to associate with many families we knew from Bonegilla. The Polish migrants were a close community.

Our Polish priest, Ks. Ziółkóś, was revered by our community and became a stable support to all. At the end of his life, Jack and Alicja took him into their home and cared for him for three months before he died of cancer.

At the age of 13, I was asked to be a bridesmaid for Jack and Alicja's wedding which took place at St Ignatius Church in Richmond, Melbourne. After five years living in Melbourne Jack returned to Ballarat.

Since returning to Ballarat, Jack became widely known for his work with the Polish Association and the wider Ballarat community. The rest is history!

As a loving brother, Jack was the BEST. Since his passing on 29 September 2011 I still miss him greatly.

Wanda Burcon -- December 2022.



Above: On the front lawn of Jack & Alicja's house: 1969: Leonard & Alicja's house is in the background next door. Elzbieta Jarosz (Grandma), Halina Kowalewski (Martyn)(Aunt)(Felicja's sister), Janek Kowalewski, Felicja Burcon (Martyn), Mike, Wanda, Jack. At front: Teresa, Tadeusz, Marek & Alicja. Leonard & Stefan were not in the photo.

Rotunda Zamość from Wikipedia

Museum of Martyrdom of the Zamość region – Rotunda *Location Zamość, Poland*

The Rotunda Zamość or the Museum of Martyrdom of the Zamość region - Rotunda (Polish: Muzeum Martyrologii Zamojszczyzny - Rotunda), is a Polish museum devoted to remembering the atrocities committed at the former Rotunda Zamość Nazi German camp located in Zamość near Lublin. The Nazi German Gestapo camp was set up in occupied Poland during World War II, as part of the Polish extermination program known as the German AB-Aktion in Poland, Ethnic cleansing of Zamojszczyzna by Nazi Germany....[1]

Rotunda Zamość. Quarter of the Victims of Nazi Genocide.

Rotunda was built between 1825 and 1831 in accordance with the design of General Jean-Baptiste Mallet de Grandville. Was part of the fortifications of the Zamość Fortress. During World War II and German AB-Aktion in Poland in 1940 was taken over by the German Gestapo precinct. It served as a prison, holding camp and a place of mass execution of Polish people.

8000 people died in the Gestapo Rotunda camp in Zamość.[2] Nobody was tried for those crimes. During Generalplan Ost and Ethnic cleansing of Zamojszczyzna by Nazi Germany from Zamość Region Germans resettled 297 villages, about 110,000 Polish people, including 16,000 to Majdanek concentration camp, 2,000 to KL Auschwitz-Birkenau. 30,000 children were resettled. 4,500 Polish children from Zamosc Region deported to Germany in order to be Germanized.[3]

The gate which leads to the yard has the original doors with an inscription in German which reads:

THE TEMPORARY CAMP FOR THE PRISONERS OF SECURITY POLICE.
IN GERMAN: GEFANGENEN-DURCHGANGSLAGER SICHERHEITSPOL.

Last execution took place on 20 and 21 July 1944, when 150 people were shot.[4]

In the center of the courtyard there is a stone plaque commemorating the site of the cremation of human bodies. Here Nazi criminals burnt the bodies of the victims they had murdered, prisoners of the Rotunda. May they rest in peace.

On the cemetery around the Rotunda lie the ashes of more than 45 thousand people.[5]

Jack and Alice visited the Rotunda in August 1985



The memorial plaque at the entrance said

W LATACH 1940-1944 BYŁA
MIEJSCEM KAZNI LUDNOŚCI
ZAMOJSZCZYZNY
HITLEROWCY WIEZILI TU
ZAMOPDOWALI I SPALILI WIELE
TYSIECY POLAKÓW

English: Between 1940 and 1944 it was the place of execution of the people of the Zamość region, the Nazis imprisoned and burned many thousands of Poles here.

Right: The entrance to the Rotunda.

There are many websites & youtube footages on the internet showing the present details of the contents of the Rotunda museum. Some features have changed since Jack took his photos in 1985.



Right: Memorial Crosses around the Rotunda, marking the site of the ashes of more than 45 thousand people.

In 1944 Jack and Steve, aged 9 and 7, had to dig graves around the Rotunda, for people who had been shot, mainly old people.



*Right: A postcard of the Rotunda.
Below: Jack's photo.*

The drawn arrows on the postcard & on the photo mark the Burcon's cell door. The central stone plaque-altar commemorates the site of the cremations of bodies.

Below right: Jack and Alice and the local priest at the altar



Right: A memorial inside the Burcon's cell, taken by Jack in 1985.

I think that today the museum has completely changed this memorial.

Jack's 1985 photos on these pages are blurry, but there are many modern photos available on websites on the internet for anyone wishing to see more detail.



Left: A memorial in one of the cells.

TU CZCI POLEGŁYCH I PARTYZANTÓW
WALCZĄCYCH O WOLNOŚĆ NIEPODLEGŁOŚĆ I
DEMOKRACJĘ Z OKUPANTEM
HITLEROWSKIM NA ZIEMI ZAMOJSKIEJ

Here honors the fallen and partisans fighting for freedom, independence and democracy against the Nazi occupier in the Zamość region.



Right: A memorial in one of the cells.

ODESZU NA WIECZNĄ WARTĘ

"We will go away for eternity".



CH14.2 MŁYNARCZYK JAN AND CECYLIA 1945–2019

by Irena (Młynarczyk) Green

Jan, Cecylia and I (Irena, three and a half years old) migrated to Australia after WW2 on the American Army ship *General W.C. Langfitt*, which left Naples, Italy, on 18 December 1949 and docked in Melbourne on 14 January 1950, with 1282 Displaced Persons. This was the third voyage of four that the *Langfitt* made to Australia.

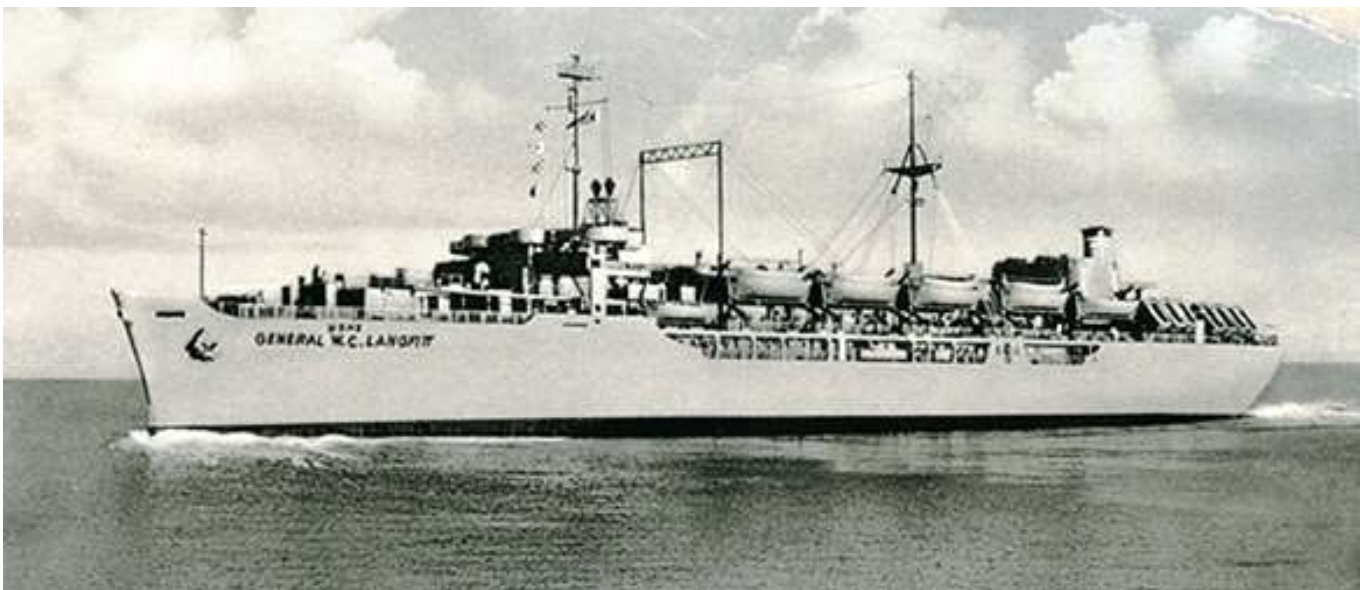
Jan was in the Polish Army when Poland was invaded by Nazi Germany. He was captured by the Germans, and became a prisoner of war.

Cecylia was 14 when she was taken from her family home in the middle of the night. She was put onto a truck then herded onto a train bound for a secret location a few kilometres outside of Hamburg, Germany, where she was forced to work in an ammunition factory for the duration of the war. The officers reminded her daily that she better do a good job because the “bullets were for her brothers”.

After the war, in 1945, Jan and Cecylia both ended up in the same refugee camp named *Hel Camp*, in Lubeck, Germany. They met at a dance one evening. I (Irena) was born at *Hel Camp*. Jan and Cecylia also married at *Hel Camp*. Jan worked as a Security Officer at the Camp during that time.

1948-1950. The Commonwealth countries, England, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia, and America, were looking for refugees for migration. Australia carried out an advertising campaign in Europe enticing refugees to come to Australia promising a better life. Jan and Cecylia wanted freedom and dreamed of a better life for themselves and their children, and made a life changing decision to create a new life for themselves in Australia.

On 18 December 1949, Jan and Cecylia and I boarded the *General W.C. Langfitt* in Naples, along with Cecylia’s sister Helena and her husband Zymon (Simon) Oparski, and their two children, Eric and Joseph, leaving behind their homeland, family and friends. They had little money, and in Australia they had to face the language barrier, loneliness, separation and a different lifestyle. With myself (Irena) on their arm, and three suitcases, there was no turning back as they travelled in anticipation across the ocean with many other migrant families to their chosen home, Australia -- a land of dreams -- a land of freedom -- the promised land -- the promise of a better life.



Australia the Lucky Country. Upon arrival in Melbourne, 14 January 1950, all the migrants were taken to the Bonegilla migrant camp, the largest migrant camp in Australia, near Wodonga. Many found it very scary and upsetting coming face to face with isolation, fear, discomfort, the climate, different food, the language barrier, and the Australian system -- and there was nothing around except lots of sheep and paddocks, and it was very, very hot. Men and women (children stayed with their mothers) were put into separate sleeping quarters – and it was very traumatic. Australian food made many sick. It was a cultural shock to all -- Australia was totally strange. Government officials asked that all migrants write their names on a list at the Main Office to help authorities to co-ordinate work placements according to everyone’s skill set.

Cairn Curran Dam, Maldon

After five months at Bonegilla, Jan and Cecylia, and Helena and Simon Oparski, relocated to Welshmans Reef (population 20-30), where they shared a small cottage. Jan and Simon worked as labourers on the Cairn Curran Dam, near Maldon. They rode 20 km on bicycles from Welshmans Reef to Cain Curran and back every day, rain, hail or shine. After six months of cycling they bought a car together – a Buick.



I (Irena, aged three and a half) went to school in Welshmans Reef. Every day after lunch my mum Cecylia sat at the back of the classroom, to learn English.

1951. Jan and Cecylia welcomed another daughter, Barbara, born at the Maldon Hospital.

Photo: Dec 1951: Jan, Irena, Cecylia & Barbara Młynarczyk.



1953. The family moved to Newstead (six km down the road). Work had ceased at the Cairn Curran Dam (government funding had stopped), and Jan was offered work on the railways.

Simon Oparski heard that there were plenty of jobs in Ballarat, so the Oparski family moved from Welshmans Reef to Ballarat to see what was available. The Oparskis bought a home in Ripon St South.



*Photo left: My uncle, aunt & cousins:
Joseph, Eric, Simon & Helena Oparski:
Helena & my mum Cecylia were
sisters.*

1955. Jan and Cecylia and family moved from Newstead to Ballarat, and boarded with the Dron family (Polish), who were kind enough to give our family a temporary place to live until we saved enough money for a deposit for a house. Two years later, Jan and Cecylia bought their first home at 108 Forest St, Wendouree (now a McDonald's car park). Whilst living with the Dron family, Jan and Cecylia

were introduced to the growing Ballarat Polish community, where they were able to connect with their heritage, where great friendships were formed -- giving them emotional support, a sense of belonging, and allowing them to connect and celebrate their Polish heritage.

Jan was employed as a mouldmaker at M.B. John & Hattersley (valve manufacturer), Creswick Rd, where he worked for over 30 years. Cecylia worked at the Ballarat Mental Hospital as a Nursing Assistant, and retired after 15 years.



*Photo: Ballarat Botanical Gardens:
1958: Barbara, Cecylia, Jan and
Irena Młynarczyk.*

1974. Jan and Cecylia worked hard, they saved their money and loved to travel -- they visited surviving family members in Poland three times. My husband Max and I joined Jan and Cecylia in Poland, and we visited relatives together.

Jan and Cecylia moved house four times in Ballarat. They loved Wendouree, and they lived in Forest St, Mathilda St, Norman St, and finally Form St.

Jan passed away at home (Form St) on 6 October 1990, aged 67.

Cecylia continued to live independently in Form St, until August 2017. Cecylia passed away at Kelaston Aged Care, Wendouree, on 24 June 2019, aged 92.

Barbara passed away at the Ballarat Base Hospital on 7 July 2011, aged 60.

Photos below are of Jan, Cecylia and Barbara, who have passed away.



Barbara, the youngest daughter, married Martin Ikstrums in 1972. Barbara attended St Joseph's and St Columba's Primary Schools, and Sacred Heart College, Ballarat. Barbara and Martin have three children, Paul, Mark, and Amanda, and have six grandchildren.

Irena. I attended St Joseph's and St Columba's Primary Schools, and Mary's Mount (now Loreto College), Ballarat. I married Max Green in 1970, and we lived in Melbourne for 11 years (Hawthorn, then Melton). We moved back to Ballarat in 1982, and are now retired and live in Delacombe, Ballarat. We have two daughters, Lisa and Joanne.



Left: Lisa married Scott Young and they have two daughters, Rachel and Annalese.

Below: Joanne married Mark Thornton and they have two sons, Oliver and Noah.





I was involved with the Ballarat Polish Association from 1995 to 2018, and served in various positions on the Executive throughout those 23 years. I was President during the “proposed Wind-Up of the Polish Association and the selling of the Hall process in 2018”.

Left: Irena at a Polish Association display at Lake Wendouree on Australia Day.

Photo right: Irena and Max in 2022.

Jan and Cecylia enjoyed and loved their life in Australia. There were no regrets. After overcoming many obstacles and challenges and much heartache, they created a new life for themselves. They integrated, they sacrificed and worked hard, and revelled in the freedom Australia offered. They achieved much. They were proud to call Australia home. They loved to be surrounded by family, grandchildren and friends.

They loved their home in Form St, Wendouree. In their hearts they were happy, grateful and content, knowing all was well, and that one day, when they passed on, their daughters, Irena and Barbara, and their families, grandchildren and future generations, would be in a better place.

Thank you Mum and Dad for your vision, and for your fierce determination, and for all the sacrifices you made so that we were in a better place, to have a better life. What an inspiration you were to your whole family and others. Congratulations on a life well lived.

Irena (Młynarczyk) Green.

Visiting the Rynkiewiczz



*Above: Pat & Frank Kicinski, Cecylia & Jan,
with Frank & Irena Rynkiewicz.*

Above: Cecylia & Jan with Irena Rynkiewicz.

Below: Cecylia and her sister Helena and other nurses at the Ballarat Mental Hospital: circa 1956.



The Młynarczyk family



Above: Barbara, Jan, Cecylia and Irena: Ballarat Botanical Gardens: 1972.



Above: Irena and Cecylia at the 2014 Polish reunion in Castlemaine, organised by Bill Sikora. Bill's reunion was a huge, well planned function, for past Polish residents of the Castlemaine region, many of whom later settled in Ballarat.

CH14.3 THE CIĘZKI FAMILY – by John Ciężki



Kazimierz (Kaz) Ciężki Born 17 March 1923, Dabrowka, Poland.

Eugenia (Jeany) Ciężki (Smietanska) Born 22 May 1927, Potulice, Poland.

Henryka Ciężki Born 2 April 1947, Heilbronn, Germany.

Kazimierz John Ciężki Born 5 June 1952, Ballarat, Australia.

George Ciężki Born 9 April 1954, Ballarat, Australia.

Both my parents came from farming backgrounds, which helped them survive during World War II, each had about seven or more siblings. My mother and father visited their families in Poland in the 80s. Mum's dad had already died. Mum's brother, Zigmund, visited Ballarat in about 1989. I (John) visited mum's family in Poland twice, in about 2003 and 2007, but I couldn't find dad's side of family, the addresses were wrong. George, a metallurgist, worked in Poland for a time, but he didn't visit any family. Henryka has never visited, even though she lived in Spain for many years.

The invasion of Poland by Germany, in 1939, resulted in my mother and father being forced into agricultural work camps. These camps were solely for feeding the German army. Concentration camps were fraught with constant danger, especially for women, German soldiers and guards forever mistreating, molesting and raping them.

My mother was sometimes forced to stand in front of her barracks, sometimes in the nude, sometimes in the snow, for long periods, as punishment. My father was also forced to do similar things. He told me stories of catching mice and rats to eat, to survive. Being caught stealing would end in a beating, or simply being shot.

Documents show that my father was not always nice and obedient. He was incarcerated in so-called penalty camps. This was for bad conduct, for causing mayhem, and for fighting etc. In 1941, he spent a month in one of these camps... and in 1943 and 1944 he spent an extra three months on both occasions. He was lucky not to have been taken away and shot. This was Jeany's life and Kaz's life until the war ended.

When the war ended, in 1945, my mother and father happened to be separately taken to the American Goppingen Displaced Persons Camp, near Stuttgart. That is where they met, fell in love, and eventually they had a civil marriage on 14 September 1945, in Goppingen, according to their German marriage certificate. And then, in accordance with German custom, they had a Church wedding, on 10 October 1945, according to their Polish marriage certificate.



They ended up at the American Heilbronn Displaced Persons Camp, Germany. The camp had been bombed. Heilbronn was a large town, and was a centre of industry and learning, and still is today. The Americans made Heilbronn their base because many train lines went through, making it very good for the transport of displaced persons.



People could learn new skills at Heilbronn. My father learnt to be a boilermaker (welder), while working as an ambulance driver and truck driver for the American army.

Ambulances at Heilbronn in 1947: Kaz Ciężki (dad) is on the right.





My father got a job driving trucks for a Polish truck company, in March 1946. He then drove trucks for the American army at the airfield at Nellingen, near Stuttgart, until 1948. While there, he did two additional three month welding courses as well, acetylene (gas) and electric.


Left: Kaz Ciężki (dad) and his truck at Heilbronn (near Nellingen), in 1948.

Meanwhile, my mother enrolled herself in a class to learn Kitchenwork in Ludwigsburg, a town near Stuttgart. She did this for two years under the International Refugee Organisation, and stopped in 1947. Mum was only about 12 or 13 years old when war started, and her schooling was very limited. Her certificate in Kitchenwork was going to be very helpful later on. My sister Henryka was born in 1947, in Heilbronn.

PREPARATORY COMMISSION
for the
INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION
US ZONE GERMANY

AREA TEAM: 1002 Ludwigsburg

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that Mrs. CIĘZKA, Eugenia
has been tested in Kitchen Work and has been
classified as a 2nd Class worker. Code "G-11"
Experience: 2 years.

STAMP: 

[Signature]
AREA EMPLOYMENT OFFICER
DATE: December 16th, 1947.

My parents, having worked for the American Army in Heilbronn for a couple of years, story has it, were offered a passage to America... which they took. Ciężki family lore has it that on arrival at Chicago my father told my mother to stay on the ship until he had had a good look around, and that he came back later that day and wasn't impressed, so they continued on to Australia. That story can't be entirely true, because IRO documents tell us that the Ciężki family came to Australia on the Castel Bianco, embarking at Genoa on 3 September 1950, and docking in Port Melbourne on 29 September 1950. Perhaps the family sailed to Chicago on some other ship at an earlier date, and then returned to Germany or Genoa. On arrival in Melbourne, they were sent by train to the Bonegilla migrant camp, near Albury. Like all refugees, they went through identity checks.

Right: Kazimierz, Eugenia & Henryka: photos from IRO documents on the National Archives Canberra website.



My father and other men were given temporary work around Bonegilla. After a month the men were sent to a work camp at Snake Valley, west of Ballarat. They were assigned jobs east of Ballarat, clearing land, and constructing water and sewerage pipelines, for the Ballarat Water Commission.



Right: The work camp at Snake Valley: 1950.

Below: Clearing for a Ballarat Water Commission pipeline at Gong Gong: 1951.





Left: Clearing for a Ballarat Water Commission pipeline: 1951: Kaz Ciężki is third from left.

Sometime in 1951, dad bought a house in Hunt St, Ballarat. He joined forces with his Ukranian friend, Mikolaj (Michael) Lagowski, and the two families lived in that little house for about a year. The men worked, and the women looked after the children. My mother got a job in the kitchen at the George Hotel, and later sometimes worked at the Tearooms, across the street from the hotel. Mrs Lagowski soon followed, and they walked to work together.



Left: circa 1958: Outside the Lagowski's Hunt St home, for the Christening of Maria Lagowski.

L-R: (unknown man), Nadzieja Lagowski & her daughter Helena is standing in front of Nadzieja, Jeany Ciężki (Godmother) holding Maria Lagowski, my brother George is standing in front of Jeany, Mikolaj Lagowski (Ukrainian) has his hand on his son Anton, Alojzy (Alex) Kawa is holding his son.

The little Hunt St house was too small for both growing families, so in 1952 my father found and bought a building on Geelong Road, called the Prince Regent Store. The Lagowski family continued to live in their Hunt St home for many years. No bank would give dad money for this purchase, but he obtained a loan from Baird and McGregor Solicitors for about 1200 pounds. Baird had served in the Royal Air Force, bombing parts of Europe, and he felt sorry for Europeans in general, so when he returned to Ballarat he was very generous with legal help for Poles and other nationalities, especially because of the language difficulties.

The Prince Regent Store was run down, but it was solid brick, and had lots of land. It had four bedrooms, a kitchen, dining room, lounge room, outside laundry, outside toilet, garage and a woodshed. The Maciąg family lived with the Ciężkis for a while, until they found a home. So too the Cham family. To help with mortgage payments, my parents invited a Croatian family to live with them for a while, and later took in a boarder, Wally Kitlowski, a bachelor. The house gave them room to move, and they created a large vegetable garden, a small orchard, and they had a few chooks and geese. This made them about 90% self sufficient. The money saved went into buying a means of transport and paying off their debt.

My mum and dad would often have parties at our home, the Prince Regent, to celebrate something or other, and, the grog would come out, along with some music and dancing.

Right & Below: A celebration at the Prince Regent for Henryka's First Holy Communion in 1955. Kaz Cieżki playing the squeeze box, and we see the Buczeks, Majdas, Fugiels and Kawas.



The government, in 1952, gave my parents permission to remain in Australia. Around that time, dad got a job as a welder with the Ford Motor Co. in Eureka St, and he worked there until 1955. Mum kept working as a kitchen hand. I (John) was born in 1952, it was a busy and big year. In 1954 things became busier for mum when my brother, George, arrived on the scene.



In 1955 dad got a job with Munro Engineering, and later with Villiers

until 1963. In 1964, dad was proud to be granted a Tradesman Certificate as a first class welder. Shortly after, he got his dream job as a welder at the Victorian Railways Workshop, Ballarat North. He remained in that job until 1988, when he retired and looked after my mother, who had fallen ill.

My mother also changed jobs around 1963, having worked a long time as a kitchen hand. She finally obtained a job as a Nursing Assistant at the Ballarat Mental Hospital, Gillies St. Polish people who worked there helped her to get that job.

Life was pretty hard for us as migrant children. No friends, no other family members, often abused by Australian kids, and by unkind and sometimes ruthless teachers. But we managed to look after each other pretty well overall. My father was a hard task master and expected all of us to do well at school. We would go to school by bike, or on a bus, or simply just walk. Things were never easy, and you had to work for the things you had. There were some very good neighbours up and down the street who helped us out from time to time. Mum and dad were very grateful, especially when we needed a doctor, the use of a phone, or just some babysitting time.

Polish people seemed to stay together as a close community in Ballarat. They set up a Polish Association. My father was President from 1957 until 1960, and then from 1961 until 1965.

Below: Kaz Ciężki (President) at a meeting of the Ballarat Polish Association in St Patrick's Hall: 1959.



Below: Kaz Ciężki at the tenth anniversary of the Ballarat Polish Association at the Lower Civic Hall in 1962.



UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
UNHCR fund for assistance to persons persecuted by reason of their nationality
(UNHCR Indemnification Fund)

To be filled in by the Office of the UNHCR only with _____ enclosures

Date of receipt stamp _____

No. _____ Section _____

Confirmation of receipt sent on _____

Second part of application sent on _____

Please read all the notes before completing the form; please use typescript or block capitals

APPLICATION - PART I
to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,
Palais des Nations, Geneva

I hereby apply for assistance from the UNHCR Indemnification Fund.

1. Surname(s) CIEZKI
Forename(s) KAZIMIERZ
Sex M.

2. Date of birth 17-3-1923
Place and country of birth Dabrowka / Wielun, Poland

3. Present address 134 Seelong Rd. Ballarat Australia

4. Nationality: Polish
(a) on 1 January 1939 _____
(b) on 1 October 1953 Polish
(c) naturalized No date _____

5. Religion R. Catholic.

6. Were you on 1 October 1953 a refugee in the sense of the Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees of 28 July 1951? * YES * NO

7. Were you persecuted under the national socialist regime for reasons of nationality in disregard of human rights? * YES * NO

IF YES:
(a) Concentration camp * YES * NO from _____ to _____
(b) Arrest * YES * NO from 7-9-41 to 3-11-43
(c) Other persecution Penalty Camps (As Straff Lager Arbeitserziehungslager)

? First time: From 2-11-41 to 16-12-1941. See 1-3-12-43 to 26-3-1944.
* Mark with an X what is applicable.

Left: In 1961, dad applied for compensation from the United Nations (UNHCR), because all refugees who had been persecuted in some way during the war were eligible, especially for forced labour. He received a small annual payment from the German Government, it wasn't a large amount but it helped.

Right: The Ciężki family in about 1955.

The Association ran a Polish language class on Saturday mornings, at the Christian Brothers Primary School in Drummond St (now St Patrick's).

Below: The Polish boys who attended Christian Brothers PS full time in 1955.

L-R: Joseph Cacek, Stan Olszewski, Zdzisław Walczak, Wally Borecki, Mac Rynkiewicz, Ryszard Płotecki, Stan Niziorski, Marian Olszewski, Stan Fugiel, Eric Oparski:



There was a Polish Mass held at St. Patrick's Cathedral at 12 pm each Sunday, with a Polish priest presiding. Members of the Polish community naturally had a gathering before and after Mass, and once a month there was a special gathering to talk about issues. There was a Polish Association Christmas party held at St. Patrick's Hall, where children would receive a present, and devils would try to upset the children.

The Association organized trips and excursions to places like Hepburn Springs, cherry farms and concerts. The trips would normally be a chance to relax, eat and drink, play music, sing and dance.

Six photos of a trip to Hepburn Springs in 1956



Above: Kaz Ciężki (violin). Stan Iwanowski, Frank Różycki, Michael Lewicki, Nadia & Piotr Buczek (piano accordion), Nancy Różycki, Ryszard & Zofia Walczak.

Below: Frank & Nancy Różycki, girl, Nadia & Piotr Buczek, Wanda Zabinski, Stan Dziuba, Kaz Ciężki (violin), man with hat.





Above: Includes the Chams, Dziubas, Fugiels, Buczeks, Lewickis, & Walczaks.

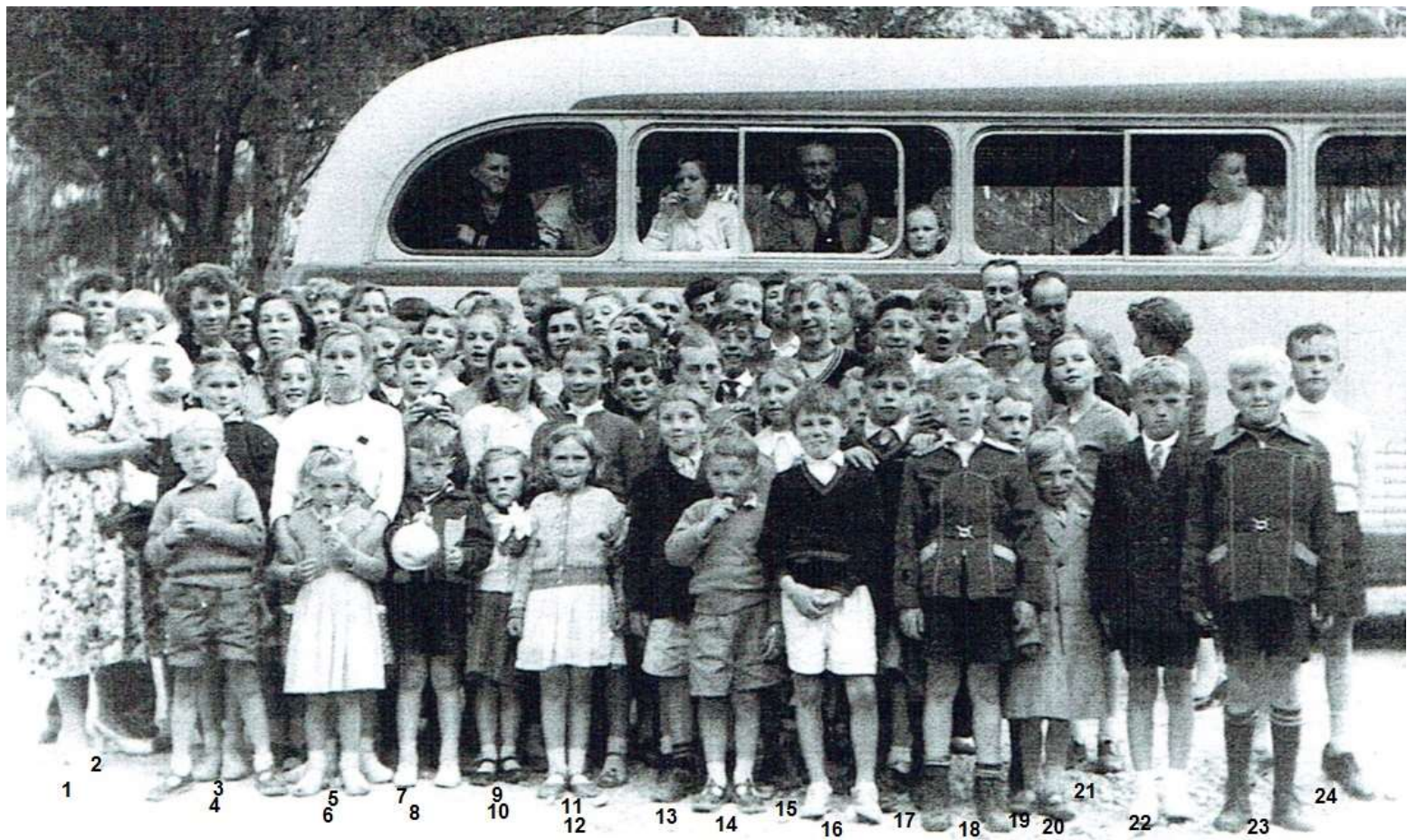
Below: Kaz Ciężki (guitar) & Stan Dziuba. Includes the Fugiels, Iwanowskis, Walczaks, Buczeks & Różyckis.





Above & Below: Includes Stanisław Stodolny, Eugenia Ciężki, Nadia Buczek, Sofia Buzo.





Above: The Ballarat Polish Association bus trip to Hepburn Springs & Daylesford: circa 1959: 1 Nadia Buczek, 4 John Ciężki, 8 Richard (Bubsie) Fugiel, 15 Valdi Cham, 18 Kaz Fugiel, 19 Bolak Cham, 22 George Studzinski, 23 Kaz Kusiakiewicz.



Above: Combined Ballarat, Melbourne and Geelong Polish Associations four day visit to the Healesville Sanctuary: circa 1960: 4 Richard Jarecki, 7 George Ciężki, 8 Ricky Kulman, 9 John Ciężki, 10 Peter Rynkiewicz, 11 Bernard Skrypko, 12 Adam Dudkiewicz (President of Sunshine Polish Association), 13 Teresa Dudkiewicz, 14 Barbara Rynkiewicz.

There were annual Polish concerts and Balls, often involving the Polish Associations of other towns and cities, and a lot of fun was had and many friendships made. These needed planning, organizing and delegation, especially for the end of year Ball. These Balls became renowned, and other nationalities would attend and give their support.



Left: Ball at the St Georges Hall: 1954. Michael Lewicki, Kaz Ciężki, Jan Kowalewski.

Below: A Ball at the Lower Civic Hall: circa 1975: Stan Klicki, Jozef Fugiel, Theophil (Toey) Kornas, Maria Kornas (Sztójko), Jozefa Fugiel, Katarzyna Sztójko, Zofia Pamuła, Jacob Pamuła.



Left: The 4 Tenors: George Harn, Jan Blasiak, Bodek Poniec, and Kaz Ciężki. At a Sunshine Polish Association concert, Mariana Hall, Sunshine: 1961. Today there is a sports, recreation, and dining centre, called the Albion Polish Club.

Being children of the President, we would often have to perform in concerts. I (John) would play recorder with Ricky Kulman, and we would both be a part of the troupe, dancing the Krakowiak. My sister would play the piano, and sometimes my father and others would sing along. After 1965, there was less pressure because dad wasn't President -- thank God!

Right: Elizabeth Pamula & Peter Rynkiewicz, Barbara Rynkiewicz & Ricky Kulman, Helen Szapiel & Bernie Skrypko, Teresa Burcon & John Ciężki. Aniela Kulman was our dance teacher: 1962.



In the early 60s a junior soccer team was formed, of mainly Polish youngsters. Coached by Stan Wach, this team was unbeatable around Ballarat.

Right: (1964): Back: Bernard Skrypko, Richard Juzwin, Peter Rynkiewicz, Kaz Fugiel, Domenic Micich, Richard Jarecki, Ricky Kulman, Sjaak (Shak) Weyers. Front: John Ciężki, Bolak Cham, Josh Kulman (goalie), Richard (Budsy) Fugiel, George Ciężki.



Mum and dad would go to work on push bikes in the early days. I remember mum cycling to the Ballarat Mental Hospital in Gillies St -- she left home at around 7 am to start at 8 am. Dad would also be at work by 8 am. So, we all had to rise early, and as school aged children we had to organize ourselves for school. Mum would leave my sister in charge, and each of us had enough money to catch the bus to school. Sometimes I would walk to school because I could then use the bus money to buy some chips for lunch.

Later, dad bought himself a BSA motorbike, and he gave me his bike to ride to school, and perhaps dink my brother to school as well. A few times my foot slipped off the pedal, because dad's bike was too big for me, and I wondered if I would ever be able to have a family of my own. I ended up riding that bike all through secondary school.

Soon after purchasing the motorbike dad bought a rifle. It was his way of getting meat cheaply by shooting rabbits. Sometimes he would take George and I rabbiting on his motorbike... somewhere near Buninyong. Can you see us... a child on the petrol tank, a child on the back, going down Geelong Road without any helmets, and a man in the middle with a rifle slung over his shoulder... and coming back with three or four rabbits on the handle bars. Try doing that today!!!

Funny thing though, dad would become sick if he tried to skin a rabbit, so he would get mum to do the *dirty work* but he would look on to make sure that she did it properly.

The Ballarat Polish Association and the Polish community invested money in the R.O.P. Construction Co, Melbourne, a building company, owned by a Pole, the President of the Sunshine Polish Association. Investors received interest yearly, at a rate much higher than bank interest. The company also gave loans to buy cars and household needs etc. It was very successful for many years, and made it possible for dad to save for a new car.

Eventually, mum and dad bought a car, a Morris Oxford. It was green and had blinkers attached to the side pillars which came out. This meant that dad did not have to put his hand out the window to indicate making a turn. The car certainly made life easier to get around, when going to work and other places. Later on, he sold that and bought an FC Holden... black with leather seats. Some funny things happened while we had this car.

As we had no TV at home, on the way to pick mum up from her work, dad would drop Henryka, George and myself, off at the Retravision store in Sturt St and we would watch TV through the window. He picked us up about half an hour later, on the way home. Allowing people to watch TV through the window was good advertising, as it enticed people to buy a TV from this store.

On another occasion, dad got really drunk at home but still had to go and pick mum up. So, I had to sit behind him and tell him if he was going straight, if he needed to stop or slow down, all the way up the street and all the way home. He had two *spews* along the way and mum wasn't very happy. In those days there were no traffic lights and not many cars on the road... and no policeman pulled him over that day... very lucky!

Following that, dad decided to try to teach my mother how to drive. So, he took her out on a bush track but she nearly crashed into a tree... he got mad at her... and that was the last time she drove!

Dad loved to celebrate events. We had lots of visitors, they drank *lots* and enjoyed the food and hospitality. Later, he decided to make some GRAPPA from the abundance of fruit that was lying on the ground. Some people would come around and help, bringing their bottles to be filled. Basically, it was pure ethanol, about 95% proof, and tasted really bad. It made you drunk very quickly. All had a great time!



Above: At a function: Seated: Zofia Pamuła, Jeany Ciężki, Frank Rynkiewicz. Standing: Jacob Pamuła, Bolek Łyszczarz (Melbourne), Kaz Ciężki, and Tadeusz Jarecki.

Dad also invented a machine to retread old and bald tyres. Again, people would come around and have tyres retreaded which would save them buying new tyres.

Both mum and dad agreed that a good education was the number one priority. Dad would get angry if we did not do well and none of us wanted him to get angry. Things got a bit hairy when I gave away going to Polish school to play football, without his blessing or permission. He would drop me off at Polish school, and when he left I would go to White Flat Oval to play football and then return for him to pick me up. One day, the teacher asked him where I was, he found out and I paid for it... he was not happy! He mellowed over time but never supported my desire to become a footballer.

We all went to secondary school, and thankfully we all passed and went on to higher education. He was very proud of all of us for achieving that and for getting decent jobs. This was part of his dream because war had robbed him of a good education.

Life was pretty good for us overall. We were never rich but we managed to not go without things. Mum and dad worked hard so that we could achieve our goals in life. We always had food, a good place to live, proper clean clothes, and some freedom to do our own thing. Dad was hard on us when we were children but mellowed as he got older. Mum was the quiet one and the person you went to if you knew you were in trouble. My sister was the eldest, but as I grew up I became the person who had to look after my sister and younger brother... because I was the oldest boy.



My mother became ill from cancer in 1989 and died in 1990. This devastated my father and broke his heart. Later, he became friends with a woman from Geelong, and seven years later he too became ill and died in 1997... also from cancer.

Eventually, we three children sold the old house, and after a fair bit of renovation the new owner sold it to Brian Harrison, who turned it into a funeral home, called Prince Regent House.

Henryka (now in Canberra), George (Tasmania) and I (Ballarat) are still alive and well, each of us having had three children, and we are now enjoying retirement and being a grandmother and grandfathers... or Babka i Dziadek.

Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła -- Poland is not yet lost!!

Some of mum's and dad's documents

Gültig vom 1942 **bis** 1942

Arbeitskarte*) Nr. XL

für den ausländischen Arbeiter **15.12.1942**

Der- und Zuname: **Kusmierci Ciężki**

Bei Frauen auch Geburtsname)

Wohnung: **Heiligenthal Ub. Bieleben**

Geburtsort: **17.3.22 Dombrowka**

Strel: **Wielon Staat: Eing. Ostg.**

Glaubensbekenntnis: **poln.**

Beruf: **landw. Arbeiter 1.2a**

Arbeitsbuch Nr. **232 Ge/03513**

Unternehmer: **B. v. Krosigk-sche Rittergutsverwalter**

Arbeitsstelle: **Helmsdorf**

(Ort, Straße) **Manf. Seekreis**

Strel: **Eisleben den 14.1. 1942**

Der Leiter des Arbeitsamtes
Eisleben

Im Auftrage:
Krus

*) Abgestellt auf Grund der Verordnung über ausländische Arbeiter vom 23. Januar 1933 - Reichsgesetzblatt I, S. 26 -
Einführung und Arbeitsübernahme ohne die hier Arbeitskarte ihnen mitgeteilt oder mitgeteilt bis zu 6 Monaten befristet werden.
Wechr. Blatt Nr. 4. C. Nr. 187. MK. 450. 7000. 3. 0. M/0052

Above: Kaz Ciężki's police registration papers: 1942.

Anmeldung zur polizeilichen Einwohnererfassung

Wohnort und Wohnung
Hiesige Sammelnummer i mieszkanie

Vor Anfüllung die Erläuterungen auf der Rückseite lesen!

Kreis (Powiat): **Yungovich**

Gemeinde (Gmina): **Polubki**

Ortschaft (Miejscowość): **Polubki**

Straße und Hausnummer:
Ulica i nr. d.

Zgłoszenie celem policyjnego stwierdzenia ludności

Czytanie przed wypełnieniem obowiązku ochronnej strój!

1. Familienname (Nazwisko): **Smietarska**

(Bei Frauen auch Geburtsname und zugehörige Name von der letzten Ehescheidung in zeznanych kolonii rzymsko-katolickiej i w innych wyznaniach chrześcijańskich)

2. Rufname (Imię): **Eugenia**

3. Geburtstag, Monat und Jahr: **22.5.1927**

Dziedz. miejsce i rok urodzenia:

Geburtsort (miejsce urodzenia): **Polubki**

(nach Gemeindef. und Kreis) (miejsce i rok urodzenia)

4. Geschlecht:*) **weiblich**

5. Familienstand:*) **ledig, wch. jedyny**

6. Religion (Wyznanie): **Katolick**

7. Volkszugehörigkeit: **Polin**

Narodowość:

8. Welche Sprache sprechen Sie zu Hause? **polnisch**

Który język, mówi się w domu?

9. Seit wann sind Sie im neuen Reichsgebiet wohnhaft? **von Geburt an**

Od którego czasu mieszka w P. na nowym obszarze Rzeczy?

10. Haben Sie in der polnischen Armee gedient? Dienstgrad?

Czy WP, służył w armii polskiej? Rang służbowy:

11. Beruf (Zawód): **Handl.**

(Zawód Annot. der Berufstätigkeit und Angabe, ob zbrodnice, kriegsweiliger Arbeiter usw.) (określenie rodzaju czynności zawodowej i czy zawodowym, kriegsweiliger, robotnikiem i t. p.)

12. Sind Sie Eigentümer oder Miteigentümer eines Geschäftes?

Czy WP, właścicielem lub współwłaścicielem interesu? eines Hauses (kamienicy)?

von Land (gruntu)?

13. Nur für Familien- und Haushaltungsvorstände:
Tylko dla głów rodzin lub gospodarstw domowych:
Zahl der im Haushalt lebenden Kinder unter 12 Jahren:

Ilość dzieci poniżej 12 lat żyjących w gospodarstwie domowym:

Fingerabdruck (Odciskpalca)

und Unterschrift des Gemeldeten:
Eugenia Smietarska
i podpis zgłoszonego:

*) Nichtzuzustimmen ist zu durchkreuzen.
*) Niechciane przekreślić.

Above: Eugenia Smietanski's police registration papers: 1942.

Świadcstwo ślubu

Zaswiadcza się, że **Ciężki Kazimierz**

kawaler, wyznania rzymsko-katolickiego,
urodzony dnia **17.3.1923** w **Dobrowice**

Syn **Józefa**

1. **Stanisławy** z domu **Drogoszew**

oraz **Smietarska Eugenia**

wolna, wyznania rzymsko-katolickiego,
urodzona dnia **22.5.1927** w **Polubkach**

1. **Amatorji** z domu **Stojanowski**

zawarli świątek małżeński dnia **7. października 1945**

w kościele ewangelicznym w Göppingen /Blanc/

wobec księdza **Ljbnoskiego Zygminta**

i świadków 1. **Marcin Jankowski**

2. **Morawskiego Józefa**

Egdnobęd niniejszego wypisu z oryginałem potwierdza

Dr. Ignacy Joz.
Kapelan Polakiego Cór-
w Göppingen.

Göppingen, dnia **10.10.1945**

Polish wedding certificate: Goppingen: 10 Oct 1945.

Heiratsurkunde

(Standesamt) **Göppingen** Nr. **349/1945**

Der rüchler **Kasimierz Ciężki**

katholisch, wohnhaft in **Göppingen, Pfliegerhorst**

geboren am **17. März 1923**

in **Dombrowka Kreis Wielun**

(Standesamt) **Göppingen** Nr. **349/1945** und

die rüchlerin **Eugenia Smietarska**

katholisch, wohnhaft in **Göppingen, Pfliegerhorst**

geboren am **22. Mai 1927**

in **Waldgrund Kreis Wicherbrück**

(Standesamt) **Göppingen** Nr. **349/1945**

haben am **14. September 1945**

vor dem Standesamt **Göppingen** die Ehe geschlossen.

Drucken!

↓ Nr. 12a. Heiratsurkunde ohne Eintragung. Wichtig ist der Familienstand!

German wedding certificate: 14 Sep 1945.

5-tes KOMPAKIA TRANSPORTOWA
DZIELNY
Reiskirchen
EXPERIMENTAL
dnia 16. May 1946

KARTA ZAOPATRZENIA

Wzrost	Nazwisko i imie	Wzrost do dnia	Dozwo- wienie do dnia	Dodaki Pr
Pfc.	Ciezki Kazimierz	1.V.46.	17.V.46	15.V.46.

Dowodca Kompanii
Stanislaw Rozko Por.

NOTES

- To be issued only after strict and practical examination.
- Permit will be authenticated by commissioned officer immediately after test for each type of vehicle concerned.
- Where testing facilities do not permit cross-country driving, permit will be marked "limited" after each type of vehicle concerned.
- List accidents below. If more than three are charged to the permit holder, his driving ability and mental attitude should be investigated before issuance of new permit.

MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATOR'S PERMIT

RECORD OF ACCIDENTS
(List all in which permit holder is involved)

Date _____ (1)
Responsibility and cause _____
Estimated cost of damages _____
Officer's initials _____

Date _____ (2)
Responsibility and cause _____
Estimated cost of damages _____
Officer's initials _____

Date _____ (3)
Responsibility and cause _____
Estimated cost of damages _____
Officer's initials _____

Valid with/without glasses

Kazimierz Ciezki
(OPERATOR'S A. S. N.)

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-22299-1

Above: Kazimierz Ciezki's Polish driving card
Polish Transport Co: 1946.

Above: Kaz Ciezki's American driving permit: 1946

Polnische Schule Kierowcow Samochodowych
in Tübingen Koenigs
w Göttingen (Wirttemberg)

DIPLÓMATYKÓW UZDOLNIENIA Nr. 0174

Wistojny stwierdzamy, że
Kazimierz Ciezki
dnia 17.2.1945. - Daprowca (p. 46) dnia 1945

uczestnik odcykowity program nauk teoretycznych i praktycznych oraz zostal uznany przez Komisje Egzaminacyjna do prowadzenia *koszeliach*
pracy w dziedziny mechanicznych
5 marca 1946

Team of
for DRIVER
Ciezki Kazimierz
Wasserslager podpis.

Kazimierz C i e z k i

Verbreunungsschein
No. 2 (wei) in Silber.

Heilbronn am 1. Juli 1947
Bürgermeisteramt
Polnische Abteilung

Das amtlich anerkannte Sachverständigen
Zeichen
1. Juli 1947

Konkarte Nr.
Eigentliche Unterschrift des Inhabers
Kazimierz Ciezki

Polish truck driving certificate: Gopplingen: 1945.

Possibly an entry permit for the factory
at Heilbronn: 1947.

PREPARATORY COMMISSION
for the
INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION
US ZONE GERMANY

AREA TEAM: 3 Nellingen

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that *Mr. CIEZKI Kazimierz* b. 17.5.1925
has been tested in *driving* and has been
classified as a *2nd Class* worker.
Experience: 1 year and 6 months.
Job Description: Has worked for 1 year & 6 months, as driver.

STAMP: AREA EMPLOYMENT OFFICER
DATE: April, 1948.

Preparatory Commission
INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION
U.S. ZONE GERMANY

Ba AREA 2 Nellingen

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that *Mr. C I E Z K I, Kazimierz* born March 17th, 1925
has been tested in *electric welding* and has been
classified as *2* apprentice: *1st*

Experience: After completing special 5 monthly electric welding course is able to join metal parts by means of electric welding apparatus in the fabrication or repair of simple metal articles. Knows iron welding.

This certificate, based upon testing carried out by qualified persons, is correct to the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned.

Testing Officer. DATE: Oct. 4th, 1948.
Stamp: AREA VOCATIONAL TESTING OFFICER

Kazimierz Ciezki's IRO driving certificate: Nellingen: 1948.

Kaz Ciezki's IRO electric welding certificate:
Nellingen: 1948.

RADA STAWCOWA POLSKA
Polish Ambassadors Board
Confédération des Associations Professionnelles Polonaises

SEKCJA SZKOLENIA ZAWODOWEGO
Professional Training Section
Section de l'Éducation Professionnelle

OKREG Württemberg - Baden KURS Y Polskiej Szkoły Zawodowej
District Württemberg - Baden Courses of Polish Training School
Dzielnica Heilbronn - Badenerhof
in Heilbronn - Badenerhof

SWIADECTWO UKONCZENIA KURSOW
WYSLUCHANIA WYSLUCHANIA
Certificate of Attendance 3720
Diplôme de fin d'études
Certificat

Pan(i) C I E Ż K I Kazimierz
Mocznik (Mr, Mrs, Miss)
urodzony(a) dnia 17.3.1923
at (day) in Dabrowka - Wielun

uczestniczył(a) na 24 tygodniowe Kursy Spawanie Elektryczne
took part in 24 weekly courses of Electric arc Welding
à l'école pendant le cours hebdomadaire de

i ukończył(a) je, składając przed Komisją Egzaminacyjną egzamin z przewidzianych programem przedmiotów następującymi wynikami:
and finished them, passing before the examination board an examination in the subjects listed by the program with the following results:
Après avoir eu recours devant la Commission d'Examen pour passer les épreuves prévues par le programme à obtenir les notes ci-dessous:

i wysłuchał(a) wykłady z niżej wymienionych przedmiotów:
and attended lectures on the following subjects:
à l'égard des matières suivantes:

teoria spawania - dostateczny	praktyka spawania - dostateczny
theory of welding - satisfactory	practical welding - satisfactory

Heilbronn dn 19

Kierownik Kursów Delegat Sekcji Szkolenia Zawodowego
Director of courses Member of the Professional Training Section
Directeur de cours Membre de la Section de l'Éducation Professionnelle


Członkowie Komisji Egzaminacyjnej
Members of the Examination Board
Les Membres de la Commission d'Examen

Above: Kaz Ciężki's electric welding certificate: 1948.

PREPARATORY COMMISSION
for the
INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION
US ZONE GERMANY

AREA TEAM: 2 Nellingen.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that Mr. CIEZKI, Kazimierz... b.17.3.23.....
has been tested in gas welding work..... and has been
classified as 2nd class..... worker.
Experience: 12 years.
Job Description: Finished a 3 months course in the camp and worked as gas welder.

STAMP:  DATE: 29th April, 1948.

K. W. W.
AREA EMPLOYMENT OFFICER

Above: Kaz Ciężki's IRO gas welding certificate: Nellingen: 1948

INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION
AREA 2
SUB-AREA HEILBRONN

Motor Pool Office, Heilbronn Heilbronn - Badenerhof,
Date: 20 - 2 - 1950

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that Mr. C i e ż k i, Kazimierz born March 17, 1923 in Dabrowka-Wielun / Poland /, has been employed with Heilbronn - Badenerhof in IRO Motor Pool as driver from: January 8, 1948 To: February 20, 1950. He has performed all his duties to my full content, and I can always recommend him to anyone seeking a specialist in this line.

LUDWIG LARAS
TRANSFORMER
I.R.O. - S.U.Z. - AREA 2
(142) HEILBRONN/N. BADENERHOF

Above: Kaz Ciężki's IRO driving reference/certification: Heilbronn: 1948.

Below: IRO Card from the National Archives in Canberra.

509 Serial No. 199 050

Surname CIEZKI

Christian Names Kazimierz

Nationality <u>Pol.</u>	Age <u>17/3/23</u>	Sex <u>M</u>
Date of Arrival <u>30 SEP 1950</u>	Marital State <u>M</u>	Religion <u>P.C.</u>
Ex Ship <u>C'bianco III</u>	Description	
Date of Departure <u>26/10/50</u>	Height <u>5'9</u>	
Destination	Weight <u>156</u>	
<u>Ballarat Water Commission White Swan Reservoir, Ballarat, Vic.</u>	Hair <u>fair</u>	
Trade <u>R.L. 6296</u>	Eyes <u>blue</u>	
Standard of Education	Complexion	
	Scars	
	General <u>med.</u>	

Address of Next of Kin (if known)
wife Eugenia
child. Henryka

Specimen of Signature
Kazimierz Ciężki

National Archives of Australia NAA: A2571, CIEZKI KAZIMIERZ

CH14.4 THE MAJDA FAMILY STORY by Richard Majda

My name is Ryszard (Richard) Majda. I was born in 1947 in Wolfsburg, Northern Germany, a city famous for the *Volkswagen* cars. I am the only child of Andrzej (Andrew) Majda (1914-1987), born in Kutyn near Poznan, Poland, a part of Prussia at that time, and Stefania (Stefa) (Byczyk) (1923-2020), born in Kokoszenice, Poland, now probably a part of the Ukraine. Little is known of Andrew's and Stefania's early lives as they rarely spoke of those times.

In 1939 Andrew and his brother joined the Polish army, and Andrew was wounded in action and taken as a Prisoner of War until the end of World War 2, but he was never placed in forced labour. I remember that in later years, in Ballarat, he would sometimes come out of the bathroom and show us a chunk of metal that had worked its way out of his leg.

Right: Andrzej (Andrew) Majda in Polish army uniform.

Stefania was taken as a 16 year old and placed in slave labour by the Nazis.

After the war Andrew and Stefania were sent separately to the Wolfsburg Displaced Persons Transit Camp, Germany, where they met and married in 1946, and I was born in 1947. Andrew worked as a watchman for the British Occupational Forces.



Below: Stefania, Ryszard (Richard) and Andrew Majda in 1947. Below: Andrew in British uniform.



NO 6 D.P.A.C.S. BAOR
D.P. Transit Camp Wolfsburg

Certificate.

This is to certify that Pte MAJDA Andrzej.....
have been employed as watchman Polish Guard Company at the
Polish Transit Camp Wolfsburg under control of 6 D.P.A.C.S.
from November 7, 46 to June 14, 47.

Wolfsburg.
14th June 47

[Signature]
U.C. No 6 D.P.A.C.S
/Capt. H.D. Ald/

In 1950 mum and dad were offered the opportunity to migrate to Australia, departing from Genoa aboard the *SS Castel Bianco* (an Italian ship), and disembarking in Melbourne on 29 September 1950. As with many migrants our family was sent to the Bonegilla migrant camp, near Albury, for training, until such time that work was found for my parents.

My father was sent to Ballarat to work on the construction of the White Swan Reservoir. My mother and I were sent to a small town called Mudgegonga in the north east of Victoria, where my mother worked as a housekeeper for a dairy farmer named Pat. I am not sure whether my mother had a choice, I think that a mum with a young child could not be forced to work, but I suppose that mum wanted the extra income. However, I wonder whether mum could have insisted on doing housekeeping in the Ballarat region, close to dad.

Below: Documents courtesy of the National Archives Canberra.

365		Serial No. 198785			
Surname MAJDA		Christian Names Andrzej			
Nationality Pol.	Age 17/11/14	Sex M	 <i>Majda Andrzej</i>		
Date of Arrival 30 SEP 1950	Marital State M	Religion P.C.			
Ex Ship O'bianco III	Description	Height 5'6"			
Date of Departure 26/10/50	Weight 145	Hair grey			
Destination Ballarat Water Commission, White Swan Reservoir, Ballarat.	Eyes blue	Complexion			
Trade S.L. 6296	Sears	General med			
Standard of Education	Address of Next of Kin (if known)				
Wife Stefania	Child Ryszard				
National Archives of Australia		NAA: A2571, MAJDA ANDRZEJ			

366		Serial No. 198784			
Surname MAJDA		Christian Names Stefania			
Nationality Pol.	Age 17/1/23	Sex F	 <i>Majda Stefania</i>		
Date of Arrival 30 SEP 1950	Marital State M	Religion P.C.			
Ex Ship O'bianco III	Description	Height 5'6"			
Date of Departure 5/12/50	Weight 150	Hair dark brown			
Destination Grande View Mudgegonga, Kyrtleford Vic. Approv. by Father	Eyes grey-green	Complexion			
Trade S.L. 50/10/535	Sears	General med.			
Standard of Education	Address of Next of Kin (if known)				
National Archives of Australia		NAA: A2571, MAJDA STEFANIA			

367		Serial No.			
Surname MAJDA		Christian Names Ryszard			
Nationality Pol.	Age 14/7/47	Sex M	 <i>Majda Andrzej</i>		
Date of Arrival 30 SEP 1950	Marital State M	Religion P.C.			
Ex Ship O'bianco III	Description	Height			
Date of Departure 5/12/50	Weight	Hair			
Destination Grande View Mudgegonga, Kyrtleford, Vic. Approv. by Father	Eyes	Complexion			
Trade S.L. 50/10/535	Sears	General			
Standard of Education	Address of Next of Kin (if known)				
National Archives of Australia		NAA: A2571, MAJDA RYSZARD			

When my father had saved up enough money he sent for us and we settled in Ballarat in 1951. Here again I wonder whether mum needed permission, the two year government contract would have expired in September 1952. My parents bought a block of land in Iris Ave -- it had a fibro-cement shed that we used as our home -- we lived there until 1955. My parents then purchased a proper house and land in Essex St, Wendouree, where they lived until they passed away -- dad died in 1987 aged 73, and mum died in 2020 aged 96.

My mother and many other Polish women were Ward Assistants at the Ballarat Mental Hospital in Gillies St, now the site of the large Lake Gardens housing estate. Mum then worked at the Villiers Australia factory in Wendouree, where they manufactured small and large engines, now the site of the Wendouree Railway Station and a Holden dealership.





Val Richters (Latvian) Stefania Majda Karolina Olszewski Margaret (Aussie)



unknown

Stefania Majda

unknown

Above: circa 1960: Stefania Majda was a Ward Assistant at the Ballarat Mental Hospital.

After the White Swan Reservoir was built my father found work at Joe White Maltings in Gregory St, Ballarat, now replaced with housing. Some years later he finally obtained work at the Ballarat North Railway Workshops in Creswick Rd, as an Oil Furnaceman for the steam generators, and later as a Blacksmith's Assistant making carriage leaf springs, and he retired in 1979.

Below: Mum and dad entertaining with Edward and Anastazja Piłat at Christmas.



St Georges Hall: circa 1954



My father was very involved with the Polish Community of Ballarat. He usually collected money as people entered the Polish dances which were held at the Lower Civic Hall in Doveton St North, and at the wonderful New Year's Eve Balls held at the Main Civic Hall. He would also help at the drinks-bar selling soft drinks and alcoholic beverages. He was the Treasurer of the Polish Association for decades, and contributed to the purchase of land for the Polish Hall (Copernicus Hall) in Orion St, Sebastopol, and then helped with the construction and running of the Hall, including dances.

Below: Andrew Majda working at Copernicus Hall in 1976.





A celebration of the Polish National Constitution Day, 3 May, at Copernicus Hall: circa 1980.

My father also helped at many Polish functions, Polish Mass every Sunday at St Patrick's Cathedral, Australia Day celebrations at the Ballarat Gardens, Mother's Day, Father's Day and other outings. There was an annual Polish Christmas lunch, visited by St Nicholas (Father Christmas) with his helpers (Angels and Devils), and St Nicholas presented each child with a gift. My father also supported the Kosciuszko (Redan) Soccer team, and The Ballarat, Geelong and District Soccer Association.



Polish National Constitution Day, 3 May, at St Patrick's Cathedral.



Above: Richard Majda (front left), with Bishop O'Collins & Fr Krasocki (St Patrick's Cathedral).

Dad had three brothers and a sister in Poland, and he visited them in 1970. Mum had **five** siblings, but mum and the Red Cross were never able to find any of her relatives, and so mum didn't go to Poland with dad. Dad was disgusted with the life and the standard of living in Poland under the Soviet puppet quasi-communist government. The Polish Zloty was very cheap based on the exchange rate for the Australian dollar, and dad paid for most of the food and drink for parties during his visit. Wikipedia says.....

The złoty (which means golden)(equals 100 grosz) is the official currency of Poland. It replaced the Polish marka in 1924. As a result of inflation, in 1995 10,000 old złoty (PLZ) became one new złoty (PLN). Since then the exchange rate fluctuates between 3 and 4 złoty for a United States dollar. Poland is a member of the European Union, which obligates member states to eventually adopt the euro.

Mr Andrzej Majda, his wife Stefania and son Ryszard

Andrzej Majda became a Prisoner of War (P.O.W.) in Poland during World War II. Like many others, he was moved through a number of different P.O.W. camps from Poland to Germany.

He later married, and together with his young family, immigrated to Australia under the Displaced Persons Scheme. They were taken to Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre, and Andrzej worked on the construction of the White Swan Reservoir.

Over the years, Andrzej became actively involved in the Polish community in Ballarat. He was a generous humanitarian who was highly regarded for his integrity, personal contributions as a financier, and services as a volunteer. He was awarded the title of Honorary Patron by the Polish Association of Ballarat.

Private Collection



Above: Here we see some wordage from the Polish Exhibition at the Gold Museum in 2005.

Right: A plaque commemorating Andrew's award of Honorary Member of the Polish Association.

Richard Majda -- Some of my own personal snippets

I (Richard) attended St Columba's Primary School in Lydiard St North, then St Patrick's College in Sturt St, and finally the Ballarat School of Mines and Industries in Lydiard St South.

At the age of 17, I applied for and obtained a job with the Victorian Railways as a Junior Clerk at the Newport Workshops in Melbourne. After a short while I was transferred to the Ballarat East Locomotive Depot in Corbett St, which is now a railway museum (Steamrail Ballarat). After several years I was transferred to the Ballarat North Railway Workshops in Creswick Rd, Ballarat. Chasing a promotion I transferred to the Maryborough Loco Depot in Victoria as Roster and Senior Clerk, and my final move with the Railways was to Mildura as Operations Manager. Over the three decades of working with the Railways I saw many changes. Victoria Railway became VicRail, then V/Line, and it changed from steam locomotives to diesel.

After the Railways was privatised and my job in Mildura no longer existed, I entered the Taxi business in Mildura where I ran a cab for about 10 years. I then decided to retire, and as all our children had moved to Melbourne and Adelaide, Barbara and I decided to move to Adelaide where we currently live.



Above: Henrietta Kaciczak's birthday party: circa 1965: Rear: Eric Oparski, Rod Klicki, Josh Kulman, (unknown), Michael Maciag, Richard Majda, Jack Fugiel, Kaz Fugiel, (unknown): Middle: (unknown), Barbara Pamula (later Majda), Kazia Stodolny (later Iwanowski), Mary Kaciczak (now Titheridge), Christine Buzo, Zofia Dziuba, Wanda Zabinski. Front: (unknown), Henrietta Kaciczak (now McNally), Anne Buzo, Cheryl Oparski.



Above: Some of the Polish Olympic Team, in Ballarat in 1956.

I had a strong love of sport which may have originated with the visit to Essex St, Wendouree, of some members of the Polish Olympic Rowing Team in 1956.

I played junior soccer with the Kosciuszko Soccer Team, and then with the seniors, in the Ballarat Geelong and District Soccer Association, and finally with the Ballarat Red Devils in the Melbourne Association. Some team mates who come to mind are Eric and Joe Oparski, Johnny and Kaz and Budsy Fugiel, Wally and Johnny Gradkowski, Harry, Leo and Theo Arts, Bolek Cham, Mac and Peter Rynkiewicz, Rod Klicki, Jacob Pamuła (coach), Steve Burcon, Stan Wojdat, Ken Wach & his father Stan (coach), Michael and Ray Maciąg.

Below: Kosciuszko Soccer team at Geelong: circa 1963: Back: Guiseppe (Pepe) Micich, Jack Fugiel, Joe Oparski, Michael Maciąg, Jacob Pamuła, Mac Rynkiewicz. Front: Richard Majda, Ken Wach, Eric Oparski, Stan Wojdat, Wally Gradkowski. Spectators include Tad Jarecki and Kaz Ciężki.





Above: An outing to the soccer at Geelong: circa 1964: Keith Bell (leaning on his pre-war Armstrong Siddeley): Rear: Michael Maciag (leaning on car) (the Maciag family emigrated to the USA in about 1966), Józef Kulman (sipping a drink), Zofia Pamuła, Aniela Kulman, Jacob Pamuła, Józef Fugiel, and young Richard (Bubsie) Fugiel. Front: Richard Majda (sitting on bumper), Jack Fugiel (sitting on bumper).

I also played competition volley ball at the YMCA in Camp St, Ballarat City, table tennis at the Ballarat Showgrounds, football and cricket with Buninyong, and golf at the Buninyong Golf Club and the Mount Xavier Golf Club.



Above: Dad's first car, an FJ Holden, which he gave to me when he bought a Mitsubishi Magna. Dad drove very badly. Mum had a licence but thankfully rarely drove.



In the mid-sixties I met my lifetime partner, Barbara Pamuła, and we married in 1968 at the Church of the Little Flower on Wendouree Pde (no longer a church), with the reception at the Ballarat City Rowing Club (which sits over Lake Wendouree).

Left: Jacob & Sophie Pamuła, Richard & Barbara Majda, Andrew & Stefania Majda: 1968.

We moved into our first home near the corner of Gillies St and Norman St, Wendouree, across the road from the present Stockland shopping center. Our first child Paul was born in 1970. I think that Paul was the first child born to a Baby Boomers Polish couple in Ballarat. There were few Ballarat marriages involving a Polish boy marrying a Polish girl. Three other young Polish couples married in Ballarat in that era -- they were Jimmy Iwanowski and Kazia Stodolny, Wally Iwanowski and Irene Izydorczyk, and Toey Kornas and Maria Stojko. A number of Ballarat Poles married Poles from Melbourne and Geelong, including Jennifer Pilecki who married Joseph Timanowicz from Geelong, and Stan Fugiel who married Helena Pasiak from Melbourne.

Right: Paul was born in 1970, Donna in 1972, and Adrian in 1977. We have four grandchildren, Justin, Shaun, Mia and Henry. All our children and their partners have been very successful in life and we are extremely proud of them all.



Left: One of the most memorable events during our younger days were the Polish dances held mainly in the Lower Civic Hall, and the famous Polish New Year's Eve balls and dances held in the Main Civic Hall. We even travelled from Mildura to attend. As previously mentioned, we are now well and truly retired in Adelaide where we will probably live out our days.

St Georges Hall: circa 1954



My father was very involved with the Polish Community of Ballarat. He usually collected money as people entered the Polish dances which were held at the Lower Civic Hall in Doveton St North, and at the wonderful New Year's Eve Balls held at the Main Civic Hall. He would also help at the drinks-bar selling soft drinks and alcoholic beverages. He was the Treasurer of the Polish Association for decades, and contributed to the purchase of land for the Polish Hall (Copernicus Hall) in Orion St, Sebastopol, and then helped with the construction and running of the Hall, including dances.

Below: Andrew Majda working at Copernicus Hall in 1976.



CH14.5 THE WACH FAMILY

by Ken and John Wach and Daniela Jeffery (Wach)

The Wach family arrived in Australia on 13 April 1950, landing at Melbourne's Station Pier. They came with three young children (Gienek, Daniela and Krystyna), all of whom were born in different forced labour or Displaced Persons camps in Germany. Upon arrival, the family, like so many others, were transferred to Australian migrant camps in the Victorian towns of Bonegilla and later Mildura.



Above: The Wach family: Stan, Helena, Gienek (Ken), Daniela and Krystyna.

Sixteen-year-old Helena Koscanska (Helen) and seventeen-year-old Stanisław Wach (Stan/Stanley) were separately captured by German troops in 1939 and 1940 during the invasion of Poland, at the outbreak of World War II. Helena was born in the small rural village of Bibianna (in the administrative region of Gmina Malanów in Turek County within West-Central Poland about 100 km south-east of the city of Poznan). She unexpectedly died in 1994 of an aortic aneurysm during corrective surgery at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. She led an eventful life that was highlighted by her warmly dedicated and consistently maintained familial connections. She had many virtues and was very much respected as well as admired by all who knew her. Given her hard-working and caring character, as well as her unwavering dedication, she was always deeply loved by her cherished family.

Stanisław was born in the small farming village of Borzykowa near the spa town of Busko-Zdrój (in the administrative region of Gmina Chmielnik within Kielce County in South-Central Poland about 40 km south of the city of Kielce). He died in 2016 of heart failure at Ballarat's Gandarra Palliative Care Unit, after a long and highly energetic commitment to the forging of a completely new life in Australia. He was always a significant part at the centre of the local Polish Community. He also consistently helped and spoke kindly of everyone in need; he was not outwardly showy, yet somehow everybody thought of him with affection.

What they knew, and responded to, was his deeply seated vitality and active sense of purpose; these were the attributes that people, especially the young, admired the most. Together, they made a treasure out of normality and a virtue out of simplicity. Home was a haven built through unpretentious diligence. Of course, people live their lives and do what they can to shape a sustainable way of life; however, Helena and Stanisław Wach in their example and ethos always seemed to do more and give more. Their four devoted children, Gienek, Daniela, Krystyna and John, always strove to honour their parents' lives - their respective deaths were very deeply felt losses.



Above: Krystyna, Helena, Daniela, Stan & John.

Gienek (Ken) Wach was educated at St Patrick's Primary School and then Ballarat Technical School. He graduated from The Ballarat School of Art, and then the Toorak Technical Teachers' College in Melbourne, and became a teacher at Morwell and Glenroy Technical Schools. Soon after, he undertook Post-Graduate study at RMIT and The University of Melbourne - where he gained a lectureship that led to a thirty-five year academic career that progressed to an Associate Professor position, and a term as Head of the School of Creative Arts at the University of Melbourne. He married Denise (nee Brookman) and lives in Melbourne.

Daniela was educated at St Aloysius Primary School and Loreto Convent in Ballarat; she gained Accountancy credentials and took employment in Ballarat and later worked in various Melbourne-based companies largely at Murray-Goulburn Co-operative. She married Tony Jeffery and has two sons (Brendan and Simon) and two grandchildren (Lewis and Sophie born to Simon and his wife Arlene).

Krystyna Wach was also educated at St Aloysius Primary School and Loreto Convent; she went on to study Nursing and later Midwifery in Melbourne. She gained employment at several prominent hospitals in Melbourne and died of an aggressive melanoma in 1984.

John Wach was educated at St Patrick's Primary School and Ballarat High School before attending the University of Ballarat to study Science and Physics. Upon graduating he gained employment at the Mt Stromlo Observatory in Canberra and later as a Senior Technical Officer at the Australian National University – he continues to live in Canberra.

Right: John, Ken, & Stan Wach.

Like many at the time, Helena Koscanska and Stanisław Wach were both forced into servitude and taken to work as agricultural labourers in various forced-labour camps in Northern Germany from 1939 to 1945. They met in the camp at the German town of Waltrop during this period. They were married at the end of the War and lived in various towns (mainly Waltrop, Haltern, Datteln and Rhine) in Germany's Nord-Rhine-Westphalia Province for the next five years.



During this Post-War period, Stan was spotted playing soccer with a British Royal Air Force team against a British Army team. He was almost immediately selected to sign up and play for the Manchester United team in England. A Polish priest, working for the Red Cross, warned him about the problems of living in an area that was virtually demolished by V1 flying bombs; a region with ruined factories and very few prospects and employment. Thinking of his wife and young family, the prospects seemed grim, and he decided upon leaving everything – home, friends and relatives and land, to travel to Australia – a country where a new and free life beckoned.

Stan worked as a labourer on the Victorian Railways at Hamilton and Dunkeld. He became attracted by Ballarat's rural and historical charms. Soon after moving to Ballarat, in 1952, Helena found employment at the Queen Elizabeth Geriatric Centre and worked there for the rest of her life. The family of five first settled in a small house in Ballarat's Ascot St; they then moved to Alexander St in Redan, where their youngest son John was born, and later to Darling St, Rubicon St, and finally to the suburb of Alfredton. The Wach family was a happy and cohesive whole; it was sufficient unto itself yet responsive to its social context. The family wrote to and sent numerous packages to its extended family members on Poland, and were very happy to meet them in person during three separate trips to Poland, and to sponsor Stan's sister (Jozefa Damienska) for her visit to Ballarat in 1978.

In 1953, Stan was asked to play for the RAF Soccer Club, when it was located at the Ballarat Aerodrome. He was the only European migrant in the side of British Airmen, in what eventually came to be called the Ballarat City Soccer Club, as led by RAF Captain John Glenn, and managed by the tireless Jimmy Oliver. This eventually led to Stan forming the Kosciuszko Soccer Club, and after Helena's suggestion of a fitting name and colours, it became a much-appreciated long term focal point for Ballarat's Polish community. The club held regular events and memorable celebrations at St Georges Hall, the Wendouree Rowing Club, and the Ballarat Civic Hall.



Above: Kosciuszko team 1955: Back: Peter Steiner, Sławko Nykoluk, Nick Nikolovski, Wally Kitlowski, Sergio Bielski, Ted Zabinski. Front: Stan Wach, Stan Wojdat, Jack Burcon (goalie), Steve Burcon, Frank Różycki.

Below: Kosciuszko won the Henderson Shield in 1963. Back: Frank Rynkiewicz, Giuseppe Micich, Harry Arts, Mac Rynkiewicz, Herman Hovens, Ken Wach, Ivan Tudorovic, Stan Wach: Front: Martin Vissers, Richard Majda, Eric Oparski (goalie), Jack Fugiel, Theo Arts.





Above: Kosciuszko team 1966: Back: Hank Batstra, Mac Rynkiewicz, Ivan Tudorovic, Luka Kuric, Aldo Bulic, Giuseppe Micich: Front: Ken Wach, Richard Majda, Eric Oparski, Jack Fugiel, Beniamino Dal Ben.

These were wonderful times with many unforgettable events. The Wach family always figured largely in their successes. There was hardly a Polish family or youngster who did not share in those blissful days.

CH14.6 ADAM AND ANTONINA SKIRZYNSKI by Wanda Mann (Skirzynski)

Adam Skirzynski (dad) was born on 2 Sept 1914, in Babiec Rząty, near Warsaw. His ex-Prisoner of War Identity Card lists his mother Leokadia Skirzynska (nee Zołtanska) as his next of kin. Little is known about his childhood but a brother was mentioned from time to time. Adam was conscripted into the Polish



Army in 1935 when he was 21 years old. World War II broke out in 1939 and Adam fought in the Polish Armed Forces as a private until his capture and incarceration in Stalag XI-B. He became a Prisoner of War.

Left: Adam in the Polish Army: c. 1939.

Below: Adam Skirzynski kneeling back left.



I obtained the following words from the Wikipedia page for – "*Stalags XI-B, XI-D, and 357*".

Stalag XI-B and Stalag XI-D [later renamed Stalag 357] were two World War II prisoner-of-war camps (Stammlager) located just to the east of the town of Fallingbommel in Lower Saxony, in north-western Germany..... The first prisoners to arrive were the Poles in late 1939, followed by French and Belgians the following year. By the end of 1940 around 40,000 POW were registered there, although only about 2,500 of these were housed at the camp, with the majority assigned to various.... work camps in the area..... [Adam was assigned to farm work].

I obtained some of the following information from Wikipedia and some from Adam. In the beginning conditions weren't too bad, but in 1941, Soviet POWs numbered 11,000. Under these conditions typhus broke out in both camps and Adam recounted the intolerable conditions the POWs experienced -- severe diarrhoea as a result of insanitary conditions, resulting in many deaths. Later, in 1943 Italian POWs arrived and were treated very poorly, suffering the most deaths. By mid 1944, in Stalag XI-B, there were 93,380 registered POWs.

While working on the farm, towards the end of the War, conditions did improve for Adam. The Red Cross insisted and strove for better conditions for the Polish POWs. The organisation managed to achieve some leniency and Polish soldiers were able to attend Mass.

The British liberated the POWs on 16 April 1945, but many prisoners died of starvation and sickness in the final days leading up to what would have been their liberation.

Below: Adam Skirzynski's Polish Army ex POW identity card, and photo probably made by the Germans when he was captured.



No 90821		Nazwisko Surname	Skirzynski (initials—in capital)
Polskie Siły Zbrojne Polish Armed Forces		Imiona własne Christian Names	Adam
LEGITYMACJA b. jeńca wojennego		Data i miejsce urodz. Date and place of birth	2.8.1914.
IDENTITY-CARD ex Prisoner of War		Babiec Rzeczy, woj. Warszawskie	
No. 139.		Wyznanie Religion (option.)	rzym.-kat.
		Stopień wojskowy Rank	szeregowy.
		Pieczęć Of. Kont. Stamp Cont. Offic.	Podpis Ofc. Kont. Signature Cont. Offic.
		B. SZYMANOWSKI	
		No 15	
		Data Date	

Numer jeńcki P.W. Number	14733.	Jakie posiada dokumenty osob. Personal document in possession	Przebieg choroby, dysfunkcja dnia Disease/defect
Wiek Age		Zwolnienie z niewoli niem. z dnia 27.6.1940. Na podstawie urzędów i jakich Authority and kind of currency in possession	Na rozkaz — przez — lekarza By order of — G — M.D.
Obóz jeńców woj. P.W. Camp	Stalag XI.B. (Miejsc i No.) (Place and No.)	Nazwisko i adres najbliż. krewnych Name and address next of kin	Nazwisko (jeżeli jest) lekarza, specjalista i jak. N.O. (jeżeli jest) Name (if any) doctor, specialist & last N.O. (if any) name
Obóz pracy Labor Camp	Lindau. (Miejsc i No.) (Place and No.)	Skirzynska-Zożanna Leokadia, żona Babiec Rzeczy, woj. Warszawskie	Uwagi lekarza co do obec. stanu zdrowia M.D. remarks
Miejsce i miejsce zatrudn. w czasie niewoli Place and occupation at P.W.		Podpis b. jeńcy woj. Signature ex-P.W.	Inoculations against typhus and typhoid finished on 27.10.45
Wiek poborowy Conscript. (the name, year)	1935.	Odcisk palca Finger print	Podpis lekarza Signature M.D.
Ostatni przydział wojsk. i specj. Poate assignment	22.3.1938.	Uwagi Remarks	Data Date
	59 p.p. Inowrocław.		19.12.45
Zawód w życiu cyw. Usual trade or profession	rolnik.		

Antonina Piaseczna (mum) was born in Borzymów, Poland, on 11 May 1925. Her mother's name was Tekla (Kaminska) and her father's name was Bolesław Piaseczny. Antonina was the second eldest of her mother's five children. She had two brothers and one sister, and her mother died during the birth of her fifth child, a boy, who also died. An older brother Janek was born in about 1923. Władysława (Władja)(now deceased) was born in 1931. Roman (now deceased) was born in 1934. A baby brother died during birth in about 1935.

Shortly after Tekla's (grandma's) death Antonina's father Bolesław married Marianna Malec, and had four more children, two boys, and two girls, one of whom (Marianna) died at a young age. Marianna (now deceased) was born in about 1936. Kazimierz (now deceased) was born in 1937. Helena (now deceased) was born in 1939. Zdzisław (Zbyszek) was born in 1946, and he is the last surviving member of mum's family and lives in Poland.

Antonina's family lived in a small farm house with a dirt floor, existing on subsistence farming, and relied on her help. When her mother (Tekla) died during childbirth Antonina was a young child, and, as mentioned, Antonina's father married again. In 1937 her stepmother gave birth to a son, Kazimierz. Although mum was only 12, she assumed the responsibility of looking after the other children and the newborn baby. Her responsible attitude and conscientiousness remained with her throughout her life journey. After mum died in 2007 my husband Graeme and I visited Poland in 2008, and Zbyszek took us to see the old, small farm house, now derelict and dilapidated, and I was amazed at how small and rudimentary it was. We also visited the graves of Antonina's parents and stepmother.

Antonina's young life changed drastically when German trucks pulled up at her school in Borzymów. A bell had announced their arrival. The students rushed to the school only to be *loaded* onto the waiting trucks for transport to Germany.

Many frightening moments followed. The students were terrified as they couldn't understand or imagine what was in store for them. Antonina had never been out of her small village. She was 15. Being the second eldest child, she felt a heavy sense of duty, as her parents depended on her assistance. Life on their small farm was tenuous. The year was 1940.... She never saw her father or stepmother again.... The trucks were open to the elements and some children died during transport.

Left: Antonina (on right) and friend in Germany: 1944.



Antonina was whisked off to Germany to work on a farm. The owner was a German soldier who owned 120 hectares. On the farm he grew potatoes, wheat, rye and corn, and raised pigs. She was ordered to look after three children, clean the house, milk cows and work in the fields. There was also an orchard on the farm. She was treated harshly by the German owner but his mother was a kind lady who took pity on her, sneaking her a meal when it was withheld for some reason.

Antonina owned two dresses, one for work and one for going out. Her shoes had wooden or material soles, and Antonina worked weary days from 6 am to 11 pm. She stayed on the German farm for four long years, unable to escape or improve her situation. She was *slave labour* for the German regime -- alienated permanently from family and friends.

Antonina Piaseczna met her husband Adam Skirzynski at Church. They married after the war on 27 October 1945 in Hannoversch Münden, Germany, and I Wanda Skirzynski (Mann) was born a year later in July 1946, in Hannoversch Münden.

Left: Skirzynski family in Germany: c. 1947.

Below: Marriage Certificate.



Dzielnica Polska w mieście Hann. Münden

METRYKA ZAWARCIA MALŻENSTWA

No. podawany przez sprawców małżeństwa: *Berta Oblok, Gynsburg, w piątym* 40. *antyczna na urodzeniu*

in data: *27. X* 1945. 1. i 2. strony *komunisty niemiecki* *polakowka*

1. strona: *prądowy* 2. strona: *Hann. Münden*

miejsce pobytowe: *prądowy* *Katholicki* *prądowy*

Imię i nazwisko	Malżonka	Stanowisko, imię i nazwisko
Malżonki: 1. <i>SKIRZYŃSKI ADAM</i>	<i>PIASECZNA ANTONINA</i>	<i>Frank Bronnitzer Inżynier Polak</i>
Stan i stanobność: <i>ślubnik</i>	<i>na ślub</i>	
Wzrost: <i>175 cm</i>	<i>165 cm</i>	
Wiek: <i>32 lata</i>	<i>25 lat</i>	
Dzień i rok zawarcia: <i>27 października 1945</i>	<i>11 marca 1925</i>	
Miejscowość: <i>Berta Oblok</i>	<i>Bronnitzer</i>	Stanowisko i imię ojca: <i>Frank Bronnitzer</i>
Profesja: <i>Pracownik</i>	<i>Pracownik</i>	
Wzrost rodziców: <i>175 cm</i>	<i>165 cm</i>	
Imię i nazwisko rodziców: <i>Adam Skirzynski</i>	<i>Antonina Piaseczna</i>	

Hann. Münden, dnia 3/XII. 1945

Frank Bronnitzer

T

PODPISY KSIĘDZA KAPLANA

The Skirzynski family was probably lucky to live in a flat rather than in a Displaced Persons camp, and life returned to some normality, but important decisions had to be made. Should our family return to Poland or migrate to Australia or America? Poland is situated between Germany and Russia -- the Germans had *moved out* but the Russians had *moved in*, so returning to Poland was not an option. Australia was regarded as a young land where there were great opportunities, so Australia was chosen.



Left: Antonina's elder brother, Janek.

After the war, Antonina was reunited with her elder brother Janek, in Germany. She was delighted to persuade him to join our family on our trip to Australia, but at the final moment he decided to go to America, *the land of the free*. Janek wrote to Antonina from a Chicago address -- Jan Piaseczny, 2653N Mozart St, Chicago, 47 ILLINOIS, USA. -- and they corresponded for a while, but then she never heard from him again, and Janek seemingly *disappeared off the face of the Earth*. Janek's family in Poland, Antonina and the Red Cross failed to find or contact him. He remains missing.



Our family sailed on the *General M L Hersey* arriving in Australia on 26 April 1950. Mum, dad and I embarked on our journey with my mother's first cousin, Bolesław (Boris) Kotlarz, his wife Magdelina, their four year old daughter, Janina, and Magdelina's mother, Maria Walichowska. Both families initially settled in Castlemaine.

The trip was long and tedious, while the food was uninviting and monotonous. Macaroni or spaghetti was the usual meal and the Polish migrants missed their staple food; vegetables, especially potatoes, and meat. The ship docked in Port Melbourne and a bus took us to the Bonegilla migrant camp near Wodonga.

Below: IRO photos: Adam, Antonina & Wanda Skirzynski: 1950.



Form No. 2
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
Immigration Act 1901-1949
Number 11235
Port of MELBOURNE
Date of Issue 28 APR 1950

CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION.

This is to Certify that Adam SKIRZYNSKI
who is described hereunder, is authorized to enter or remain in the Commonwealth without being subject to any of the provisions of the Immigration Act 1901-1949 restricting entry into or stay in the Commonwealth.

This certificate shall be in force for a period of TWENTY FOUR
months from the 28 APR 1950 day of 19.

Nationality Polish Birthplace Poland Age 35
Particular Marks
Occupation Labourer
Signature of Person exempted Shirginah Bon

(By authority of the Minister for Immigration)

The Bonegilla migrant camp had been a former Army camp with basic, rudimentary, shared facilities. It had a big hall and we lived in corrugated iron barracks which were designed to accommodate large numbers of single men. The barracks were very hot in summer and very cold in winter. There were 18 women and 23 children in our barrack. The men were segregated in a different part of the camp.

Document left: After arriving in Bonegilla Adam and Antonina received permission to stay in Australia for 24 months.

After a month in Bonegilla dad left the migrant camp on 29 May 1950, departing from Wodonga by rail, to meet a CES officer in Melbourne for arrangements to be placed in work as a labourer on the Cairn Curran Dam. The Certificate of Exemption allowed him to work for up to two years. My dad spent many weeks working at Cairn Curran and we didn't see him often. He returned to Bonegilla by train occasionally.

His remuneration was £6 and 14 shillings a week, plus 10 shillings camping allowance.

Letter right: Adam was directed to travel by rail to the Cairn Curran Dam Project.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
COMMONWEALTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
List No. 4698.
26th May, 19 50.

Dear Mr. Adam SKIRZYNSKI

I desire to advise that, as discussed, arrangements have been made to place you in the employ of State Rivers & Water Supply Commission (110 Exhibition St., at CAIRN CURRAN, VIC. Melbourne) as Labourer

You should commence work on arrival
The hours and/or shifts will be 40 hours - 5 days weekly

Your wages will be £6/14/0 p.w. plus 10/- p.w. camping allow. and, while they remain at that level, deductions from your wages are likely to be:-

Tax Deductions
Approx. 22/- per week for messing
such deductions totalling
leaving a net pay of about

You will leave Bonegilla on 29th May, 1950 at 6.30 a.m. and the travel arrangements made for you are as follows:-
Depart Wodonga by rail at 8.21 a.m. On arrival at Spencer St. Station Melbourne wait outside your car where you will be met by a C.E.S. Officer who will arrange for you to meet your Employer. Meal allowance for 3 meals.

The address of the District Employment Officer of the Commonwealth Employment Service whom you should consult if you wish to make any enquiries about your wages, or working conditions, or if you need advice or information on any other matter is
Lyttleton St., Castlemaine
and his telephone number is 361. He will be glad to help you and there is no charge for this service.

You will remember that the Certificate of Exemption granted to you under the Immigration Act 1901-1949, requires you, for a period of up to two years, to engage in such employment as the Commonwealth Employment Service on behalf of the Minister for Immigration approves. A change of employment can be arranged only if there are very special reasons to justify it.

YOU MUST NOT LEAVE THE EMPLOYMENT MENTIONED ABOVE UNLESS YOU HAVE FIRST APPLIED TO THE DISTRICT EMPLOYMENT OFFICER AND RECEIVED HIS APPROVAL TO DO SO.

Yours faithfully,
A. H. CONOLLY
Acting Officer-in-Charge
District Employment Officer
Centre No. 3.

N.B.—Advance made for meals up to and including breakfast/lunch/dinner on / /19
and for accommodation including night of / /19
No advance for fares or accommodation.

O/C D.E.O. 227

Form E.S.50 1, & N.S. Revised 8/49.

Mum worked at the Bonegilla camp in the kitchen, as a cook, for £3 a week. Mum stayed at Bonegilla for about six months then she was told that it was time to *move on* as more migrants, with children, were arriving. She was transferred to the Immigration Holding Centre Mildura, Victoria, where she started attending lessons in English Language and Civics on 20 November 1950, completing her course on 2 June 1951. Her progress was evaluated as being very good. Mum was in her early twenties and easily grasped the intricacies of the English language, as a result she was able to read and write in simple English.



RECORD OF ATTENDANCE OF
Antonina SKIRZYNSKI

Continuation Class	Date joined	Date left	% of Classes Attended	Progress	Signature of Teacher in Charge
Immigr. Holding Centre Mildura, VIC.	20.11.1950	Certificate Issued 20.5.1951 Left: 2.6.1951	94%	Good.	Silbon
- " -	- " -	- " -	- " -		

I started Kindergarten at Mildura and I remember one situation that is etched in my memory – one day all of the children had left with their mums and I was left with the teacher. My mum was very, very late, probably held up at her English class, and I was sobbing uncontrollably and couldn't be silenced.



Above: Kitchen Hands in the dining hall at Mildura -- Mum is sitting on the table, far right.

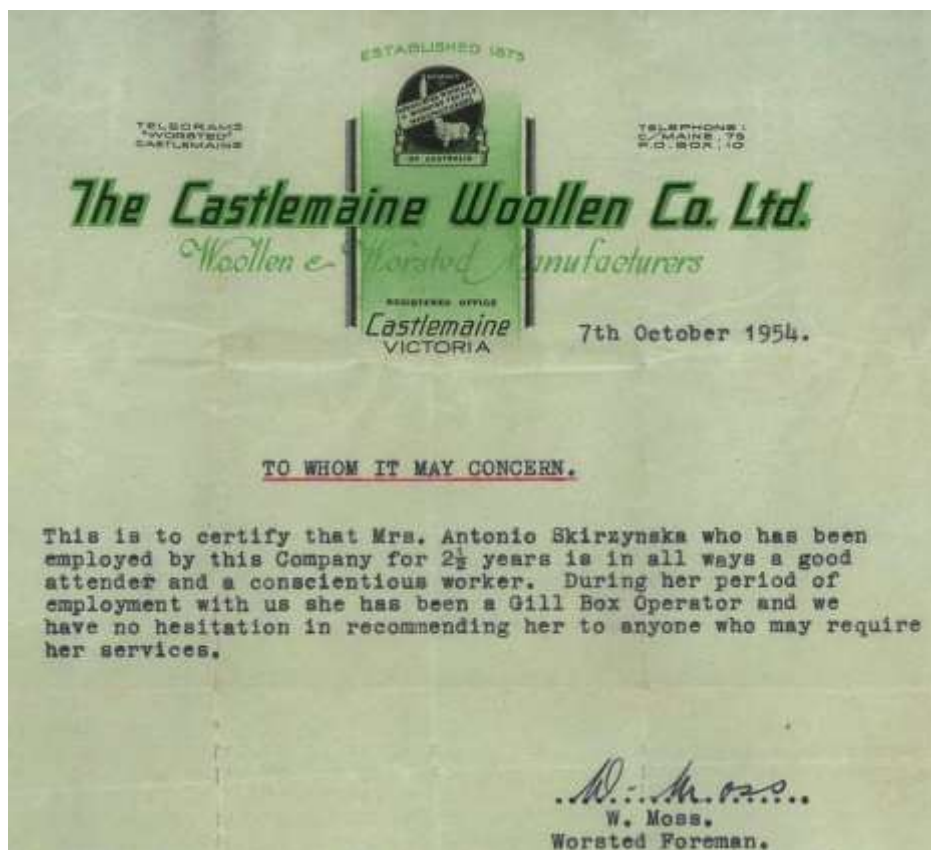
On 27 June 1951, while he was still working at Cairn Curran, my father paid a deposit of 100 pounds for the purchase of a small, wooden heritage house at 14 Elizabeth St Castlemaine. Dad obtained a loan of 800 pounds from the Bank of New South Wales and we moved into our new home in the second half of 1951, after mum finished her English Language lessons at Mildura.



After Mildura in April 1952 Adam and Antonina obtained Certificates of Authority to Remain in Australia.



The contract work had finished and mum was anxious about finding stable employment and making a life in Australia. The Australian language remained a barrier, especially for Adam, and money worries intensified -- Adam was not eligible for unemployment benefits until the family was naturalised on 17 August 1959.



However in 1952 both my parents obtained jobs at The Castlemaine Woollen Co. Ltd. Later Dad worked for the Castlemaine Sewerage Authority. This job was well paid but the benefits were outweighed by the dangers. Mum became increasingly anxious as the Castlemaine newspaper reported a number of deaths at the sewerage work sites, so dad obtained a job with Ford Motor Company of Australia in Ballarat. But after six weeks he returned to the Woollen Co. Mum left the Woollen Co. and worked as a kitchen hand at the Cumberland Hotel in Castlemaine.

In 1954 my parents decided to move to Ballarat where there were more job opportunities. In early 1955 they bought a house at 24 Ascot St South, Central Ballarat, and dad gained employment on the Railways as a Boiler Maker.

Mum was lucky to gain employment in the laundry at the Queen Elizabeth Home (see A in photo) which was just a short walk from our home. Later mum was promoted and was in charge of the staff roster, and the scheduling of staff hours -- she was very proud of her elevated supervisory position. I remember that as a young child the QEH held wonderful, free Christmas parties for the children of the employees, with food and presents provided.



Our house was an old Victorian weather-board house and needed extensive renovation. My paternal grandfather in Poland had been a shoe-maker and my dad had acquired skills from him which he used to advantage. Dad replaced the cheap hessian linings on the walls, painted the house throughout, and installed new floor coverings. My mother decorated the house with a European flair; lace curtains, flowery doona covers and lace table cloths. My Aussie friends didn't have doonas and were in awe of the softness and comfort that doonas provided. Being frugal and money literate, my parents soon paid off the mortgage.



Above: The Skirzynski house at 24 Ascot St Sth during renovation by new owners a few years ago.

Living in Ascot St holds memories of early Ballarat's *simple country life*. Lots of deliveries were made by horse and cart. I remember the baker calling out at the back door – *BAY-KER* – delivering fresh baked bread to our back door, with a smile and a neighbourly chat.... a farmer's uncovered cart rolling along Ascot St delivering raw meat, in the hot early morning sun, against present day rules and regulations, contemporary Australians would question this type of meat delivery, unsuitable for human consumption nowadays. At least the meat was stored in an ice-chest. Ice for our ice chest was also delivered by horse and cart.

The Ascot St central location meant that mum and I could walk to Sturt St for most of our shopping. Around the corner, at the grocer, personal service was given from behind the counter. The grocer would fill a brown paper bag with the desired amount of flour, sugar, rice etc. Broken biscuits were sold or given to children as a treat. *Steve's fish and chip shop*, also in Sturt St, and still there today, served chips that, I think, were better than today's chips, because they were fried in lard or beef fat. Wrapped in newspaper that still had the news print, the chips seem to melt into the grease-proof paper and salt, becoming soft and temptingly delicious. The big, leafy oak trees shading the rows of heritage houses dropped acorns that the neighbourhood children used to play house, ie. to model house plans. What a charmed simple life we led!



Television was introduced in Australia in 1956, but in the 1950s few homes were lucky enough to own one. One of our neighbours, Mrs Trembath, had a small black and white television, and *watching 40 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA* was a treat that enthralled the four Trembath children and myself, glued to the screen.

Left: The Skirzynski radio licence.

Right: Antonina Skirzynski, Janina Zajac, Wanda Skirzynski, Halena Zajac, and Genowefa Zajac. Circa 1955. The Zajacs moved to Sydney in the 60s.



In 1956 it was time to settle into the Ballarat community and form connections with Ballarat Poles. Lacking family connections, my parents joined the Polish Association which was emerging under Jack Burcon's initiative. They were seeking companionship, acceptance and a sense of belonging, and remained life-long members. In 1960 during my early teen years my parents purchased a new, brick *builder-built* home in Surrey St off Pleasant St South. The house was always kept immaculately, and the flower garden and veggie patch were their pride and joy.

Unfortunately dad had a heart attack while working in the veggie garden after work in 1964 at the young age of 50. His internment during the War and his life-long hard, manual labour must have contributed to his untimely death.

Left: Fr Wladyslaw Ziolkos conducted the funeral graveside service.



In 1966 my mum married Michael Yaworowicz, a long-time friend of our family and an original member of the Association.

Right: Church of the Little Flower: Best man was Franciszek Stępień, Maid of Honour was Maria Maciagg.

My mother and Michael moved into Michael's house in Dover St, Wendouree. Later they moved into a house that they built in Lake St, and then they moved into a house that they built in Redford Dr, Wendouree, where they lived for the remainder of their lives. This house is on the site of the former Skyline Drive-In, which opened in 1956 and closed in 1984.



Right: The Redford Dr house.

Michael and Antonina went on two trips to Poland. Mum reconnected with her sister Władja and her half sister Helena and her two half brothers Kazimierz and Zbyszek and their families. On their 2007 trip they attended the wedding of Zbyszek's daughter Beata.



Right: Michael, Antonina, & Mark (Wanda's son), in Poland.

Below right: Mark, Antonina, Beata Piaseczna (Antonina's niece), & Michael.

Below left: Antonina's family in Poland.



I, Wanda, married Graeme Mann in 1969 and we had three children; Kylee in 1970, Paul in 1971 and Mark in 1976. Kylee married Jeff Ellerton in 1996; Owen was born in 2001, and Abbey was born in 2003. Antonina and Michael became doting great-grandparents and they relished the challenge.



Left: Abbey and her brother Owen in 2021, at Abbey's Debutante Ball.

Paul married Lisa Carroll in London in 1998 as they pursued lucrative and challenging careers. After returning from London, Paul became the Chief Financial Officer of the new, emerging Future Fund, in Melbourne.



Unfortunately my mother had a stroke and died in October 2007, at the age of 82, before the marriage of her youngest grandchild Mark in 2009. Mark married Elizabeth (Liz) Aitken in Australia and then they moved to London for 10 years, where Mark worked as an Actuary. Then they lived in Singapore for eight years, where Mark once again worked as an Actuary. They have two daughters -- Alice was born in London in 2012 and Florence was born in Singapore in 2015. Due to COVID-19 Mark's family relocated to Ballarat, Australia, in December 2021.

Alice & Florence Mann in Singapore



Our daughter Kylee became a proprietor of a travel agency, Frank Ford Travel, in Ballarat, before the world pandemic struck. There were many challenges during 2020 and 2021 that needed to be faced and overcome. In October 2021, Kylee's hard work was rewarded when Kylee and her team at Frank Ford Travel, won a 2021 Federation Business School Commerce, Ballarat Business Excellence Award. It was the *prestigious* Power FM Small Business Award. Graeme and I are proud of her achievement during this *extraordinarily* difficult time in the Travel Industry.



Above: Kylee with staff.



Recently Kylee was presented with another award, this was an international award for being a winner of the 2022 Woman Founder of the Year for The Best Vendor.

Here below is Kylee's explanation of how her travel business has managed to cope with the COVID pandemic.

I own Frank Ford travel which is a travel agency selling all things travel. Opening its doors alongside Sovereign Hill and Melbourne Airport 50 years ago, Frank Ford Travel is the longest running travel agency in Ballarat. In a world where we want to feel safe and protected, our customers appreciate that we look after them like they are family. We define success differently at Frank Ford Travel, we believe in making a positive contribution to our community, because it is only when we give back that our work becomes truly meaningful.

Our Team - Frank Ford Travel has been the local travel agency for many of our clients for over 50 years, it has stood the test of time as other agencies have come and gone. This, together with our supportive and customer-focused culture, has seen longevity in our staff, choosing travel as a long term career (which goes against the industry norm). Our staff have returned to us after maternity leave, moving interstate and trying other careers.

Our Customer Service. Our customers appreciate the personal services we provide, that other agencies lack. We offer airport transfers, so their relaxing holiday starts the moment they leave home to the time they get back. Our 24/7 emergency number manned by myself, gives them peace of mind as someone is always there for them and that we will go above and beyond to make their holiday stress free. We also send them personal emails wishing them an enjoyable stay/trip, thanking them for their support, and letting them know how to contact us if they need us.

With such limited cash flow, but still strong demand for customer support, our ability to pivot into new revenue streams was limited. Our new initiatives were the development of hygiene packs, offering airport transfers and regional accommodation packages.

(1) With nothing to sell, we saw the demand for face masks and hand wash and buying 500 hygiene packs ready for sale. Our valued clients supported us in this initiative and businesses brought them for their staff's cars and desks.

(2) Our airport transfers were initially developed to provide a safe door to door service during COVID, for fly in and fly out miners and clients in a high-risk category. We now offer this service to all clients.

(3) Our last initiative, involves us visiting local accommodation providers and helping them put together packages (such as doggie stays, mystery picnics, and high teas), which helped us have a product to sell and encouraged travellers to regional Victoria. Win/win.

We adapted internally whereby we were able to strip our business back to bare bones, fully embrace the work from anywhere concept and focus solely on caring for our customers and making them feel safe. We learnt you can do so much, with so little.



Left: Mum and I when I was awarded a Graduate Diploma of Religious Education in 1986 whilst teaching at St Thomas More, Alfredton.

Antonina was a gentle, caring mother and an admired grandmother and great-grandmother. Her generosity and caring nature has left an enduring legacy. She was loved by all who knew her.

Below: Mum was extremely proud of being Australian but she always remembered and honoured her Polish and Catholic heritage.



Above: Mum enjoying the company of some Polish friends: Bronisław Brodziak, Danuta Przekwas, (mum) Antonina Yaworowicz (Skirzynski), Zofia & Kazimierz Walczak.



Mum's maxim was *"Life is not easy – always do your very best"*.

Mum, you remain forever in our hearts – RIP.

CH14.7 MICHAEL YAWOROWICZ – A DAPPER GENTLEMAN

by Wanda Mann (Skirzynski)

Michal (Michael) Yaworowicz was the son of Aleksander, a Polish army officer, and Maria (Pawluk). He had a baby brother who died of pneumonia, resulting from an unfortunate accident -- falling through the thick, winter ice.

Michael was probably born in Magierow, Poland, which is near the border with Ukraine, on 2 March 1928. He and his parents were taken forcibly from their home by the Germans towards the end of WW2 and became civilian prisoners on a German farm, working as slave labour. Regrettably Michael's dad died in Germany on 16 March 1948 in Weinsberg, before he could be resettled, and he is probably buried in the Sontheim Cemetery (see Death Certificate below). *Below: Michael: circa 1953.*

Duszpasterstwo Katolickie
Polskiego Ośrodka
Curatia Rom. Cath. pro Polonis

Heilbronn/W. data 20.3. 1948
die

w Heilbronn/Würt.
Nr. aktu 5/1948

ŚWIADECTWO ŚMIERCI TESTIMONIUM MORTIS

W księgach zmarłych Duszpasterstwa kat. Polskiego Ośrodka
In libro mortuorum Curatiae Rom. Cath. pro Polonis

w Heilbronn/Würt. strona 7 Nr. 5/1948
in pagina

opisy jest następujący akt śmierci:
actus actus mortis reperitur:

Nazwisko i imię zmarłego JAWOROWICZ Aleksander wyznania Rzym.-kat.
Nomen et cognomen defuncti religio

urodzony (a) 16.3.1887 w Biala pow. Rawa Ruska woj. Lwów
natus (a)

syn, córka Michala i Marii z domu Długoos
filius, filia

zamieszkały(a) w Polsce Magierow pow. Rawa Ruska
habitans in Polonia

zmarł(a) dnia 16.3.1948 w Weinsberg pow. Heilbronn/Würt. Niemcy
mortuus(a) est, die in

i został(a) pochowany(a) na cmentarzu w Heilbronn-Sontheim/Würt. Niemcy
et sepultus(a) est in coemeterio in

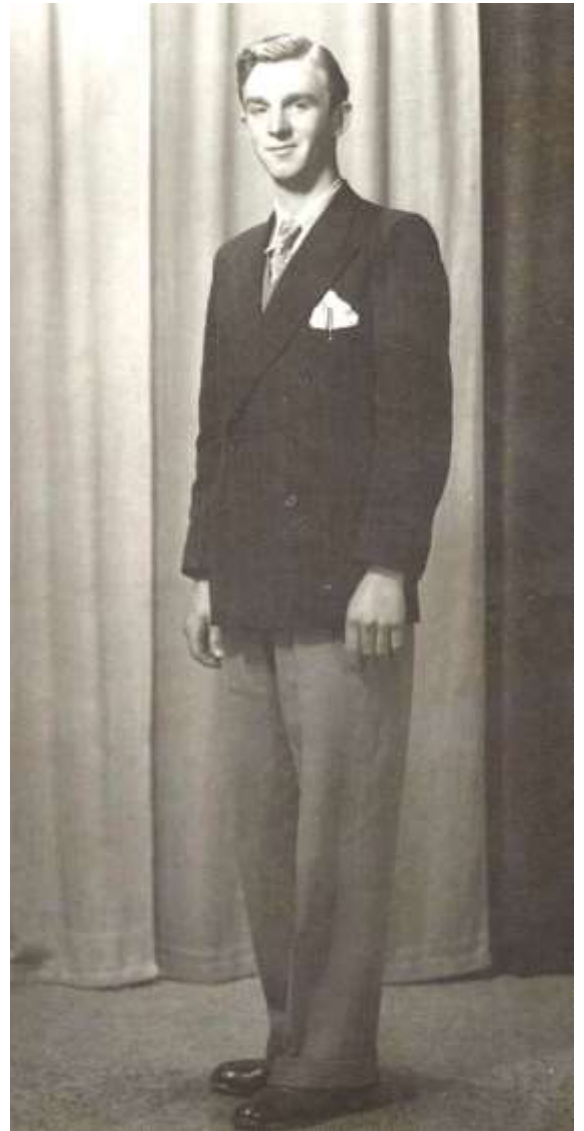
Nr. grobu
nr. sepulchri

Pozostali po zmarłym syna Maria Yaworowicz z domu Pawluk

Za spisanie
in: sporum, fidem

Jo. Henryk Latała
Polski Duszpasterz
Curatiae Rom. Cath. pro Polonis

Uwaga! Akt powonny zamieścić się także w księgach metrykanych w miejscowego proboszczu starostkijskiego.
Copie actus inveniuntur quoque in libro mortuorum parochias loci Germanicis.



While in Germany, after the war, Michael worked for the Americans as a security guard -- he was in a very fortunate position as the Americans treated him well and he was able to learn the English language. The Americans tried to persuade him to travel to America, *the home of the free*, and they painted a *rosy picture* of life there. However he decided to make the long, tedious voyage to Australia believing a promising new life awaited him in a young, developing country.

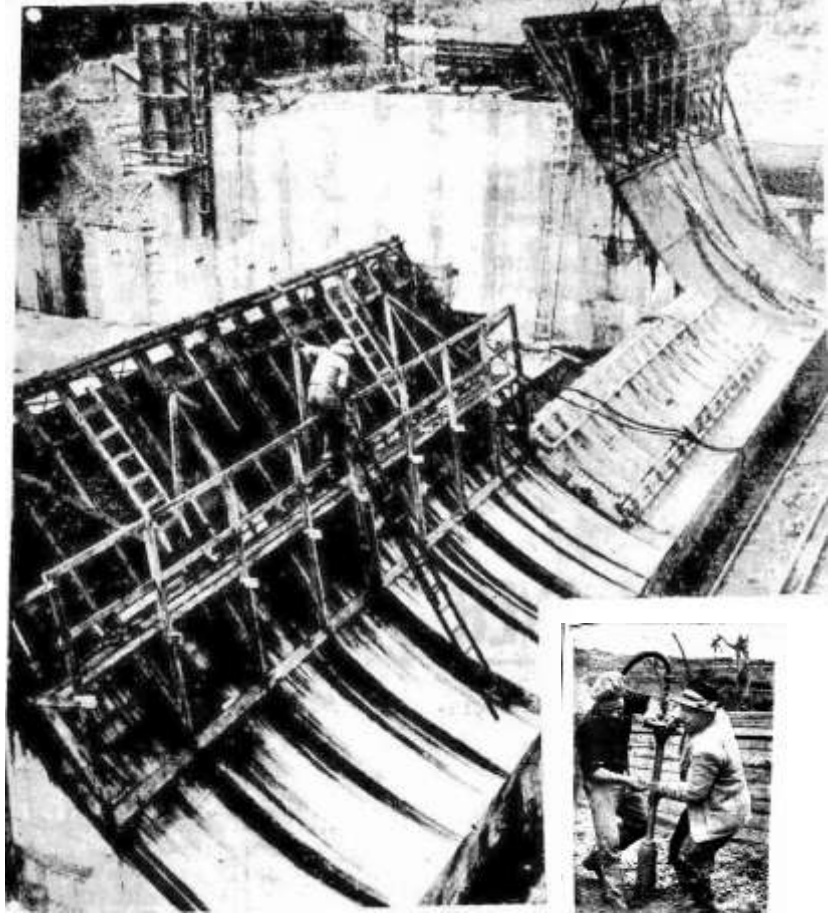
Michael sailed from Naples on the Wooster Victory and disembarked in Sydney on 15 March 1949, and was taken by train to the Bathurst Training Centre. Michael's mum for some unknown reason sailed separately on the Fairsea, reaching Sydney on 31 December 1949. On arrival in Australia Michael was luckier than most Polish migrants -- as he already spoke *good English*, he was able to fit into Australian society quite easily.

Rocklands Dam Michael's two year migrant contract with the government resulted in him working on the Rocklands Dam project on the Glenelg River near Hamilton, Victoria. Many other Ballarat Poles also worked on the Rocklands Dam before settling in Ballarat.

Below left: Michael working at Rocklands Dam: circa 1950.

Below right: Spillway work:

Horsham Times Friday 18 Nov 1949



90th Year—70,877 Subscription: Posted: In Advance, 40/- per annum. Booked, 45/- per annum. HORSHAM, FRIDAY, MAY 8, 1953

**NEW WEALTH FROM
ROCKLANDS DAM**

**MINISTER OPENS
DAM**

**Two Thousand
At Opening**

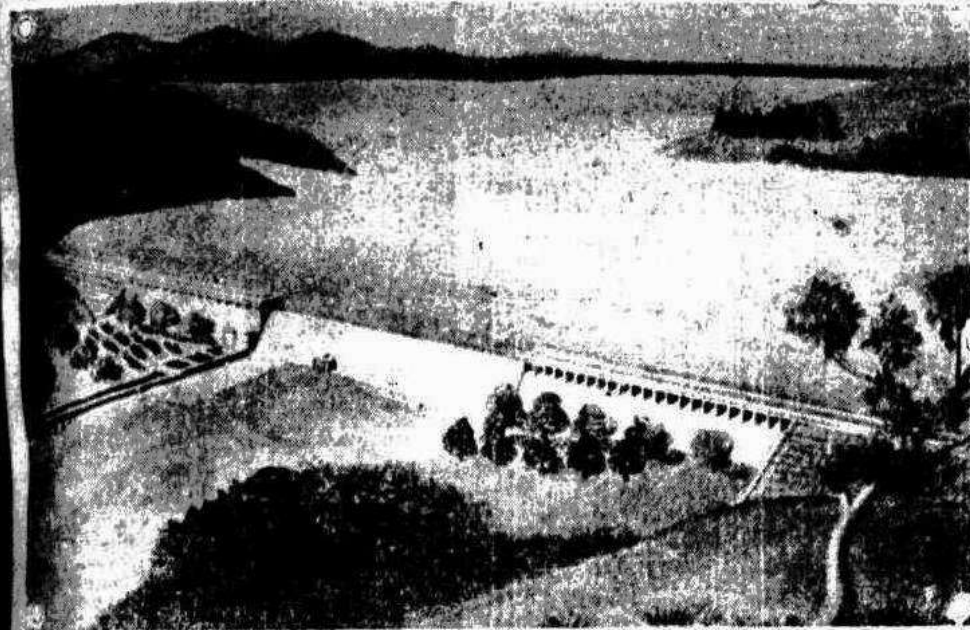
The giant outlet valves of **Rocklands Dam**, which holds life giving water for thousands of western Victorian primary producers, were opened yesterday.

In the shadow of the giant construction, many of the crowd of 2,000 people cheered, as thousands of gallons of water surged through the outlet channel, headed for dry northern areas.

The dam, held up by many set backs since construction began, will be the nerve centre of the largest water supply system of its kind in the world.

The dam was opened when the Minister of Water Supply (Mr. Stoneham) pressed a button at the end of the official ceremony.

In his address to the people, Mr. Stoneham said the intense public interest in the important event was proof of the realisation of people throughout the Wimmera and Mallee, that Rocklands Dam would add to future stability and prosperity.



Top picture shows an artist's impression of what the Rocklands Dam looks like. The dam was officially opened yesterday by the Minister for Water Supply (Mr. C. Stoneham).

The bottom picture shows work being done in the early stages of the dam's construction.

Horsham Times: Friday 8 May 1953.

**NESTLÉ'S FOOD SPECIALITIES
(AUSTRALIA) LIMITED**

INCORPORATED IN NEW SOUTH WALES

TELEGRAMS & CABLES: "NESTFOOD"
CODE: NESTLÉ'S
BRANCH OFFICES THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA

DENNINGTON CONDENSERY, DENNINGTON, VICTORIA
POSTAL ADDRESS: BOX 3 WARRNAMBOOL, VICTORIA
TELEPHONES: WARRNAMBOOL 223, 617

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO
THE COMPANY, NOT TO INDIVIDUALS
YOUR REFERENCE:
OUR REFERENCE: **AKN/VLM/570**

22nd May, 1952

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Mr. M. Yaworowicz was employed by this Company as a Motor Lorry Driver from the 6th September, 1951 to the 1st March, 1952.

He carried out his duties to our satisfaction, and left us of his own accord.

Yours faithfully,

NESTLÉ'S FOOD SPECIALITIES (AUSTRALIA) LIMITED
DENNINGTON CONDENSERY

After Rocklands Dam, Michael worked in Hamilton detailing cars, and then in Warrnambool he was employed as a truck driver picking up cans of milk from farms, taking them to the Nestlé factory, and returning the empty cans.

Left: Document from Nestlé.

Michael then, for unknown reasons, moved to Ballarat where he gained employment as a taxi driver and he became very popular because he was respectful, courteous and obliging, opening and shutting taxi doors for passengers. He kept the taxi spotless, and his passengers found him to be engaging and interesting. Often repeat taxi jobs came his way, as clients requested his services. Many years later, with determination and planning he purchased two taxis and his financial stability improved. During his initial taxi work he saved enough money to put a deposit on a house in Windermere St Sth, Central Ballarat.



BALLARAT URBAN TAXI CAB RATES
(Authorised from 1st April, 1966, by Transport Regulation Board)

A. HIRINGS WHOLLY WITHIN BALLARAT URBAN DISTRICT

Flagfall	20c (2/-)	From point of pick-up including payment for first one-sixth of a mile.
Mileage Rate	18c (1/9.6)	2c (2.4d) for each additional one-ninth of a mile to destination.
Detention	\$2.00 (20/-)	per hour 2c (2.4d) each 36 seconds.
Service Fee	15c (1/8)	Pre-booking through depot by hirer
Luggage	5c (6d)	each item carried outside passenger compartment.
Bicycle	10c (1/-)	

B. HIRINGS PARTLY OR WHOLLY OUTSIDE BALLARAT URBAN DISTRICT

Hiring rate to be computed at the rate per mile of 15c (1/5d) from point of pick-up of passengers and return thereto via the most direct route, plus detention at \$2.00 (20/-) per hour where applicable.

Note:- Any hiring by taxi cab must commence within the said urban district unless bespoken through a depot in which the said vehicle is attached.

C. Separate rates and conditions are specified by the Board for special hirings such as weddings, large vans, etc.

T.R.B.
FORM 17/582

CERTIFICATE No. 25 _____ REGISTER

BALLARAT TAXI CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED
(Incorporated under the Companies Act, 1955 in G.L. at VICTORIA _____)

REGISTERED OFFICE: 36 LINDSEY ST., BALLARAT.

AUTHORIZED CAPITAL: £ _____ divided into _____ PREFERENCE SHARES of £ _____ each
_____ ORDINARY SHARES of £ _____ each
_____ STOCK UNITS of £ _____ each

This is to Certify that NICHOLAS JUBERT TARDONCZ of _____ 36 LINDSEY STREET, BALLARAT, is the registered holder of _____ ONE HUNDRED Shares numbered as in the margin hereof, on which the sum of FIVE DOLLARS per share has been paid subject to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company.

NUMBER	AMOUNT	PAID
2001	5.00	100

Given under the Common Seal of the Company, this 27th day of AUGUST 19 52

John H. H. H. Director
John H. H. H. Secretary

This certificate must be surrendered to the company on transfer of any of the above shares

Michael was also a generous and extremely friendly person with an outgoing personality. He loved to chat *over a drink* and loved social gatherings – sharing stories and jokes. Although he had a strong grasp of the English language, he was mystified by one incident that he retold numerous times. While drinking with an Australian fellow worker his new friend said, "I'll have to go, I'll see you later". Michael waited... and waited for his friend to return... but he never came back.

Michael's engaging personality and charisma earned him respect in the Polish and Australian community, and he was willing to contribute in any way he could. He gravitated towards the Polish community offering help in legal and civil matters. Often he would volunteer driving lessons and take learner drivers for their licence -- he took pleasure in helping others to succeed, and he formed long lasting friendships with members of the Police and the legal fraternity.

Joining the Polish Association gave Michael a worthwhile purpose and direction in life, and he became a dedicated Polish Association member. He was a *Pole at heart*. At Polish celebrations he often initiated the singing of Poland's National Anthem with gusto and exuberance. Michael was very upset by the division that occurred in the Ballarat Polish Association in 1994. He advocated for unity, but was not able to achieve it, as too many differences surfaced. He, and a number of other long-time members, encouraged the younger members to take on a role in the new committee. Michael remained a lifelong member encouraging others to be a part of the organization he valued and loved – he died in 2015 -- the Association finally wound up in 2018.

In the early 1950s Michael and his mother Maria met my family, Antonina and Adam Skirzynski and me (Wanda), during Polish community gatherings and celebrations.



Above left: Michael displayed his Polish Association plaque in the lounge room.

Above right: Maria Yaworowicz (Michael's mum)(18 Aug 1888-20 Oct 1979)(aged 91).

My dad, Adam, died in 1964, and in 1966 Michael married my mother, Antonina, and they were happily married for 40 plus years, until my mother died in 2007. Michael began his relationship and married life as a stepfather to a strong-willed, teenage step-daughter. He taught me to drive, and he never hesitated to pick me up from dances and parties in his beloved taxi which was always immaculate.

Below left: Michael & Antonina's house that they built in Lake St, Wendouree, and Michael's precious taxi: circa 1972.



Right: Michael & Antonina in Michael's front garden, Dover St, Wendouree, Ballarat: circa 1966.



Left: When I married Graeme Mann in 1969 in St Patrick's Cathedral, Michael proudly walked me down the aisle. Janina Kotlarz who was my cousin, and lived in Castlemaine, was my Matron of Honour, and her brother Andrew was my Page Boy. Michael's immaculate taxi can be seen in the photo.

Michael and mum loved cooking Polish food: sauerkraut soup, cabbage rolls, rosół soup, and he made his own pasta. Anyone who knocked on his door was *dragged inside* for a cuppa, a polish sausage sandwich, sometimes sauerkraut or rissoles.... and vodka.

Being family orientated our extended family and friends enjoyed many Sunday dinners. Michael's generosity extended to anyone who was lonely or alienated. Quite often we shared our Sunday meal with priests, and with Michalina Raczek (who died just short of 100 years of age), and Bronisław Brodziak who was a very valued Vice President in the early years of the Polish Association.

After 1988 Fr Henry Nickel held masses in the Polish language at St Aloysius. In the 1990s and the early 2000s Michael helped with preparations and the setting up of the church for masses and celebrations.



Left: Family gathering at the Polish Hall: circa 2007: Rear L-R: Kylee Ellerton (Mann) (Wanda's daughter), Graeme & Wanda Mann, & Jeff Ellerton: Front: Antonina & Michael holding their grandchildren Abbey & Owen Ellerton.

Michael will be remembered for his *dress-up role* as St Nicholas at the Polish Association's celebration of Opłatek (the sharing of the Christmas wafer). Michael died in August 2015 at the age of 87. The previous year, after being in hospital, he willingly agreed to dress up as St Nicholas at the Polish Opłatek celebration.

Right: Michael as St Nicholas, with Abbey & Owen Ellerton: circa 2007:

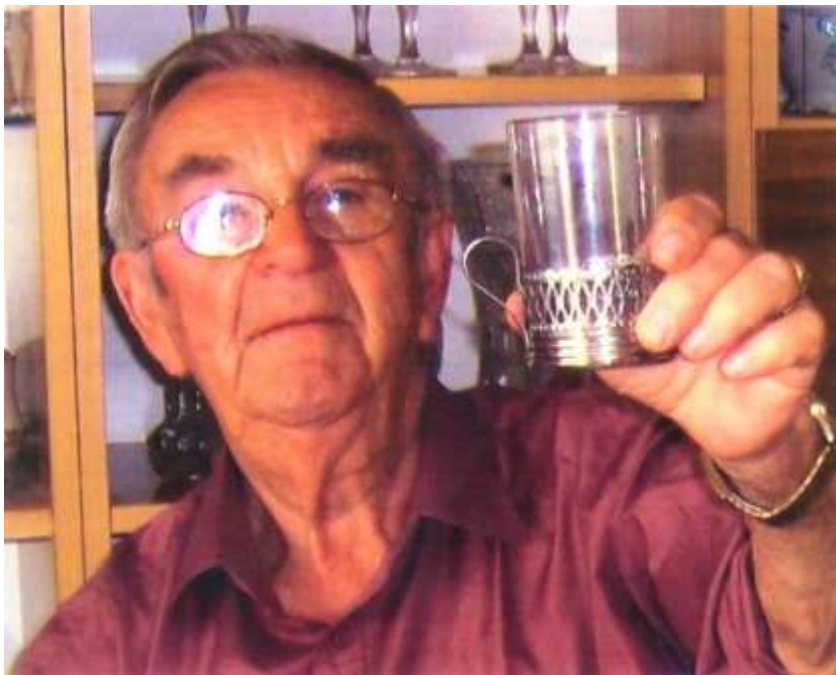


Below: Wedding of Mark Mann & Liz Aitken: 2009.





Left: Michael -- a dapper gentleman, and a proud Polish Australian, husband, stepfather, and adored grandfather.



*Left: Prost! Na zdrowie!
"To your health"*

CH14.8 THE STODOLNY FAMILY – by Kazia Iwanowski (Stodolny)

Stanisław (Stan) Stodolny (my dad) was born on 12 August 1917, in Czekanow, Poland. He was the fourth child of Maria and Franczisek -- they had seven children, five boys and two girls. In his early years, he worked on the Polish Railways. After Germany invaded Poland, in September 1939, his sister, Helena, was singled out to be transported to Germany, but Stanisław was adamant that he would take her place. While in Germany, naturally, he was forced to work on the railways, and it was during that time that he met his wife, Franciszka.

Franciszka (my mum) was born on 28 May 1922, in Kisielów, southern Poland. She was one of seven children, two girls and five boys, born to Leon and Jadwiga Nowik. One brother and her sister passed away when she was very young, so Franciszka was the last surviving daughter. She had a very happy childhood, and was born into a very religious and wonderful caring family. As she was the only surviving daughter, at an early age she had to learn all of the household duties expected of a girl. By the time she was ten years old, she knew how to spin and weave, how to bake bread, cook and clean. She loved school, but only went to grade four, as she was needed to help in the home, as well as in the fields -- planting crops and gathering hay. She enjoyed outside work, and that was evident, because, in Ballarat, she always had a beautiful, big vegetable garden -- she loved gardening in general.



After Germany invaded Poland mum, like dad, was also taken from her loving family and forced to work in Germany -- this devastated her family, because she was the only girl. In Germany, she worked in a number of factories, and then she was transferred to a railway kitchen, preparing meals for the railway workers. During this time she met dad, Stanisław, who worked on the railways. The war ended in 1945 and Franciszka and Stan were married in 1946, and in 1947 I (Kazia), their first child, was born.

After living for four years in displaced persons camps in Germany, our family was accepted for migration, and sailed on the Hellenic Prince from Naples, docking in Melbourne, on 14 February 1950. On arrival our family and many others were taken to Bonegilla migrant camp, and later to Mildura migrant camp. *Below: Photos from 1949 IRO documents, courtesy of National Archives Canberra.*



Dad was assigned to work for the Mildura Fruit Growers Association for a short time, and later for the Railways at Ouyen, for his obligatory two year contract, so that the family could remain in Australia. Franciszka found work picking grapes. Mildura was too hot for Franciszka, so in May 1952 the family came to Ballarat. Stan was a shunter on the Ouyen to Ballarat line, and he had heard that Ballarat had a cool climate. They built a new home in Alfred St, Sebastopol, where Franciszka lived for 55 years.

Winds of Change

By the 1950s, post-war developments in the wider society were beginning to affect the St Aloysius community. The arrival in Redan of some Catholic migrants from European countries was one such change. A number of Polish families settled around Alfred and Kent Streets.

Kazia Iwanowski (née Stodolny) arrived there in 1952, aged five. Her experience was probably typical of migrant family children who came to St Aloysius in the 1950s and 60s. Having known only the close-knit, local Polish community, she was lost when she began school in 1953. She recalled that every Monday the nun teaching her class would ask children who had not been to Mass on Sunday to stand up. She stood up every Monday. A fellow student who knew she went to Mass every Sunday with her family asked her why she stood up. Kazia (pictured right) only knew the Sunday outing as going to "Church"; she had not known what "Mass" meant. The Polish families brought with them a strong tradition of faith. They attended a Polish Mass which began at St Patrick's Cathedral in 1952. In May each year there was a special Polish liturgy at St Aloysius on a Sunday afternoon where the Litany and other hymns were sung followed by Benediction. In October, the rosary was recited each Sunday and during the week families took turns for saying of the rosary in their homes.



*Kazia Stodolny with her parents, Franciszka and Stanislaw on her First Communion Day
17 September 1954*

St Aloysius was the venue for a weekly Polish community Mass for many years. As well as Polish migrants, a number of Catholic families from the Netherlands settled in Redan and Delacombe in this period. The De Jong and Den Ouden families were among Dutch families to have a deep involvement in the life of St Aloysius School and community.

Above: Article from "Out of the Mullock Heaps" – 1875-2008. St Aloysius Parish, Redan, June 2008.

Stan's working life in Ballarat was a change from the railways, as his first job was at the Sunnyside Woollen Mills, and then at MB John (John Valves), as a fitter and turner, until his retirement. Franciszka obtained work at the Paddles Shoe factory. She was a hard worker who did everything to perfection.

In March 1961, Franciszka and Stan became the proud parents of a second child, Frank. The long-awaited birth (I was 14 years old) gave the family great joy. After a few years caring for her young family, Franciszka returned to work, this time at the Ballarat Paper Mills, and she worked there until her retirement.

Franciszka and Stan enjoyed a great social life and had many friends. Their home was always open to the Polish and Australian communities. No-one left without a little vodka, vegetables from the garden, or eggs from the chooks. Stan dearly loved and cherished his family. Along with this trait, he is remembered for enjoying a good party. There were always jokes and smiles for everyone in his company, and his absence meant the party was never quite as much fun. Stan was also a bargain hunter, who travelled from one side of Ballarat to the other, in search of a special at the supermarket. Above all, he was always a deeply religious man, who prayed every day from his beloved and now worn out prayer book. He was a hard worker, a very law-abiding citizen, and he very much appreciated the privilege of living in Australia.

Frank was born on 17 March 1961, at the St John of God Hospital, Ballarat, 11 years after our arrival in Australia. He began his schooling at St Aloysius Primary School, and then studied at the Christian Brothers Primary School, Drummond St. He completed his education at St Patrick's College. He was an altar boy, and he was involved in the Polish Scout Group, and the Polish Youth Club. He held wonderful memories of taking part in the early Polish Association's youth activities. His first job was with Venture Stores, then with the Commonwealth Bank, where he stayed for 28 years. He excelled at sport, enjoying tennis, table tennis, badminton, darts, billiards and especially golf and fishing. He insisted on continuing to play golf after he became sick. Frank was much loved by everyone, he was so gentle and kind, such a loving brother and son. He loved our get-togethers at Christmas, Easter and birthdays, and he was especially welcome at bank BBQs etc as he was such a good cook. His bank workmates loved and respected Frank very much, and at the Geelong bank's Australia Day BBQ they have a team sports event, and the perpetual trophy is named after Frank. My husband (Jim) and I are invited every year, in Frank's memory. Frank died on 30 April 2012, aged 51.



Lovingly reunited again in God's care.

12/8/1917 ~ 15/9/1997
28/5/1922 ~ 9/9/2008
17/3/1961 ~ 30/4/2012

Stanislaw
Franciszka
Frank



Polish Childrens' Dance Troupe



Above: Back: Zofia Sztojko, Aniela Kulman (dance teacher), Wally Borecki, Stan Fugiel, Eddie Dziuba, Anton Wajda (driver). Front: Kazia Stodolny, Jack Fugiel, Maria Sztojko, Zofia Dziuba, Anna Andrejczuk (music accompanist): For the visit of Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies in 1956.



Meeting the Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies: Begonia Festival 1956.



Above & below: The Polish children's troupe danced for the Prime Minister on the lawn at the Botanic Gardens.

P.M. in Ballarat for big day

MR. MENZIES, Prime Minister, and Dame Pattie Menzies, will arrive in Ballarat this morning to open the begonia festival.

They will arrive by plane at Ballarat R.A.A.F. School of Radio aerodrome at 10.30, where they will be met by a guard of honor of 100 airmen under command of Flight-Lieut. E. V. T. Shields.

The Prime Minister and Dame Pattie will be welcomed by Wing Commander G. E. Prosser, commanding officer of the R.A.A.F. School of Radio, and Mr. Edgar Bartrop, chairman of begonia festival committee, and Mrs. Bartrop.

They will drive to Craig's Hotel, and will be given a civic reception by Cr. N. T. Callow, Mayor, and Mrs. L. T. Hodgson, Mayoress.

Senior scholars of Humfray st. State school, which the Prime Minister once attended, will form a guard of honor at the town hall.

At 11.29 a.m. Cobb and Co's coach will return to Ballarat from its mail run to Bendigo and at 11.30 the Prime Minister will open the 1956 begonia festival.

At night, Mr. Menzies and Dame Pattie will attend a New Australians' concert at Botanic Gardens, when Dame Pattie will crown Miss Carol Penrose, begonia queen.

Photos
The Courier
Saturday
3 March 1956



Polish Association Float: Begonia Procession: 1956.





Wedding of Alex and Alojza Kawa: circa 1963. Stan Fugiel, Christina Buzo, Mike Burcon, Wanda Burcon, Teresa Buzo (flowergirl), Maria Buczek, Anton Wajda, Kazia Stodolny (later Iwanowski), Steve Burcon.



Above: Henrietta Kaciczak's birthday party: circa 1965: Rear: Eric Oparski, Rod Klicki, Josh Kulman, (unknown), Michael Maciag, Richard Majda, Jack Fugiel, Kaz Fugiel, (unknown): Middle: (unknown), Barbara Pamuła (later Majda), Kazia Stodolny (later Iwanowski), Mary Kaciczak (now Titheridge), Christine Buzo, Zofia Dziuba, Wanda Zabinski. Front: (unknown), Henrietta Kaciczak (now McNally), Anne Buzo, Cheryl (later Oparski).



Above: St Patrick's Cathedral Hall: Apostolic Delegate's visit to Ballarat in April 1958. L-R: (unknown), Bishop O'Collins, the Polish Prelate (Apostolic Delegate) Archbishop in Exile of the Polish Diaspora Jozef Feliks Gawlina (Rome) receiving flowers from Richard Majda, Monsignor Fiscalini, Fr Ziółkós.

*Below: The Polish community welcoming the Apostolic Delegate, St Patrick's Hall.
Photos from Stodolny family album.*



AUSTRALIA

GROUP NR. 1841/17

I. R. O. Resettlement Medical Examination Form

Part I. Identification form to be completed by Assembly Centre doctor.

I. Teil. Identifikations-Formular, durch den Arzt der Assembly Centre auszufüllen.

1. Name **S T O D O L N Y , Stanislaw** 2. Camp **Free living** 3. Location **Scholsshof Kra**
 Name **S T O D O L N Y , Stanislaw** Lager **Free living** Ortschaft **Backnang**
 4. Age **32** 5. Sex **M** 6. Colour of hair **blond**
 Alter **32** Geschlecht **M** Haarfarbe **blond**
 7. Colour of Eyes **blue** 8. Height **175cm** 9. Weight **62 kg**
 Farbe d. Augen **blue** Grösse **175cm** Gewicht **62 kg**
 10. Scars or other Means of Identification **None**
 Narben oder andere Kennzeichen **None**

19

11. D.P. Number **S T O D O L N Y , Stanislaw** 12. Claimed nationality **Polish**
 D.P. Nummer **S T O D O L N Y , Stanislaw** Angebliche Staatsangehörigkeit **Polish**

I certify that I have seen - Ich erkläre

Mr. - Herrn
 Mrs. - Frau **S T O D O L N Y , Stanislaw** and
 Miss - Fräulein

examined his/her D.P.I. Card, his/her photograph and his/her appearance, and am satisfied the particulars given are correct and that he/she has signed in my presence.

gesehen, seine/ihre D.P.I. Karte, seine/ihre Photographie und sein/ihr Aussehen kontrolliert zu haben. Ich bestätige, dass die Angaben richtig sind, und dass er/sie in meiner Gegenwart unterzeichnet hat.



X-Ray Passed

Date - Datum **12/9/49**

Camp Doctor
E. D. Spald
 Signature Medical Officer - Unterschrift d. Arztes

Stanislaw Stodolny
 Signature of Candidate - Unterschrift d. Kandidaten

Part II. To be completed by Assembly Centre doctor and signed by the Candidate.

II. Teil. Durch den Assembly Centre Arzt auszufüllen, u. durch den Kandidaten zu unterzeichnen.

1. Family medical history
 Krankheitsgeschichte der Familie

o. B

No. of Children: a) Alive **1** b) Dead **/** c) Cause of death **/**
 Zahl d. Kinder: Am Leben **1** Gestorben **/** Todesursache **/**

2. Have any of your Family suffered from a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy? If "Yes" give details:
 Hat jemand Ihrer Familie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallsucht).
 Wenn "Ja", bitte nähere Angaben:

nein

3. Personal medical history: Have you suffered from any of the following illnesses? a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy, d) Venereal disease, e) Kidney disease, f) Nervous breakdown. If "Yes" give details:
 Persönliche Krankheitsgeschichte: Haben Sie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallsucht), d) Geschlechtskrankheiten, e) Nierenkrankheit, f) Nervenzusammenbruch. Wenn "Ja", bitte nähere Angaben:

nein

4. Previous illnesses, injuries and operations of candidate, indicating whether he has or requires prosthesis for amputation:
 Frühere Krankheiten, Verletzungen u. Operationen des Kandidaten, mit Angabe ob eine Prothese nach Amputation verlangt wurde.

nein

I certify that the above statements made by me in answer to the foregoing questions are true and complete to the best of my belief.
 Ich bestätige die Richtigkeit obiger Angaben und wahrheitsgetreu, nach meinem besten Wissen auf alle Fragen geantwortet zu haben.

Date **12/9/49**
Datum

Signature of Candidate
 Unterschrift d. Kandidaten

Stanislaw Stodolny

AUSTRALIA
I. R. O. Resettlement Medical Examination Form

GROUP NR. 12414

Part I. Identification form to be completed by Assembly Centre doctor.
I. Teil. Identifikations-Formular, durch den Arzt der Assembly Centre auszufüllen.

1. Name **STODOLNA, Kazimira** 2. Camp **Free living** 3. Location **Schlösshof Backhsag**
 4. Age **2 1/2** **23.3.49** 5. Sex **F** 6. Colour of hair **blond**
 7. Colour of Eyes **blue** 8. Height **157 cm** 9. Weight **55 kg**
 10. Scar or other Means of Identification **None**
Narben oder andere Kennzeichen

11. D.P. Number **L 5045** 12. Claimed nationality **Polish**
D.P. Nummer Angeführte Staatsangehörigkeit

I certify that I have seen - Ich erkläre

Mr. - Herr **STODOLNA, Kazimira**
 Mrs. - Frau
 Miss - Fräulein

examined his/her D.P.I. Card, his/her photograph and his/her appearance, and am satisfied the particulars given are correct and that he/she has signed in my presence
gelesen, seine/ihre D.P.I. Karte, seine/ihre Photographie und seine/ihre Aussenen kontrolliert zu haben. Ich bestätige, dass die Angaben richtig sind, und dass er/sie in meiner Gegenwart unterzeichnet hat.

Date - Datum **26-9-49**

Dr. M. Sziogin
 Signature of Candidate - Unterschrift d. Kandidatin
Stodolny Franciszka

DR. M. SZIOGIN
 DOCTOR
 Signature of Assembly Centre Doctor - Unterschrift d. Assembly Centre Arztes

1. Family medical history
Krankheitsgeschichte der Familie

No. of Children: a) Alive **1** b) Dead **1** c) Cause of death **1**
Zahl d. Kinder: a) Am Leben b) Gestorben c) Todesursache

2. Have any of your Family suffered from a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy? If "Yes" give details.
Hat jemand in eurer Familie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallsucht). Wenn "Ja", bitte nähere Angaben.

3. Personal medical history: Have you suffered from any of the following illnesses? a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy, d) Venereal disease, e) Kidney disease, f) Nervous involvement. If "Yes" give details.
Persönliche Krankheitsgeschichte: Haben Sie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallsucht), d) Geschlechtskrankheiten, e) Nierenkrankheit, f) Nervenzusatzenbruch. Wenn "Ja", bitte nähere Angaben.

4. Previous illnesses, injuries and operations of candidate, indicating whether he has or requires prosthesis for amputation.
Frühere Krankheiten, Verletzungen u. Operationen des Kandidaten, mit Angabe ob eine Prothese nach Amputation verlangt wurde.

I certify that the above statements made by me in answer to the foregoing questions are true and complete to the best of my belief.
Ich bestätige die Richtigkeit obiger Angaben und unterzeichne, nach meinem besten Wissen auf alle Fragen geantwortet zu haben.

Date **26-9-49** Signature of Candidate **Stodolny Franciszka**
Datum Unterschrift d. Kandidatin



Stodolny Franciszka
 Signature of Candidate - Unterschrift d. Kandidatin

ohne Bescheinigung
 Signature of Assembly Centre Doctor - Unterschrift d. Assembly Centre Arztes

whether he has or requires prosthesis for amputation:
ob Angabe ob eine Prothese nach Amputation verlangt wurde.

2. Have any of your Family suffered from a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy?
Hat jemand in eurer Familie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallsucht). Wenn "Ja", bitte nähere Angaben.

3. Personal medical history: Have you suffered from any of the following illnesses?
Persönliche Krankheitsgeschichte: Haben Sie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallsucht), d) Geschlechtskrankheiten, e) Nierenkrankheit, f) Nervenzusatzenbruch. Wenn "Ja", bitte nähere Angaben.

4. Previous illnesses, injuries and operations of candidate, indicating whether he has or requires prosthesis for amputation.
Frühere Krankheiten, Verletzungen u. Operationen des Kandidaten, mit Angabe ob eine Prothese nach Amputation verlangt wurde.

I certify that the above statements made by me in answer to the foregoing questions are true and complete to the best of my belief.
Ich bestätige die Richtigkeit obiger Angaben und unterzeichne, nach meinem besten Wissen auf alle Fragen geantwortet zu haben.

Date **26-9-49** Signature of Candidate **Stodolny Franciszka**
Datum Unterschrift d. Kandidatin

NAA A12005, 456-458

Lba



Stodolny Franciszka
 Signature of Candidate - Unterschrift d. Kandidatin

DR. M. SZIOGIN
 DOCTOR
 Signature of Assembly Centre Doctor - Unterschrift d. Assembly Centre Arztes

1. Family medical history
Krankheitsgeschichte der Familie

No. of Children: a) Alive **1** b) Dead **1** c) Cause of death **1**
Zahl d. Kinder: a) Am Leben b) Gestorben c) Todesursache

2. Have any of your Family suffered from a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy? If "Yes" give details.
Hat jemand in eurer Familie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallsucht). Wenn "Ja", bitte nähere Angaben.

3. Personal medical history: Have you suffered from any of the following illnesses? a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy, d) Venereal disease, e) Kidney disease, f) Nervous involvement. If "Yes" give details.
Persönliche Krankheitsgeschichte: Haben Sie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallsucht), d) Geschlechtskrankheiten, e) Nierenkrankheit, f) Nervenzusatzenbruch. Wenn "Ja", bitte nähere Angaben.

4. Previous illnesses, injuries and operations of candidate, indicating whether he has or requires prosthesis for amputation.
Frühere Krankheiten, Verletzungen u. Operationen des Kandidaten, mit Angabe ob eine Prothese nach Amputation verlangt wurde.

I certify that the above statements made by me in answer to the foregoing questions are true and complete to the best of my belief.
Ich bestätige die Richtigkeit obiger Angaben und unterzeichne, nach meinem besten Wissen auf alle Fragen geantwortet zu haben.

Date **26-9-49** Signature of Candidate **Stodolny Franciszka**
Datum Unterschrift d. Kandidatin

o.B

kein

kein

keine

Date **26-9-49** Signature of Candidate **Stodolny Franciszka**
Datum Unterschrift d. Kandidatin

AUSTRALIA
I. R. O. Resettlement Medical Examination Form

GROUP NR. 12418

Part I. Identification form to be completed by Assembly Centre doctor.
I. Teil. Identifikations-Formular, durch den Arzt der Assembly Centre auszufüllen.

1. Name **STODOLNY, Franciszka** 2. Camp **Free living** 3. Location **Schlösshof Backhsag**
 4. Age **27** **28.5.22** 5. Sex **F** 6. Colour of hair **d. blond**
 7. Colour of Eyes **blue** 8. Height **157 cm** 9. Weight **55 kg**
 10. Scar or other Means of Identification **None**
Narben oder andere Kennzeichen

11. D.P. Number **L 5045** 12. Claimed nationality **Polish**
D.P. Nummer Angeführte Staatsangehörigkeit

I certify that I have seen - Ich erkläre

Mr. - Herr **STODOLNY, Franciszka**
 Mrs. - Frau
 Miss - Fräulein

examined his/her D.P.I. Card, his/her photograph and his/her appearance, and am satisfied the particulars given are correct and that he/she has signed in my presence
gelesen, seine/ihre D.P.I. Karte, seine/ihre Photographie und seine/ihre Aussenen kontrolliert zu haben. Ich bestätige, dass die Angaben richtig sind, und dass er/sie in meiner Gegenwart unterzeichnet hat.

Date - Datum **26-9-49**

Dr. M. Sziogin
 Signature of Candidate - Unterschrift d. Kandidatin
Stodolny Franciszka

DR. M. SZIOGIN
 DOCTOR
 Signature of Assembly Centre Doctor - Unterschrift d. Assembly Centre Arztes

1. Family medical history
Krankheitsgeschichte der Familie

No. of Children: a) Alive **1** b) Dead **1** c) Cause of death **1**
Zahl d. Kinder: a) Am Leben b) Gestorben c) Todesursache

2. Have any of your Family suffered from a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy? If "Yes" give details.
Hat jemand in eurer Familie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallsucht). Wenn "Ja", bitte nähere Angaben.

3. Personal medical history: Have you suffered from any of the following illnesses? a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy, d) Venereal disease, e) Kidney disease, f) Nervous involvement. If "Yes" give details.
Persönliche Krankheitsgeschichte: Haben Sie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallsucht), d) Geschlechtskrankheiten, e) Nierenkrankheit, f) Nervenzusatzenbruch. Wenn "Ja", bitte nähere Angaben.

4. Previous illnesses, injuries and operations of candidate, indicating whether he has or requires prosthesis for amputation.
Frühere Krankheiten, Verletzungen u. Operationen des Kandidaten, mit Angabe ob eine Prothese nach Amputation verlangt wurde.

I certify that the above statements made by me in answer to the foregoing questions are true and complete to the best of my belief.
Ich bestätige die Richtigkeit obiger Angaben und unterzeichne, nach meinem besten Wissen auf alle Fragen geantwortet zu haben.

Date **26-9-49** Signature of Candidate **Stodolny Franciszka**
Datum Unterschrift d. Kandidatin

162

GROUP 18/1/5

I. R. O. RESETTLEMENT REGISTRATION FORM

1. EMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA AREA 2 DATE 25-9-50

STODOLNY, Stanislaw
C.O. Ludwigshurg
O. No. L 5045
en/j 636565

Schlesisch West Markhart Krs. Becknang
Schlesien Ostpre
12-5-17
Poland 1940/11

Age 28
Sex Male
Married Free living

2. ACCOMPANYING FAMILY MEMBERS

RELATION TO HEAD	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY	TOWN, PROVINCE AND COUNTRY OF BIRTH
wife	28/5/22	Polish	Kielce/Wilna/Poland
daughter	23/7/47	Polish	Hellbronn Germany

3. EMPLOYMENT FOR LAST 14 YEARS BEGINNING WITH PRESENT

DATE	TYPE OF WORK	EMPLOYER	TOWN, PROVINCE AND COUNTRY
1942/8-up to	quarry labourer	Firm Walter & Leuber	Hettlberg/Becknang/Germany
1942/8-4/11	road worker	"	Schlesien, Becknang/Germany
1947/11-4/19	without work	Refugee Camp	Gallhof, Bonn, Rf/Germany
1947/8-7/3	"	"	Becknang/Germany
1947/5-4/1	"	"	Unterjeltigen/Becknang/Germany
1947/1-4/4/7	"	IP Camp	Hellbronn/Germany
1947/1-4/10	"	UNRWA Camp	Kornthal/Stuttgart/Germany
1945/10-3/6	"	private bring	Friedrichshafen/Germany
1945/4-10/11	railway worker	German railway	Kornthal in Stuttgart/Germany
1940/11-1936	farm worker	at parouts	Schlesien/Ostpre/Poland

4. EDUCATION

DATE	TYPE OF SCHOOL	TOWN, PROVINCE AND COUNTRY	CERTIFICATED OR DEGREE
1924-1931	Primary School	Schlesien/Ostpre/Poland	None

LANGUAGES SPOKEN Polish, German partly
LANGUAGES READ
LANGUAGES WRITTEN

GROUP 18/1/5

I. R. O. RESETTLEMENT REGISTRATION FORM

1. EMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA AREA 2 DATE 25-9-1949

STODOLNA, Stanislaw
C.O. Ludwigshurg
O. No. L 5045
en/j 636565

Schlesisch West Markhart Krs. Becknang
Schlesien Ostpre
12-5-17
Poland 1940/11

Age 28
Sex Male
Married Free living

2. ACCOMPANYING FAMILY MEMBERS

RELATION TO HEAD	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY	TOWN, PROVINCE AND COUNTRY OF BIRTH
husband	12-5-17	Polish	Becknang, Ostpre, Poland
daughter	23/7/47	Polish	Hellbronn Germany

3. EMPLOYMENT FOR LAST 14 YEARS BEGINNING WITH PRESENT

DATE	TYPE OF WORK	EMPLOYER	TOWN, PROVINCE AND COUNTRY
1947-11-up to	housewife	at home	Schlesisch, Becknang, Germany
1947-11-4/7-8	"	Refugee Camp	Gallhof, Bonn, Rf., Germany
1947-8-4/7-5	"	"	Becknang, Germany
1947-5-4/7-4	"	"	Unterjeltigen, Becknang, Germany
1947-4-4/7-7	"	"	Becknang, Germany
1947-7-4-5-10	without work	IP Camp	Hellbronn, Germany
45-10-45-4	"	private living	Kornthal, Stuttgart, Germany
1945-4-10-8	"	railway worker	Kornthal in Stuttgart, Germany
1945-4-10-8	"	"	Stuttgart, Germany
1945-1936	farm work	at home parouts	Kielce/Wilna, Poland

4. EDUCATION

DATE	TYPE OF SCHOOL	TOWN, PROVINCE AND COUNTRY	CERTIFICATED OR DEGREE
1931-1935	Primary School	Schlesien, Ostpre, Poland	None

LANGUAGES SPOKEN Polish,
LANGUAGES READ Polish
LANGUAGES WRITTEN Polish

456

Serial No. 140960

Surname STODOLNY

Christian Names Stanislaw

Nationality Pol. Age 12.8.17 Sex M

Date of Arrival 14 FEB 1950 Marital State M Religion P.C.

Ex Ship Hellenic P.


Date of Departure 17/2/50

Destination Mildura Fruit Growers Assoc. Mildura, Vic. E.L. 3558

Trade E.L. 3558

Standard of Education 10

Address of Next of Kin (if known)
wife: Franciszka
Chld: Kazimiera



Specimen of Signature

STODOLNY

National Archives of Australia. 2083

NAA: A2571, STODOLNY STANISLAW

CH14.9 WE'LL CALL HER VALDI (WADIYSŁAWA) – by Valdi Cham

My migrant story begins with that of my parents Aniela Mokrzycka (born in, Tarnopol, Poland, on 23 August 1921), and Józef (Joseph) Cham (born in Opatow, Kielce, Poland, on 11 April 1911).

One day in 1941, in Lwow, Poland (now in the Ukraine), when my mother was 19 and coming home from work, she rounded the corner and saw that the Germans had the area blocked off. They were forcing people onto trucks and carting them off to the train station, and then on to Germany. My mother's fate was sealed -- forced to work as a slave labourer in a German aircraft factory in Tauche, near Liepzig, for most of the war.

During this time, my mother told me that all slave labourers were provided with one dress/smock to wear, and it had to have the letter P stitched over the left breast to denote that she was a Polish slave labourer. All nationalities had to wear a designated letter to denote their nationality. Jewish people had to wear a yellow Star of David sewn to their clothing. My mother told me that if a person was found without a letter sewn to their clothes they were reprimanded and beaten. Germans had a very low opinion of Slavs, particularly Poles and Russians.

Food was rationed, with rye bread for breakfast and soup for lunch. Once a week, usually a Sunday, some meat and other vegetables were provided. The slave labourers worked six days a week and were given Sunday off so they could go to church or into town, or to socialise.

My oldest sister, Bozena, was born in Germany in 1943. I do not know who Bozena's father was, or any other information about this part of my mother's life. My mother told my sister, Elizabeth, that there were numerous occasions when she and Bozena had to run for their lives when American planes bombed the factory and surrounds. My mother also said that everyone was hungry all of the time, and that there were times when Bozena would approach other slave labourers and beg for food.

Towards the end of the war, my mother and Bozena were transferred to a farm where she worked as a slave farm labourer. Although the work was hard, it was the first time in years that she had been warm and well fed.

After the war, Aniela found herself and Bozena in an American displaced persons camp at Gablingen, near Augsburg, Germany, previously a subcamp of the Dachau concentration camp. It was in this camp that she met my father, Joseph, who had been in the Polish army, and had been captured after Germany invaded Poland in September 1939. Joseph was a survivor of Buchenwald concentration camp (July 1941 to April 1945). He had been caught listening to the BBC on the radio, and was classified as a political prisoner. He must have had an incredible will to survive over four years of internment in this horrible place. Aniela and Joseph married in December 1948.

Aniela, Joseph and Bozena survived very well in Gablingen camp, thanks mainly to the fact that Joseph was a black-marketeer. Joseph managed to accumulate considerable money during this period, however when the Mark was devalued his and Aniela's fortune disappeared. The Wikipedia page for the Deutsche Mark advises that

Currency reform of June 1948

The Deutsche Mark was officially introduced on Sunday, June 20, 1948, by Ludwig Erhard. The old Reichsmark and Rentenmark were exchanged for the new currency at a rate of DM 1 = 10 RM.....

The introduction of the new currency was intended to protect western Germany from a second wave of hyperinflation and to stop the rampant barter and black market trade (where cigarettes were used as currency).....

Since the 1930s, prices and wages had been controlled, but money had been plentiful. That meant that people had accumulated large paper assets, and that official prices and wages did not reflect reality, as the black market dominated the economy and more than half of all transactions were taking place unofficially. The reform replaced the old money with the new Deutsche Mark at the rate of one new per ten old. This wiped out 90% of government and private debt, as well as private savings.....

Aniela said that there was a great deal of boredom in Gablingen camp. Many of the men were gamblers and gambling was something that Joseph enjoyed greatly. The family, and many other families, had a part of a tent which was their home. During this period my second sister, Elzbieta (Elizabeth), was born in 1948, in Gablingen. My parents had decided that they would not return to Poland, as they both thought that they had no surviving family there, so they waited in the camp, to migrate to another country.

*Right: Mum (Aniela), Bozena,
& dad (Joseph) in Germany.*

In 1949, they were scheduled to migrate to South America, when Elizabeth became ill. Bozena and a friend had been minding Elizabeth when, for some reason, they gave her a lolly followed by some water – both being a *no-no* for a child who was only ten days old. This affected Elizabeth to such a degree that she was hospitalised in a facility which was run by nuns. For some unknown reason Elizabeth remained in the hospital for approximately 3 months before returning home to her family.



The next scheduled ship was the Italian ship the *Castel Bianco*. It sailed to Australia, with Aniela, Joseph, Bozena and Elizabeth as passengers, along with many other migrants. The trip took six weeks, and the men were separated from the women and children. My mother told me that all they got to eat was *spaghetti, spaghetti, spaghetti*, something I rarely saw her eat in Australia.



Józef



Aniela



Bozena



Elzbieta

On arrival in Melbourne, on 30 September 1950, my parents were assured that they would not be separated again. They travelled by train up to the Bonegilla migrant camp, where once again the men were separated from the women and children. My mother said that everything was foreign – the language, it was hot, there were lots of flies, red dust, the landscape was barren, and the huts were old, tin army huts. They wondered where in the world they were. The staple food was mutton, which was generally served cold and greasy. In later years my mother rarely ate lamb, and we knew not to serve it to her.

As a part of his migration contract, my father was required to work for the Australian government for two years, and he and other Poles were sent to Mildura to pick grapes. My mother and sisters initially remained at the Bonegilla camp, and they followed later, spending Christmas together in Mildura. Then dad was sent to Ballarat to work on the White Swan Dam and on a pipeline project at the Gong Gong Dam. During this time my mother and sisters moved to the Mildura migrant camp -- they had been told that Mildura was closer to Ballarat, but it wasn't.

After working at the Dam, where his two year contract was ended early, my father and many of the other Poles settled in Ballarat. He found work at the Railways, then at the flour mill, and finally at the Australian Paper Mill.

CLEARING FOR A BALLARAT WATER COMMISSION PIPELINE AT GONG GONG: 1951



The family rented rooms with the Cieżki family, who had bought a large house in Geelong Road. Later they rented in Windermere St, until eventually they bought a block of land in Kent St, Sebastopol, and transported a house from another block in Ballarat. My brother, Bolak, was born in Ballarat on 3 October 1951, and I Władysława (Valdi) was born on 26 November 1952. In 2001 Bolak moved back to live in our Kent St home.

During this period, many of the Polish families settled within close proximity of each other, forming small communities. They helped each other with accommodation, often two or more families lived in one house. They helped each other to build a home of their own -- concreting and painting.

The blocks of land were usually a quarter acre, and each family always had a huge vegetable garden where they grew potatoes, cabbages, carrots and many other vegetables, as well as fruit trees. Each family usually had a chook shed. When I was growing up, chicken was considered a delicacy and was only eaten on special occasions – Easter or Christmas. I remember my father catching and chopping the heads off chickens, and they would run around the yard headless. My mother and sisters did the plucking.

The families used to get together to make sauerkraut in large wooden barrels, and they pickled cucumbers. My mother would make her own cottage cheese. We ate mainly Polish food which included peirogi, ogorki, paluski, cabbage rolls, lots of potatoes and other vegetables. When my mother baked, she always used yeast, and made apple and plum cakes, as well as jam filled doughnuts.



Above: Valdi's Christening: 1953. 2 unknown, 3 Stanisław Czochara (Maryborough), 4 Valdi Cham, 5 Parania Czochara (Godmother), 6 Aniela Cham, 7 Ludwik Jaskulski (Godfather), 8 Sofia Buzo, 9 Walerian (Walek) Kitlowski, 10 Nadia Buczek, 11 unknown, 12 Andrzej Majda, 13 Piotr Buczek, 15 Bozena Cham, 16 Richard Majda, 17 Maria Buczek, 18 Elizabeth Cham.

Significant celebrations included Easter, Christmas, Christenings, weddings and Name Days (which were celebrated instead of Birthdays). All of these celebrations involved the whole community -- lots of food, alcohol, music, dancing and singing.

The Polish tradition was to celebrate Christmas on Christmas Eve, which was called Wigilia. We had a special meal cooked by mum. Before the meal mum placed a large square of Opłatek (wafer bread), on a special plate, on the table. Before we began to eat, each person had to break off a piece of the Opłatek and

approach everyone at the table with their piece. Each person would take a small piece of Opłatek extended to them and wish one another a happy Christmas. We ate Borscht (beetroot soup), which had little dumplings (uszka) in it, sauerkraut, pierogi with different kinds of filling, potatoes and other vegetables. Traditionally, we did not eat meat at this Christmas celebration.

The best thing that I remember about Christmas was that we got our presents after tea (dinner), so we received our gifts on Christmas Eve. I remember going outside to our Australian playmates and saying, "Look what Santa brought me". They would be quite scornful and say that Santa was not meant to come until Christmas Day. However, nothing could dampen my joy and enthusiasm that Santa had brought presents to us on Christmas Eve.

Easter was also a special celebration within the Polish community. Being Roman Catholic, we participated in the Lenten tradition where fasting was encouraged, and where we were also encouraged to go without something special during Lent (eg. lollies). I remember collecting lollies during the six weeks of lent and storing them in a jar, knowing that I would be able to eat them once Easter Sunday arrived.



Left: Bolak, Joseph & Valdi: September 1953.

On Easter Saturday, each family would gather together a plate of all the foods they may not have eaten during Lent. The plate of food would be beautifully presented and would include hard boiled eggs, whose shells had been coloured using onion skins or coloured materials or something similar. Some ham, butter (which my mother usually made into the shape of a rose), salt, sugar and other foods would be included. The plate would be taken to a central house in the neighbourhood during the afternoon, and the Polish priest would arrive to bless all the plates of food, which were then taken home. This food would be shared on Easter Sunday, after the family had returned from Mass.

Once the people felt more settled, the Polish Association of Ballarat was formed, to lead the community. They decided that they needed a central place where the community could meet and celebrate, so they all worked together and purchased a block of land in Orion Street Sebastopol where they erected a hall. I remember that my mother assisted at the hall, helping with cooking and catering for events. Something occurred (exactly what this was is unknown) and mum stopped helping to cook for events or to assist with catering. She only attended the Polish hall for special events, taking my children to the Wigilia (Christmas Eve) celebrations.

When my father came home from work at the flour mill and the Paper Mill, he worked in the veggie garden. He often had a second job, helping out at local farms. I remember that the Paper Mill would hold a huge Christmas party for the employees and their families. Food would be provided and each child received a gift.

My sisters and brother all attended St Aloysius Primary School. My mother stayed at home until I was about four. Then, she found work at the Ballarat Mental Hospital, in Gillies St, as a kitchen hand. Mum used to work two or three 12 hour days, and then have two days off, during which she did the housework. She rode her pushbike to work, regardless of the weather. When dad eventually bought a car in 1959, he would usually collect her from work. Dad only ever bought big yank-tanks, usually Chevrolets. Whilst mum was at work, I was looked after by the lady across the road, Mrs Waldron. I remember swinging on her gate at around 3.30, waiting for my brother and sisters to come up the road from school.

We spoke only Polish at home – a tradition which my mother followed until the day she died. When we spoke to her in English, she would always give us a look and say in Polish, *"you're speaking very good English today"*, to which we would reply, *"yes"*, and shrug. I have always believed that I didn't speak English until I went to school, however, I probably learnt to speak English from my brother and sisters before I went to school.



Above: First Holy Communion: Stan Fugiel and Elizabeth Cham: 1955.

*Left: Valdi Cham's First Holy Communion: 1960.
Kaz Fugiel in background.*

I went to school at St Aloysius, and Elizabeth tells me that the nuns asked her my name, and when she replied *"Władysława"* (pronunciation would be Vwa-dis-wava) they said *"we can't call her that -- we'll call her Valdi"*. I remember being thrilled because I finally had an Australian name. But Valdi was only my name at school, my mother never called me Valdi, she and my Godmother always called me Władzia (the English pronunciation would be Vwadz-ya). And our Aussie neighbours didn't ever call me Valdi, they called me Vodj. But nowadays all of my friends call me Valdi.

I enjoyed school, and I don't have any negative memories of my time there. I do remember that we used to walk to and from school as a group. We would walk up one side of Pleasant St and the non-Catholic (Protestant) children would walk down the other side, to Redan Primary School. We would hurl insults at each other across the street, which included *"Proddy dogs (Catholic dogs), sitting on logs, eating maggots out of frogs"*. And then we would continue on our way.

In 1975 my mother and a group of approximately five or six Polish women from Ballarat travelled to Poland. At this time, until Lech Wałęsa became President in 1990, Poland was a communist satellite of the Soviet Union, so I am assuming that the trip was not easy, and may have been stressful at times. My father did not go with the group, because he had suffered a series of strokes, and had diabetes, and was unwell. Towards the end of her trip in Poland my mother discovered that her mother (Zofia) had not died during the war, and that she was in fact still alive, living in a little village called Paczkow, and she discovered that she had an extended family (aunts, uncles, cousins) who also lived in Paczkow. Strangely, when my mother visited my father's home village, Opatow, Kielce, she couldn't find any of his relatives, and no-one remembered him, or a family called Cham.

From conversations we had with my mother, she had always felt that Australia was a foreign country for her, however, following her 1975 trip to Poland she told us that her Polish relations had asked her if she would ever go back to Poland to live, and she stated, "*no*", she would remain in Australia, which she now considered her home, mainly because she had children and grandchildren in Australia.

In 1979, my sister Elizabeth travelled to Poland, and met her (our) mum (Aniela) in Warsaw, and they then travelled to Paczkow to meet her grandmother (Zofia), and the extended family. Elizabeth has now visited Poland on numerous occasions, staying with relatives for long periods. Elizabeth says that when visiting Poland she feels as if she is *going home*.

I travelled to Poland in 2009 with Elizabeth and her husband Sebastian. I never met my grandmother, Zofia, as she died on 31 July 1991. We stayed with relatives, in Paczkow, and they made us feel very welcome. I enjoyed my time in Poland, however, I did not feel that *I was returning home*. I attribute this to the fact that I had been born in Australia. I did, however, find that I was dreaming in Polish.

Bozena and her English husband (Bill), lived in Sydney. They visited Poland in the 90s, but did not contact her Polish relatives (on her mother's side). Bozena died in Sydney in 2007.



Both my parents worked very hard to provide a better life for themselves and their children, for which we are grateful. Dad died in 1975, when he was only 64. And mum died in 2001, when she was almost 80 years old. Bozena had four children, Elizabeth had one child, I had three children, and Bolak never married. Joe and Aniela, are survived by eight grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren, and so their legacy lives on.

Left: My children & me: L-R Emma Wakeling, Sarah Wakeling, Valdi Cham & Lara Wakeling

Some documents from Germany


Heiratsurkunde F 2

(Standesamt Gablingen Nr. 23.)
 Der Bauer Josef Cham
 r. katholisch, wohnhaft D.P. Camp Gablingen
 geboren am 1. April 1911
 in Opaduv, Kreis Kielce in Polen
 (Standesamt _____ Nr. _____), und
 die Hausangestellte Aniela Mokrsick
 r. katholisch, wohnhaft D.P. Camp Gablingen
 geboren am 23. August 1921.
 in Tarnopol in Polen
 (Standesamt _____ Nr. _____),
 haben am 13. Dezember 1948.
 vor dem Standesamt Gablingen
 die Ehe geschlossen

Vermerke:

Gablingen, den 13. Dezember 1948.

Der Standesbeamte
[Signature]



Vordruck 12 a. Heiratsurkunde F 2
K. SCHUBERT ARSBERG

Główna Komisja Weryfikacyjna politycznie
 i narodowo przesładowanych Polaków przez
 niemiecki reżim narodowo-socjalistyczny

Planegg near Munich, 12 Mai 1949.
Tel. 89084

Main Verification Commission
 for Poles Politically Persecuted
 by German National Socialists

Planegg b. München
 Pasinger Str. 14
 US. Zone - Germany

CERTIFICATE

The Main Verification Commission for Poles persecuted under the Nazi Regime hereby certifies that

Mr. CHAM Josef
 born 11 April 1911. in Opasow/Poland.
 has been arrested for political reasons has been verified and registered under
 No. 482. in the Main Book.
 Mr. CHAM Josef was arrested
 on 10 July 1941. and subsequently detained in Camp Buchenwald.
 until 14 April 1945.

This Certificate is issued for the following purpose:
EMIGRATION.




Main Verification Commission
[Signature]
 Mieczysław Wysocki
 Chairman
[Signature]
 Marian Kucmarek
 Secretary
[Signature]
 Zygmunt Zieliński

IRO - O - 301 Annex III

IRO TESTING CERTIFICATE

Area: S - AUGSBURG

This is to certify that Mr. CHAM, Josef
 born April 1, 1911 - Id. No. 661952
 Has been tested in _____
 and has been classified as a FARMER
 Camp GABLINGEN

[Signature]
 Testing Officer
 Date: October 28th, 1948

Stamp: 

This certificate, based upon testing carried out by qualified persons, is correct to the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned.

[Signature]
 Area Employment Officer
 Date: October 28th, 1948

AWTS.

National Archives of Australia NAA: A12038, 502-505

IRO - O - 301 Annex III

IRO TESTING CERTIFICATE

Area: S - AUGSBURG

This is to certify that Mrs. CHAM, Aniela
 born August 23, 1921 - Id. No. 661984
 Has been tested in _____
 and has been classified as a II CLASS B O R E R
 Camp GABLINGEN

[Signature]
 Testing Officer
 Date: October 28th, 1948

Stamp: 

This certificate, based upon testing carried out by qualified persons, is correct to the best knowledge and belief of the undersigned.

[Signature]
 Area Employment Officer
 Date: October 28th, 1948

AWTS.

National Archives of Australia NAA: A12038, 502-505

37940

Family-unit

732

F (9)

4R

I. R. O. Resettlement Medical Examination Form

Part I. Identification form to be completed by Assembly Centre doctor.

I. Teil. Identifikations-Formular, durch den Arzt der Assembly Centre auszufüllen.

1. Name **CHAM Josef** 2. Camp **Gablungen** 3. Location **Gablungen**
 Name **CHAM Josef** 4. Age **1.IV. 1911** 5. Sex **Male** 6. Colour of hair **D-Blonde**
 Alter **1.IV. 1911** 7. Colour of Eyes **Blue** 8. Height **164** 9. Weight **90**
 Farbe d. Augen **Blue** 10. Scars or other Means of Identification **not appl.** 11. D.P. Number **661932**
 Narben oder andere Kennzeichen **not appl.**



11. D.P. Number **661932**
D.P. Nummer

12. Claimant's Nationality **Polish**
Angehörige Staatsangehörigkeit

I certify that I have seen - Ich erkläre

Mr. - Herr **CHAM Josef**
Mrs. - Frau
Miss - Fräulein

examined his/her D.P.I. Card, his/her photograph and his/her appearance, and am satisfied the particulars given are correct and that he/she has signed in my presence.
gesehen, seine/ihre D.P.I. Karte, seine/ihre Photographie und sein/ihr Aussehen kontrolliert zu haben. Ich bestätige, dass die Angaben richtig sind, und dass er/sie in meiner Gegenwart unterzeichnet hat.

Medical Officer of Assembly Centre

Date - Datum **4th October**

[Handwritten signature]
 Signature Medical Officer - Unterschrift d. Arztes
[Handwritten signature]
 Signature of Candidate



Part II. To be completed by Assembly Centre doctor and signed by the Candidate.

II. Teil. Durch den Assembly Centre Arzt auszufüllen, u. durch den Kandidaten zu unterzeichnen.

1. Family medical history *no medical history by the family here*
Krankheitsgeschichte der Familie

No. of Children: a) Alive **2** b) Dead **/** c) Cause of death **/**
Zahl d. Kinder: Am Leben Gestorben Todesursache

2. Have any of your Family suffered from a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy? If "Yes" give details:
Hat jemand ihrer Familie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallsucht).
Wenn "Ja", bitte nähere Angaben:
nothing has happened

3. Personal medical history: Have you suffered from any of the following illnesses? a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy, d) Venereal disease, e) Kidney disease, f) Nervous breakdown. If "Yes" give details:
Haben Sie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie, d) venerische Krankheiten, e) Nierenerkrankung, f) Nervenleiden. Wenn "Ja", bitte nähere Angaben:

4. P...
Pr...

I certify that the above statements made by me in answer to the foregoing questions are true and complete to the best of my belief.
Ich bestätige die Richtigkeit obiger Angaben, und wahrheitsgetreu nach meinem besten Wissen auf alle Fragen geantwortet zu haben.

Date **4. Oct 1949**
Datum

Signature of Candidate *Cham Josef*
Unterschrift d. Kandidaten

Part I. Identification form to be completed by Assembly Centre doctor.
 I. Teil. Identifikations-Formular, durch den Arzt der Assembly Centre auszufüllen.

1. Name **C H A M Aniela** 2. Camp **Gablingen** 3. Location **Gablingen**
 Name **Aniela** Lager Ort
 4. Age **23.VIII.1921** 5. Sex **female** 6. Colour of hair **blonde**
 Alter Geschlecht Haarfarbe
 7. Colour of Eyes **blue** 8. Height **157 / 159** 9. Weight **63 / 60**
 Farbe d. Augen Größe Gewicht
 10. Scars or other Means of Identification **not appl.**
 Narben oder andere Kennzeichen

11. D.P. Number **661934** 12. Class **Polish.**
 D.P. Nummer Angehörige Staatsangehörigkeit

I certify that I have seen - Ich erkläre
 Mr. - Herr **C H A M Aniela**
 Mrs. - Frau
 Miss - Fräulein

examined his/her D.P.I. Card, his/her photograph and his/her appearance, and satisfied the particulars given are correct and that he/she has signed in my presence
 gesehen, seine/ihr D.P.I. Karte, seine/ihre Photographie und seine/ihre Aussehen kontrolliert zu haben. Ich bestätige, dass die Angaben richtig sind, und dass er/sie in meine Gegenwart unterschrieben hat.

Date - Datum **4. October 1949**

Medical Officer of Assembly Centre **Charm Amieles**
 Signature of Candidate **Charm Amieles**

Part II. To be completed by Assembly Centre doctor and signed by the Candidate.
 II. Teil. Durch den Assembly Centre Arzt auszufüllen, u. durch den Kandidaten zu unterzeichnen.

1. Family medical history
 Krankheitsgeschichte der Familie
see medical history by the family doctor

No. of Children: a) Alive b) Dead c) Cause of death
 Zahl d. Kinder: An Leben Gestorben Todesursache

2. Have any of your Family suffered from a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy? If "Yes" give details
 Hat jemand ihrer Familie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallstrich). Wenn "Ja", bitte andere Angaben.
nothing has suffered

3. Personal medical history: Have you suffered from any of the following illnesses? a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy, d) Venereal disease, e) Kidney disease, f) Nervous breakdown. If "Yes" give details
 Persönliche Krankheitsgeschichte: Haben Sie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallstrich), d) Geschlechtskrankheiten, e) Nervenkrankheit, f) Nerven Zusammenbruch. Wenn "Ja", bitte andere Angaben.
see med. report

4. Previous illness, injuries and operations of candidate, indicating whether he has or requires prosthesis for amputation.
 Frühere Krankheiten, Verletzungen u. Operationen des Kandidaten, mit Angabe ob eine Prothese nach Amputation verlangt wurde.
none illness, injuries and operations

I certify that the above statements made by me in answer to the foregoing questions are true and complete to the best of my belief.
 Ich bestätige die Richtigkeit obiger Angaben und Mitteilungen, nach bestem Wissen und allen Folgen gezeichnet zu haben.

Date **24. Oct 1949** Signature of Candidate **Charm Amieles**
 Datum Unterschrift d. Kandidaten

Part I. Identification form to be completed by Assembly Centre doctor.
 I. Teil. Identifikations-Formular, durch den Arzt der Assembly Centre auszufüllen.

1. Name **C H A M Bogena** 2. Camp **Gablingen** 3. Location **Gablingen**
 Name **Bogena** Lager Ort
 4. Age **16.V.1943** 5. Sex **female** 6. Colour of hair **blonde**
 Alter Geschlecht Haarfarbe
 7. Colour of Eyes **blue** 8. Height **110 / 120** 9. Weight **20 / 22**
 Farbe d. Augen Größe Gewicht
 10. Scars or other Means of Identification **not appl.**
 Narben oder andere Kennzeichen

11. D.P. Number **661935** 12. Class **Polish.**
 D.P. Nummer Angehörige Staatsangehörigkeit

I certify that I have seen - Ich erkläre
 Mr. - Herr **C H A M Bogena**
 Mrs. - Frau
 Miss - Fräulein

examined his/her D.P.I. Card, his/her photograph and his/her appearance, and satisfied the particulars given are correct and that he/she has signed in my presence
 gesehen, seine/ihr D.P.I. Karte, seine/ihre Photographie und seine/ihre Aussehen kontrolliert zu haben. Ich bestätige, dass die Angaben richtig sind, und dass er/sie in meine Gegenwart unterschrieben hat.

Date - Datum **4. October 1949**

Medical Officer of Assembly Centre **Charm Amieles**
 Signature of Candidate **Charm Bogena**

Part II. To be completed by Assembly Centre doctor and signed by the Candidate.
 II. Teil. Durch den Assembly Centre Arzt auszufüllen, u. durch den Kandidaten zu unterzeichnen.

1. Family medical history
 Krankheitsgeschichte der Familie
see pathological report

No. of Children: a) Alive b) Dead c) Cause of death
 Zahl d. Kinder: An Leben Gestorben Todesursache

2. Have any of your Family suffered from a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy? If "Yes" give details
 Hat jemand ihrer Familie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallstrich). Wenn "Ja", bitte andere Angaben.
nothing has suffered

3. Personal medical history: Have you suffered from any of the following illnesses? a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy, d) Venereal disease, e) Kidney disease, f) Nervous breakdown. If "Yes" give details
 Persönliche Krankheitsgeschichte: Haben Sie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallstrich), d) Geschlechtskrankheiten, e) Nervenkrankheit, f) Nerven Zusammenbruch. Wenn "Ja", bitte andere Angaben.
see med. report

4. Previous illness, injuries and operations of candidate, indicating whether he has or requires prosthesis for amputation.
 Frühere Krankheiten, Verletzungen u. Operationen des Kandidaten, mit Angabe ob eine Prothese nach Amputation verlangt wurde.
none illness, injuries and operations

I certify that the above statements made by me in answer to the foregoing questions are true and complete to the best of my belief.
 Ich bestätige die Richtigkeit obiger Angaben und Mitteilungen, nach bestem Wissen und allen Folgen gezeichnet zu haben.

Date **24. Oct 1949** Signature of Candidate **Charm Bogena**
 Datum Unterschrift d. Kandidaten

Part I. Identification form to be completed by Assembly Centre doctor.
 I. Teil. Identifikations-Formular, durch den Arzt der Assembly Centre auszufüllen.

1. Name **C H A M Elbieta** 2. Camp **Gablingen** 3. Location **Gablingen**
 Name **Elbieta** Lager Ort
 4. Age **25.12.1948** 5. Sex **female** 6. Colour of hair **blonde**
 Alter Geschlecht Haarfarbe
 7. Colour of Eyes **blue** 8. Height **25 / 80** 9. Weight **10 / 12**
 Farbe d. Augen Größe Gewicht
 10. Scars or other Means of Identification **not appl.**
 Narben oder andere Kennzeichen

11. D.P. Number **678757** 12. Class **Polish.**
 D.P. Nummer Angehörige Staatsangehörigkeit

I certify that I have seen - Ich erkläre
 Mr. - Herr **C H A M Elbieta**
 Mrs. - Frau
 Miss - Fräulein

examined his/her D.P.I. Card, his/her photograph and his/her appearance, and satisfied the particulars given are correct and that he/she has signed in my presence
 gesehen, seine/ihr D.P.I. Karte, seine/ihre Photographie und seine/ihre Aussehen kontrolliert zu haben. Ich bestätige, dass die Angaben richtig sind, und dass er/sie in meine Gegenwart unterschrieben hat.

Date - Datum **4. October 1949**

Medical Officer of Assembly Centre **Charm Amieles**
 Signature of Candidate **Charm Elbieta**

Part II. To be completed by Assembly Centre doctor and signed by the Candidate.
 II. Teil. Durch den Assembly Centre Arzt auszufüllen, u. durch den Kandidaten zu unterzeichnen.

1. Family medical history
 Krankheitsgeschichte der Familie
see medical history by the family doctor

No. of Children: a) Alive b) Dead c) Cause of death
 Zahl d. Kinder: An Leben Gestorben Todesursache

2. Have any of your Family suffered from a) Tuberculosis, b) Mental illness, c) Epilepsy? If "Yes" give details
 Hat jemand ihrer Familie an folgenden Krankheiten gelitten: a) Tuberkulose, b) Geisteskrankheit, c) Epilepsie (Fallstrich). Wenn "Ja", bitte andere Angaben.
nothing has suffered

Family unit
I. R. O.
RESETTLEMENT REGISTRATION FORM

EMIGRATION TO **A U S T R A L I A** AREA **5 Augsburg** DATE **20.9.1949**

CHAM Josef 054771 No. **561932** **854051**
 Family Name: **Josef** No. **561932** CR. I. No. and Date of Arrival: **854051**
Polish D.P.Camp Gablingen IRO Area 5 Augsburg **Polish**
 Present Address: **1.4.1911 Csernikow, prov. Kielce Poland** Nationality: **Polish**
 Birth Date: **1.4.1911** Birth Place: **Csernikow, prov. Kielce Poland** Country: **Poland** Date of Issuance: **23.9.1939**
 Religion: **Rom. Cath** Sex: **male** Married: **married** **Polish DP Camp "Gablingen"**

ACCOMPANYING FAMILY MEMBERS	RELATIONSHIP TO HEAD	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY	TOWN, PROVINCE AND COUNTRY OF BIRTH
2/ Aniela, nee Mokraycka	wife	23.8.1921	Polish	Tarnopol, Poland.
3/ Rosenna	daughter	16.5.1943	"	Leipzig Germany
4/ Elsbjeta	"	25.12.48	"	Gablingen Germany

054775
017800
054799

ACCEPTED

13. EMPLOYMENT FOR LAST 12 YEARS BEGINNING WITH PRESENT

DATE	TYPE OF WORK	EMPLOYER	TOWN, PROVINCE AND COUNTRY
1949- April 45	camp-worker	diff. D.P. Camps	Berghart, Heidelberg Sttlingen Marching Wurnau Augsburg Gablingen
March 1941	Concentration Camps	"German"	Buchenwald Germany
March 1941	farm-worker	German farm	Grosssinner Germany
June 40	Prisoner of War Stlg. IKA		Eigenheim Germany
23.9.39-1937	farmer	at father's farm	Csernikow Poland

14. EDUCATION **5 class Elementary School**

DATE	TYPE OF SCHOOL	TOWN, PROVINCE AND COUNTRY	CERTIFICATES OR DEGREES
1918-23	Elementary School	Csernikow Poland	


LANGUAGES SPOKEN **Polish German**
 LANGUAGES READ **"**
 LANGUAGES WRITTEN **"**

507
Serial No 048824
Issued at **Augsburg/Germany**

INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION

CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF EMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

1. The holder of this Certificate is the concern of the International Refugee Organization.
 2. This Certificate is issued by the International Refugee Organization with the approval of the Allied authorities of Occupation in Germany and Austria to Refugees and Displaced Persons recommended for emigration to **AUSTRALIA**. It is issued without prejudice to and in no way affects the holder's nationality.
 3. This certificate is NOT valid for travel unless it bears the signature of the I.R.O. certifying officer AND the appropriate military exit permit has been granted.



FAMILY NAME **CHAM** **CHRISTIAN NAMES** **Josef**

MAIDEN NAME (where applicable)

DATE OF BIRTH **1.4.1911** **SEX** **M** **DP NO.** **561932**

PLACE AND COUNTRY OF BIRTH **Csernikow / Poland**

NATIONALITY **Poland**

OCCUPATION **Farmer**

FATHER'S NAME **Cham Josef**

MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME **Vas Jadwiga**


Cham Josef
 (Signature of Applicant)
 Description of Holder:
 Height **1.65m** Weight **89kg**
 Hair **dark-blond** Eyes **blue**
 Nose **straight** Shape of Face **oval**
 Special Characteristics **none**

Children up to 16 years accompanying holder. (Dependants over 16 years of age must have separate documents.)

NAME	SEX	PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH
see wife's form		

E. SHAEFER
 MORESETTLING OFFICER
 Signature and Position of I.R.O. Certifying Officer
 Date **February 16, 1950**
 Place **Augsburg/Germany**

Exit Permit No. **GA-151165**
 Issued **2.9.50** at **C.T.B. Munich**
DATE EXPIRED 2.9.50



Family-unit.
Heirat

Copy.
72

Heiratsurkunde

(Standesamt---Gablingen---Nr. 23---)
 Der Bauer---Josef C h a m ---r.katholisch---wohnhaft D.P.Camp Gablingen geboren am 1.April 1911 in Csernikow, Kreis Kielce in Polen
 (Standesamt---Nr. 23---)
 und die Hausangestellte Aniela M o k r s i c k a ---r.katholisch, wohnhaft D.P.Camp Gablingen geboren am 23.August 1921 in Tarnopol in Polen--- (Standesamt---Nr. 23---)
 haben am 13. Dezember 1948.---vor dem Standesamt Gablingen---die Ehe geschlossen.
 Vermerke:
 Gablingen, den 13. Dezember 1948.
 Der Standesbeamte: Unterschrift unleserlich
 Siegel: Standesamt Gablingen

Translation from German.
72

Marriage-Certificate

(Registry---Gablingen---No 23---)
 The farmer---Josef C h a m ---R.Catholic---living D.P.Camp Gablingen---born on April 1st 1911---at Csernikow, district Kielce in Poland---
 (Registry---No---)
 and the domestic---Aniela M o k r s i c k a ---R.Catholic---living D.P.Camp Gablingen---born on August 23rd 1921 at Tarnopol in Poland---
 (Registry---No---)
 contracted the marriage ---on December 13th 1948 before the Registry at Gablingen.
 Remarks:
 Gablingen---December 13th 1948.
 The Registry: Signature illegible
 Seal: Standesamt Gablingen.

Waltera Polkowski
 (Widow's) Notar
 Legal Counsellor
 IRO Area 5 Augsburg
 Wurnau/Gablingen

1949-9-17

Below: This persecution certificate was helpful for immigration. Later, it was helpful for Joe getting a one off compensation of US\$300, in 1962. Aniela got a one off compensation of Aus\$3000, in 2003, after she died, under the German forced labour compensation programme. Bozena, Elizabeth and I got \$1000 each, but Bolak did not apply for his compensation.

International Refugee Organization

International Tracing Service
Headquarters
APO 171 US Army

Organisation Internationale pour les Réfugiés

Service International de Recherches
Siège Central

FOR PURPOSES OF
RESETTLEMENT AND
MISSION R.O.

Certificate of Incarceration
Certificat d'Incarcération
Bescheinigung über Inhaftierung

No. 3854/T.110844

1. Reference your enquiry for certificate of incarceration for:
Faisant suite à votre demande de certificat d'incarcération pour:

Name CHAM ----- Nom	First names Jozef ----- Prénoms	Nationality Polish ----- Nationalité
Date of birth 11 April 1911 ----- Date de naissance	Place of birth Onatow ----- Lieu de naissance	Prisoner's No. 619 ----- No. de Prisonnier

2. It is hereby certified that the following information is available in documentary evidence held by the International Tracing Service. *Il est certifié par la présente que les informations suivantes se trouvent dans la documentation détenue par le Service International de Recherches.* Es wird hiermit bestätigt, daß folgende Angaben in der Dokumentation des Internationalen Suchdienst aufgeführt sind.

Name CHAM ----- Nom	First names Josef ----- Prénoms	Nationality Polish (or) ----- Nationalité German -----
Date of birth 11 April 1911 ----- Date de naissance	Place of birth Onatow ----- Lieu de naissance	

Last permanent residence: "Kamensbach/Odenwald, bei Bauer Johann." -----
Dernière adresse connue:

has entered concentration camp Buchenwald ----- <i>est entré au camp de concentration</i>	Prisoner's No. 619 ----- <i>No. de prisonnier</i>
--	--

on 11 September 1942 coming from custody of the "Stapo." (Staatspolizei) -----
le venant de Darmstadt

Reason given for incarceration: "Polit.Sch." (Politische Schutzhaft) -----
Raison donnée pour l'incarcération:

Transferred to the Concentration Camp Weimar (Kommando of Buchenwald) -----
Transféré

Liberated/Released on not given ----- in not given -----
Libéré/Relâché le

Remarks: In Buchenwald "Haeftlingsfragebogen" is given: "Verhaftet am 15 July 1942; Grund: Arbeitsvertragsbruch - 2 Vorstrafen fuer Aufлагенеbertretung - 40 RM Geldstrafe." - In the two first under-mentioned documents is given German as Nationality.

3. References of documents: "Haeftlingspersonalkarte, Haeftlingsfragebogen, Post-Kontrollkarte, Zugangsbuch" of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp documents.

Arolsen, 1st November 1949

Hg.

[Signature]
Gené EVERAERT
Deputy Director of the International Tracing Service
Directeur Adjoint
Bureau du Service International de Recherches

CH14.10 IN MY WORDS & HOW I REMEMBER

By Ricki Ryan -- Rischarda (Rysia) Pamuła

My mother's maiden name was Zofia (Sofia-Zosia-Sophia-Sophie) Zmudzka. She was born on 27 June 1928, however, during the war she pretended that her birth year was 1927, because by being older she was apportioned more food. She was born in the town of Radomysl, Kreis Luck District, Poland. At the start of the war the Zmudzki family lived in the town of Tomaszow-Lubelski, in south-east Poland, near the border with Ukraine, hence after partition in late September 1939 the town was in the Soviets' territory. Below: Mum (Zofia), Jozef (mum's dad), Zdzicho (mum's brother).



My father's name was Jakob (Czesław-Czesiek-Jacob) Pamuła, born on 25 July 1925 in a town called Białohorszczka, Poland (near Lwow Poland, now Lviv in the Ukraine).

Mum was 11 years old and dad was 14 years old when World War II started. They both had a hard life as children during the war. Dad was taken from his family in Poland when he was about 16 or 17 years old, in 1941, to work in a factory in Germany until 1945. My mother stayed with her mother for most of the war.

In 1940, my maternal grandmother, Helena (Hauser) Zmudzka, who was born in Radom, Poland, but whose mother and father were German, had to go to Germany. My maternal grandfather, Jozef Zmudzki, whose mother and father were Poles, had to remain in Poland. The following website article is from the Yale Law School -- Nazi Conspiracy & Aggression Vol1 Chapter XIII, Occupation of Poland (1939-45).

German People's List

The German People's List (Deutsche Volksliste) classified the willing Polish citizens into four groups of people with ethnic Germanic heritage.

- 1. Group 1 included so-called ethnic Germans who had taken an active part in the struggle for the Germanization of Poland.*
- 2. Group 2 included those ethnic Germans who had not taken such an active part, but had "preserved" their German characteristics.*
- 3. Group 3 included individuals of alleged German stock who had become "Polonized", but whom it was believed, could be won back to Germany. This group also included persons of non-German descent married to Germans or members of non-Polish groups who were considered desirable for their political attitude and racial characteristics.*
- 4. Group 4 consisted of persons of German stock who had become politically merged with the Poles.*

After registration in the List, individuals from Groups 1 and 2 automatically became German citizens. Those from Group 3 acquired German citizenship subject to revocation. Those from Group 4 received German citizenship through naturalization proceedings; resistance to Germanization constituted treason because "German blood must not be utilized in the interest of a foreign nation," and such people were sent to concentration camps.[49] Persons ineligible for the List were classified as stateless, and all Poles from the occupied territory, that is from the Government General of Poland, as distinct from the incorporated territory, were classified as non-protected.

Grandfather was eligible to be in Group 3, and had he lived in German territory he might have been allowed to go to Germany with grandmother (who was in Group 3 or 4), but this was probably blocked by the Soviets. The Zmudzki's lived in the Soviets' territory, but it appears that (in 1940) the Soviets were happy to accede to the German guidelines in the case of grandmother, but not grandfather.

After the war, the Soviets occupied all of Poland, and Eastern Germany, but grandfather was, once again, not allowed to leave Poland to live with grandmother. After the war, my grandmother was told that she could return to Poland, but she decided against a reunion with grandfather. After being separated for so many years, she wanted to remember him as he was in their younger days, or perhaps grandmother preferred that she and the children live in Western Germany, rather than in Soviet Poland, so, sadly, they lived apart for the rest of their lives.

My mother met my father in Esslingen, near Stuttgart, Germany, in October 1945. They were married in a civil government ceremony on 28 February 1946, and had a Catholic Church wedding on 3 March 1946. In those days a civil government wedding preceded a religious church wedding. I (Ricki) was born in 1946 in Sindelfingen, Böblingen, near Stuttgart, Germany. Nobody came to visit mum for about four or five days, then her mother came to visit, and mum was very happy to see her. My father did not visit her for about a week. When I was about nine months old, dad went to Belgium to look for work. He found a job in the coal mines, and a friend, Joe Bochenek, also went to Belgium to work in the coal mines. Mum and I joined dad in Belgium a few weeks later.



While in Belgium, I became very sick. My parents took me to a hospital, and the doctor told them to take me home, because there was nothing they could do for me, and I would die. I was being fed *sour milk*, and a lot of children had died from drinking it. Dad went to work as usual but came home during the day and told mum to pack a few things, and they took me to another hospital. There, the doctor told them he had no room for me, because there were so many sick children. Mum and dad begged the doctor to help me. The doctor said he didn't know if his advice would help, but he suggested that they give me carrot juice instead of *sour milk*, this worked, and I got better.

My middle sister, Basia (Barbara), was born in 1948, while we lived in Belgium. In 1949 mum, dad, my sister and I returned to my mother's family in Waiblingen, Germany.

My father decided to migrate to Australia and he told my mother about his plan. They applied, completing all the necessary papers, and the family went to Bremerhaven, Germany, to board a ship for Australia. Jacob was 27 years old, Sophia was 24, I was 5 and Barbara 3.

Nazwisko i imie *Zimudzka*
 Nom et prenom *Zofia*
 Data urodzenia *27. VI. 1927*
 Date de la naissance
 Miejsce urodzenia *Radomysl*
 Lieu de la naissance *Luch*
 Zawod
 Profession
 Funkeja w Osrodku



Odisk palca
 Signe du doigt
 ou
 photographie

Wasnoreczny podpis
 Signature
Zimudzka Zofia

MAJ Mai	CZERWIEC juin	LIPIEC juillet	SIERPIEN aout
WRZESIEŃ septembre	PAZDZIER. octobre	LISTOPAD novembre	GRUDZIEŃ decembre

Komendant Osrodka
 Commandant du Camp
Justyn

Nr 402
 No du dossier S. P.
 Nr van het dossier O. V.
 Naam *PAMULA*
 Nom
 Voornamen *Jakob*
 Prénoms
 Geboren te *Lwow*
 Né à
 De *25-7-1925*
 Le
 Nationaliteit *Pools*
 Nationalité
 Handtekening van de houder
 Signature du titulaire
 100F
 20F
 BK 211943

izba *25*
 chambre

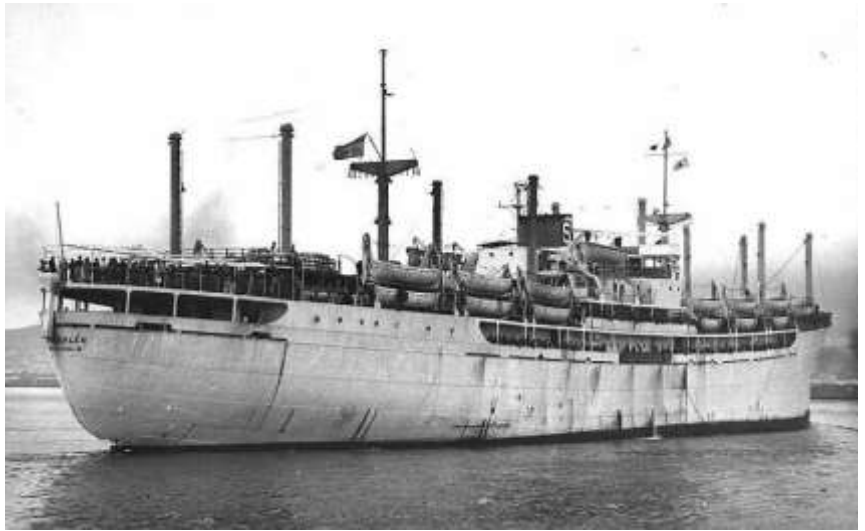
Proved by blood test
 1000000
 MEDICAL SECTION
 LABORATORY CENTER

International Certificate of Vaccination against Smallpox
 Certificat international de vaccination contre la variole

This is to certify that *Pamula Jakob*
 Le présent document certifie que
 (age) *26* (sex) *M* whose signature appears below, has this day been vaccinated
 dont la signature apparaît ci-dessous, a été vacciné (e) au jour d'hui
 by *25735* against smallpox. (Origin and Batch No. of vaccine) *Beijing 1102*
 par moi contre la variole. (Origine du vaccin et numéro du lot)
 Signature of vaccinator: *[Signature]*
 Signature de la personne pratiquant la vaccination:
 Official position: *[Signature]*
 Fonction officielle:
 L.S.O. AREA 7
 MEDICAL SECTION
 Place - Lieu: *L.S.O. AREA 7, KODICH* Date: *- 7. Nov. 1951*
 Signature of person vaccinated } *[Signature]*
 Signature de la personne vaccinée }
 Home address - Domicile: *Bad Cannstatt*

Our life in Australia started on 1 April 1952

The Anna Salen departed Bremerhaven, Germany, and arrived at Port Phillip, Victoria, very early on the morning of 31 March 1952. We eventually docked in Port Melbourne and disembarked on 1 April 1952, and we were railed by special train directly to the Bonegilla migrant camp (Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre) at Wodonga, on the Victoria/NSW border.



Ryszarda & Jakob

Zofia & Basia



Photo: Aboard the Anna Salen leaving Bremerhaven, Germany.

The arrival of the Anna Salen was not advertised in the newspapers because there were a lot of young German men on board. They were being sent to Australia to build roads and railways. During the voyage they caused trouble -- wanting to jump ship -- as they did not want to go to Australia, because their families were back in Germany. Some jumped ship in Cape Town, Africa, because a colony of Germans lived there -- and others jumped ship in Fremantle, Western Australia -- many got hurt and broke arms and legs.

Joe Bochenek, our friend from Germany, was to meet us in Melbourne. Joe and my parents knew each other in Boblingen, Germany, and in 1947 he and dad went to Belgium to work in the coal mines. Joe migrated to Australia in 1949, and then sponsored us (or at least supported us) to come to Australia. Joe worked on the O'Brien farm near Burkes Flat, on the Wedderburn and Burkes Flat Rd, near St Arnaud, and he found dad a job at that farm.



Passengers received this certificate for crossing the Equator.

It was three days before Joe realized that our ship the *Anna Salen* had arrived -- he made a few enquiries and found that we had been transported to Bonegilla. The family tradition says that, as we were sponsored, Joe was supposed to take us directly from Melbourne to the farm. On the other hand, it appears that the official policy was that all displaced persons, sponsored and non-sponsored, had to go to Bonegilla to receive about three weeks of basic training.

At Bonegilla we all had medical checks for T.B. (Tuberculosis) and other diseases as soon as we arrived. Dad slept in one room with me (Ricki), and mum slept in another room with Barbara.



Jacob and Sophie Pamula in 1999, outside their rooms at the Bonegilla migrant camp, where they lived briefly in 1952.

Joe Bochenek and Mr O'Brien came to Bonegilla and took mum, my sister and me to our new life on *our farm* near Burkes Flat, near St Arnaud. Dad stayed behind, as security, in case any of us had a disease of some sort. In addition, dad had to stay behind to complete his three weeks of training.

On the way to Burkes Flat, we stopped for tea at a hotel owned by Mr O'Brien's relations in Shepparton, and they could not believe how black my sister's eyebrows were, thinking that mum had coloured them black. When we arrived at *our farm house* where the O'Briens let us live, it was very cold and a long way from everything. We lived on the farm for three weeks, on our own, until dad came by train from Bonegilla to join us. It took dad three weeks because Easter fell in the middle of the three weeks, and no paper work could be done during the Easter holidays. As already mentioned, dad also had to complete his training.



Above: Sophie, Ricki and Barbara Pamula at a friend's farm, near Burkes Flat, in 1952.

Dad worked on O'Brien's farm with Joe Bochenek. Mr O'Brien lent dad a car for a while, but then decided to charge him for the use of the car and also for the petrol, so dad bought himself an old bike and fixed it up. He rode 8 km to and from *our farm house* to the O'Brien farm. He left very early in the morning, in the dark, and came home in the dark. The house had no electricity in those days, so, at night, we used kerosene lamps and candles. Electric appliances such as refrigerators, toasters and kettles were not possible, and there was no phone. We had a wood stove for cooking and boiling the kettle, and we used a fork to toast the bread near the hot coals of the wood stove. Mum, my sister and I would stay at *our farm house* all alone, many km from our neighbours. We were terrified because we didn't know anybody, and we couldn't understand English.

You could only see the smoke from the chimneys of the homes of our nearest neighbours. Slowly, we got to know the neighbours, the Stephensons, the Suttons and the Robinsons. They were very nice and friendly. The Robinsons had a mulberry tree on their farm, and Barbara and I used to climb the tree and get the mulberries, and mum would make mulberry jam. And, we had REAL cow's cream on our home baked bread, every Sunday. We did not have supermarkets in those days, only a small grocery shop in St Arnaud.



Above: Barbara & Ricki in Belgium, Christmas 1948.



Left: Barbara & Ricki at our farm in 1952.

Below: Sophie, Barbara & Ricki Pamula on the right with friends at St Arnaud Show in 1952.



In 1953, Joe Bochenek decided to work on the Snowy Mountains Scheme, where a lot of *New Australians* worked. We called him *Uncle Joe*, but he wasn't related. We didn't have any relatives in Australia. We used to call people who were our friends, *aunty* or *uncle*, showing respect. Later, Joe married an Aussie girl, and they lived in Newcastle, NSW. Dad and mum and Joe kept in touch for many years, until dad and mum passed away.

Dad ended up getting mum a bike too, so, on Sundays we went for bike rides, with Barbara and I getting a dink, and one day we saw a goanna. We had never seen a goanna, and unfortunately dad killed it.

Mum and dad used to go into St Arnaud with Mr O'Brien to do our shopping once a month. On one occasion, mum and dad bought some wallpaper and papered the walls to freshen the place up to make it look nice. They mixed flour and water for the paste. The next day, when we woke up, the rats had chewed lots of holes in the wallpaper.

One day Mr O'Brien took mum shopping in St Arnaud. She entered the Coles Variety Shop to buy some buttons, and asked for some F'n buttons, and other things, using the F--word quite a lot. She was told by some men on the farm that it was OK to use the F--word, and she could not understand why people were staring at her. Mr O'Brien came to take her home and mum told him what she had been saying. He told her it was a very bad word, and she was very embarrassed. Back in those days, it was thought very funny to play jokes on *New Australians*.

I started school at the Burkes Flat Primary School in 1953, when I was six. I used to leave home early in the morning, and dad gave me a double-dink on his bike, 8 km through paddocks to the farm where he worked. I had to wait until it was time for school, and then after school I had to wait for dad to finish work before we rode the bike 8 km back home. Mum used to stay at *our farm house* alone with Barbara who was only about four years old. Dad took me with him to the O'Brien farm where he worked Monday to Friday, so that I could walk to the bus stop with the O'Brien children to catch the school bus.

On *our farm*, we had a few farm animals -- dogs, cats, ducks, chooks and roosters. There was a dam at the back of our farm house, so mum and dad started to grow our own vegetables, and we would water the vegetables every day. One day, we went to water the vegetables and mum saw a snake. She was very frightened and found a long stick and beat the snake to death. When dad came home from work, she told him how she had killed the snake, and he went down to the dam to find the dead snake -- it was only a snake skin -- we did not realise that snakes shed their skin.

I can remember a time when dad was at work and the three of us stood in the dam on *our farm* for protection from a fire. There was thick smoke in the sky, coming from the west, and the sky was very red. Later we were told that the smoke was coming from fires burning in Western Australia (a bit hard to believe!).

We lived on *our farm* and dad worked for the O'Briens from April 1952 to about November 1953, about 20 months. Then we moved to St Arnaud, where dad had found employment with the local brick works. My understanding is that, because we were sponsored, dad had to work on the farm until the end of the government contract, two years, unless given special permission -- perhaps he did get permission.

House #1 Our first rented house in St Arnaud was on the road to Swan Hill, and we shared the house with a religious group who owned it (perhaps Seventh Day Adventists). They used to take Barbara and I for Bible reading. Mum became suspicious and came with us one day, and when she saw what was being taught, she made us leave the Bible Reading program. After that, our family had to leave the house and we lived in their barn -- we lived there for a few more months.

Mum and dad enrolled me at the St Arnaud State school. But one day the Catholic priest came to the school and took me to the Catholic school in St Arnaud, taught by the Convent of Mercy nuns. Mum came to pick me up after school and I wasn't there, so she had to pick me up from the Catholic school.

The nuns told us that I needed to change the spelling of my Polish name from Ryszarda to Rischarda (today Ricki).

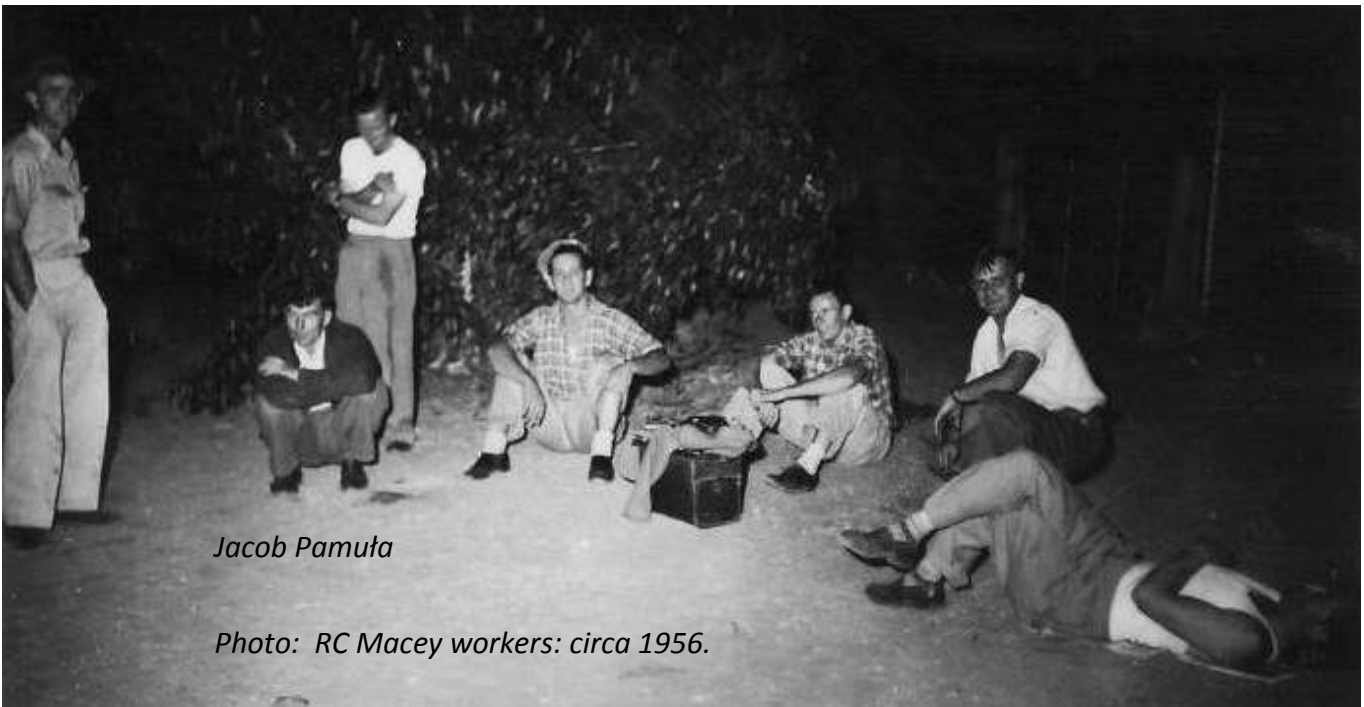


Left: Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip visited Ballarat on 6 February 1954 -- the St Arnaud Catholic school came to Ballarat to see her. I remember standing in Sturt St, near the Ballarat City Oval, watching her being driven past.

Dad had a job at a brick works in St Arnaud -- he carted the clay for the bricks, and loaded bricks into the kiln. It was very hot, heavy and dirty work. The leading hand at the factory left the job, so dad asked the boss for the leading hand's job, but the boss said: *"no you are too good in your job, keep doing what you are doing"*. So dad gave notice and left *that day*. Dad then got a job working for RC Macey of St Arnaud. They built all types of sheds around Victoria and southern New South Wales. He really liked that job.

Below: RC Macey trucks loaded to build sheds in Vic and NSW: circa 1956





Jacob Pamula

Photo: RC Macey workers: circa 1956.

House #2 We moved out of the first house and found a house to rent and share in St Arnaud, right next to the railway line. The owner, Mrs White, was a lady well into her 80s, and mum looked after her, doing her cooking, washing and cleaning. Barbara and I walked to St Patrick's Primary School and the Convent every day.

Over the railway line there were sale yards for sheep and cattle. Barbara used to hate school, and one day Barbara and her friend, Andrea, wagged school, and got into trouble for playing with tar at the sale yard. Barbara had tar on her clothes and in her hair. I was blamed, being the eldest child, for not looking after my sister.

We used to go rabbiting with dad, and mum cooked the rabbits. One day, my sister found a white rabbit near a dam, and we could not bring ourselves to kill it, so we brought it home as a pet.

Mum fell pregnant with Elizabeth, and could not look after Mrs White anymore, because Mrs White had bowel accidents, so we had to move out. Dad wouldn't let us keep the white rabbit so we took it back to the dam and left it where we found it.

House #3 In July 1955, we moved in with Mrs McGrath, a widow. The house had a large conifer hedge in the front, concrete all around, and lots of fruit trees in the backyard. The house was always very neat and tidy. Mrs McGrath did not like children and we had to be very quiet, so we were not allowed to play and make any noise. Barbara and I used to sit at a child's table and chair set on her front veranda, and we coloured and drew in our books most of the time.



In 1954 dad bought our first car a Ford Pilot



House #4 Next we went to live with the Wearne family, in St Arnaud. They had a chicken farm. We lived in what we used to call a sunroom. It was a very large room, and mum and dad divided the room with wardrobes to make it into two bedrooms.



Elizabeth was born at the St Arnaud hospital in 1956. She couldn't drink normal cow's milk, so we used to go to a farm around the corner and get a billy of milk from one particular cow.

House #5 Then we rented a house in Canterbury St, St Arnaud. The house was on a big block and the home was built at the very back of the block. There was a train track right behind us and we used to play on the train tracks. It was the first home since *our farm house* that we did not have to share. It was a small home but had lots of land to run around. Mum and dad kept a large vegetable garden and we had lots of assorted fruit trees including a quince. We also had hens, chicks and a bantam rooster.

House #6 In October 1959, mum and dad bought our very own home in St Arnaud, and we lived there until about February 1961. Mum cooked and cleaned a house for a very old lady. Mum would start work very early, before we went to school, and we would have to go and wait with mum until it was time for school. My baby sister, Elizabeth, was not allowed out of her pram while mum was cleaning, as the lady was nervous that little Elizabeth might get up to mischief. Mum said that the old lady never missed anything that went on around her, and she was probably in her 90s.

Mum used to repair and alter nuns' habits, make clothes for school concerts, make altar-boy outfits, and repair garments that the priest wore for Mass. She also cleaned rooms in the Town Hall Hotel. I think it was about this time that mum went for her driver's licence. The policeman asked her to drive him to post a letter at the post office, about three blocks from the police station, and then told her to drive him back to the police station. That is all she had to do to get her licence -- the policeman told her that he had watched her driving around St Arnaud for a long time.

We had lots of fun at school -- bush excursions, sports competitions, swimming competitions, yearly concerts, and many good times with our school friends. I recall one concert was about farm animals. My sister Barbara was dressed as a chicken, and at the end of the concert the curtain came down and she was on the wrong side, trying to find her way back. Everyone in the theatre laughed at *the poor lost chicken*.

We met a *New Australian* family that came to live in St Arnaud, the husband was Russian, and he was married to a German lady, and we were also friendly with a single man from Germany.

House #7 In February 1961, we sold our house in St Arnaud, and we moved to a farm called *Pretty Tower*, between Skipton and Beaufort. Dad looked after the sheep on the farm, did the crutching and shearing, removed very large and small rocks from the paddocks, and piled them up to clear the land, and he did lots of other farm work.

While living there, we went to Beaufort High School. Mum drove us to the bus stop. We got to know the neighbours who lived a kilometre away, and on alternate weeks we used to ride our bikes to the end of our road, and our neighbour would take us to catch the bus.

Dad used to drive us to Mass at the Catholic Church in Streatham every Sunday. This seemed miles from home. Winter mornings were very dark, cold and frosty. We lived on the farm for only about eight months, because the work was very hard, and the farmer expected too much from dad.

Recently, in about 2017, Barbara, Elizabeth and myself went for a drive from Ballarat to Beaufort. We always wanted to go back to have a look at the *Pretty Tower* farm that we had lived in for only a short time. The farmer was transferring sheep across the road and came over to us and we told him we used to live in the farm house. He immediately named us without any prompting and asked if we would like to go into the house and also look around the farm property, which we did. He was the son (Colin) of the farmer that dad had worked for, and Colin was about a year older than me -- and he remembered us all very well.

House #8 In about October 1961, we moved to Skipton. Dad got a job at a sheep station, I think it was *Banongill Station*, and dad really liked the work there. The house that we rented was across the road from the Skipton Primary School, and Elizabeth started her schooling there. It was also across the road from a baker, and we bought beautiful fresh baked bread. Mum cleaned the school every day, and in the winter she lit the fires in the school rooms in the mornings, so the children would be warm. She also cleaned the Anglican Church once a week.



Above & left: Jacob Pamula working with sheep at the Banongill Station near Skipton: circa 1961.

Barbara and I caught the school bus to Ballarat, Monday to Friday, leaving Skipton at 7.30 am and arriving home at 6 pm. We went to the Ballarat High School for a couple of months, until the end of the school year. In the New Year, mum and dad transferred us to Sacred Heart College in Victoria St, as the nuns were *Convent of Mercy* nuns, the same religious order that taught us in St Arnaud.

House #9 In April 1963 mum and dad bought a house in Eyre St, Ballarat, and they lived there for the remainder of their lives.

Kosciuszko Soccer Team While living in Skipton, mum and dad heard of the Kosciuszko soccer team, a Polish soccer team that played in Ballarat on Saturday afternoons, so they drove to Ballarat and watched a couple of games. It is there that they got to meet many Polish families -- Stodolny, Majda, Fugiel, Burcon and many others -- the first Poles that they had met since leaving Europe. My father coached the Kosciuszko soccer club in the mid 1960s, and played in the team.



*Above: Jacob Pamuła is standing at left rear, Waiblingen, Germany: circa 1949-50.
Below: Kosciuszko soccer team of 1963: Jacob Pamuła second from left, front row.*



Polish Association Mum and dad were both very involved with the Polish community. They both helped whenever there were Polish dances at the Ballarat Civic Hall and at the Lower Civic Hall. The dances were held not only for the Ballarat Polish community but also for Australians and other nationalities.



Right: Andrew Majda, Teresa & Roman Skrypko, Sophie & Jacob Pamula, Stefania Majda: Lower Civic Hall, Ballarat, 1970.



Left: Ballarat Poles at a dance in Geelong: circa 1970.

Mum and dad attended lots of dances in Geelong and Melbourne that were organized by those Polish communities.



Left: Miss Polonia entrants at the Ballarat Lower Civic Hall: circa 1967. Jan Gradkowski Wanda Zabinski Zofia Dziuba Maria Sztojko Irena Młynarczyk Barbara Pamula Jan Studzinski.

Right: Mum & dad helped with lots of functions held in the Ballarat area, and with Polish folk dancing by Polish parents and children at the Sound Shell, Ballarat Gardens.



Below: Polish community at rear in a parade at the Ballarat Gardens.



Polish Costume

Mum would get dressed in her Polish costume whenever the Polish community had a *Special Polish Mass*.

Below: mum (far right) helping at a Polish display stall in the North Ballarat Gardens.





Left: Dressed for a special Polish Mass, St Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat.



*Left: Folk Dancing:
Includes
Elizabeth Pamula
John Eliaz
Peter Skrypko
Teresa Burcon
Denise Maciag*



Right: The children's band:
Peter Skrypko drummer.
Teresa Burcon on guitar.
Helena Jaskulska on banjo.
Elizabeth Pamuła vocalist.
The coach was a German
(name unknown).



Left: Jacob Pamuła raising
the Polish flag in Sturt St,
Ballarat, opposite the Town
Hall: circa 1985

Mum and dad were both on the committee for the Ballarat Polish Association and the Ballarat Polish Seniors Club at different times. I think dad was Vice President for a while and mum served as Treasurer.

Right: The Courier: Tuesday 31
January 1984: Presentation of Polish
awards at the Town Hall: Kathy
Biała, Helena Fugiel, Jacob Pamuła
(Committee), and Cr Neil Steinman.



The Ballarat Polish Association built Copernicus Hall in Orion St, Sebastopol, and mum and dad were involved with all functions held there.



Left: Polish ladies preparing meals in Copernicus Hall: circa 1985: Sophie Pamula is second from left.



Left & below: The Ballarat Polish community bus trip to the Melbourne MCG to see the Polish Pope, John Paul II: 1986.



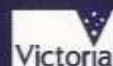


Above: Taken at the Polish Heritage Exhibition, Gold Museum, Ballarat: 12 February 2008.

Below: Taken at the Premier's Gala Dinner: 2008.



Premier's Gala Dinner 2008





Left: Roman & Teresa Skrypko, Sophie & Jacob Pamuła.

Below: Ricki, Sophie, Barbara & Elizabeth.



Below: Richard & Barbara (Pamuła) Majda live in Adelaide, Ricki (Pamuła) & Kevin Ryan live in Ballarat, Elizabeth (Pamuła) & Peter Skrypko live in Ballarat.



CH14.11 THE IZYDORCZYK & WOJDAT FAMILY STORY

by Irene Iwanowski (Izydorczyk)

The migration of my family is the story of my parents, grandparents and my uncle's journey across many continents to flee war and make a new life in Australia.

The Izydorczyk family

1. Stanisław (Stan) Izydorczyk (dad): born in Poland on 29 April 1928 – 20 February 2019 (Ballarat).
2. Helena (Wojdat) Izydorczyk (mum): born in Poland on 14 Feb 1930 – 14 Feb 2005 (Ballarat) (married Stan Izydorczyk in Ballarat in 1953).
3. Irene Izydorczyk (me)(now Iwanowski): born in Melbourne on 8 April 1954:
I married Wally Iwanowski on 5 February 1972, and we have two children, Monika and Patrik.
4. Peter Izydorczyk (my brother): born in Ballarat on 17 Sep 1961: Peter married Lorraine Patrick on 31 November 1991, and they have two sons, Jason and Ben.

The Wojdat family

5. Franciszek (Frank) Wojdat (granddad): born in Poland on 15 Aug 1903 – 13 Feb 1998 (Ballarat).
6. Weronika (Veronica) Wojdat (grandma): born in Poland on 8 Aug 1908 – 12 March 1974 (Ballarat).
7. Stanisław (Stan) Wojdat (my uncle): born in Poland on 4 Oct 1936 – 11 Jan 2010 (Pambula, NSW):
married and had 2 children.
2. Helena Wojdat (mum)(Izydorczyk): born in Poland on 14 Feb 1930 – 14 Feb 2005
(Ballarat)(married Stan Izydorczyk in Ballarat in 1953).

My father Stanisław (Stan) Izydorczyk was born on 29 April 1928 in Andrzejów, Zduńska Wola, Poland. He was the fifth child of six children: Marianna, Stefan, Helena, Tadeusz, Stanisław and Irena. At the age of 14, after he attended church, the Germans took my father to Zduńska Wola, the district centre, and the next day his family was allowed to bring a parcel and say good-bye. Dad was then taken to Emden, Germany, to work as a labourer, building concrete bunkers and digging ditches. When Emden was bombed dad was taken to Aurich, Germany, to work on a farm tending to horses and cows. He was given board and a little food in return. At the age of 16 he was given an ID card and a 'P' symbol to attach to his clothing.



When the war was over dad thought his family would meet him in Germany but no one came. The Polish Army was taking displaced people back to Poland, but dad heard that things were not good in Poland, so he refused to go. I believe that dad didn't know whether his family were all in Poland at the end of the war, and whether they had all survived, and I don't know what efforts he made to find out. Years later in Ballarat my mum (Helena) persuaded dad to write back home, which he did. A few years ago one of my cousins from Poland visited me, and she gave me a photocopy of Stan's sister's reply.

Dad's family in Poland had all survived, and had not been forced to leave home -- and they were upset that dad hadn't returned to live in Poland after the war. In the end dad never went back, even to visit, mainly because mum had injuries and health issues resulting from an accident which occurred while riding her bike from work (see later).




Germany After the war Stan was lucky to be in the English zone, where he learnt mechanics, got his licence, and worked in transport (photo left).

Australia On 18 April 1950 dad left Bremerhaven, Germany, on the Fairsea (photo below), docking at Station Pier, Melbourne, on 23 May 1950.



Eildon Dam Project Stan was then transported to Bonegilla migrant camp (Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre), near Wodonga, near the Victoria/NSW border. He was required to work for two years as directed by the government, firstly on the Eildon Dam project in central Victoria, and then later in Melbourne putting up electrical towers. Dad then did a Fitter and Turner apprenticeship while working with GM Holden, Fishermans Bend, Melbourne. Dad enjoyed his freedom in Australia, his new culture, and the abundance of food.

600	Serial No. 189421	
Surname: IZYDORCZYK	Christian Names: Stanislaw	
Nationality: Pol.	Age: 29/IV/28	Sex: M
Date of Arrival: 24 MAY 1950	Marital Status: S	Religion: P.C.
Ex Ship: FAIRSEA III	Description:	
Date of Departure: 15/6/50	Height: 6'11"	Weight: 168
Destination: State Electricity Commission of Victoria Melbourne, Vic. E.L. 4832	Hair: dk. brown	Eyes: grey
Trade:	Complexion:	Scars:
Standard of Education:	General: none.	Specimen of Signature: <i>Stanislaw Izydorczyk</i>
Address of Next of Kin (if known):	18	
National Archives of Australia		NAA: A2571, IZYDORCZYK STANISLAW

Grandparents My grandmother, Weronika (Veronica) Wojdat, was born on 8 August 1908 in Dzisna, Poland. My granddad, Franciszek (Frank) Wojdat, was born on 15 August 1903 in Dzisna, Poland. They married on 15 October 1927 in Dzisna and had two children. Helena, my mother, was born on 14 February 1930, and Stanislaw (Stan), my uncle, was born on 4 October 1936.

Farm Work Like dad, my grandparents, mum and uncle Stan were taken together from Poland to Germany for forced farm work.





Left: In 1949 they migrated to Australia on the Gen M L Hersey, which docked in Melbourne on 27 April 1950.

Bonegilla Frank, Veronica, my mum Helena, and uncle Stan, were sent to the Bonegilla migrant camp. This was a month before dad arrived at the camp. They had a few small suitcases. They were grateful for the food and the welcome they received in Australia.

Left: Mum (Helena), grandma (Veronica) and uncle (Stan) at the Bonegilla camp: circa 1950.



Mildura After a short stay at the Bonegilla migrant camp they were sent to the Mildura migrant camp. Mothers and children stayed at the camp, and the men were sent to work at various locations for the standard two years.

Bottom left: circa 1951: My grandma Veronica worked in the kitchen at the Mildura migrant camp. In the photo we see Veronica & Zofia Walczak (the Walczaks later lived in Ballarat).

Rocklands Dam Frank and uncle Stan were sent to the Rocklands Dam project near Horsham. As it happened, Stan Iwanowski, my future husband's dad, also worked at Rocklands Dam.

Below right: Stan Iwanowski using a jackhammer at Rocklands Dam: circa 1950.




Ballarat After the two year contracts ended, Frank, Veronica, Helena and Stan, decided to settle in Ballarat (as did the Iwanowski family). Frank got a job at Joe White Maltings, and later at MB Johns Foundry, where he worked until he retired. Uncle Stan found work at Irish & Sons, Ballarat, for many years as a welder and as a Fitter and Turner. This enabled them to save money for their own home.



Royal Hotel Mum's contract required her to work at the Royal Hotel in Horsham, where she became a good friend of co-worker Genowefa (Genia) Nowakowski, who too was required to work at the hotel. Genia's boyfriend, Kazimierz Kloszynski, was required to work at the Rocklands Dam. Genia and Kaz later married and settled in Melbourne.

Left: Mum (Helena) and Genia at the Royal Hotel.

Below: IRO documents from the National Archives, Canberra.

485		Serial No. 122025	
Surname: NOWAKOWSKI			
Christian Names: Genowefa			
Nationality: Pol.	Age: 7/1/29	Sex: F	 <p>Signature: <i>Genowefa Nowakowski</i></p>
Date of Arrival: 28 APR 1950	Marital Status: S	Religion: P.C.	
Ex Ship: HRESZY II	Height: 5'0"	Weight: 118	
Date of Departure: 11/5/50	Hair: Dark	Eyes: Brown	
Destination: Royal Hotel Horsham, Vic. S.L. 4438	Complexion:	Scars:	
Trade:	General: mod.		
Standard of Education: 7			
Address of Next of Kin (if known):			
Father Stanislaw			
National Archives of Australia		NAA: A2571, NOWAKOWSKI GENOWEFA.	

366		Serial No. 119102	
Surname: KLOSZYNSKI			
Christian Names: Kazimierz			
Nationality: Pol.	Age: 21.12.28	Sex: M	 <p>Signature: <i>Kazimierz Kloszynski</i></p>
Date of Arrival: 18 DEC 1949	Marital Status: S	Religion: P.C.	
Ex Ship: GEN. HOWSE	Height: 5'8"	Weight: 157	
Date of Departure: 17/1/50	Hair: Dark	Eyes: Blue green	
Destination: State Rivers & Water Supply Commission, Rocklands, Vic. S.L. 3234	Complexion:	Scars:	
Trade:	General: mod.		
Standard of Education: 17			
Address of Next of Kin (if known):			
Father: Gustaw			
National Archives of Australia		NAA: A2571, KLOSZYNSKI KAZIMIERZ	

Melbourne Mum decided to go to Melbourne, to be near Genia, and she found work at the Peter MacCallum Clinic as a Nurse's Aide.

Right: Mum at the Peter MacCallum Clinic.



Wedding Mum met dad at a dance in Melbourne, and they married on 26 September 1953 in St Patrick's Cathedral, Ballarat. I (Irene) was born in Melbourne on 8 April 1954.

Ballarat Mum's parents lived in Ballarat, so mum and dad decided to move there.

Renting When my grandparents moved to Ballarat they and the Maciąg family shared the rent of a house at 1306 Gregory St (photo right). Mum, dad and I moved in with my grandparents after the Maciągs built their own home. My grandparents then bought a home at 13 Beech Ave, Wendouree, and we all shared that house for a while, until mum and dad bought their own home in Dowling St.



New House After mum became disabled due to a bicycle accident, in about 1959, mum and dad bought a vacant block at 11 Beech Ave, next door to my grandparents, so that my grandparents could help to look after mum and me -- and we later moved into a new house on that block.

Work Dad worked first at Ronaldson Bros. & Tippett, as a machinist, and mum worked at the Ballarat Mental Hospital, as a Ward Assistant. On weekends dad would work driving a truck as far as Naracoorte, Beachport and Melbourne, collecting scrap metal for a local scrap metal merchant.

Bicycle Accident In about 1959 mum was riding her bike home from work at the Mental Hospital, when she was struck by a car and suffered what appeared to be non-serious injuries – it was a hit and run. Mum's problems grew over a number of years – headaches, loss of balance, and difficulty walking. My grandmother and I (12 years old) would carry mum around the house in an armchair. Later the Queen Elizabeth Home arranged for mum to get a wheelchair, which made things much easier. Then mum had a number of operations, which made things worse – an accidentally cut nerve led to mum gradually losing the use of her hands (partial quadriplegia).

As mum's disability worsened, dad decided to work locally, so that he could help mum – he quit his scrap metal job and instead did garden maintenance during the day – he also changed from day-shift to night-shift at Ronaldson Bros. & Tippett. In later years dad worked at MB Johns, then Villiers, and later at Valinight Modco -- as a Fitter and Turner.

Wheelchair Living next door allowed grandma to care for my badly disabled mum. Peter, my brother, was born on 17 September 1961. Later my mother was confined to a wheelchair, and grandma died in 1974, so dad decided to take an early retirement from full time work to give mum better care. In later years dad had a double hernia and a bad back, and mum had to have professional care at the Queen Elizabeth Home, where she died on 14 Feb 2005.

Celebrations, Functions and Traditions

Wigilia At Christmas my grandmother always held Wigilia (the Christmas Eve dinner) for our family at her home. Before sitting down at the table everyone broke the traditional wafer, or Opłatek (similar to altar bread), and wished one another health, wealth and happiness in the New Year. The Wigilia is a meatless meal and the menu consisted of mushroom or beetroot soup, fish, pierogi and dried fruit compote. An extra place was set in case an unexpected visitor arrived. This practice stems from the ancient Polish saying, *A guest in the home is God in the home*.

Opłatek My parents would always try to go to the Polish Opłatek luncheons, held on a Sunday before Christmas, if mum was feeling well enough. These included St Nicholas handing out presents. They were held at St Georges Hall in Urquhart St Ballarat, later at St Patrick's Hall, and then at Copernicus Hall.



Left: Santa (Michael Burcon) giving me (Irene) a pram, Wally Kitlowski helping, at St Georges Hall: circa 1957.

Below: Helena Izydorczyk (mum), Genia Kloszynski, Stefania Piłat, Stefania Majda and Frank Wojdat (granddad) at a dance at St Georges Hall: circa 1957.



Above: Saint Nicholas at St Georges Hall: circa 1957: 1 Kaz Fugiel, 2 Stan Fugiel, 3 Rod Klicki (half hidden), 4 Toey Kornas, 5 Bubsie Fugiel, 6 Richard Majda, 7 Ray Maciąg, 8 (boy), 9 Henryka Ciężki, 10 John Ciężki, 11 Michael Maciąg, 12 Christine Buzo, 13 Krystyna Wach, 14 George Ciężki, 15 Anna Buzo, 16 Christine Buzo, 17 Wanda Skirzynski, 18 Irene Iwanowski (Izydorczyk)(me, with doll), 19 Daniela Wach, 20 Barbara Piłat, 21 Maria Sztojko, 22 George Piłat 23 John Andrejczuk, 24 Jack Fugiel. 25 Edward Dziuba, 26 Zofia Dziuba, 27 Saint Nicholas (Michael Burcon), 28 Sophia Sztojko, 29 Anna Andrejczuk, 30 Wanda Burcon, 31 Helena Izydorczyk (mum).

Polish Functions My grandparents and my father always attended Polish Association meetings, and my grandparents always volunteered to help at the many Polish functions. My grandmother helped in the kitchen, and my grandfather manned the door and collected tickets.

Polish Traditions Our family held on to their Polish traditions in our Australian community. My grandfather loved fishing for eels with Edward Piłat and other friends at Lake Bolac and Lake Burrumbeet. Learning from his Polish heritage, he would hang the eels on the clothes line to dry before smoking them at Edward Piłat's house, over a few vodkas. They were the best eels ever!! Dad and mum always loved having friends over at the weekend. They laughed, talked, shared food and had a few whiskies. I remember that Poles came together to help each other when needed -- concreting driveways, building sheds and many other tasks.

Kosciuszko Soccer Club Uncle Stan Wojdat played for the Kosciuszko Soccer team in the Ballarat Association. Below is a photo of the team taken before their first game in 1954, at their home ground at Victoria Park. Stan married and had two children, and later lived in Pambula, NSW, where he died on 11 January 2010, and his ashes were spread on the ocean at his favourite fishing spot off Bermagui. His teammate Ted Zabinski used to go fishing with Stan, and Ted attended the funeral service. Ted is today the only remaining player, and he lives in Ballarat.



*Above: Rear: Peter Steiner (German), Sławko Nykoluk (Ukranian), Svetan (Nick) (Stefan) Nikolovski (Yugoslav), Walek Kitlowski, Sergio Bielski (Ukranian), Ted Zabinski.
Front: Stan Wach, Stan Wojdat (my uncle), Jack Burcon (goalie), Steve Burcon, Frank Różycki.*

Early Years, Family Life and Caring For Mum



School In my early years at St Columba's Primary school, Ballarat, I was embarrassed when other children saw my Polish lunch -- a very thick portion of very dark rye bread, and a length of smoked eel. When I told my dad about my embarrassment he decided to drive to school every lunch time, and I had lunch with him in his car. How times have changed, nowadays a migrant child bringing an ethnic lunch to school wouldn't raise any eyebrows!

Left: Me (Irene) and Peter.

English was my second language. Learning grammar in Grade 4 was difficult as my parents did not understand verbs or adjectives, and rarely spoke English. I was lucky I had nice neighbours, the Thompson family, who helped me to learn.



Right: Barbara Piłat, Jack Fugiel, Richard Majda and me (in Polish dress): Taken at the combined Polish Associations' annual sports day at Lara, near Geelong: circa 1966.



Left: Opłatek at the Polish Copernicus Hall. Saint Nicholas (Michael Yaworowicz) is talking to my dad (Stan Izydorzyc). My son (Patrik Iwanowski) is the Devil, my daughter (Monica) is the tall Angel, and I don't remember the name of the little Angel: circa 1997.

Wally Iwanowski On 5 February 1972 I married Wally Iwanowski at the Church of the Little Flower, Ballarat, and we now have two children, Monika and Patrik, of whom we are proud. Both are now married, with children of their own. We lived in Sale for 2 years, as Wally was in the RAAF.

Caring For Mum When my grandmother passed away in 1974, Wally and I decided to move to Ballarat so that I could care for mum -- Wally obtained a discharge on compassionate grounds. We bought granddad's house so that we could be close to mum -- grandad moved into a caravan in mum's backyard, later replaced with a proper granny flat. For the last two years granddad resided at the Begonia Nursing Home, where he died in 1998.

Mum and Dad Dad worked as a part-time cleaner/caretaker at the Wendouree Primary School for 10 years. The children loved dad and called him *Mr Stan*. After mum passed away on 14 February 2005, on her birthday, dad bought a unit in Cromwell St, Sebastopol, of which he was very proud. Dad loved his garden, especially his veggie patch. Later dad was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. When his condition became serious he went to Nazareth House, where he resided for three years. Dad passed away on 20 February 2019.

Right: Lorraine, mum, Peter, Monika, Irene, Patrik, dad & Wally: circa 1992.

Peter married Lorraine Patrick on 31 November 1991. They live in Melbourne and have two sons, Jason and Ben.



Right: Peter, Jason, Lorraine & Ben: circa 2009.



Mum and dad always said how happy and lucky they were to have migrated to a wonderful life in Australia. As an extended family, Wally and I (Irene), together with my brother Peter and his wife Lorraine, and Wally's brother Jim, and his wife Kazia (Stodolny), uphold our Polish traditions with pride and respect. Wally and I are so grateful that our parents and grandparents chose Australia.

Below: An article from the Ballarat Courier: April 2000.



Aussie friends: Fifty years ago Genia Kzoszynski, Helen Jzyporczyk, Andzia Bieniesz and Teresa Skrypko travelled by ship together from their homeland Poland to start a new life in Australia.

Four friends in Australia for 50 years

By **LEONIE BARLOW**

FRIDAY marked a special anniversary for four ladies in Ballarat.

Fifty years ago to the day they travelled by ship together from their homeland Poland to start a new life in Australia.

Teresa Skrypko said she and her three friends had been

getting together ever since to share their special memories.

"There was no home for us in Poland and they offered us a home in Australia," Mrs Skrypko said.

"Australia has been a fantastic country for us and we always get together with our families to celebrate that fact."

The four women, two living in Ballarat and two in Melbourne, met with their families at the Red Lion Hotel on Friday night to mark their 50th year in Australia.

Teresa Skrypko, Helen Jzyporczyk, Genia Kzoszynski and Andzia Bieniesz have each returned

to Poland at different times over the years.

"But each time we get back to Australia this is our home," Mrs Skrypko said.

"I love Ballarat because it is a place where you can send your grandchildren from one end of town to another and not have to worry about them."

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CH14.12 MY STORY AS A MIGRANT CHILD

by Maria Crawford (Marysia Buczek)

My name is Maria Crawford (Marysia Buczek). My parents Nadia and Piotr (Peter) Buczek and I arrived in Australia on 29 September 1950 on the *SS Castel Bianco*, which docked in Melbourne on 30 September 1950. We were Polish migrants and *displaced people*. I would like to share a little of what my parents went through during the war, prior to our journey to Australia, as displaced persons.

A snippet of my parents' lives

Peter's mum and dad had a small farm near the village of Tarnobrzeg, Poland. Peter was born in 1911. We used to celebrate his birthday on 29 September, but in later years his sister told us that he had been born on 29 October. He had three older sisters and a younger brother. Both parents died before Peter turned 16. In 1940, the Nazis threw Peter into a truck, and took him to work as a slave labourer on farms near Donauworth, Germany. He never saw his family again. Dad told me very little about the war and his time in Poland and Germany.

Nadia was born in 1926, in a village in the Ukraine. She never knew her birthdate. Both of her parents were Polish. They, and her younger brother, died when she was about five. Stalin conducted an intentional Terror-Famine in Soviet Ukraine from 1932 to 1933 that killed millions of Ukrainians. Household foodstuffs were confiscated, and population movements were restricted. Mum remembered her family eating potato skins, and grass. Soldiers would suddenly enter their home to check whether they were hoarding food. Her dad (possibly a veterinarian) starved to death, giving his food to his children, and in the end only Nadia and her older brother survived -- her younger brother died, possibly from eating poisonous mushrooms. Bodies were thrown into a large communal pit near each village. In 1940, when she was 14, Nadia was taken from her village to the Auschwitz concentration camp, Poland. Nadia was transported by train in a cattle wagon, standing, squished tightly. There was not enough room to properly relieve oneself. There was no food or water, and people died. After a couple of days at Auschwitz, she was taken to a farm near Donauworth, Germany. At about the same time, Peter was also taken to Donauworth.

Peter's and Nadia's lots were not easy, however mum believed that things were a little easier on farms than in factories. They had one meal a day, consisting of a slice of dried bread and watery, thin soup. Mum was versatile, when milking a cow she would squirt milk into her mouth, and when gathering eggs she would eat one raw egg. The hours were long and the work was hard. The farm owners had three sons who were in the SS -- mum told me that they had whipped her when she was pregnant with me.

Dad said that farm workers owned very little. They were not allowed to gather in groups. Each person had a large P for Poland, sewn on their clothing. Mum said that they had Sunday afternoons off, and despite the ban on gatherings, dad arranged for get-togethers in the Black Forest. Dad would say, "*let's forget for the afternoon where we are, and what's going on*". There was singing and dancing, and the war was briefly forgotten. Dad played piano accordion and harmonica beautifully -- he used anything, even blowing through a leaf. He was self-taught but was able to hum a tune, and then play a bar or two.

Throughout his life dad had a hatred of injustice, and this might have resulted in some kind of altercation with the farmer -- he was taken from the farm and interned in Buchenwald. Dad worked in a chain gang breaking huge rocks, and later he worked as a barber. He told me that he was interned with 150 men on the same day, and three months later, when he left, there were only 50 survivors. As previously mentioned, dad hated injustice -- while in Buchenwald, he grabbed a whip from a guard who was beating an inmate, and used it on the guard. He escaped severe punishment when he agreed to cut the Commandant's hair,



and he did a good job, as dad was a good barber. At Buchenwald he was given the job of cutting the hair of new arrivals. Interestingly he believed that a long day cutting hair was worse than breaking rocks. In later years, in Ballarat, he would cut his Polish friends' hair for a bottle of beer.

Left: Peter Buczek & friend, after Peter's release from Buchenwald concentration camp in 1941, aged 29.

Mum told me, before she died, that Nazis hanged dad's friend in the Black Forest -- dad had to take down his body -- and he was told that he would be next. I think that this might have been after the two of them had been in a fight with seven Italian soldiers. Another horrific story that dad told me was that a noose was placed around his neck by SS soldiers, in the Black Forest. This was a month after his friend was hanged. Dad was lucky that American soldiers arrived shortly after and liberated that area.

During April and May the war was ending, and the Allies were bombing everywhere. It was a frightening experience with people running for their lives. During this time dad was trying to help mum who was pregnant with me. After the war there was a shortage of food and accommodation. The Allies tried to look after the refugees and displaced persons as they were called. I (Maria) was born during this chaos, on 1 August 1945. Mum, 19 years old, gave birth in the Donauworth hospital, on the laundry floor, with no one in attendance to help her with the birth of her first child. Mum was terrified and said that it had been a horrific experience. She suffered injuries preventing her from having another child.

Photos below: Peter and Nadia's wedding on 1 September 1945, Donauworth, Germany.



After the war, mum and dad were shuttled from camp to camp, including Augsburg, and Gablingen. For a while they lived on a factory floor. At another time they lived in a house, sharing a large room with three other families, each having a corner. Sometimes they moved again after only two weeks. They owned *nothing*. They were given a box of food each week, sometimes used for bartering. Mum didn't smoke, and the box contained cigarettes, so mum would barter her cigarettes for milk for me, and for other necessities -- baby clothes, pram and blankets. Mum also bartered with Germans -- they were victims too, receiving little help. We lived this way for nearly five years -- not wanted and with nowhere to go.

Right: Nadia with Maria (aged 1) in 1946.

Below : Nadia & Maria & lady: 1948.

Bottom: Maria (aged 4) looking back to Nadia, 1949.

Many countries were asked to take in displaced persons. Churches, particularly the Catholic Church, sponsored displaced persons. I remember mum said that we nearly went to Argentina. Later, we could have gone to America, with many of our friends, but we missed out because mum was sick. Then we were offered Australia, and mum was extremely excited. She had memories from her school days, where she had learnt that Australia was a *Garden of Eden*. To her dying day, she never regretted coming to Australia.

In about July 1950 we left Augsburg, Germany, travelling by train to Genoa, Italy, where we boarded the *SS Castel Bianco*, belonging to the Italian Sitmar Line. On board the men were quartered separately from their family -- the men sleeping in the large dining room. We shared a cabin with Mrs Cham, her oldest daughter Bozena (aged 10), and her youngest daughter Elizabeth (aged 18 months). I (Maria)(aged 4) shared a bunk with Elizabeth. The Chams, and many other families on board, would eventually settle in Ballarat.



The food on board consisted mainly of pasta. My dad disliked tomato sauce and pasta to the day he died, but my mum and I never had that problem with Italian food, and I still enjoy it. I turned five on the ship. I have vague memories of my mum being seasick, and I somehow had a big lump on my head.

I remember the Suez Canal, boats coming close to the ship, laden with wares and Turkish carpets. They were ridiculously cheap -- and there was bargaining, as there was *little money*. It was very colourful, and looking down from the ship, seeing these little boats bobbing up and down laden with wares, fascinated me. I remember mum got an animal wall hanging which was tied to a rope and pulled up to the ship -- payment was returned the same way. I remember a lot of noise, yelling and haggling. Mum still owned this wall hanging when she died in 2002, although it was a bit tattered.

We docked in Melbourne on 30 September 1950 and we were taken to the Bonegilla migrant camp, near Wodonga. Once again women and children were separated from the men. The men were taken away to work on sites allocated by the Australian government. Dad did forestry work for the Ballarat Water Commission, and also worked on the White Swan dam project. The IRO paid for the passage to Australia, and the Australian government guaranteed the men two years work, where directed.

Below: Clearing for a Ballarat Water Commission pipeline at Gong Gong: 1951.



After two months at Bonegilla, we were relocated to the Mildura migrant camp, to allow for a new batch of migrants at Bonegilla. We found out that Mildura was further from Ballarat, but at least there was a direct train line to Ballarat. My mum helped in the camp kitchen, and I went to preschool or school for the first time. I visited the Mildura camp site in about 2005 -- sadly, the camp had been obliterated -- and I was disappointed that there is no mention of it anywhere, not even a plaque to commemorate its existence.

The men were well paid, and when their contracts finished at Ballarat many stayed and worked in Ballarat factories or for the Railways. Some men picked grapes at Mildura for a time, before returning to Ballarat. They set about making a new life for themselves and their families, working hard, saving money, and enjoying their new country. Mum and dad tried to forget the war, and probably thought that they would never see their relatives and homeland again.

Arriving in Ballarat in 1951, my parents could only rent a room. We had no furniture and for two years the three of us slept on a mattress on the floor. The elderly landlord was exceedingly kind and wanted to help us. He was a survivor of the war and returned to Australia with one arm missing. His wife was not so happy for us to be living there.

We had to stay in our room till 7 pm before we could come out and mum could cook a meal for us. I remember *Majestic Fanfare* being played before the ABC news, at which time the landlord and his wife retired for the night. Then very quietly, like mice, we would come out of our room, and mum would quickly cook tea. We had to be quiet otherwise the lady of the house complained. I remember feeling very glad to exit our little room -- I felt free for a short time, and it was warm near the stove.

I remember the address was 24 Duke St. I called the landlord Poppy as I had no aunts or uncles or grandparents (just mum, dad and I). I got to know Poppy and loved him very dearly. He was very kind and he often gave me a bunch of my favourite flowers, Camellias, which he had grown near the fence and gate. In later years I used to call in to see him, till he died. Whenever I see Camellia flowers, I remember Poppy as a kind gentleman -- it was my privilege to know him.

Mum and dad were working all this time. Mum as a domestic at Loreto College, a Catholic girls' boarding school near Lake Wendouree. The school provided a hot lunch. I enjoyed school holidays, especially when mum took me to work with her. One of the nuns took me *under her wing*, and gave me the responsibility of cleaning a large dollhouse. It had three floors, and I furnished the inside. To me, this was *child heaven*, as I didn't have any toys. Another nun used to take me to where she worked with plants and flowers. She gave me a flower plant to take home, and I was thrilled. When the Olympic Rowing was held in Ballarat, in 1956, the nuns kindly invited us to share front row scaffolding seats.

Mum and dad bought land (at huge expense) at 3 Alfred St, Sebastopol. Unfortunately some Poles were financially *taken for a ride* by Aussies. Land prices were massive in 1952 – Poles were charged over 200 pounds for a block, with extremely high interest. They liked big blocks, where they could grow their own veggies, using every bit of ground outside their chook yard. Much of their food was pickled and stored in a cold garage or shed, where they also hung their onions and garlic.

Dad firstly built the kitchen, and we slept there until he built the other rooms -- and later he built a shed, that had a copper and a bath, and we had an outside toilet. After my parents finished work, and on weekends, they worked in our veggie garden, sometimes after dark.

I remember I was seven years old, because within a week of moving out of the kitchen we had a little party when I made my First Communion. I was so excited to be in our own home and have my own room -- we were free to do what we wanted, and to cook and eat when we liked. Many of our neighbours were Polish, and for a while it was an incredibly happy *Little Poland*.

Mum and dad rode push bikes to work, then in 1957 dad bought a Ford Zephyr, and in 1962 replaced it with a Ford Falcon. Mum obtained a driving licence too.

Right: Mum & dad & Falcon at our Alfred St home: circa 1970.



Many Australians found it very hard to accept migrants. Unfortunately some Poles were insulted and verbally abused. I attended St Joseph's Primary School, Central Ballarat, and I found that many of the children refused to play with me because I was a migrant. Some of the nuns found it difficult to accept me as well, and they were not charitable! I remember a very friendly girl, named Frances, who was happy to play with me, but the other girls in her group said "*me or them*"! I felt left out, but felt that it was best if Frances stayed in her group. At school I read every book, in every class.

My growing up years were not easy as some people were very inconsiderate and rude, telling us to speak English when we were on trams or buses or shopping or walking down the street. However, there were some people who went out of their way to be kind, especially Mrs Singleton, who lived in Redan (mum did her ironing), and Mrs Ridsdale, from our church (mum did her housework).

My working parents had difficulty with English -- mum tried hard but found the meanings of many English words difficult. She was able to speak, read and write in seven languages, but said English, for her, was the hardest language.

In 1952 the Polish community was assigned our own priest, Fr Władysław Ziółkóś, Ballarat's first Polish chaplain. He shepherded his Polish flock and led our cultural celebrations. Polish Mass was held at midday Sunday, in St Patrick's Cathedral. He was a decent person who helped us through difficult times. Fr Ziółkóś, came from the Tarnobrzeg area, and he and dad were especially friendly because they knew each other before the war.

To help pay for the high home mortgage, mum changed jobs and went to work in a shoe factory in Sebastopol. She came home one day, shocked because she had been told to slow down, as the other workers were unhappy that she was working so hard. Mum saw this country as *a land of milk and honey*, and was surprised at their attitude. At this time, dad was employed on roadworks nearer Melbourne. Later, dad worked for the Ballarat Railways, doing the plumbing in the cabins. A couple of times, we took advantage of the cheaper train fares, and we had a small holiday in Adelaide.

I rode the tram to and from school, walking three blocks. At ten years of age, after school, I would light the fire and start cooking dinner. After dinner I would clear up, wash, and put away. I was always tired, and life at home was stressful. There was no trauma counselling in those days, and some teachers and nuns had no understanding of my family life, and no compassion!

Right: Visiting Polish friends in Sunshine, Melbourne: 1953.



Middle: Ursula Bobik, Henrietta Ciężki, Anna Andrejczuk, Kazia Stodolny, Maria Buczek, Wanda Burcon, at St Georges Hall: 1954.



Bottom: An outing to the Ballarat Botanical Gardens: 1955:

Rear: Ludwik & Krystyna (Borecki) Jaskulski, Peter & Nadia Buczek, Wally & Katarzyna Sztojko, Jozef & Olga Kusiakiewicz:

Front: Maria Buczek, Maria Sztojko, John Kusiakiewicz, Zofia Sztojko.



During school holidays, even though I was a child, I, by myself, went into town to pay bills and do shopping. I had a list of household chores -- washing walls, cleaning windows, scrubbing and polishing floors, and cleaning the Venetian blinds (I still hate Venetian blinds). Polishing the floors was good fun -- I would turn on the radio, and, using an old jumper, I would dance till the floor shone. I believe that giving responsibility and chores to children instills self-discipline and makes children better citizens.

I enjoyed Saturday mornings with mum, when we went shopping and paid bills. That brings memories of the fun times as a Polish community, usually on weekends. Saturday nights were free for dancing at the old St Georges Hall, and for celebrating weddings. On Sundays we went to Polish church, and had Christenings and other celebrations. Poles often celebrated Name Days (instead of birthdays), on the Saint's Day of their namesake.



Many people had musical instruments – such as a violin, banjo, button accordion or a trumpet type instrument. There was singing, and lots of laughter and merriment. Dad always played his piano accordion and mouth organ, and he had a good, deep baritone voice.

*Left: Peter Buczek with his piano accordion:
Ballarat: circa 1955.*

Dad loved to dance and he enjoyed his beer. The traditional drink was Vodka, although many Poles also enjoyed Brandy. We enjoyed traditional food, which included golumbki (gołąbki), pierogi, various sausages, sauerkraut, mushrooms, pickled herring, pickled cucumber, beetroot, and potatoes, much of it grown in our own gardens. What memories! Sadly, some of our dear friends and loved ones died very young, as war had taken its toll.

Easter celebrations were very special

Polish Catholics did not eat meat on Good Friday. There were special preparations, boiling and colouring eggs, by using onion skins and beetroot, then the children decorated the eggs. They also used candle wax to make patterns on the eggs. The artwork was beautiful. Mum would bake a *sort of cake*. She bought a large piece of speck (smoked bacon). A specially embroidered cloth was placed on a tray, including the coloured eggs in a bowl, and then the speck bacon. Butter was in a container with a cross, and a salt and pepper container also had a cross.

On Easter Saturday, one of the houses would be used as a base where each family would take their plate of food to be blessed by the Polish priest. The children looked on in wonder. We could not touch this *blessed food* until Easter Sunday morning. Then, following Mass, we would partake of this fare. I was not overly fond of boiled eggs, except these were *blessed eggs* and they always tasted special on Easter Sunday morning.

From time to time my parents' Polish culture and my maturing Australian culture clashed, especially during my teen years. My story of growing up here in Australia is mixed with sad times and incredibly happy times.



Left: Maria Buczek aged 16: Ballarat: 1961

I started work part time during school holidays at Myer, Ballarat, in the glove department. I remember the money train above our heads. Later, I worked for Greed's Bakery in Sturt St for two years - - then I did Nursing in Melbourne, and I finally ended up in Queensland, where I married a wonderful Aussie, Rodney, who has British and Scottish ancestry, and freely came to this country when he was young. We have two wonderful sons, Christopher and Peter, regrettably no grandchildren as I write.

Right: Nadia Buczek aged 16: Germany: 1942.



Sadly, I have lost both my parents – dad died on 2 September 1976, aged 64 – mum died on 22 February 2002, aged 76. Mum visited Poland and Ukraine in 1976, but sadly dad was too ill to travel, and he died of leukemia shortly after.

My belief in the *faithfulness of God*, has been strong throughout my life story. I drew strength from God through difficult times, sad and traumatic times as well as good times. I thank God, our Father, for bringing me to a country called by my mum *a land of milk and honey*. A country where we are truly free to be what we want or desire to be, a country where I can freely practise my faith and belief in Christ Jesus, and go anywhere I desire.

Rod and I have retired to Hervey Bay, where we live in a two-storey brick home on a large bush block, overlooking the bay and Fraser Island, living the Australian dream. Until recently we made many trips with our caravan and 4WD.

Our youngest son, Pete, lives and works in Gladstone, and sadly does not have any children. Our eldest, Chris, works in NSW, living with his partner, helping her to bring up her five part-aboriginal grandchildren (their early life was difficult), four boys and one girl. So I'm their Babcia (grandmother).

It has been a very interesting journey, becoming Australian (naturalized) at 16. Now, in 2023, I am 78 years old, and I have been married for 56 years, and we are living through the COVID-19 global pandemic.

I have been overseas to visit my father's family in Poland -- I have travelled to many European countries, Canada, America, Hawaii and other Pacific islands -- but it is wonderful to come home. Australia is my country, my home, my incredibly special and unique place in this world. I thank God daily for the blessing He bestowed upon me and my family. And so, I will finish my story on this uplifting thought.

CH14.13 ANNA AND STANISŁAW DRON

by Stasia Stubberfield (Stanisława Dron)

My parents met and married in Germany after WW2, and migrated to Australia on the *SS Amara*, docking in Sydney on 20 October 1949.

My mother, Anna Kiscuk, was born in 1924 and grew up in Richka, Eastern Galicia, a remote village in the Carpathian Mountains, then an autonomous area under Polish control, and now a part of Ukraine. During WW2, in 1941, when the Germans entered the area, she (17yo) and her sister Katya were put on a truck, but they managed to escape and return home. The Germans came looking for them and threatened to shoot the family unless one of the girls was put back on the truck, so Anna's father grabbed Anna, and she was taken away from home.

Ukraine was taken over by the Soviets after WW2, and Anna's mum and dad died of starvation in 1946 and 1947 due to a severe drought, and due to Stalin's collectivization program. Anna migrated to Australia in October 1949, and in 1960 she got the first letter that she had ever received from her family, via the Red Cross, saying that her mum and dad had died of typhus – a necessary lie, as all letters were censored. I remember that she cried for days. It was in about 1991 that we learned that Anna's mum and dad, and many others in their village, died of starvation.

Left: Stan, possibly in the Polish Army.



My father Stanisław (Stan) Dron was born on 2 November 1922 and lived in Lwów, Eastern Galicia, where the predominant language was Polish. Stan was a cobbler, and when the war started in 1939 he was in the Polish army. In the 1930s East Galicia was outside the area of Ukraine controlled by the Soviets, and therefore Lwow and Richka were not subjected to Stalin's genocidal man-made terror-famine of 1932-33. Wikipedia has a page for *History of Galicia (Eastern Europe)* which says

..... In 1918, Western Galicia became a part of the restored Republic of Poland, which absorbed part of the Lemko region. The local Ukrainian population declared the independence of Eastern Galicia as the West Ukrainian People's Republic. The predominantly-Polish population of Lviv (Lwów, Lemberg) resisted, which led to the Polish-Ukrainian War during which the Poles took control of all of Galicia. In a pact with Poland, Herman Petyura of the Ukrainian People's

Republic ceded Eastern Galicia in exchange for help against the Soviets. During the Polish–Soviet War, the Soviets established in July 1920 in Eastern Galicia the short-lived Galician Soviet Socialist Republic.[4] The Peace of Riga of 18 March 1921 assigned the contested Eastern Galicia to the Second Polish Republic. The Entente powers recognized the Polish possession of the territory on 15 May 1923. The Ukrainians of the former Eastern Galicia and the neighbouring province of Volhynia made up about 12% of the population of the Second Polish Republic and were its largest minority. As the Polish government's policies were unfriendly towards minorities, tensions between the Polish government and the Ukrainian population grew, which eventually gave the rise to the militant underground Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.

Eastern Galicia was a supposedly autonomous area controlled by Poland after 1923 and was known as Eastern Little Poland. In 1939 Eastern Galicia was annexed by the Soviet Union, and after the end of WW2 that area became a part of Ukraine and the Soviet Union, and Lwow is now called Lviv.

Stan's father Stanisław, who was born in Lwow, Poland, fought in WW1, and died suddenly in 1922 before Stan was born in November 1922. Stan's mother Augusta died in 1932 when Stan was ten, and Stan was then raised by relatives. After WW2 the remaining family in Lwow fled to Przemysl, Poland, and their descendants have lived in Przemysl ever since. Dad's brother Piotr migrated to Argentina after WW2, and died in Argentina. Stan's sister Maria died in 2017, aged 102, and I was delighted to have visited Maria in Przemysl several times, as my brothers and I had grown up in Ballarat not knowing anything about our extended family in Poland.

Stan's (dad's) parents & siblings (all born in Lwów, East Galicia)

After WW2 the remaining family in Lwow fled to Przemysl, Poland.

1. Stanisław Dron (granddad) -- 1922. Fought in WW1. Died suddenly in 1922 before dad was born.
2. Augusta Dron (grandma) -- 1932. Died when dad was 10yo, & dad was raised by relatives.
3. Piotr Dron 1905 – Migrated to Argentina in about 1949.
4. Andrew Dron 1907 – Two children, Darota and Helena.
5. Kasia Dron 1908 – Three children, Kasia, Maria and Władysława.
6. Jan Dron 1911 – Died of the flu when young.
7. Maria Dron 1915 – 14 August 2017 aged 102. Married Stanisław Pogorzelec. Three children, Piotr, Kasia and Janina. Kasia has four children, Darota, Jezy, Ursula and Ella. Piotr has two children, Paul and Ivonka. Janina has two children, Arek and Ella.
8. Stanisław (Stan) Dron (dad) Nov 1922 – 13 July 1964 aged 41, in Ballarat. Migrated to Australia in Oct 1949. Three children, Stanisława (Stasia), Tadeusz (Ted) and Jan (John)(born in Ballarat).

Anna's (mum's) parents & siblings (all born in Richka, East Galicia)

1. Nikolai Kiscuk (granddad) died in 1946 of starvation.
2. Maria Kiscuk (grandma) died in 1947 of starvation.
3. Annastasia Kiscuk
4. Anna Kiscuk (mum) 21 Feb 1924 – 26 Jan 2015 aged 91, in Ballarat. . Migrated to Australia in Oct 1949. Three children, Stanisława (Stasia), Tadeusz (Ted) and Jan (John)(born in Ballarat).
5. Katya Kiscuk
6. Ivan Kiscuk
7. Paraska Kiscuk
8. Maria Kiscuk

The Dron family (Ballarat)

Sailed on the Amarapoora from Naples to Sydney on 20 October 1949, then Bathurst migrant camp.

1. Stanisław (Stan)(dad) 2 Nov 1922 – 13 July 1964.
2. Anna (nee Kiscuk) 21 Feb 1924 – 26 Jan 2015.
3. Stanisława (Stasia) (Stubberfield) 4 Feb 1946 (Bibrach-Riss, Germany). Married Marinus (Mario) Van Extel (Dutch). Two children, Catherine (Cathy) born in 1967 and Anthony (Tony) born in 1969. Cathy had a daughter Jemima born 2004 who died in 2008 aged four, and has a son Finn born in 2007. Tony has two children, Toby born in 2004, and Jessica born in 2006.
4. Tadeusz (Ted) 19 Oct 1948 (Bibrach-Riss, Germany). Married Sandra Dean. Two daughters, Kelly born in 1971, who has a daughter Brooke born in 2000, and Melissa born in 1972, who has three sons, Alex born in 1998, Oliver born in 2003 and Lewis born in 2006.
5. Jan (John) 30 May 1953 (Ballarat). Married Jacinta Dwyer. Has two daughters, Lucy born in 1982, who has two daughters Freya born in 2017 and Margo born in 2020, and Hannah (no children, is expecting a boy in Dec 2023).



Prior to my parents meeting, they were both forced to work on farms in Biberach-Riss, southwest Germany, near the Black Forest. They worked hard and were treated decently by the German farmers. Stan worked as a butcher. I remember my mother telling me that before they were assigned to their farms they were sent separately from camp to camp, similar to parts of the film *Schindler's List*.

Left: On the farm in Germany: Stan is front right.



After the war ended and liberation came my mother and father happened to be in one of the 10 displaced persons camps near Biberach in the French Zone, where they waited to be sent back to their home country or to migrate to America or Canada or Australia -- they chose Australia. In the meantime they married in Biberach an der Riss in 1948. I Stanisława (Stasia) was born in February 1946 in Bibrach-Riss, and my brother Tadeusz (Ted) was born in October 1948 in Bibrach-Riss.

Left: Anna 17 in Germany in 1941.

Below left: Wedding of Stan & Anna in Germany in 1948.

Below centre: Stasia 3 in Germany in 1949.

Below right: Stan & Anna in Germany.



The *Amarapoora* was chartered by the IRO to transport displaced persons to Australia, and the Drons' voyage was her third DP voyage to Australia, departing Naples and arriving in Sydney on 20 October 1949 carrying 598 DPs. The majority were from Poland and the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), and from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia, and were composed of single males, single females, married couples and family groups. The IRO paid the cost of the voyage, and the Australian government guaranteed two years work.

Passengers were given Roll Nos, because this was easier for the supervisors, compared to using family names. The Dron family were given Nos 466-469. The Escort Officer reported that No 460 Kristina Adamaitys aged 19 months died during the voyage, and 18 passengers disembarked at Colombo and



Port Said for medical reasons. From Sydney passengers proceeded to the Bathurst Department of Immigration Reception and Training Centre, per special trains which departed from No 13 Wharf, Pyrmont at 11:00 pm and 12 midnight.

The family was then sent to the Greta migrant camp, near Newcastle, where dad waited for placement in accordance with his two-year contract with the Australian government. Dad was sent to work at the Mount Isa Mines, Queensland, and after a few months mum, Ted and I were sent to the Stuart Migrant Camp, newly set up near Townsville, which was closer to Mount Isa.



Above left: Stuart Migrant Camp: 1950-51: Rear: Zofia Pykało & Ted Dron & Anna Dron: Front: Lucy Pykało & Stasia Dron.

Above right: Playtime behind Stuart migrant camp, Mt Stuart in the background. Lucy Pykało with a doll, Ted with a doll, Stasia with a tin spinning top, & Stan Szymanski with a ball.

The Pykałos were friends of the Drons in Germany, and came over on the same ship. They settled in St Albans, Melbourne. Stasia remains Lucy's friend, and Lucy today lives in Melton, Melbourne.

Right: Stan with a bike & sombrero at the Stuart migrant camp: 1950-51.





Left: Stan & friend 400 km from Townsville.

The Townsville weather was very hot and unbearable for Europeans not used to the tropics, so as soon as the two year contract was completed in 1951 our family and many other migrant families travelled to Victoria (by train), because we heard that the climate was very similar to the colder parts of Europe. Some families went to Melbourne or

Geelong, but we went to Baringhup, near Maldon, Victoria, as did the Andrejczuk and Jaroszek families, where the men worked for the Forestry Commission. The Olszewski family also lived there for a while. These families had come from the Stuart migrant camp, but there were many other Polish families who were living near Maldon at that time, or who had recently been living in that area, because the government required the men to work on the Cairn Curran Dam project.

As it happened, our family, and some of the other families at Stuart, ended up moving to Ballarat. In Ballarat dad worked for the Ford Motor Company, and then at the Paddles Shoe factory.

In Ballarat times were hard and accommodation was scarce, so many families bunked together until they were able to buy or rent their own house. Some families bought a block of land and built a hut or garage to live in while building their home. We shared a house with the Walczak family for over two years, until the Walczaks saved a deposit for a house of their own, at which time my parents bought the Walczaks' half share. My youngest brother John was born in Ballarat in May 1953.



Above: Christening of John Dron in 1953 at the Dron home: Godmother is Krystyna Jaskulski, Godfather (centre) is Kazimerz Walczak, Fr Władysław Ziółkós is hidden at centre rear.

The Młynarczyk family came to Ballarat from Newstead, near Maldon, and they lived with us for three years before they bought their own home. We also had other Polish tenants from time to time.



*Above: Irena & Barbara Młynarczyk, & Stasia & Ted Dron: 1955.
The Młynarczyks lived with the Drons for a while.*

*Above: Stan & Anna & John,
Stasia & Ted, at home: 1954.*

Ballarat had a large Polish community and Poles gave each other a lot of support, help and friendship. Few Poles had extended families in Ballarat so they formed a close community and celebrated birthdays, name days, christenings and weddings. Though many were homesick and missed their families they realized that they were better off than being in a war torn country. Just before Christmas Poles had an Opłatek dinner, and St Nicholas (Father Christmas) visited. Starting in 1952 there were many dances and functions at the old St Georges Hall. This hall closed and became a housing site, after which dances were held at the Lower Civic Hall. In 1976 the Polish Association built their own hall, Copernicus Hall, in Sebastopol.

Ballarat Poles retained the traditional veggie garden with lots of cucumbers and cabbages for pickling. I can remember visiting Pani (Mrs) Zofia Walczak with my mum, and their greeting was "*jak twój ogorki ten rok?*" (how are your cucumbers this year?).

My parents observed all of the Polish traditions – Easter (blessing of the basket etc)(dad carved the butter into the shape of a lamb), Christmas (Wigilia & Opłatek etc), and Name Days etc. At home, on Christmas Eve, we served 12 meatless dishes, pickled herring was a favourite, and we had the traditional empty chair at the table for any visitor. Easter Monday in Poland, is known as Śmigus-Dyngus or Wet Monday, people will sneakily drench others with water. I remember Mr Walczak sneaking in and wetting my parents. Today my Polish relatives send me Opłateks (wafers) so that I can carry on the tradition with my family and friends.

I went to St Joseph's (Catholic) Primary School, Lyons St, until grade seven. My brothers Ted and John went to St Joseph's PS, and later to the Christian Brothers (Catholic) Primary School (for boys). Our school lunch was rye bread, pickled cucumber, cheese and salami sandwiches, whilst Aussie children had white bread and vegemite. I remember asking mum to get us white bread and that black stuff that started with V (Vegemite) so we could be like the other kids.

We, as children, were sent to Polish school, which we all hated as we wanted to be Australians, so Pan Wajda (Mr Antoni Wajda) had a lot of trouble teaching us to read and write Polish. We spoke Polish at home, and I had to learn most of my English at school. We had to teach our parents English, and we had

to read and interpret our parents' mail. Also, we had to go with dad to help him with day to day business. I can remember giving dad a spelling lesson and it was very difficult because some words sounded the same even though they had a different spelling and meaning. Unlike English, Polish words and spelling are strictly phonetic.

Anna was a stay at home mum for some years after John was born in 1953, and therefore she took a long time to learn English. She got interested in radio dramas, like Dr Paul, Portia Faces Life, and Life Can Be Beautiful, and when I was at home during school holidays I would translate them in Polish.

When John started school, in about 1958, mum started work at the Ballarat Paper Mill, then at the St John of God Hospital, and then she worked for the Rynkiewicz family cleaning and cooking at their hotel, the Royal Exchange, in central Ballarat. Many a Sunday, Poles gathered together for a relaxing afternoon in the Botanical Gardens. *Below: Stan, Anna, John, Stasia & Ted, at home in 1958.*

Below: Stan & Anna Dron at Lake Wendouree, with Zofia & Kazimersz Walczak.



We were the only New Australians in our street, and the man next door called us *savages*. I think that he was *old-Methodist* or *old-Presbyterian*, he didn't drink alcohol. My parents went to church at midday on Sundays, and after church Polish friends would often visit and we would have a party, drinking, playing music and singing. The neighbour didn't understand our Polish ways, but he got to know us and eventually became a good friend. His daughter, Sue, loved my mother's Rosół (chicken) soup, and our informal lifestyle.

There were lots of house gatherings, which we kids enjoyed because of the lemonade and cake. Some times I would sit quietly in a corner and listen to conversations. One time the talk was about which German concentration camps and post war displaced persons camps they had been in. I remember asking my mother which camp she was in, and she replied that she had been in many camps before she was placed with a German farmer and family. They were good people and treated her so well that she kept in touch with them long after we came to Australia. Frank Różycki was a great story teller and kept everyone entertained with his exploits – he escaped from Germany through Switzerland.

As a teenager I enjoyed going to the 60/40 dances at the Civic Hall, and to many other dances like the Jazz dances at the School of Mines hall and the Jazz dances held by the Girl's Friendly Society at the GFS Hall, Lyons St. St Patrick's and the YCW also had dances. There were midweek dances near the lake. Guest singers included Judith Durham, and Normie Rowe. We had four cinemas in Ballarat, and two drive-ins. I often accompanied my parents to the cinema. Stan loved comedies like Abbott and Costello, and The Three Stooges, at the Odeon and at the Plaza. Anna loved melodramas like Quo Vadis, and Taras Bulba, and Stewart Granger movies, at the Regent and at Her Majesty's.

On Sundays I would listen to vinyl records with friends. The Walczaks had a lot of Polish records, and we all enjoyed singing and dancing to the lovely music. Dad's favorite record was about Lwow, it must have made him homesick. My favorite was about the flowers of Poland, and the singer was lamenting that in their London home all they had was dry lavenders. The Dron family had a good, busy life. I used to love going to Polish mass, and many of the functions and events, such as Polish film nights.

Below: Monsignor Fiscalini at a Polish function: Photo courtesy of Maria Crawford (Buczek).



My dad loved smoked eel so he fished for eels in Lake Burrumbeet, as did many other Poles, including some of our friends from Melbourne. Dad's good Ballarat friend Jan Młynarczyk had a smoker box and he did the smoking.

The family loved to go blackberry (jeżyna) picking near the Yarrowee Creek, near our home. We gobbled blackberries down but kept plenty for jam, and dad made sure that there were enough for his home-made blackberry desert wine. I also remember that dad distilled a kind of homemade vodka.

Also, our family and our Melbourne friends loved to go mushrooming in the numerous pine plantations in and around Ballarat -- our favourite area was close by, near the Sunnyside Woollen Mill. We picked orange pine mushrooms (Saffron Milk Caps)(see top photo), which in Poland are called Rydze, and are good for pickling. Slippery Jacks, which in Poland are called Maslaki, are brown and slimy, and are good for drying to make a soup (lower photo). The Polish for mushroom is Gryzb, which means fungus. In the 50s and 60s no Aussies would dare to eat Rydze or Maslaki, they would stick to picking paddock mushrooms, mainly found on sheep farms.



Dad suddenly died of a heart attack at home on 13 July 1964, aged only 41, and mum lived in our home until she died in 2015, aged 91. Although mum was only 40 when dad died, she never remarried.



Stasia Stubberfield (Dron) with daughter Cathy and son Tony: in Polish costume



Kazimierz Walczak (Godfather) & John at John's wedding in 1977.

I went to St Joseph's PS, Lyons St, until grade seven, and then I learnt dressmaking at the School of Mines. I would have liked to have gone to Teacher's College, to be a teacher, but dad's bad health made finances short. When I was 15, I started work at the I & R Morley textile factory, drafting patterns, which I loved. I worked at the I & R Morley textile factory until I got married in 1966, after which my husband, Marinus (Mario) Van Extel (Dutch), and I lived in Renmark, South Australia. After our wedding, mum (dad had already died) met us at the reception door with the traditional Polish bread and salt greeting, so that we would never go hungry or be in need.

After three years in Renmark we returned to Ballarat, and I worked at I & R Morley again. After two years we moved to Noosa where Mario got a job with a company called Dayal Singh in the development of Noosa Sound. After three years we moved to Tamworth, NSW, where Mario had been transferred by Dayal Singh, to work in Transmission. We lived in Tamworth for 20 years, and I worked in a textile factory cutting army jumpers. I loved working in the rag trade. I also worked for an interior decorating company. Whilst in Tamworth I was proud and happy to study for and obtain an Advanced Certificate in Retail Fashion.

My marriage ended in 1984, and in 1994 I married Bob Stubberfield, and we moved to Redcliffe, Queensland, near Brisbane, where I worked in Aged Care and sewing for the aged. Bob died of cancer in 2010, and I now keep myself busy sewing for charities, clients, my family and myself.

My brothers Ted and John went to St Joseph's PS, and later to the Christian Brothers Catholic Primary School (for boys), and then both Ted and John went to Ballarat Junior Technical School (for boys). Ted worked for the Railways in Ballarat, eventually as a driver, and retired at age 75 in 2023. Ted and his wife Sandra continue to live in Ballarat.

John worked for the PMG (responsible for postal and telegraphic services), which became Telecom Australia in 1975, and then became Telstra in 1995, and he retired in 2017, and John and his wife Jacinta now live in Geelong. John loves Polish cuisine -- he learnt to cook from a recipe book called A Polish Kitchen, and his favourites are rosół (chicken soup), pierogi (dumplings full of potato & sour cream or sauerkraut), and kopytka (potato gnocchi).

In 1997, I was lucky enough to take my mother back to her home country (Eastern Galicia), and that was very special, as she had not set foot in her village (Richka) since 1941 when she was 17 years old. East Galicia was after the war a part of Ukraine, which was a part of the Soviet Union, and it had not been possible for her to go back until 1991 when Ukraine regained its independence.

Below: Stasia (myself) & Anna (mum) with our Ukrainian relatives in Richka in 2000.



Anna's family, the Kiscuks, live near Richka, a remote village south west of the Carpathian Mts. The Kiscuks belong to a group known as the Hutsuls, highlanders who have preserved a distinctive culture and identity, despite centuries of despotic foreign rule. In 1989 Ukraine regained its independence, and in 1996 Cathy (Anna's granddaughter) went to Ukraine and found Anna's family. In 1997 we (Cathy, Anna, Bob and I) trudged up the steep mountain roads and visited the surviving family, who Anna hadn't seen since 1941 (56 years). As we trudged up the mountains the only sound was the wind. Homesteads were scattered dots on the steep hillsides. The visit of the Australian Droń family to Richka was a local sensation, foreigners of any kind were a rarity in those days.

The Kiscuks are mostly self sufficient, and depend on barter. They scythe hay, chop wood, and have cows and chickens. Meals are based on bread, cheese, and vegetables. Many families had vodka stills, and vodka flowed at breakfast and for the rest of the day. For cash some Kiscuks made inlaid wood artefacts for tourists at city markets, but the war with Russia has put a stop to that. In the Soviet communist era, some Hutsul land was confiscated, and many religious and cultural traditions and the Ukraine language were banned.



Life in Ukraine had been hard under communism, but when we visited Ukraine after the fall of communism we found that many people lived in poverty, with little employment, especially in small towns and in the countryside. Many Ukrainians considered that life had been better under communism. We found that conditions were much better for our relatives in Poland, where, for example, many families had a microwave oven.



*Left: August 1997:
Hay cutting time in Richka.*

Below left: 1997: Stasia and her husband Bob are leaving to go to England for five weeks. It is a standard ritual that when any of the family are leaving they are farewelled with a Vodka toast. Stasia and Bob & their luggage were taken down from the mountain by horses and dray, about 20 minutes. L-R: Ivan (Paraska's husband), Paraska (mum's sister), Anna (mum's cousin), Anna (mum), & me (Stasia). In the cart are Ivan Kiscuk and Ivan Kiscuk.



Below: Nikolai with the family taxi.



Whilst mum and dad had a good life, or at least it had been better than living in Poland or Ukraine, they never lost their yearning for their homeland, and they were scarred by their separation from family and friends, and from their experiences during and after the war. In Australia they strove to keep alive their old, traditional ways and customs, and we children were not happy with this, as we wanted to become *little Australians*. Today I am proud of being both Polish/Ukrainian and Australian.

My daughter Catherine was born in 1967 and is a journalist for ABC Radio National in Brisbane. Cathy had a daughter Jemima (deceased in 2008 aged 4), and has a son Finn born in 2007. My son Anthony (Tony) was born in 1969, he did economics, and is a trader for the Commonwealth Bank, and has two children, Toby born in 2004, and Jessica born in 2006, and the family live in Mosman, Sydney.

Ted and his wife Sandra (nee Dean) live in Ballarat and have two daughters. Kelly was born in 1971, and Kelly's daughter Brooke was born in 2000. Melissa was born in 1972, and has three sons, Alex (a plumber) born in 1998, Oliver born in 2003, and Lewis born in 2006.

John and wife Jacinta (nee Dwyer) have two daughters and live in Geelong. Lucy was born in 1982, and has a daughter Freya born in 2017, and Margo born in 2020. Hannah was born in 1985, and has no children, and is expecting a boy in December 2023. Today in 2023 I am 77, retired, and enjoying life, sewing, gardening & enjoying family, friends and good health.

Below: The family on the day of Anna's funeral in 2015.



More photos from Ballarat



Above: At the Christening of John Dron in 1953: Rear: Anna Andrejczuk, Kazimierz Jaroszek, Stasia Dron, Helena Mytyk: Front: Zdzisław Walczak, Alicia Walczak, Zofia Jaroszek, John Andrejczuk, Czesław Mytyk, Ted Dron.

Below: Christening celebration: On the left we can see Anna Dron holding Stasia, and Stan Dron at rear, and Ted Dron front right.



Above: A birthday party at the Walczak home: Front: Janina Juzwina & her two boys Richard & Anthony, Pilecki girl, John Dron, Pilecki girl, Jennifer Pilecki. Middle: Ted Dron, Alicja Walczak, Stasia Dron, Zdzisław Walczak: Rear: John Borecki.



Above left: L-R: Richard Dański, Ted Droń, Stasia Droń, John Droń, Joseph Cacek, Danuta Cacek.

Above right: L-R: Joseph Cacek, little Danuta Cacek, Janina Cacek, Stan Jakiel, Stan Cacek, Anna Dron (God Mother) holding Cacek baby girl. The Caceks lived next door to the Olszewskis, opposite The Royal Mail hotel in Albert St, Sebastopol. Also in the Little Poland in Albert St we had the Pileckis, the Dańskis, the Nykoluks and the Rynkiewicz.

Below left: Lydia Dębski, Irena Młynarczyk & Stasia Dron, at Lake Wendouree: circa 1962.

Below right: Christening of Elizabeth Jaroszek, twin sister of Maria Jaroszek, at St Patrick's Cathedral: Antoni Wajda (driver), Eva Dębska & Stan Droń (God Parents of Elizabeth).



More photos from Ukraine



Above: Stasia with cousins Ivan and Anna Kiscuk.

Above right: Anna and her nephews.



Left: Stasia and Cathy in front of cousin Ivan's house, in the hills near Richka.

Below left: 1997: Anna at welcome dinner, with sisters Paraska & Maria, & Katya's son Nikolai.

Below right: 1996: Stasia's daughter Cathy's first visit to the family, with cousins Anna, Ivan and Nikolai.



Below: Cousin Ivan making wooden dishes to sell at markets.



Many families had a Vodka still.



Below: The very ornate Orthodox Church in Richka.



Above left: Anna's parents, Maria and Nikolai Kiscuk, in Richka. Above centre: Anna's sister Katya and brother Ivan, in Richka.

Above right: Anna's sisters Paraska, Katya and Anastasia.

Photos from Poland

Below left: Stan's brother Piotr, who went to Argentina.

Below centre: Stan's sister Maria Pogorzelec in Poland.

Below right: Maria's children Janina, Piotr & Katya, in Przemyls.



Below left: Anna, Maria (Stasia's aunt), Stasia, Ivonka (Piotr's daughter), Irena (Piotr's wife), & Piotr, in front of Piotr's house in Przemysl, Poland, in 2000.



Above right: Stasia's aunt Maria celebrating 100 years: back row: L-R: Ivonka (Maria's granddaughter), Janina (Maria's daughter), Robert (Janina's son in law), & Cathy (Stasia's daughter), Piotr (Maria's son) is at far back, & Finn (Cathy's son) is at front: In front of Piotr's house in Przemysl, Poland, in 2014.



Stasia Dron

Above: First Communion at St Brigid's, Stuart: 1950-51: Stasia is far left in front row.

*Below: Children at the Stuart migrant camp kindergarten: 1950-51.
1. Mac Rynkiewicz, 2. Stasia Dron, 3. Zofia Dziuba, 4. John Andrejczuk.*



More photos from Germany

Below: Stan in front.



Stan in light trousers in centre.



Below: 1946: In Murnau 50 km south west of Munich.



More from the Dron family album

Right: Stasia 18, Ted 16, John 11, in 1964.



Above: Zdzisław (Zoz) Walczak, Stasia, & Jack Fugiel, toasting with Vodka the passing of Zoz's dad Kaz Walczak in 1993. Above right: Stasia's birthday party: 2003: L-R: Cecylia Młynarczyk, Barbara (Młynarczyk) Ikstrums (decd), Irena (Młynarczyk) Green, Stasia (Dron) Stubberfield, Lydia (Dębski) Turner (decd) & Anna Dron. Below right: Stasia Stubberfield (Dron), Kathy Daciw & Maria Crawford (Buczek) holidaying in Queensland: Celebrating Easter with traditional Polish food & Vodka: The Daciws (Ukrainian) lived across the road from the Rynkiewiczzs in Ballarat, and Kathy and Mac Below: Anna aged 82 with Stasia, John & Ted. Rynkiewicz attended St Columba's PS.



CH 14. 14 INTERVIEW WITH ROMAN SKRYPO

Interviewed by Valdi Cham -- 29 June 2007

Interviewer. Roman perhaps we could start by talking about how you travelled to Australia from Germany?

From Germany we went to Napoli, Italy. We stayed in Napoli I think for a couple of weeks or so, I don't exactly remember. From Napoli we left to go to Australia (probably by train through Austria to the Bagnoli DP camp near Napoli).



Interviewer. When you were on the boat what did you actually do?

On the boat I did everything actually -- they wanted volunteer workers, I used to paint, I did concreting, and we got food. When we came to Melbourne as workers on the boat we did not have to queue for the meals, we just went straight through -- that was all that we got, we didn't get any wages.

Interviewer. When you were travelling on the boat were the women and the men separated?

Yes, women on the one side, men on the other, on top deck we were all together. I was about 20. Teresa said that the younger ones had a lot of fun on board.

Interviewer. How long did the trip take?

We left Napoli -- about 4 weeks -- we landed in Melbourne about the 20th of May -- 3 or 4 weeks (actually 2 May 1949 to 31 May 1949, 30 days).

Interviewer. Did you come to Australia on your own?

Yes, actually after the war I was homesick -- but a lot of people said don't go because the commies are over there -- blah -- and I decided to go to the end of the world. As you can see, I was an ambulance driver -- I was personal chauffeur to Mr Rignon, who was a person in the French occupation, and he told me *Roman Australia "C'est Bon"* -- Australia was very good -- so I decided to go to Australia, and I finished up here.

Interviewer. When you landed in Melbourne did you stay in Melbourne for any length of time?

We came to Melbourne during the day, and we had to stay on the boat overnight -- there was another boat in the port. The next day they pulled up and we went straight from our boat, onto the train, and straight to Bonegilla.

Interviewer. You didn't spend anytime in Melbourne?

No.

Interviewer. Did everybody who travelled with you go to Bonegilla?

The whole lot on a big train, right through to Bonegilla -- actually I have a photo on the boat, about 1200 people.

Interviewer. How long did the trip to Bonegilla take -- on the train?

I cannot tell you exactly, we stopped on the way, had lunch -- but what places we went through I don't know -- when we got to Bonegilla it was late.

Interviewer. What happened when you got to Bonegilla?

At Bonegilla there were the barracks and straw mattresses -- those army barracks, blankets. The next day, being youngsters, we chased rabbits. We stayed in Bonegilla about 4 weeks, after that I was sent to Mt. Gambier.

Interviewer. Who went with you?

There were quite a few of us -- Ziggy Pavlic a good friend of mine. There were quite a few of us went on the train, they loaded us onto a train to Melbourne -- and the Forest Commission people picked us up and loaded us onto another train to Portland or Hamilton -- and then we were picked up, not by a bus, but, one of those trucks that carry horses.

Interviewer. A cattle truck?

Yes, some sort of cattle truck -- yeah, we went through Portland, it was right on the beach -- and we travelled on to Dartmoor and along to the Glenelg River right on the border.

Interviewer. How old were you Roman?
21.

Interviewer. When you went to Mt Gambier what did you do there?

We chopped the gum trees, and we planted pines -- the foreman put a stick every four meters, and we put a pine into each hole.

Interviewer. Did you live in a camp?

Yes, we lived in a camp -- see the camp photos there, we lived in a camp. There were about 70 of us.

Interviewer. How long did you stay there?

We stayed there roughly quite a few months -- from there they transferred some of us to Beaufort to the Chute camp, near Mt Cole -- we worked over there in the Chute camp, that's the Chute camp photo -- and that's the Chute camp barracks where after I finished, some of my friends were still working there.

Interviewer. At the Chute camp were you cutting wood again?

Cutting wood, stacking in 6-foot lengths and stacking up -- that was the work at the Chute camp, cutting, splitting, and stacking up -- and they were selling the wood, a truck would come up and take the wood away.

Interviewer. You're not sure what the wood was used for?

No, just firewood, everything was for firewood.

1383 Serial No. 87080

Surname: **SKRYPKO**

Christian Names: **Roman**

Nationality: **Polish** Age: **14.5.27** Sex: **M**

Date of Arrival: **21.5.49** Marital Status: **S** Religion: **gr.c.**

Ex Ship: **SKAUDUM** Description: Height: **162 cms** Weight: **142** Hair: **d / Blond** Eyes: **blue** Complexion: **swet.** Scars: General: *Allyjo Roman*

Destination: **Forestry Commission of Victoria, LOWER GLENELG, Vic.**

Trade: _____

Standard of Education: _____

Address of Next of Kin (if known): _____

National Archives of Australia 1000 NAA: A2571, SKRYPKO ROMAN

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

COMMONWEALTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Telephone: **Wodonga 305**

In any correspondence please quote: _____

21th June 19 49

Dear **Mr. SKRYPKO, Roman**

I desire to advise that, as discussed, arrangements have been made to place you in the employ of the Forestry Commission of Victoria at **Lower Glenelg Vic.** as **labourer**

You should commence work on **arrival**

The hours and/or shifts will be **48 hrs 5 days per week**

Your wages will be **allowance less tax** and deductions from your wages, while they remain at that level, are likely to be approximately :-

Tax Deductions

Men Batch such deductions totalling

leaving a net pay of about

You will leave **Benegilla** on **27th June** and the travel arrangements made for you are as follows:- Depart **Albury 8:09 a.m.** At **Melbourne** you will wait **outside on the platform** opposite your car, where you will be met by a **C.E.S. officer** who will put you on the train for **Lower Glenelg** where you will be met by your employer.

Meal allowance for 2 meals

The address of the District Employment Officer of the Commonwealth Employment Service nearest your work place is **Thompson St. Hamilton Vic** and his telephone number is **Hamilton 714/715** If you wish to make any enquiries about your wages, or working conditions, or if you need advice or information on any other matter, you should communicate without delay, with the District Employment Officer. He will be glad to help you and his service is free.

You will remember that the Certificate of Exemption granted to you under the Immigration Act 1901-1940, requires you, for a period of up to two years, to engage in such employment as the Commonwealth Employment Service on behalf of the Minister for Immigration approves.

YOU MUST NOT LEAVE THE EMPLOYMENT MENTIONED ABOVE UNLESS YOU HAVE FIRST APPLIED TO THE DISTRICT EMPLOYMENT OFFICER AND RECEIVED HIS APPROVAL TO DO SO.

Only if there are very special reasons justifying a change in your employment, e.g. ill health, (Evidence of which must be supported by a Medical Certificate) will the District Employment Officer arrange a change of work.

Yours faithfully,

M.C. BRYVES
M.C. BRYVES
Officer-in-Charge
District Employment Officer.

Form E.S.55 L. & N.S. Revised 2/49.

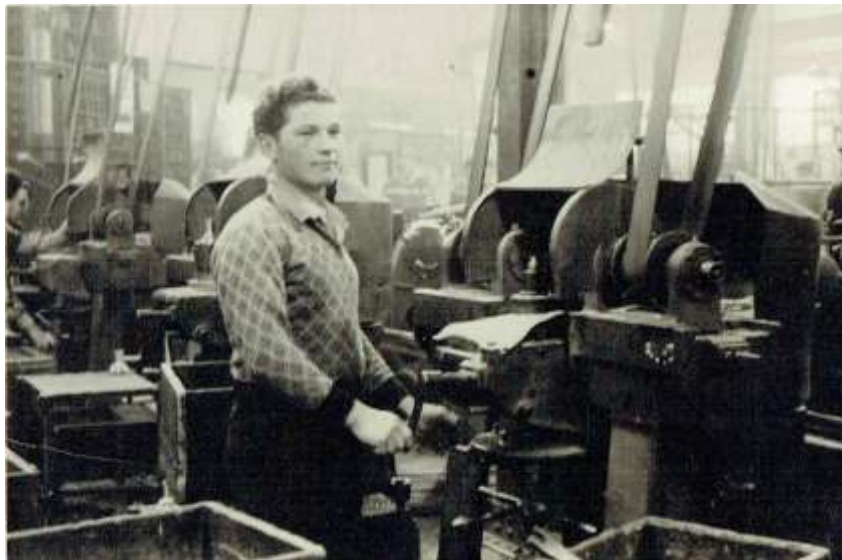
Interviewer. How long did you stay at the Chute camp?

I stayed at the Chute camp until I started at M B John -- actually I didn't quite finish my contract -- two years -- I was sick of it and didn't finish it -- I was relieved. I came to Ballarat and the employment office told me to go to M B John -- and I went there and they told me to start straight away -- so I could work there day and night. So I started at John's (in 1950) -- I was there 24 years, nearly 25 years.

Interviewer. What did you do at M B John?

Below: Roman at M B John in 1952.

I started as a machinist 3rd class, and went to 2nd class, then 1st class -- and towards the end I was classified as a specialist. I still have a reference and documentation from Mr Lonsdale, engineering manager.



Interviewer. Did they give you training Roman?

Yes, I had training. At the end of my training, I was able to read plans and to work unsupervised.

Interviewer. When you first started at the Forest Commission could you speak English Roman?

A little bit -- I was here almost two years, and in those days when I was in the camp I did a correspondence course, filling in papers and writing letters -- sent them to Melbourne, they sent them back corrected -- in those days my writing and spelling was better than it is now.

Interviewer. When you worked at M B John you lived in Ballarat, where were you living?

At the Chute camp some Australian people from Beaufort, Loretta Davis and John Davis, used to come to the camp, and a friend of mine knew their daughter, and they invited us to join a

Youth group -- and I spent every weekend in Beaufort with the Australian kids. Actually, the people were fantastic, young and old. Every Sunday we used to go to church, sometimes the Methodist Church, sometimes the Church of England. Mind you when I came to Ballarat to work at M B John, at weekends I used to hitchhike back home to Beaufort.





Interviewer. How long was it before you began to feel that Ballarat was your home?

Well, at John's, Mr McConachy said *Roman could you explain in Polish to Edmund (Aniola)(Teresa's father) what to do.* My English wasn't bad, and I knew a bit about the work. Edmund invited me to sit with him at lunch times, but I didn't want to leave my other workmates, Roman Paradiso, and others. One day Edmund says "*Roman*

come to our place my wife will cook a Polish meal", but I didn't accept. He kept inviting me, saying that his wife was a good cook, and that he had a 16-year-old daughter -- so I changed my mind -- and that's when Ballarat became my home. There is a photo over there of the first time we all went to the Ballarat Gardens -- I didn't know Teresa's name, but I heard her father call her Teresa.



Interviewer. So that was when you met Teresa?

That's when I met Teresa, and we got married at the end of 1951. I worked at M B John for 25 years -- we lived in Skipton St with Mrs Nett -- and then we lived with Teresa's parents for a while, then they went their way and we went our way. We had a very, very good life - - Australian people are very nice, very honest, you didn't have to lock the doors.



Left: Teresa at Chute camp four days after our wedding: 1951.

Interviewer. When working at M B John, when you first started, were there many other migrants working there?

No, when I started, I think there was a Yugoslav fellow, and I was the second migrant at John's. Adam Kieza, Edmund Anioła and your father (Józef Cham) came afterwards, and I can name a whole lot of others.

Interviewer. Roman, when you married Teresa did you become involved with the Australian society and community or were you only involved with the Polish community?

I and my Australian friend were involved with a youth group in Beaufort, before I married Teresa. When I was leaving Beaufort to work in Ballarat, a chappie gave me the Skipton St address of his sister in Ballarat, a Mrs Nett, and I boarded with Mr and Mrs Nett – they were just around the corner from M B John (the old M B John factory site in Armstrong St Sth). After I married, Teresa and I both lived there for a while. Even today Mrs Nett is a fantastic lady, I think she is in her 90s, and she still treats Teresa as her daughter and me as her son.

Interviewer. Roman did you find it easy to settle into the Australian lifestyle?

Yes, very easy for me in Beaufort where I was in a youth group. I might have had a bottle or two, a young fellow does this, not that I was a drinker when the kids were born, I did not touch the grog at all -- different today!

Interviewer. What sort of involvement did you have with the Polish community?

I would have to go through my documentation. I was a member of the Polish Association, and I was the 'internal auditor' for quite a few years, Treasurer for a few years, and President in 1966-68 -- so I did a few different things. The best time was when Fr Zenon Grodz was here (Fr Grodz travelled from Melbourne, 1966-69) when I was President -- I think we had a very, very strong community -- I think there were 70 Polish families in Ballarat in those days.

Interviewer. When would that have been?

What date, I would have to go and look it up.

Interviewer. In the 60s?

Teresa: It would have been in the 70s. In the 60s, our kids were born in 1952, 1953 and 1955, so at that stage we weren't involved much.

Roman: No, no we didn't, because you worked, I worked nightshift so we tried to

Teresa: It goes into the 60s.

Roman: Because in the beginning, as I said, we paid a deposit on a house -- sometimes we had 2 shillings or 4 shillings to last the whole week -- buying furniture, lino, mortgage and everything -- so we were both working.

Interviewer. Things were very difficult financially?

Roman and Teresa: Yes --Yes.

Teresa: Things were very difficult, that's why we both worked -- and the reason that my mother and father both worked too. There were no babysitters, we did both -- Roman worked nightshift (5 pm to 2 am) and I worked dayshift (8 am to 4:30 pm) at a factory in Mt Pleasant. We lived in Munro St (near the Arch of Victory) -- and we both rode bikes to and from work, in opposite



directions along Sturt St, and we had an arrangement. Roman would wait, and would not turn off to go through the Gardens until he saw me approaching in the distance, and we waved to each other, and he went his way and I continued home to the kids. Our next-door neighbour knew of our arrangement, and she checked that I was home within 10 minutes of Roman leaving. It was very, very hard.

Left: Roman & Teresa in 1951.

Roman: We tried in the beginning to pay our house off as quickly as possible, to have something over our head, simple as that.

Teresa: And not only that, Roman worked very hard helping other Poles with building and fencing and concreting. He helped a farmer to build chook sheds. So we had no weekends off, it was more or less work seven days a week.

Interviewer. So, was Roman helping other people in the Polish community?

Teresa: Yes, Roman helped. Say for instance someone was building and when he came to the concreting the men would help -- the wife would make the lunches -- they would be working till perhaps eleven o'clock.

Interviewer. So Roman, Teresa has just mentioned that she used to work and swap over shifts basically, so how many children have you got?

Roman: We have two boys, Bernard and Peter. Actually both of our boys went to St Aloysius Catholic Primary School. Peter said that he didn't want to go to St Pat's he wanted to do a trade, so he went to Ballarat Technical School, and became a plasterer. Bernard went to St Patrick's College. We tried to do our best for our boys and we're quite happy with our family. Bernard played the saxophone, Peter played the drums, we've got a photo.

Interviewer. Were they involved in Polish community life when they were growing up?

Yes, Peter was in the Polish Youth Orchestra.

Interviewer. Did they go to Polish school?

Roman: Our kids went to Polish school didn't they Teresa?

Teresa: No, no that was later.

Roman: That was later when they were bigger, yes, they were too big. Polish school didn't start that early. Polish school started in the late 70s.

Teresa: No, 60s.

Roman: No it wouldn't be late 50s.

Interviewer: 60s?

Roman: 60s? I couldn't tell you now.

Teresa: I couldn't say exactly when,

Roman: It didn't last that long, only a few years.

Teresa: Only two or three years.

Roman: Majda was a teacher for a while, then Mr Baker (only a few weeks) there was another bloke – I can't remember his name.

Interviewer. So, were there other things that were specifically Polish, that you used to do as a community Roman? Special celebrations?

Roman: Oh, celebrations in those days yes.

Teresa: Our first dances were at the St Georges Hall here in Redan. That was fantastic, it was a beautiful dance hall, some of our Polish people played the accordion and the violin -- we had a whole orchestra. It was fantastic because nobody drove a car -- we all came on bikes -- there was a hedge, and by the time everybody put their bikes against it, the hedge was nearly falling over. And when everybody left they gathered the bikes, and believe you me everybody tried to get on their bikes three times before they pedalled off -- everybody was quite *under the weather*. It was a wonderful time, really.

The Poles celebrated Christmas Eve, and we had New Year's Eve dances. At Easter, your mother Aniela Cham would have been involved in this, here in Sebastopol one house was picked, and each family took their basket to the house with them on Easter Saturday, and the priest would bless the baskets, and each family would take their baskets home, and eat the contents on Sunday after mass.

Interviewer. Was there special food in the basket?

Teresa: There was special food. The basket was decorated with a nice, beautiful white doily in it -- we had bread, a piece of ham, a piece of polish sausage, a small piece of cake, salt and pepper, butter, and horseradish which we made ourselves, it wasn't bought. Mr Pawel Andrejczuk made a baranek -- it's a little lamb made of butter. We decorated our Easter eggs -- some would paint their Easter eggs -- some would color their eggs light brown or dark brown by boiling with brown onion leaves, and scratch patterns onto the egg. When the family returned home after mass on Sunday that was our breakfast. You had to have one peeled egg, or two if you had a big family -- and the man of the house would share the egg among the whole family and wish each one a happy Easter.

Interviewer: So that would have been a hardboiled egg?

Theresa: That was a hardboiled egg and you cut it into pieces.

Roman: A blessed one.

Theresa: A blessed one -- and then you had everything for breakfast. The greenery which you had on the basket, because it was blessed, everything had to be burnt in the fire -- it was not something that you threw into the rubbish.

Interviewer: So that's a Polish tradition?

Teresa: That is a Polish tradition yes. Here we have little baskets, but in Poland they usually had big families and so they used a great big washing basket – and they had lots of bread and ham. Meat was usually scarce, but when it came to Easter there was always ham, sausage, and other meats.

Teresa: And the dances and balls that we had.

Interviewer: So, when you had your dances and your balls, were they something that just the Polish community went to?

Teresa: No, it was anyone, different nationalities came, including Australians, especially to the International Balls, these were great balls!

Roman: Actually, the Polish International Balls in Ballarat were some of the best -- all nationalities.

Teresa: And the Polish ladies (Mothers Club) would do the cooking.

Interviewer: So, they would cook the food?

Teresa: Yes, for dances and balls. The women also cooked a meal that was eaten during the Association's Opłatek celebration.

(The Opłatek is traditionally a family celebration on Christmas Eve, but, because Christmas Eve is not a public holiday in Victoria, the Association celebrated their community Opłatek on a Sunday before Christmas. This started at St Georges Hall in the 50s, and later at St Pat's Hall when St Georges Hall closed in the late 50s, and at Copernicus Hall after the 70s. Opłatek is the sharing of wafers among the family, before the family Wigilia meal on Christmas Eve – however the Association held their community Opłatek before their community meal, and their wafers were blessed by the Polish priest).

Interviewer. It's like a communion wafer?

Teresa: Like a communion wafer, but it is rectangular, and has an imprint of Jesus in his crib and Mary and Joseph. The community Opłatek was just beautiful, everybody would wish each other well, and then sit down to a meal. Then Saint Nicholas would present gifts. Then of course we had our own Wigilia and Opłatek with our family on Christmas Eve -- we serve 12 dishes symbolising the 12 apostles – and meat is not allowed. Christmas Eve to Polish people is much holier than Christmas Day -- we present gifts on Christmas Eve, not on Christmas Day.

Interviewer. There were 12 courses?

Teresa: 12 courses – the family Wigilia was a feast. It could be bread, macaroni with poppy seeds, little pasties made with cabbage, pudding made with fruit -- as long as there was no meat.

Interviewer. So you celebrated Christmas on Christmas Eve rather than on Christmas Day?

Teresa: Yes – and St Nicholas presented gifts, mainly to the children, on Christmas Eve. So, many children got two lots of gifts – one at the community Opłatek on a Sunday, and another at home on Christmas Eve. Then we went to midnight mass, and when we came home we had a cup of coffee. Families also had a family dinner on Christmas Day.

Interviewer. Is the private Polish family Christmas Eve Wigilia a tradition that you still follow today, Teresa?

Teresa: Yes, I'm very grateful because our daughter in law, Elizabeth (Pamuła), Peter's wife, keeps the tradition going in her own family (the Pamułas). I used to have our Christmas Eve Wigilia at my place, but as I've gotten older Elizabeth has taken over -- she says that she doesn't care where we go on Christmas Day but that she wants all of us at her place on Christmas Eve.

Interviewer. Do you think Teresa that this Wigilia tradition continues in other Polish families (in 2007)?

Teresa: Yes, I know of 2 or 3 Polish families that still follow the Polish Wigilia tradition -- but some families now include meat.

Interviewer. Are you both saying that many of the first and second generations have become Australian to such an extent that they are no longer following Polish traditions?

Teresa: I think that when the community was young and strong they all followed those traditions. But (in 2007) they, like my parents, are getting older, and the first generation have mostly gone, so it's now up to the 2nd generation, and even if the family had strong traditions these traditions are going to weaken and become lost. Some friends in Melbourne said that, about 5 years ago, when they were celebrating 50 years of Polish people being in Australia, they held the celebration at 49 years, because people were dying every week.

Interviewer. Can I ask you Roman maybe to reflect on what coming to Australia has meant to you, to talk about what you feel you've achieved by coming to Australia as a migrant?

Roman: Well, straightforward, when I came down here if there hadn't been all the water I would have hitchhiked back. Now, if someone took me over there and told me to stay, I would try to swim back.

Interviewer. Do you feel that Australia is very much your country now?



Roman: Yes definitely, and I mean not only that our children and grandchildren are here, but we have achieved much -- we're respected, and we respect others. I worked as a Machinist at M B John for 25 years. Then 20 years driving taxis -- I bought a taxi after a few years, and then a second cab -- and then I was a director on the board of the taxi company for quite a few years -- till I decided to sell my taxi licences. I was respected, and I was quite happy. To me Australia is more than home. I started a Polish Seniors Club five

years ago, and we visit our oldies in hospital and in private homes. Yesterday Teresa left home at 10.00 a.m. and didn't get home until 7.00 p.m. -- visiting a sick lady, and waiting for the doctor -- and today Teresa visited the lady at the hospital again. So, we are involved with our oldies, and now on top of that we are involved with the Multicultural Council -- I am officially the bus driver, I collect anyone that wants to be picked up for the once a month multicultural meals -- they just ring me up and I pick them up and drop them off free of charge. We're both happy -- we're both retired now (79 & 67) -- we're quite happy whatever's left for us.

Interviewer. Teresa, you spoke before about the tradition of Wigilia -- are there any other traditions that you brought from Poland that you would like to talk about?

Teresa: Well, the traditions are now dwindling away. When a baby was born the baby had to be christened within 3 months, and things were hard to get. The chosen godmother played a special part in a child's life. The godmother made sure that the baby was dressed in a beautiful long frock.

Interviewer. Right, 3 months of age?

Teresa: Yes, 3 months of age -- you had a tremendous party afterwards. And then children had their first communion -- that was a wonderful time -- the children had a party afterwards, and the family and friends were invited to a feast. You made sure that the girls were beautifully dressed in a long white frock and veil -- and the boys wore beautiful navy blue suits with white shirts -- they held large candles, and you took photos.



Right: Bernard's First Communion.

Sunday was a day of rest -- Poles enjoyed themselves -- we went to Church -- and then sometimes we would meet at the Ballarat Gardens or at Lake Wendouree. Often the men stayed at home and played cards, and the women might ride their bikes with the kids, or take a tram ride around the lake, have a ride on the paddle steamer, and feed the ducks and swans. It was a wonderful time, spent with friends, with many wonderful memories. We had lots of engagements and weddings -- but now all of the festivities have gone -- we have bigger and bigger houses, and our families are growing up. The population is ageing, and we are attending more funerals.

Roman: In those days, if anyone didn't come to church, they must have been sick.

Teresa: Yes when we were young we would ask where is the next party, when is the next dance and where do we meet next. Now, when we meet, we say my back is aching I've got rheumatism, or, we ask who has passed away -- and that's the conversation. Roman and I have had a good life, I can't complain -- people in Ballarat were very good, always ready to help one another, and always ready to have any excuse for a party.



Right: Roman & Teresa with Zofia Pamula.

Bonegilla Migrant Centre tells history to hundreds

By Tahira McPherson
Nov. 19, 2015, 1:29 p.m.

Like (100) Tweet (41) G+ (0)



NEW LIFE: Roman and Teresa Skrypko, of Ballarat, remember their Bonegilla experience from more than 65 years ago. Picture: ELENOR TEDENBORG

Roman Skrypko was just 21 when he jumped on a boat in Germany headed for what he called "the end of the world".

His destination, like more than 300,000 others, would be the Bonegilla Migrant Centre outside of Wodonga.

Mr Skrypko and his wife, Teresa of Ballarat, were among about 200 people on Thursday to celebrate upgrades at the historic site.

Regional Development Victoria, Wodonga Council and the federal government's Department of Environment contributed \$760,000 for landscaping, restoration, signs and art.

Mr Skrypko said it would be their final visit to the heritage-listed camp, from which 1.5 million Australians have descended.

"It's the best thing that ever happened in my life time coming to Australia, it was the land furthest from the war" he said.

"I used to love chasing the rabbits around, there were rabbits everywhere."

Mrs Skrypko became emotional as she recalled arriving at the camp as a 14-year-old girl in 1950.

She said she came with her parents and remembered swimming in Lake Hume.

"I'm looking for a place, it was a great big dormitory with a door on either side," Mrs Skrypko said.

"It had little windows where we would put a stick to get the flies out.

"All we had was a straw mattress, a black-and-white striped pillow slip and one blanket - that was it."

Mr Skrypko found work at a Ballarat factory where a Polish man needed his help to learn skills for the job.

He met the man's daughter who he later married.

The Skrypko's now have two sons, five grand kids and seven great-grand kids.



Roman & some of the Polish community & the Mayor Cr M J Brown at a wreath laying ceremony at the Cenotaph in Ballarat commemorating the countrymen who died at the Battle of Cassino in Italy & in WW2, on the 25th anniversary of the Battle -- The Courier: Monday 18 April 1969.

Ballarat Polish Seniors Club Inc

Celebrating 10 years



BALLARAT POLISH SENIORS CLUB INC

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS



May 25th 2003

May 25th 2013

INVITATION

Proudly Sponsored by : Victorian Multicultural Commission
Ballarat City Council

AT SEBASTOPOL BOWLING CLUB

ALBERT ST SEBASTOPOL
SATURDAY 25TH MAY 2013

at

11.30am to 3.00pm

2 Course Meal
Drinks Bar Prices

Members - No Charge -- Non Members - \$20.00p.p.

RSVP - May 10th

Roman Skrypko 53357276

Mary Plotecki 53315796

Below: The Courier 15 Sep 2007 re the Polish Exhibition at the Gold Museum.

Exhibition highlights Polish migrants

By Robert Somers

VISITORS to Ballarat's Gold Museum will gain an insight into the Polish tradition when a unique exhibition opens next year.

A display highlighting Polish contributions to Ballarat will be on show from February until March.

A committee of Ballarat residents with Polish backgrounds is working to establish the exhibition, which examines contributions to Ballarat's post-1940s working culture and social life.

Ambassador Valdie Cham said Polish migrants had a strong influence on the work force in Victoria after World War II.

"The Polish were em-

ployed in several areas, including the railways, the Lakeside mental home and paper and flour mills and the Polish were heavily involved in constructing White Swan Reservoir," Ms Cham said.

She said it was important to keep Polish culture alive in Ballarat.

"I think Poles have been good at valuing the Australian way of life and accepting the local traditions."

The committee is gathering photographs and memorabilia for the exhibition.

Ms Cham said the exhibition would focus life after the war and not explore



ON SHOW: Ballarat Polish community member, Roman Skrypko at the Ballarat Gold Museum, which will house an exhibition highlighting the influence Polish migrants have had on the Ballarat community. Picture: **Jeremy Bannister**



Above: Teresa & Shirley Richards in the kitchen where Teresa worked at Kelaston Home for the Blind for over 34 years: 1988.

29 February, 1986

Mrs Teresa Skrypko
405 Rubicon Street
SEBASTOPOL 3356

Dear Teresa

On behalf of the Board, blind members, volunteers and staff of the Association for the Blind, thank you for your outstanding service over 34 years.

Over the period of your employment you will have witnessed many changes in the Association, particularly at Kelaston Home, Ballarat. We are fortunate to have the support of staff like you who are and have been committed to providing quality services to vision impaired people in a variety of ways. Your contribution with catering is an integral part of services to our nursing home residents and I'm sure they will miss you.

I wish you good health and happiness in your retirement.

Yours sincerely

N J Cook
N J Cook
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Association for the Blind Ltd
Incorporated in Victoria
A.C.N. 007 438 284

7 Main Street
Belgrave South
Victoria Australia 3180
Telephone (03) 8998 8233
Facsimile (03) 8998 4136

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Telefax (08) 44 7122

SENDER:

ROMAN SKRYPKO
405 RUBICON STREET
SEBASTOPOL Vic. 3356

Mr Roman Skrypko
405 Rubicon Street
Ballarat Vic 3356

26.7.1996

RE: Your pension claim German age pension

Dear Mr Skrypko

Please arrange an appointment by phone with

A CLERK OF COURT who has an official stamp/seal

for CERTIFICATION of all the following papers if available

- 1) enclosed certificate of nationality
- 2) copy of your ~~present husband's~~ birth certificate
- 3) copy of your ~~present husband's~~ Australian Citizenship certificate
- 4) copies of all papers available which are related to your ~~present husband's~~ stay in Germany

Please ask for completion and certification of the enclosed form and certification of the mentioned copies. Please take identification e.g. passport and all original papers of the mentioned copies with you.

Please note: **CERTIFICATION MEANS:** The clerk of court has to state on each copy of all the available papers, that the paper is a true copy of the original. Each copy then has to be signed and stamped by the clerk of court. Together with the enclosed certificate of nationality, which has to be completed, signed and stamped by the clerk of court, the certified papers are to be sent to us as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

H. Erlach

H. Erlach

PS. If at any time during the processing period, you get letters or forms from the German Pension Authorities, please forward them to us immediately without delay, and please do not fill in anything.

TO THE HONOURABLE
PRIME MINISTER
Mr John Howard
Office of the Prime Minister
GPO Canberra ACT 2601

Date: *29-3-88*

RE: ELIGIBILITY FOR A GERMAN PENSION
AUSTRALIAN-GERMAN PENSION AGREEMENT

Dear Sir

I would like to draw your attention to the fact, that I was a forced labourer during the 2nd World War and that therefore I would be eligible for a German Pension, if your Government would sign the drafted Australian-German Pension agreement. I cannot understand why we are kept from receiving this pension, as I cannot think of any valid reason for keeping us from getting at least a small compensation for what we endured during the war. **We could have had this pension since 1992. Why do so many of my fellow countrymen die without having received this pension?**

When you look at our situation, what reason could there be for not signing the pension agreement? So far, thousands of people like me do not get anything from the German Government for what they have done to us; with the pension agreement we would at least get a small amount in compensation, which would not only benefit people like me but also would help the Australian economy.

Therefore I urge you to sign the Australian-German Pension agreement immediately. When we are dead the pension agreement is of no use to us anymore!

Yours sincerely,

R. Skrypko

Funds boost for seven groups

SEVEN local groups have received State Government funding injections.

Ballarat West MLA Karen Overington and Ballarat East MLA Geoff Howard presented cheques to Ballarat and regional groups on Thursday.

The Ballarat Polish Seniors Club received a \$400 grant and the Ballarat Italian Association received a \$1000 boost.

The Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council took home a \$5000 grant.

Other beneficiaries include \$500 to the Ballarat Dutch 50 Plus Club and \$450 to the Ballarat Polish Association.

The Circolo Pensionati Italiani Di Ballarat get \$400 and the Alliance Francaise De Ballarat Et District will receive \$700.



Karen Overington



DONATIONS: At the presentation of State Government cheques L'Alliance Francaise De Ballarat Et District president Gwendoline Blake, Ballarat Polish Association representatives Irena Green and Felicity Stehlik, Ballarat West MLA Karen Overington, Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council representative Barbara Fong, Ballarat Italian Association representative Evie Dichiera, Ballarat East MLA Geoff Howard, Ballarat Polish Seniors Club representative Rohan Skrypko; back, Circolo Pensionati Italiani Di Ballarat representative Ugo Loiacond and Ballarat Dutch 50 Plus Club representative John Ruyg.

Ballarat groups benefit from grants

BALLARAT MPs Karen Overington and Geoff Howard recently presented cheques to seven Ballarat and regional groups as part of a State Government funding program.

The groups were: Ballarat Polish Seniors Club (\$400); the Ballarat

Italian Association (\$1000); Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (\$5000); Ballarat Dutch 50 Plus Club (\$500); Ballarat Polish Association (\$450); the Circolo Pensionati Italiani Di Ballarat (\$400) and Alliance Francaise De Ballarat Et District (\$700).

Snippets from The Ballarat Courier.

Funding for local groups

BALLARAT West MLA Karen Overington presented more than \$7000 worth of grants to four multicultural organisations this week.

The grants were presented to the Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council (\$5500), the Ballarat Polish Seniors Club (\$400), the Ballarat Polish Association (\$450) and the Filipino Australian Association of Ballarat (\$880).

FUNDING: At the presentation of funds to organisations, front left, Roman Skrypko from the Polish Seniors Club, Vergae Hocking from the Filipino Australia Association, back left, Ballarat West MLA Karen Overington and Jack Fugiel from the Polish Association of Ballarat.



NAA documents for Teresa
& her mum & dad.

1229	ANIOLA	Serial No. 179038
Surname		
Christian Names: Valentina		
Nationality: Pol.	Age: 5/2/06	Sex: F
Date of Arrival: 28 APR 1950	Marital State: M	Religion: P.C.
Ex Ship: HERSEY II	Height: 5'5"	Weight: 141
Date of Departure: 13/6/50	Hair: Brown	Eyes: Grey
Destination: Dept. of Immigration Holding Centre Mildura Vic. T.L. 1793	Complexion:	Scars:
	General: med	Specimen of Signature: Aniola Valentina
7/202 Rivers & Water Supply Comm. Melbourne, Vic. 11/20/50		



Specimen of Signature
Aniola Valentina

7/202 Rivers & Water Supply Comm. Melbourne, Vic. 11/20/50
Australia *** NAA: A2571, ANIOLA VALENTINA

1228	ANIOLA	Serial No. 179172
Surname		
Christian Names: Edmund		
Nationality: Pol.	Age: 27/10/02	Sex: M
Date of Arrival: 28 APR 1950	Marital State: M	Religion: P.C.
Ex Ship: HERSEY II	Height: 5'4"	Weight: 132
Date of Departure: 29.5.50	Hair: Fair	Eyes: Blue
Destination: State Rivers & Water Supply Commission 400 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, at Rocklands N.S.W. S.L. 4671	Complexion:	Scars:
	General: med	Specimen of Signature: Aniola Edmund
Standard of Education: 7		
Address of Next of Kin (if known): wife Valentina child Teresa		



Specimen of Signature
Aniola Edmund

National Archives of Australia *** N

1230	ANIOLA	Serial No.
Surname		
Christian Names: Teresa		
Nationality: Pol.	Age: 10/10/36	Sex: F
Date of Arrival: 28 APR 1950	Marital State: B	Religion: P.C.
Ex Ship: HERSEY II	Height:	Weight:
Date of Departure: 13/6/50	Hair:	Eyes:
Destination: Dept. of Immigration Holding Centre Mildura Vic. T.L. 1793	Complexion:	Scars:
Trade:	General:	Specimen of Signature: Aniola Teresa
Standard of Education: 7		
Address of Next of Kin (if known): father Edmund		



Specimen of Signature
Aniola Teresa

National Archives of Australia *** NAA: A2571, ANIOLA TERESA

Burial of Teresa's sister
in Poland.



CH14.15 GORDON THURLING – GRAPHIC ARTIST

by Wanda Mann (Skirzynski) and Gordon's family

Gordon Thurling was born on the 18 June 1940. He was one of three siblings; having a brother Robert and a sister Jenny. As a child and young adult the family lived in Drummond St South, Ballarat. Gordon was a student at Urquhart St Primary School. Jim Wilson, a schoolmate and later a close and lifelong friend, remembered that during 1945-1950 Gordon's teachers and friends realised that Gordon had exceptional artistic talent. Jim wrote -- "His drawings of Walt Disney cartoon characters, Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Pluto were drawings on the asphalt in the school yard", displaying Gordon's talent and special drawing ability. His wife Janina remembers that Gordon was the youngest person to be accepted at the Ballarat School of Mines where he completed a Diploma in Art. When Gordon Thurling finished his Diploma he was employed at Myer Ballarat as a Ticket Writer and Window Dresser, in the early 1960s. Then in 1964/65 he gained employment at a Printing and Signwriting business in Armstrong St South, in the old Phoenix Arcade.



Around 1965/66 Gordon gained employment at BTV-6, Ballarat, as a Graphic Artist. During this time BTV-6 Chief Announcer Eric Gracie asked Gordon to paint an aggressive rooster for the North Ballarat Football Club, nicknamed *The Roosters*. Head trainer Ron Hunter remembered that in 1971 Junior Vice President Eric Gracie came into the training room and stated that it needed brightening up. Eric suggested that Gordon paint an aggressive Rooster on the training room wall. Gordon's Rooster logo has survived the test of time. The original logo had a black and white rooster, and Gordon suggested that some red be added to the cockscomb. Although originally dismissed, the red colour was added later on.

Left: Sketch by Gordon Thurling: 19 Sep 1971.

Jim Wilson remembered that he saw Gordon sitting on the steps of the Ballarat Post Office, at the corner of Lydiard and Sturt St, sketching the last tram to Sebastopol, showing the Town Hall clock at 1:50 pm.

Gordon showed an interest in reproducing paintings of Ballarat's old buildings in black and white -- old factories, hotels, the early development of Sovereign Hill, all became Gordon's focus of interest.



On 24 February 1968 Gordon married Janina Kotlarz, a descendant of 1950s Polish migrants. The Kotlarz family were involved in the migration exodus from Germany after the Second World War. Janina's father Bolesław (Boris), his wife Magdalena, Magdalena's mother (Maria Walichnowska), and Janina made the long trip to Australia on the *General ML Hersey*, docking at Port Melbourne on 25 April 1950.

Boris's first cousin Antonina Skirzynski (Piaseczna), and Antonina's husband Adam, and their daughter Wanda, travelled with the Kotlarz family, making their way to Australia, with the promise of a better life. On arrival both families travelled by train to Bonegilla migrant center. Both Boris and Adam completed the obligatory two years, serving out their government contract at the Cairn Curran Dam near Maldon, Victoria.



Above: Gordon & Janina's wedding in Castlemaine: L-R: Kevin Robinson, Wanda Mann (Skirzynski), Bob Thurling, Irene Kotlarz, Andrew Kotlarz (Page Boy), Cherie (Flower Girl), Jenny Thurling & Jim Wilson.

After Boris' contract had finished the Kotlarz family settled in Castlemaine and Boris found work at the Gas Works. Boris worked here for many years until natural gas arrived and Castlemaine Gas Works was closed down. Boris was then fortunate to obtain work at the Alexander Hospital and Old Age Home, as a Wardsman. Magdalena, Boris's wife, stayed home for a number of years, then worked as a domestic at the same hospital. Maria, Magdalena's mother, gained work as a domestic at Midlands Hotel.



Above: Janina & Gordon at a Ball.

During the Kotlarzs' early years in Castlemaine another daughter Irene was born and eight years later a son Andrew was born. Boris worked hard providing for his family and made extra money chopping wood in the bush around Castlemaine. In those days many migrants chopped wood in the bush on weekends, as not only did they make extra money but they obtained free wood for their wood fires/stoves to enhance their living standards and daily lives.

Gordon and Janina made their home in Ballarat for 10 years and their daughters Cherie and Lena were born in Ballarat. It was during Gordon's time at BTV-6 in about 1980 that Gordon was approached by Jack Burcon, President of the Polish Association, and Michael Yaworowicz, to produce some artworks for the newly built Copernicus Hall in Sebastopol. Having a strong Polish family affiliation, Gordon was eager to oblige. He painted two large Polish White Eagle emblems, and 10 Coats of Arms for cities and regions in Poland, and these were placed strategically around the walls adding to the character and ethnicity of the hall.



Above: Here we see four Coats of Arms painted by Gordon Thurling, representing towns and regions in Poland.



*Photos:
Here we see
more Coats of
Arms painted by
Gordon Thurling.*



Gordon's Coats of Arms, and one of his Emblems





Above: A market was held in Copernicus Hall on the last Saturday of each month.

Here we can see another two of Gordon Thurling's Coats of Arms.

While working at BTV-6 Gordon was given a work opportunity he couldn't refuse. The BTV-6 Manager Laurie Burrows was being transferred to Network Channel 9 in Toowoomba, Queensland, and invited Gordon to come to Toowoomba to work as a Graphic Artist.

Gordon worked at Channel 9 for 10 years and it was during this time that he designed and built floats for the Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers (see photo next page). He was made redundant when Channel 9 became a satellite station and the main programs were produced at Rockhampton. It was then that Gordon became a free-lance Graphic Artist.



Photos below: While a free-lance Graphic Artist, Gordon created blackboard menus for restaurants and hotels, and these became very popular and were widely used by commercial enterprises.



Gordon's daughters, Cherie and Lena, were both influenced by his artistic ability. Gordon developed cancer but even during his long illness, he used his artistic abilities and worked until his death on the 19 November 2002.



THE LAST TRAM STURT STREET BALLARAT 19th SEPTEMBER 1971

The Last Tram

The 19th September 1971 was an historic day for Ballarat. On that day, the last tram travelled along Sturt Street on the last scheduled run. It was nearly 84 years since horse-drawn trams first rolled through the streets of Ballarat, and over 66 years since the introduction of electric trams.

The first definite moves to provide Ballarat with a tramway service were made in 1884. Because of extensive loan commitments, the Council decided to allow private enterprise to run the service, and tenders were called. By the end of 1887, rails had been laid, a depot with stables had been built on the north side of Lake Wendouree, and the public of the City of Ballarat was being transported by a fleet of horse-drawn, four-wheel, double-deck, double-ended, chocolate and yellow vehicles.

The Town of East Ballarat, then a separate entity, negotiated for a tramway system in 1888, but had to wait until the Electric Era for its tramways.

In 1906, electric trams came to Ballarat. After taking over both the Ballarat Tramway Co. Ltd. and the Ballarat Electric Supply Co., the Electric Supply Co. of Victoria Ltd. was responsible for the tram service of Ballarat as well as its power supply. The company laid new tracks, and built the red-brick Power Station on the south-east side of Lake Wendouree. The old horse-tram depot was retained, and a number of second-hand vehicles were converted to electricity.

Ballarat East now had a tram service, as the new electric trams travelled north, west and east. However, horse-drawn trams continued to operate in the south, right up until 1913.

The State Electricity Commission began to take control of the tramways in 1931. From 1934 on, there was extensive track and overhead reconstruction, and vehicles were replaced. The S.E.C. had hardly finished rehabilitating the Ballarat tramways when World War II was declared. Because of the manpower shortage, conductresses were employed from 1942 to 1946.

In 1962, the S.E.C. made its first attempt to close the tramways of Ballarat (and also of Bendigo). It was unsuccessful, and the next move for abandonment was not until 1967.

In 1970, despite local opposition, the S.E.C. finally succeeded, and tenders were called for the operation of motor buses. Davis Motor Services Pty. Ltd. were granted the replacement routes.

Various government and historical bodies continue with their efforts to retain some of Ballarat's trams and tracks as tourist attractions.

In Western Victoria

BTV

and

6

gives you the picture

Left: THE LAST TRAM

This information and the sketch on the previous page courtesy of Marie Wilson.



Celebrating & Remembering

Gordon Thurling
18.06.1940 - 19.11.2002

CH14.16 WILLIAM (BILL) JAMES BYRNE

An Australian insight into the Polish Association of Ballarat.

"Stop and think and you're unlimited".

By Wanda Mann as told by Bill Byrne

Garret Byrne Bill Byrne's life story began with his great-great-grandfather Garret Byrne in Ireland. Garret was forced off his land when English soldiers confiscated his farm holding at Ballymanus in the late 1700s.



Grandfather Years later, Bill's grandfather Henry Byrne left his beloved Ireland looking for a better life in Australia. Being entrepreneurial and adventurous, Henry became a *carrier* owning a horse and wagon carrying goods from Ballarat to Horsham. He married Barbara Matherson from Ballarat, who sang in the St Andrew's Ballarat choir. Henry Byrne began buying land from the Crown around Horsham, Victoria. He added acreage, buying out owners and eventually owned the whole district. Byrneville, a town 35 km north of Horsham, was named after Henry Byrne.

Left: Bill's grandfather Henry Byrne: circa 1890.

Right: A heritage photo of Bill's mother's aunt, being the first white child to be born in our district: circa 1880.



MISS JESSIE KENNEDY (Mrs. Reuben Wright) *K.N.*

Born on Wm. Campbell's Strathloddon Station, on the 25th October, 1845, she was the first white child to be born in our District.

William (Bill) James Byrne was born in Ballarat on 9 July 1935. His mother was Martha Andrews and his father was Henry Byrne (named after Bill's granduncle). His parents had three sons; Henry, William (Bill) and Keith; also two daughters Mary and Barbara.



Above: Bill (2nd from right at back) at Pleasant St School in 1940.

Bill remembers his sporting prowess at Ballarat College. He began his working life as a Jackaroo in 1954 at Murbulea, Victoria, then began National Service. Later when he was discharged, he worked on a station property – *Rifle Downs Station* – near Digby, becoming the overseer. At 24 he became a property manager for Shoreham Bulla Ice Cream Co. in Victoria. Bill's boss treated him well, becoming a confidant and offering Bill great advice. Bill remembers his boss' valuable life's guidance – "*stop and think and you're unlimited*".

Right: Bill in Cadet uniform: circa 1952.

Unfortunately Bill had an accident, smashing his right foot and developing gangrene. Self employment followed and Bill emulated his grandfather's work ethic and direction, becoming a grazier and *wheeler and dealer*, buying and selling for a living. This enabled him to gradually buy property and acquire prosperity.

Bill joined the Ballarat Polish Association in the late 1960s. He was enticed to become a member by Frank Studzinski. Bill loved the European Polish hospitality, enjoying the company, the food and the community celebrations. He liked and valued the honesty of the Polish community who were brave and hard working; always ready to work diligently for what they aspired to, never asking for a *hand out*. He noted that they were very honest and weren't involved in any criminal activity. Their inspiring attitude was reflected in their *happy celebratory drinking culture*. Vodka was the National drink and was obligatory for visitors and a necessity for special celebrations. He showed empathy for the struggle experienced by the Polish migrants in their attempts to learn the English language. As the Poles were decent people, Bill liked to give them a *hand up* so they could better themselves.



Bill retained his membership in the Polish Association until its closure in 2018. He is respected for his advice and assistance over the years, including the requirements relating to the closure and winding up of the Association. We thank Bill for his generosity and willingness to assist in times of need.

Bill's dog Jack is a precious addition to Bill's family



Left: Jack welcoming Bill home after a stint in hospital.

Below: Boating on Lake Wendouree.



Bill's Community Service in Ballarat

Bill's generosity is also reflected in his community service with Wendouree Apex. Bill had an affinity and profound understanding of what it would be like to be a migrant in a new country. As mentioned earlier, his great great grandfather Garret had been victimised by the English in Ireland and his land had been confiscated.



The Courier article Apex Handclasp in Action: 23 April 1966: shows the Simpson family from Cheshire, England, being greeted in Ballarat: Bill is on the left.

Wendouree Apex Club members were at Port Melbourne to greet the Simpson family from 93 Arthur street, Birkenhead, Cheshire, England, on their arrival aboard the liner Castel Felice.

Wendouree Apex, under the Apex Handclasp programme, sponsored the family, arranged accommodation for them, helped in finding a suitable job, and generally will assist the family in the early days of settling in the Wendouree district.

Pictured aboard the Castel Felice are, from left to right: Bill Byrne and Bill Crawford, of Wendouree Apex; Mr and Mrs K. Simpson and their children, Wendouree Apex Club president, Nick Trunk, and Jim Gay and his son, Ross, from Apex. (Australian Official Photograph).

Portsea campers — a privileged group

About 1300 Ballarat children have attended the Lord Mayor's Camp at Portsea since the establishment of the Ballarat Portsea Camp Committee in 1960. They were a privileged group, who had the opportunity to have a wonderful holiday, to have a health check while there, and to meet other children from all

parts of the State, committee chairman, Mr J. H. Pryor, said yesterday. He was speaking at an informal luncheon gathering at which certificates of appreciation were presented to a number of people who have helped the committee, as sponsors, committee members or camp leaders. Mr Pryor, who has been

chairman of the committee since its inception, said it had sought publicity only to the extent needed to gain community support. Mr Pryor paid tribute to all who had assisted the committee in various ways, and in particular to Mrs Helen Adams who, he said, had accepted a large proportion of the organisational work.

The certificates were presented, on behalf of the present committee, by foundation member, Mrs B. Peers. Recipients were camp leaders, Mrs. N. Nojan and Mr and Mrs A. Hems, sponsors Mrs. D. Martin and Mrs H. Smith and former committee members, Mrs Gail Locke and Mr Bill Byrne.



Mrs B. Peers, foundation member of the Ballarat Portsea Camp Committee, presents a certificate of appreciation to Mr Bill Byrne, who joined the committee soon after its formation in 1960.

In 1982 Bill received a certificate of appreciation in recognition of his work with the Ballarat Portsea Camp Committee, established in 1960. This committee provided an opportunity for disadvantaged children from the Ballarat region to attend the Lord Mayor's Camp at Portsea, where they were provided with a wonderful holiday and a health check.

Below: Another highlight from Bill's Wendouree Apex Club days, shows him amongst a group presenting a \$400 cheque from the Courier Garden Competition Funds to the Begonia Festival director, Mr Barry Wilkins.

\$1400 garden contest money distributed

Mr Robert Davies, third from left, presents a \$400 contribution from The Courier Garden Competition funds to Begonia Festival director, Mr Barry Wilkins (left). Others are (from left) Special School principal Mr Peter Wood, Wendouree Apex Club president Mr Geoff Russell and members Messrs. Russell Savige, Bill Byrne and Peter Pollard.



Ballymanus in Alfredton In about 2016 Bill developed a large, growing, residential subdivision, which he named *Ballymanus*, on Bill's land in Alfredton, Ballarat (see photo below). Ballymanus, Ireland, is the ancestral home of the famous Byrne clan, and so Bill has brought their interesting story to Ballarat (see story of William Byrne below).



William (Billy) Byrne of Ballymanus

The story of Bill's 6 ft 6 inches tall great-great-uncle "*William (Billy) Byrne of Ballymanus*" is a well-known, colourful story, embellished in Irish folklore. Bill's extended family in Ballarat is proud of Billy's endeavours back in 1798. Billy fits comfortably into Irish folklore, being immortalized in Irish history, his story passing through subsequent generations.

Billy was born in Ireland in 1775. He was the youngest son of Garret Byrne and the great-great-grandson of Hugh Byrne, MP for Macreddin in the parliament convened by James II in 1689, but later outlawed by King William of England. In 1798 there was unrest and rebellion throughout Europe, and this spread to Ireland, where the Society of United Irishmen had been formed in 1791. Garret Byrne of Ballymanus and his cousins William Michael Byrne and Miles Byrne became involved in a rebellion against the cruel English soldiers who were mistreating the Irish; pilfering, burning homes, and confiscating land.

It was Garret's son Billy Byrne, who joined the Wicklow Yeomanry in late 1797 and was expelled in 1798 when he refused to take the oath to the Crown, who became the principal rebel leader. The rebels defeated the English at Arklow and Vinegar Hill, even though the English fought with musket and canon, while the Irish used pike and sword and were at a great disadvantage. The Irish captured three canons and prevailed. Unfortunately Billy was betrayed by an informer and he was arrested in Dublin in May 1799. Aged 24, he was taken to Wicklow to be tried, hanged and beheaded as a traitor to the Crown. Irish folklore remembers him as a man who fought for Ireland's cause and liberty; being immortalized in stone, song and poems.



CH14.17 FELICITY STEHLIK by Wanda Mann (Skirzynski)

Felicity Stehlik is an educated, enlightened lady who the Polish Association had the privilege and good fortune to know. She joined the Association in 2001 and remained until 2011, volunteering to be our Secretary for a number of years. Felicity was very competent, highly regarded and a valued member of our committee. Her time in the Polish Association ended when she left Ballarat, to move to Melbourne, to be near one of her sons, Stephen.

Felicity was born in 1927, in the autonomous city, Free City Gdansk, formerly known as the German city Danzig, and today called Gdansk (Poland). Hitler's troops marched into Gdansk in 1939. The Nazi invasion of Felicity's home town was closely followed by a brutal Russian invasion, and so Felicity was soon a part of the dislocation in post-war Europe. World War II changed her life, and she migrated to Australia in 1949.

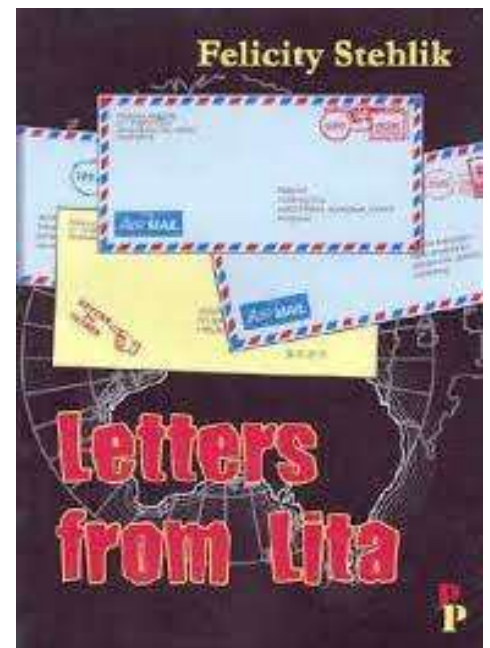
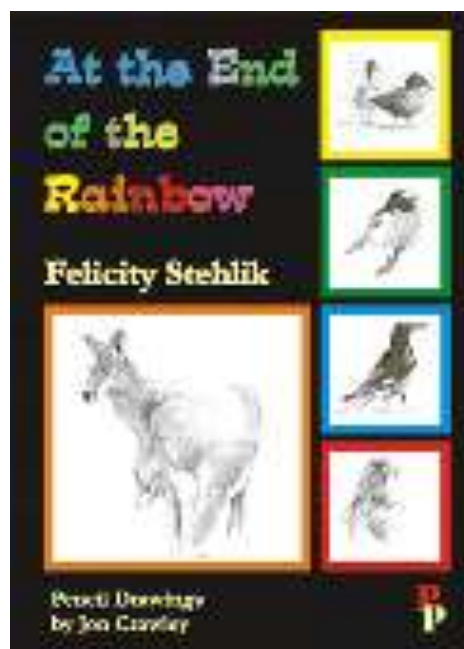
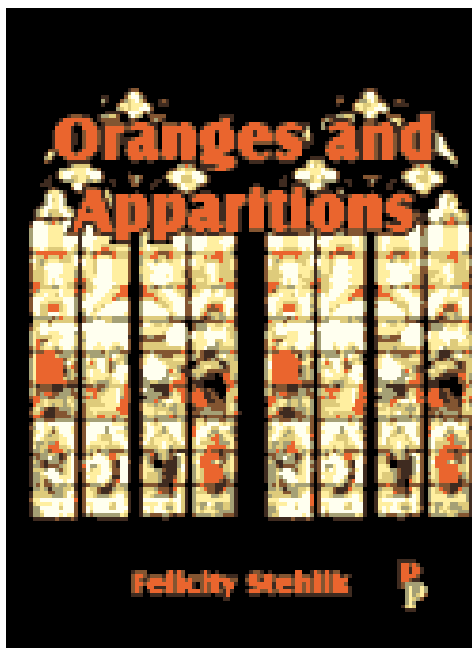
In Australia she was able to pursue her love of education, writing, and her interest in animals. Having completed a High School Certificate in 1964, a B.A. from Monash University in 1971, and a Diploma of Education in 1974 -- she was able to use these attributes later in life, especially in developing her writing skills.

Felicity married, had two sons, divorced and remarried. She ably cared for her sick second husband, who died in 1996, and she cared for a sick son.

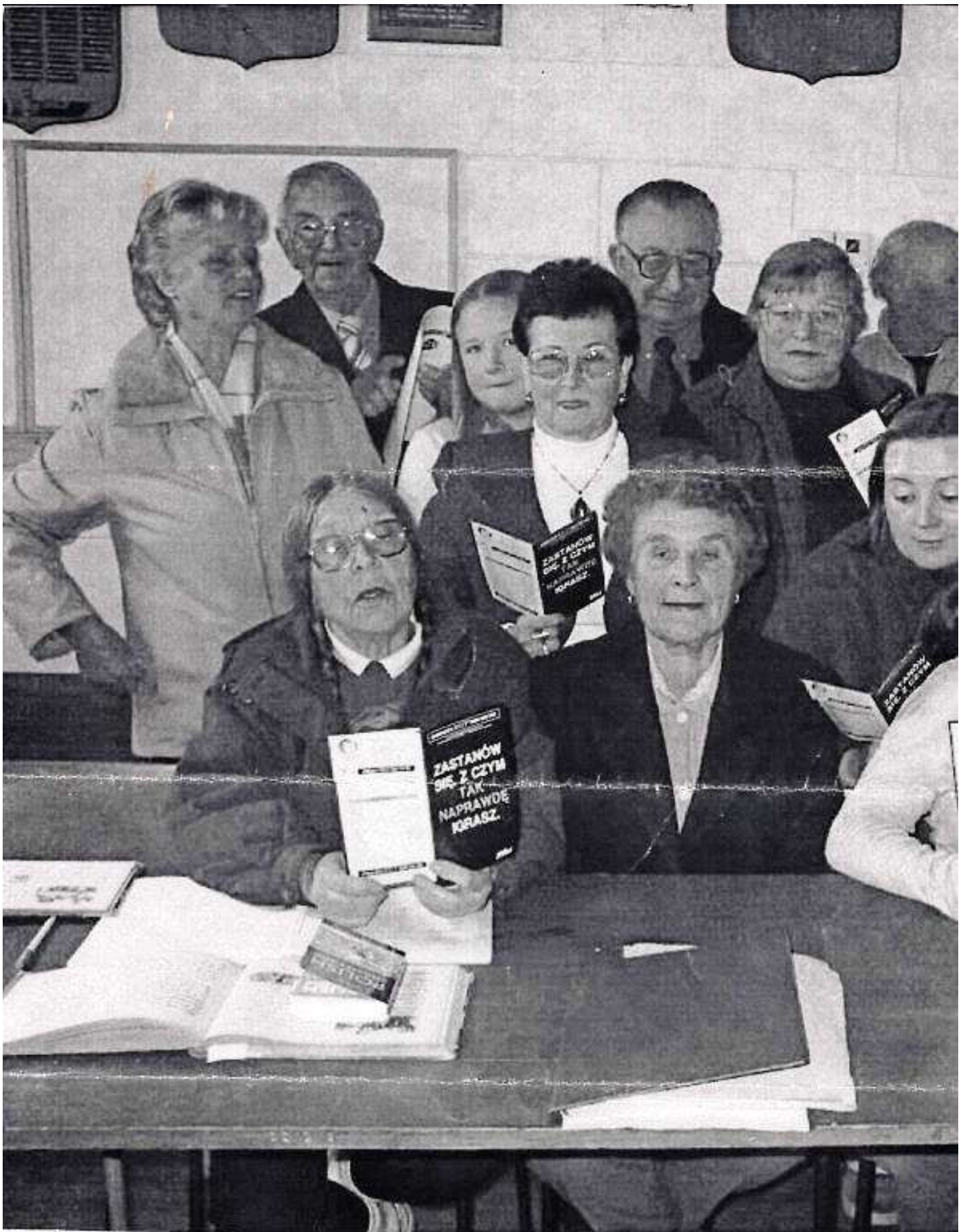
Being a person of conscience she showed concern for others by taking an active part of her church community -- St Patrick's Cathedral Parish, Ballarat. In addition to her work for the Church, and the Polish Association, she also contributed to the German-Austrian Association.

Felicity was an avid writer, and her main written work was her trilogy:

- *Oranges and Apparitions* – this portrays her spiritual growth (1998).
- *At the End of the Rainbow* – looking at her hobby farm and her involvement with nature (2001).
- *Letters from Lita* – Felicity's personal development, looking at political systems and religious and ethnic influences (2005).



The Polish Association thanks Felicity for her generous contribution to the Polish community over many years. A thank you to Lynette Singleton for sharing Felicity's inspirational book *Letters from Lita*.



Above: Felicity Stehlik at a celebration in Copernicus Hall, in about 2006, honouring Felicity's book writing skills and achievements. Felicity is holding a Polish book (by another author) with the title "zastanow sie czym tak naprawde igrasz", English translation -- Think About What You're Really Playing. Rear: Irena Green (Młynarczyk), Michael Yaworowicz, (girl), Teresa Pomorska, Stan Markiewicz, Irena Rynkiewicz. Front: Felicity Stehlik, Antonina Yaworowicz (Skirzynski), lady.

CH14.19 SZAPIEL – STANISŁAW AND MARIA by Bernard Szapiel

1. Stanislaw (Stan) Szapiel: born in Poland 24 March 1916 -- 20 Dec 2007 (Ballarat).
2. Maria Szapiel (nee Mietelska): born in Poland 27 Aug 1917 -- 28 Oct 1997 (Ballarat).
3. Bernard: born in Schonebeck Germany 26 March 1945.
4. Helen: born in Uranquinty migrant camp Australia 11 April 1951
5. Teresa (Tess): born in Ballarat Australia 9 October 1952.

Stanisław (Stan) Szapiel was born in the small village of Bojkiewiczze (Poland), near Białystok. His parents in relative terms were fairly well off. They had a farm with horses, cows, pigs etc. Even a small private forest from which they would mill their own timber for buildings on the farm. This comfortable and idyllic life was brutally destroyed by the German invasion on 1 September 1939. Before the outbreak of the war Stan had been conscripted into the Polish army. He was soon a prisoner of war and spent the next years in various stalags.

Maria Mietelska was born in Truskolasy (Poland), near Częstochowa. In contrast to Stanisław, her family lived in abject poverty. As a child she often went to bed crying from hunger (too many mouths to feed and not enough to go around). Inevitably Maria was *forced out of the family* (wicked stepmother syndrome), and found work in Germany before the war as a housemaid for a wealthy Jewish family.

Forced Farm Labour Stan and Maria met on a farm in Schonebeck (Germany) during the war. Stan was interned at his final POW camp (Stalag XI-A) a short distance away. Prisoners were marched to the nearby farm at dawn and returned late at night. Nearing the end of the war the farmhands were forced to seek cover wherever they could in the fields – artillery shells from both sides (German and American) exploding amongst them. It was during this period that I was born. Stan and Maria married on 20 March 1945, and Stan was desperate to return to his family farm, but Maria was equally desperate to get as far away from the hell of Poland/Europe. Maria prevailed with the subtle threat that she and I (Bernard) would leave without him.

Australia In 1950 we travelled across Europe by train to Naples (Italy). Our ship, the Hellenic Prince, sailed from Naples on the 23 March 1950 with approximately 1000 European refugees (displaced persons), and arrived at Station Pier (Melbourne) on the 25 April 1950 (Anzac Day). The journey for Stan was uneventful, whereas Maria spent the entire journey in her bunk suffering from seasickness. For myself, as a five year old, the surprise of the journey was waking up one morning to find the ship surrounded entirely by sand (the Suez Canal)!!! On arriving in Melbourne we were transported by train to the Bonegilla migrant camp (near Albury), then later to the Uranquinty migrant camp (near Wagga Wagga)(110 km north of Albury), where Helen was born. Then the family moved north to a farm near Griffith.

Ballarat In 1952 the Szapiel family settled in Ballarat, purchasing a modest two bedroom weatherboard home in White Ave, Wendouree, where Stan and Maria lived for the remainder of their lives (55 years). (Today my sister Teresa (Tess) and her son Joe live in our old family home. My wife (Isabelle) and I purchased and live in a house next door to Tess and Joe.) When we moved to Ballarat there was an abundance of labouring work to be had and dad was never unemployed. He worked for many years at the Ballarat Railway workshops until his retirement. Mum found work as a kitchen hand at St John of God Hospital (Ballarat) where she would take Teresa (Tess) everyday as Tess was too young for

school. Maria's primary position was in the kitchen where she became the "*Chief Sconemaker Extraordinaire*". Stan, Maria and Bernard were naturalised at Ballarat Town Hall in April 1958 and became true *Dinky-Di Aussies*.

Bernard Szapiel My education began at St Columba's Catholic primary school. Taught by nuns of the Sisters of Mercy order, this time does not evoke many pleasant memories. Secondary school was at St Paul's Technical College, a Catholic boys school, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Between 1962-65 I attended the School of Mines and Industries Ballarat and obtained a Diploma of Art, with a major in Ceramics, and a minor in sculpture. In that era pottery was not a popular subject and consequently there was only two of us, both Polish, Ken Wach and myself. It was the highlight of my education.

National Service – Feb 1967 to Feb 1969. South Vietnam -- Nov 1967 to Nov 1968.

The 12 months in South Vietnam, in the 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, were difficult. In particular the Tet Offensive in February 1968, and the large Battles of Fire Support Bases (Artillery) Coral and Balmoral May-June 1968. Those of us who fought there received the Unit Citation for Gallantry.

Teaching On returning to Australia, I was contacted by the Victorian Education Department and offered a teaching position in the Technical School division. I taught Ceramics/Pottery for nine years. I resigned in 1972 to work as a self-employed craftsman. I married in 1970 and had a son Nicholas in July 1974 who lives in Melbourne and works in the transport industry. I remarried in 1988 to my current wife Isabelle.

Vietnam Veterans After coming home the biggest battle on Australian soil was with the government and the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). Approaches to the DVA by desperate veterans and their families was met with deafening silence, closed doors and the proverbial brick wall. The Victorian RSL was either ignorant or disinterested (or both), to the Vietnam Vets' health and mental well being. In fact it was not unusual for a district or metropolitan RSL to close the door on them. (In their eyes it was not a real war). In early 1979 a small group of Vietnam vets met at my house in Rosanna (Melbourne) and the nucleus of the Vietnam Veterans of Australia began. The Association was officially formed before Christmas 1979 at Anzac House Melbourne, and I was elected as the inaugural State President of the Victorian branch. Shortly after other states followed suit, and the National Association was then finally formed. This forced the government and DVA to finally address the issue of Veteran suicide and the unbearable stress that was imposed on wives, children and relatives. Although still not being an obstacle-free encounter with the DVA, the veterans of subsequent conflicts will hopefully be treated with more respect and assistance as is their due.

Helen and Teresa (Tess) Helen attended St Columba's Primary School (Ballarat North), then Loreto Secretarial College (Dawson St Nth), and then worked at Byrne, Jones & Torney (Lydiard St Sth). Helen now lives in Perth WA with husband Gary and their grown up children Kelly and Melissa. Tess went to St Columba's Primary School to year eight, then two years at Mary's Mount (Loreto)(Sturt St), then two years at St Martins in the Pines (Mt Clear), and then went into nursing. Tess has two sons, Joe and David, from her relationship with Vietnam veteran Neil Matthews. Tess has settled down in Ballarat and now lives with son Joe in the original family home in White Ave Wendouree. Her son David and his lovely partner Sha have settled down in their *paradise* at Port Macquarie NSW.

We Szapiels were fortunate to make Australia our home -- definitely the lucky country.

The Szapiels in Germany

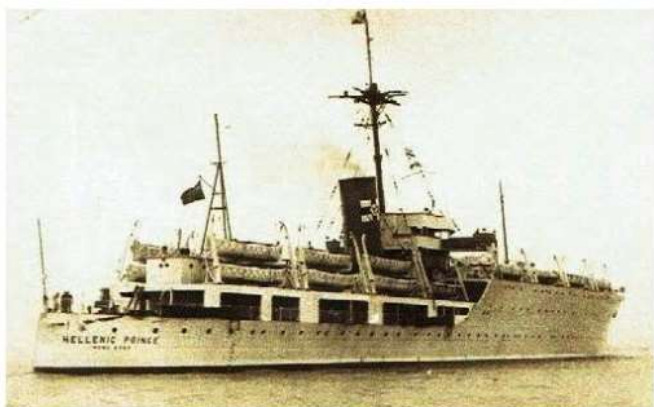


Above: On the farm at Schonebeck: circa 1942: Maria Mietelska (Szapiel) in front row, third from right. Below left: Maria with a friend. Centre: Maria. Below right: Bernard aged 4, with a bunny (dinner).



Right: Maria, Lucy (niece),
Bernard & Stan: circa 1947.

Below: The Hellenic Prince.



Coming to Australia

277
Surname: SZAPIEL
Serial No. 174763

Christian Name: Stanislaw
Nationality: Pol.
Date of Arrival: 26 APR 1950
In Ship: HELL PRINCE II
Date of Departure: 18/5/50
Destination: W.I. Black "Bolero"
Ardlethan, N.S.W.
N.L. 6693

Age: 24/11/17
Sex: M
Marital Status: U
Religion: P.C.
Description: Height: 171", Weight: 121, Hair: Brown, Eyes: Grey
Complexion: Fair
General: Good

Signature of Applicant: Stanislaw Szapiel

Trade: N/A
Standard of Education: N/A
Address of Next of Kin (if known):
Hub: The Hook, N.S.W.
Transferred from Uranquinty on 19.10.1951
19.4.50. c/o STANISLAW SZAPIEL, WHITE AVENUE, BALLARAT, VIC. T.L. No. 6071.

National Archives of Australia
NAA: A2571, SZAPIEL MARIA

276
Surname: SZAPIEL
Serial No. 174764

Christian Name: Stanislaw
Nationality: Pol.
Date of Arrival: 26 APR 1950
In Ship: HELL PRINCE II
Date of Departure: 18/5/50
Destination: W.I. Black "Bolero"
Ardlethan, N.S.W.
N.L. 6693

Age: 24/3/16
Sex: M
Marital Status: U
Religion: P.C.
Description: Height: 5'3", Weight: 138, Hair: Dark, Eyes: Brown, Complexion: Fair, General: Good

Signature of Applicant: Stanislaw Szapiel

Trade: N/A
Standard of Education: 12
Address of Next of Kin (if known):

278
Surname: SZAPIEL
Serial No.

Christian Name: Bernhard
Nationality: Pol.
Date of Arrival: 26 APR 1950
In Ship: HELL PRINCE II
Date of Departure: 18/5/50
Destination: W.I. Black "Bolero"
Ardlethan, N.S.W.
N.L. 6693

Age: 25/3/45
Sex: M
Marital Status: U
Religion: P.C.
Description: Height: , Weight: , Hair: , Eyes: , Complexion: , General:

Signature of Applicant: Stanislaw Szapiel

Trade: N/A
Standard of Education: N/A
Address of Next of Kin (if known):
Cather: Stanislaw
Transferred from Uranquinty on 19.10.1951
19.4.50. c/o STANISLAW SZAPIEL, WHITE AVENUE BALLARAT, VIC. T.L. No. 6071.

National Archives of Australia
NAA: A2571, SZAPIEL BERNHARD



Above: Cards from Bonegilla migrant camp: Courtesy of National Archives Canberra.

Left: Maria, Helen, Stan & Bernard at Uranquinty: 1951.

Below: Uranquinty class of 1951: Bernard on right, middle row.



The Szapiels in Ballarat

Christening of Teresa Szapiel: 1952: L-R: Friends from Melbourne holding their little girl, Danuta & Stefan Przekwas, little Helen Szapiel & brother Bernard, & Maria Szapiel holding baby Teresa. At the Przekwas home in White Ave, a few doors along from the Szapiel family.

Left: Fr Ziółkós, Maria holding Teresa, Bernard, Helen and Stan Szapiel, at our White Ave home.

Below left: Helen, Bernard and Teresa.

Below: The family in Nov 1967 prior to Bernard going to Vietnam.



Local artists to exhibit at Expo

By KIM NORBURY

Two Ballarat artists are among a select few from around Australia whose works have been chosen by the Australia Council to go on sale in the Australian Pavilion at Expo 92 in Spain.

Ceramic artist John Eagle and sculptor Bernard Szapiel are now busily working to get their first consignment of goods into the council by the end of November.

More than 400 craftspeople from around Australia responded to the council's invitation earlier this year.

Former chairman of the council's visual arts/craft board Majorie Johnson then selected a range of work from the submissions on the basis of quality, price and saleability.

Mr Eagle's works that will go on sale in the Australian Pavilion are small vases and bowls in a deep copper red with a design centred on gum leaves and gumnuts.

Each item comes in an at-



Bernard Szapiel with one of his ceramic stoneware ornaments.

tractive tissue lined box made from recycled cardboard.

Mr Eagle is initially sending in 60 pieces but will be sending more works in a further three consignments.

He is hoping that no more than 500 of each will be requested as he is tied up with other commitments.

One of these is with the City

of Canfield which has commissioned him to make all international gifts for when the council sends delegations overseas or when they receive visitors.

Mr Szapiel's work is entirely different.

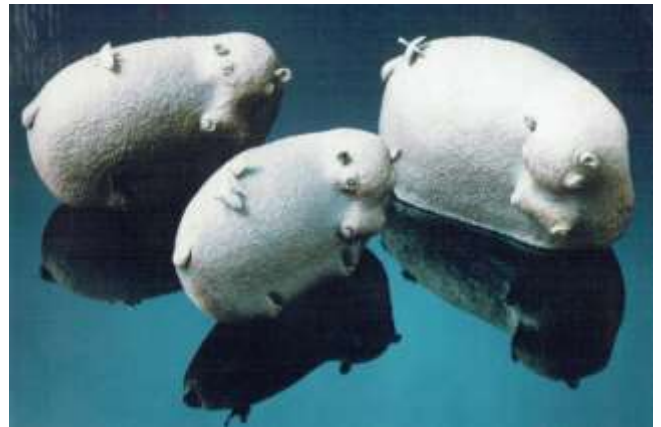
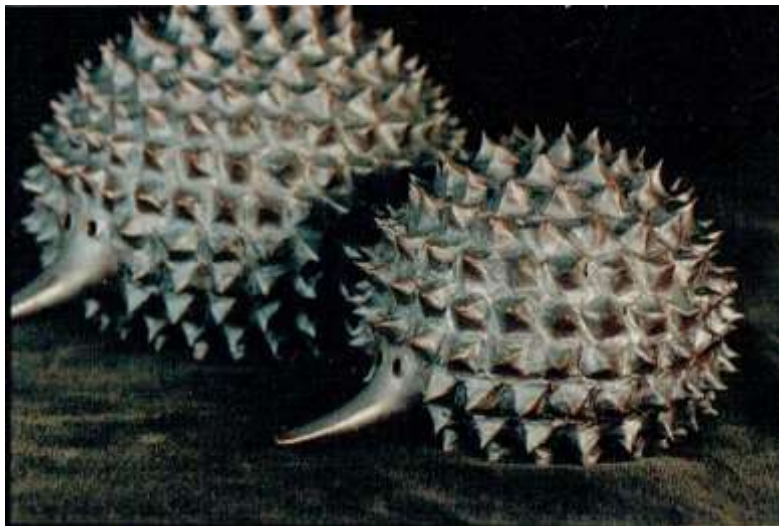
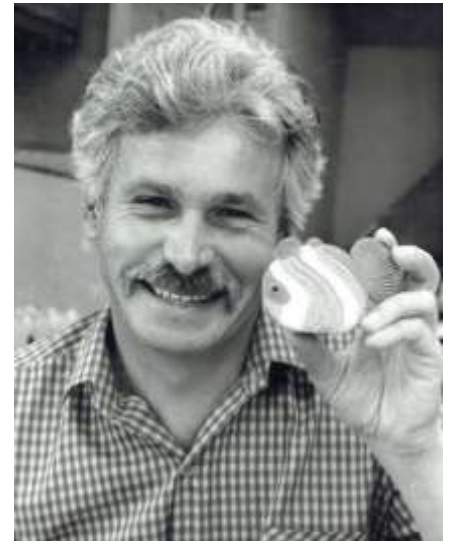
His contribution will comprise of possibly more than 3000 of his small ceramic stoneware ornaments of Australian animals.

Mr Szapiel has been creating these novel creatures since 1972 but this project is his biggest to date.

His very successful business started almost by accident. He studied sculpture and ceramics and in his spare time would make little ornaments for relaxation.

He then started making them on a full-time basis and the public demand has been so great that he hasn't looked back.

His ornaments comprise koalas, echidnas, platypus, merino rams and fish in many different designs, thousands of which he sells in northern Queensland.



Above: Some of Bernard's ceramic souvenirs.

Right: Bernard obtained a Diploma of Art from the Ballarat School of Mines and Industries, majoring in Ceramics, with a minor in sculpture. Photo shows Bernard at work in the Arts School in 1965.



Battalion Reunion 2017, and Unit Citation 2018



Above: 21 members of approximately 122 members of A-Company, at the Australian Vietnam Forces National Memorial in Canberra, during the 3RAR Battalion Reunion, March 2017. Bernard is in front row, 2nd from left

Below: The Unit Citation for Gallantry, awarded in 2018, and the letter to Bernard Szapiel, 2019.



Peter Cosgrove
 Governor-General of the
 Commonwealth of Australia
 and Commander-in-Chief
 of the Defence Force

BE IT KNOWN that with the authority of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Second, Queen of Australia, I have awarded the

UNIT CITATION for GALLANTRY

to

1ST AUSTRALIAN TASK FORCE (FORWARD) which includes
 Headquarters 1st Australian Task Force (Forward)
 1st and 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment
 A Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment
 C Squadron, 1st Armoured Regiment
 12th Field Regiment, Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery
 1st Field Squadron, Royal Australian Engineers
 Detachments in direct support of and located with
 1st Australian Task Force (Forward)

in recognition of acts of extraordinary gallantry in action

CITATION

For extraordinary gallantry in action in the Binh Duong/Bien Hoa Provinces of South Vietnam from 12 May 1968 to 6 June 1968, during Operation THOAN THANG.

GIVEN at Government House, Canberra
 this fifteenth day of May 2018.

By His Excellency's Command

Petrina Cole
 Official Secretary to the Governor-General

Mr Bernard Szapiel

27 White Avenue,
 WENDOUREE VIC 3355

Monday, 8 April 2019

Dear Mr Szapiel,

Recently you received the Citation insignia for the Unit Citation for Gallantry for the Battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral.

Since receiving feedback from recipients of the Citation insignia, the Department of Defence would like to present you with a copy of the Unit Certificate and Government Gazette, which includes the Citation Narrative and Synopsis.

Soldiers deployed with 1st Australian Task Force (Forward), and associated units, displayed extraordinary gallantry at the Battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral from 12 May to 6 June 1968. You yourself are a symbol of this gallantry. The courage and fortitude you displayed at the Battles of Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral are in the finest traditions of the Australian Defence Force, and are a clear example of why the Unit Citation for Gallantry includes an Insignia with Federation Star for the Unit members to proudly wear.

There has been some confusion regarding placement of the insignia in civilian attire, and we would like to take this opportunity to advise you that in civilian dress, serving and ex-serving personnel generally continue to wear the insignia in the same way as they are worn on uniform. In regards to the Australian Army, this is above the right breast pocket.

Thank you for your service to Australia.

Sincerely,

Petrina Cole

Petrina Cole

Acting Director Honours and Awards

Synopsis of the Vietnam War (1962-1975)

From the time of the arrival of the first members of the Team in 1962 over 60,000 Australians, including ground troops and air force and navy personnel, served in Vietnam. 523 died as a result of the war and almost 2400 were wounded. The war was the cause of the greatest social and political dissent in Australia since the conscription referendums of the First World War. Many draft resisters, conscientious objectors and protesters were fined and jailed, while soldiers met a hostile reception on their return home.

Australian support for South Vietnam in the early 1960s was in keeping with the policies of other nations, particularly the United States, to stem the spread of communism in Europe and Asia. In 1961 and 1962 Ngo Dinh Diem, leader of the government in South Vietnam, repeatedly requested security assistance from the US and its allies. Australia eventually responded with 30 military advisers, dispatched as the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam (AATTV), also known as "*the Team*". Their arrival in South Vietnam during July and August 1962 was the beginning of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. In August 1964 the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) also sent a flight of Caribou transports to the port of Vung Tau.

By early 1965, when it had become clear that South Vietnam could not stave off the communist insurgents and their North Vietnamese comrades for more than a few months, the US commenced a major escalation of the war. By the end of the year it had committed 200,000 troops to the conflict. As part of the build-up, the US government requested further support from friendly countries in the region, including Australia. The Australian government dispatched the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR), in June 1965 to serve alongside the US 173rd Airborne Brigade in Bien Hoa province

The following year the Australian government felt that Australia's involvement in the conflict should be both strong and identifiable. In March 1966 the government announced the dispatch of a taskforce to replace 1RAR, consisting of two battalions and support services (including a RAAF squadron of Iroquois helicopters), to be based at Nui Dat, Phuoc Tuy province. Unlike 1RAR, the taskforce was assigned its own area of operations and included conscripts who had been called up under the National Service Scheme introduced in 1964. All nine RAR battalions served in the taskforce at one time or another, before it was withdrawn in 1971; at the height of the Australian involvement it numbered some 8,500 troops.

In August 1966 a company of 6RAR was engaged in one of Australia's heaviest actions of the war, in a rubber plantation near Long Tan. The 108 soldiers of D Company held off an enemy force, estimated at over 2000, for four hours in the middle of a tropical downpour. They were greatly assisted by a timely ammunition resupply by RAAF helicopters, close fire support from Australian artillery, and the arrival of reinforcements in APCs as night fell. The armoured vehicles had been delayed because they had to *swim* across a flooded creek and fight through groups of enemy on the way. When the Viet Cong withdrew at night fall they left behind 245 dead, but carried away many more casualties. Seventeen Australians were killed and 25 wounded, with one dying of wounds several days later.

The year 1968 began with a major offensive by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army, launched during the Vietnamese lunar new year holiday period, known as "*Tet*". Not only the timing but the scale of the offensive came as a complete surprise, taking in cities, towns, and military installations throughout South Vietnam. While the "*Tet Offensive*" ultimately ended in military defeat for the communists, it was propaganda victory. US military planners began to question if a decisive victory could ever be achieved and the offensive stimulated US public opposition to the war. For Australian troops, the effects of the offensive were felt around their base at Nui Dat, where a Viet Cong attack on targets around Ba Ria, the provincial capital, was repulsed with few casualties.

The Battle of Coral - Balmoral (12 May--6 June 1968) was a series of actions fought during the Vietnam War between the 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF) and the North Vietnamese 7th Division and Viet Cong, 40 kilometres north-east of Saigon.

The Coral - Balmoral battle was the most sustained and arguably most hazardous battle of the Vietnam War. The engagements around these fire support bases rivalled in intensity and duration the largest action previously by Australian soldiers during the battle of Long Tan in August 1966.

By 1969 anti-war protests were gathering momentum in Australia. Opposition to conscription mounted, as more people came to believe the war could not be won.

Anti-war demonstrations in Australia in the well-known Moratorium marches of 1970 and 1971, more than 200,000 people gathered to protest against the war, in cities and towns throughout the country

By late 1970 Australia had also begun to wind down its military effort in Vietnam. The 8th Battalion departed in November (and was not replaced), but, to make up for the decrease in troop numbers, the Team's strength was increased and its efforts became concentrated in Phuoc Tuy province. The withdrawal of troops and all air units continued throughout 1971 – the last battalion left Nui Dat on 7 November, while a handful of advisers belonging to the Team remained in Vietnam the following year. In December 1972 they became the last Australian troops to come home, with their unit having seen continuous service in South Vietnam for ten and a half years. Australia's participation in the war was formally declared at an end when the Governor-General issued a proclamation on 11 January 1973. The only combat troops remaining in Vietnam were a platoon guarding the Australian embassy in Saigon (this was withdrawn in June 1973).

In early 1975 the communists launched a major offensive in the north of South Vietnam, resulting in the fall of Saigon on 30 April. During April a RAAF detachment of 7–8 Hercules transports flew humanitarian missions to aid civilian refugees displaced by the fighting and carried out the evacuation of Vietnamese orphans (Operation Babylift), before finally taking out embassy staff on 25 April.

From the time of the arrival of the first members of the Team in 1962 over 60,000 Australians, including ground troops and air force and navy personnel, served in Vietnam; 523 died as a result of the war and almost 2,400 were wounded. The war was the cause of the greatest social and political dissent in Australia since the conscription referendums of the First World War. Many draft resisters, conscientious objectors, and protesters were fined or gaoled, while some soldiers met a hostile reception on their return home.

Information sourced from the AWM (Australian War Memorial) website.



Left: Bernard Szapiel holding an uninvited visitor outside his tent in Vietnam in 1968.

IAN JAMES THOMSON (SERVICE No 2786038)

Killed In Action 19 Oct 1968

My mate "Thommo" was killed in action 12 days before we were due to come home. His parting words as he passed my position that morning were "Zappa 12 and a wakey to go", meaning 12 sleeps and the next morning. Less than half an hour later he was dead, killed by an enemy rocket propelled grenade.

Below: "Thommo's" grave at Thirlmere cemetery NSW: 15 May 2018.



The Rynkiewicz family (mum and dad)

The family of three migrated to Australia from Germany (Skaugum Nov 1949).

1. Franciszek (Frank) Rynkiewicz (dad): born in Poland on 30 Dec 1913 – 26 Aug 1994 (Ballarat).
2. Irena (Olszewski) Rynkiewicz (mum): born in Gustawów Poland 17 Sep 1928 – 12 Nov 2019 (Ballarat).
3. Marjan (Mac) Rynkiewicz: born in Wolfenbuttel Germany 2 July 1947 (resides in Ballarat).
Married Lyn Hancock. Three children, Kelly, Leigh & Warren.
- 4 Peter Rynkiewicz: born in Townsville 8 Sep 1950 (Stuart migrant camp)(resides in Ballarat).
Married Maxine Hannah. Two children, Adam & Emma.
- 5 Barbara Rynkiewicz: born in Townsville 4 Dec 1951 (resides in Ballarat).
Married Brian Pummeroy. Four children, Anita, Nicole, Colleen & Mark.

Frank's (dad's) parents & siblings (all born in Poland)

Franciszek (Frank)(dad) migrated Nov 1949, and Stanisław (Stan) migrated Sept 1960.

1. Stanisław Rynkiewicz (my paternal grandpa): 15 June 1871 – 1943 (aged 72).
2. Franciszka (Galdziewicz)(my paternal grandma): 24 July 1873 – 1945 (aged 73).
3. Andzia (Anna) 13 April 1902 --
4. Stefania 28 July 1894 – 13 Nov 1973.
5. A daughter that died when a baby.
6. Jozepha (Jozefa) 19 March 1897
7. Zofia
8. Jadzia (Jadwiga)
9. Stefan 1912 – 1943 (Stefan was held in a Soviet gulag during the war & died of tuberculosis).
10. Franciszek (dad) 30 Dec 1913 – 25 Aug 1994 (Ballarat)(migrated to Australia in Nov 1949).
11. Stanisław 1 Aug 1915 -- 27 Nov 1995 (Melbourne)(migrated to Australia in Sep 1960).

The Stanisław Rynkiewicz family (dad's brother)

The family of four migrated to Australia from Poland (Oceania 3 Sep 1960) & lived in Ballarat then Melb.

1. Stanisław Rynkiewicz 1 Aug 1915--27 Nov 1995 (Melbourne)(lived in Ballarat then Melbourne).
2. Czesława (Ciesza)(nee Luty) 15 April 1919 -- 24 April 1996 (Melbourne).
3. Danuta (Denise) born in Poland in May 1947. Married Stan Slazyk, & they reside in Melbourne.
4. Janina Luty born in Poland in 1956. Married Angelo Bernadino. They reside in Melb & Creswick.

Irena's (mum's) parents & siblings (the Olszewski family)

All of the family migrated to Australia from Germany (Skaugum 29 Nov 1949).

1. Józef Olszewski (my maternal grandpa) 15 Aug 1905 – 19 May 1992 (Ballarat)
2. Karolina (Karlikowska)(my maternal grandma) 24 April 1910 – 28 April 1983 (Ballarat).
3. Irena (mum) 17 Sep 1928 – 12 Nov 2019 (Ballarat).
Married Frank Rynkiewicz. Three children, Marjan (born in Germany), Peter & Barbara.
4. Maria 26 Aug 1930 – Sep 1930 (died a baby).
5. Alfreda (Freddie) 26 Aug 1931 – 21 Sep 1978 (Templestowe).
Married Karel Havlin (Czech). Four children, Charles, Robert, Anna & Katryna.
6. Helen 19 Oct 1933_ Married Peter Zabrowarny (Ukrainian). They reside in Adelaide.
Six children, Joe, Peter, Theodore, Andrew & Helen (twins), & Tania.
7. Daniela (Danka) 21 Jan 1935 – 10 May 2018 (Ballarat).
Married Sławko Nykoluk (Ukrainian). Three children, George, Andrew & Julie.
8. Zofia 14 Jan 1937 – 30 March 2020 (Ballarat).
Married Ted Franczak. Four children, Helen, John, Karolina & Ann (twins).
9. Jan (John) 17 Mar 1940 – 14 Sep 2010 (Ballarat).
Married Anna Andrejczuk. Two children, John & Julie.
10. Marian Herman 8 Sep 1942 (born in Germany). Married Sandra Proleta. They reside in Adelaide.
Five children, Michael, Leanne, Scott, Suzanne & Paula.
11. Stanisław 3 Jan 1944 (born in Germany)(resides in Melbourne).
Married Annetta Cairns. They reside in Melb. Four children, Karen, Leisa, Joanne & Mark.

Franciszek (Frank) Rynkiewicz (dad) was born on 30 December 1913 (on the eve of WW1) in a village called Stabieńszczyzna, in north-east Poland (near Suwałki), on the eastern tip of the vast, remote and beautiful Masurian Lake District of north-eastern Poland. This area of Poland and neighbouring Lithuania were part of the Russian Empire. The Suwałki Region remains the centre of Poland's Lithuanian minority, explaining why Frank became fluent in Lithuanian as well as Polish. The Rynkiewicz family had a large farm. The small isolated territory of the Russian Republic was not far west, and Belarus (White Russia) was not far east. Frank was the eighth of nine children. When WW1 started the family fled across a frozen lake to hide in a forest, but found that baby Frank was missing. They found him on the lake, rugged up (papoose style) and asleep. The family survived the war. When Frank's younger brother Stan was seven he broke through the ice and fell into the lake. Frank tried to save Stan and also fell in. Older brother Stefan and their dad eventually saved them. Frank learnt to play the button accordion, and was in a dance band that played at weddings etc. At 21 Frank did two years of compulsory national service in the army, in the cavalry. Frank's older brother Stefan would inherit the farm, so Frank became an apprentice carpenter and cabinet maker in Warsaw.



Above left: Stanisław Rynkiewicz (grandpa) addressing a gathering at the Rynkiewicz farm: circa 1938.



Above left: L-R: Stanisław's sister, Stanisław, & Franciszka Rynkiewicz. When Frank & Irena visited Poland in 1973 the relatives said that Frank looked like his mum Franciszka.

Above right: Frank's brother Stan & his wife, & Frank's five sisters: L-R: Andzia, Jozepha, Stan's wife Czesława, Stan, Jadzia, Stefania & Zofia: circa 1959. Stan & Czesława and their two daughters (Danuta and Janina) migrated to Ballarat in 1960.

WW2 Frank (dad) joined Poland's new army reserve after completing national service, and the reserve had been engaged in response to the Nazi invasion on 1 September 1939. He fought in the horse-drawn hussar regiment in an artillery battalion as both a gunner and later as a forward observer and radio operator. He was captured by the Germans after 11 days when he was 10 km inside Germany, after his battery had attacked. Frank said that his carpentry skill (and possibly farming skill) probably ensured his survival (the Germans needed carpenters). However, during 1941-45, he was forced to work on farms near Siestedt (north west Germany). It was there that he met Irena Olszewski, and they married in June 1945. I (Marjan) (Mac) was born in July 1947, when they lived at the Heerte Displaced Persons camp

(Germany). Peter was born in 1950, when we lived at the Stuart migrant camp (Townsville). Barbara was born in Townsville in 1951, when we lived in Garbutt (Townsville).

*Right: Photos of Frank:
1938 to 1949.*

Scars Frank had a severe scar on his right foot, when he was a child his foot got trapped in farm machinery. He also had a big scar on his right cheek, Frank never told us how he got the scar and, funnily, we children never asked (we assumed that it was from the war). Mum

said that it was from a bar fight over a woman before the war! In photographs Frank looks to the right a little to hide his scar.



Stefan Rynkiewicz Frank's father (Stanisław) died in 1943, and dad's older brother (Stefan) would naturally inherit the farm. As it turned out, Stefan (who was an officer in the Polish Army), was lucky not to be one of the 8,000 officers shot by the Soviets in the *Katyn Massacre* in 1940 (discovered by the Germans in 1943). The massacre included 6,000 police officers, and 8,000 intelligentsia. The Soviets took Stefan to a gulag in Siberia, where he contracted tuberculosis. He was allowed to return home and died in 1945. So, Frank's younger brother Stan ended up running the farm.

Left: Frank & Irena at the Rynkiewicz family grave in Poland in 1973.

Irena Olszewski (later Rynkiewicz)(mum) was born on 17 September 1928, at her maternal grandparents' home (the Karlikowskis) in Gustawów, near Krasna, 100 km south of Warsaw. Irena's father was Jozef Olszewski, a sawmill, quarry, foundry and farm worker, from Gosań, 3 km north of Gustawów. Jozef died of pneumonia in Ballarat in 1992 aged 87. Irena's mother was Karolina (Karlikowska), Karolina died of cancer in Ballarat in 1983 aged 73. Irena was the oldest of nine children -- Maria (who died at 3 weeks), Alfreda Havlin (Freddie)(who died of cancer in Melbourne in 1978), Helena Zabrowarny (Helen and husband Peter live in Adelaide), Daniela Nykoluk (who died in Ballarat of a heart attack in 2018), Zofia Franczak (who died in Ballarat of cancer in 2020), John (who lived in Ballarat with wife Anna Andrejczuk)(John died of complications from a heart operation in 2010), Marian (Mo)(lives in Adelaide with wife Sandra), and Stan (lives in Melbourne with wife Annetta).

Karolina Olszewski (nee Karlikowski)(grandma) was one of seven Karlikowski children, but five siblings died from scarlet fever in two-weeks before WW1, then two sons were born, leaving four children – Mijanka, Karolina, Józef and Mietek. Karolina was the only Karlikowski to migrate to Australia, but her brother Józef Karlikowski did visit Ballarat in 1973.

Cows In 1938, Irena was tending their cow and cows belonging to other families, on the road-side, as usual. She got interested in a dead frog in the ditch. Eventually, she looked up and was horrified to see that the cows were enjoying themselves in a neighbour's potato patch.



Above left: 1 Karolina Olszewski (Karlikowska) (Irena's mum), 2 Irena, 3 Jozef Olszewski (Irena's dad), 4 Zofia Karlikowska (nee Kuszilik)(Irena's grandma), 6 Błażej Karlikowski (Irena's grandpa): others unknown: circa 1930.



Above right: The Karlikowskis: Karolina's brother Józef at rear: circa 1960. Józef visited Ballarat in 1973.

Stukas Early on the morning of 1 September 1939, as 11yo Irene tended their cow, she saw many planes pass overhead, flying in formation, and she realised that trouble was brewing as there had been much discussion at home about the possibility of war. She heard the thump of distant explosions, and she became frightened and hurried home with the cow in tow. On arrival, she learnt from her mother (Karolina) and her grandpa (Błażej), who had recently become Burmistrz (Mayor) of the district, that Poland had been attacked by the Nazis.

Forest Over the next few days, there were many Luftwaffe aircraft flying over the district. Polish troops had taken up defensive positions between Krasna and Stąporków, and it was obvious that Nazi soldiers would soon be arriving and there would be fighting in the area. Józef and Karolina, who was three months pregnant with Jan (John), gathered up their daughters, bedding, food and the cow, and hid in a forest not far from the family home for three nights and three days. They went back to the house at night for food and provisions.

Moo The family cow was a danger, her mooing could attract the Germans. Karolina tied her head scarf around the cow's mouth to reduce her mooing, and the family was never discovered. On the fourth day, Błażej found them and told them that the fighting front had passed and it was safe to return home.

Wounded Soldiers On arrival back in Gustawów, several wounded Polish soldiers were found, and Karolina accommodated three of them in the barn, attending to their wounds and providing food. The area was occupied by a Schutzstaffel (SS) Einsatzgruppen death squad who took over from the German Wehrmacht. The three soldiers were discovered and executed. They are buried in a group grave at the Krasna cemetery, with another nine Polish soldiers killed while fighting in the area.

Hero In 1940, after the invasion, a German inspector visited Irena's school, and he asked if anyone knew any songs. Irena (aged 11) sang a banned patriotic song. She noticed the teacher getting redder and redder, so she stopped, and said that *"that was all she could remember"*. The inspector then asked where she had learnt the song. The teacher was bright red. Irena, sensing danger, said that her mum had taught her -- but in fact she had learnt it at school. After saving the day, Irena was a hero.

Forced Labour In September 1941, following the defeat of the Luftwaffe by the RAF during the Battle of Britain, and the realisation that the war with the Soviets would be prolonged, Germany mobilised its economy and expanded production. They needed labour from the conquered regions. As the local Burmistrz (Mayor), Błażej Karlikowski was accountable to the district Nazi Gauleiter. He carried out the directives of the German administration in relation to the distribution of produce to local people, and

made sure that quotas were met. Regulations limited movements of goods and people. Błażej had to volunteer names of physically able men and women of working age (12 to 45) to be transported to Germany as forced labour according to their background and skills.

Błażej Karlikowski felt that he couldn't nominate people for forced labour without including members of his own family. He approached his sons, Józef and Mietek, and Józef Olszewski and Karolina, and all agreed to go. Irene Olszewski (mum), now 13yo, was old enough to be included. It was decided that baby Jan (John) Olszewski, just over 18 months old, would also be included because he needed his mother. Helen (9yo) was included to baby-sit John while others worked. They and other locals received identity cards and work permits, and were transported to Germany.

Józef, Karolina, Irena, Helen and John Olszewski left Gustawów and arrived in Germany on 28 October 1941.

Freddie, Daniela and Zofia Olszewski had to be left behind in Poland. Freddie stayed with the paternal grandparents, Władysław and Joanna Olszewski, in Gosań, 2 km from Gustawów. Daniela and Zofia stayed with the maternal grandparents, Błażej and Zofia Karlikowski, in Gustawów. Daniela remembered Zofia being in Józef's arms as Daniela walked beside him as they returned from the Olszewskis where he had bid Freddie and his parents farewell. Józef was in tears, but Daniela did not understand the consequences of her parent's departure to Germany. As it turned out, Zofia and Daniela led a comfortable existence with their loving maternal grandparents, they had adequate food and no specific dangers.

Consequences For Freddie, life with Władysław and Joanna was a misery. Joanna was less than loving, accommodation was poor, and spoiled potato and cabbage were frequently served up. This was to have consequences for the whole family, for, after the war, it was Freddie that bluntly refused to return to Poland.



Siestedt In 1941, Irena and the Olszewski family were sent to work on the Heiligtag farm near Siestedt, and this is where Irena met Frank. Freddie, Daniela and Zofia were left in Poland, because they were too young to work. Later, with great difficulty, Karolina got a pass to leave the farm and bring back the three girls. Zofia was surprised and elated when she recognised her mum walking up the street to her house. The four came back on overloaded trains carrying German soldiers wounded at the Russian front. Zofia said that the soldiers were kind, and she remembered sitting on a soldier's lap. Two of Irena's brothers, Marian and Stan, were born in Siestedt, in 1942 and 1944.

Karolina, Irena & Helen planting veggies at Siestedt.

Heiligtag Farm The Heiligtag family were caring and concerned with the welfare of the Olszewski family. Facilities and food were good, and there were few restrictions. Periodically the Heiligtags were visited by a seamstress, and the Heiligtags insisted that she also sew clothing for the Olszewskis. The villagers from Siestedt also showed kindness to workers by providing clothing and goods. Frank befriended the village baker named Schroeder, whose mother was of Polish descent. Frank and the Olszewskis enjoyed a good supply of baked goods to the end of the war.

Bomber Siestedt was not specifically targeted by bombings, but some bombs did fall in the vicinity, and several allied aircraft were shot down close to the village. Helen told me that on one occasion an American bomber crashed on the farm, killing all on board except for one airman who had parachuted. Helen remembers the airman sitting in a German jeep which had stopped at the front of the house, and he was crying for his lost crew-mates.

Airmen On another occasion Helen, nine years old, had been given an assignment by her mum, Karolina. She had to walk to a Polish family in another village, to get some suction cups, to treat young Marian Olszewski, who had Diphtheria. Adult Poles wore a [P] on their clothing, and travel was generally forbidden. Helen took a safer long route, partly through forest, and she happened upon a group of what she thinks must have been American airmen, who fled when they saw her approaching. When she got back she told Karolina, who told her not to tell anyone. The incident did show that peril was everywhere, the airmen could have harmed Helen to avoid being found.

Frank's photos at the Siestedt farm



Above: Frank drove the tractor, here threshing grain.

Below: Harvesting turnips.







Joseph Olszewski (grandpa).



Dropping feed during snow fall.







Prisoners being trucked to farms & factories.



Frank was a card sharp.



GoogleEarth of the Heiligtag family farm at Siestedt.



Some of Frank's German licences & permits & identity cards

Frank used the name Cynkiewicz when he became a POW in Poland, so that he could alphabetically be in the same barrack as one of his army mates, and he had to use that phoney name for the rest of the war.



Antek's Haystack

This saga was told to me years ago by mum, and also recently in part by my uncle Mo (Marian) who lives in Adelaide. Frank (dad) hid a Pole (Antek Burkowski might have been his name) in a haystack in the loft of the stables at the Siestedt farm for a year, and no-one knew but Frank. Antek used to go jogging in the fields at night for exercise, sometimes in the nude they say, and there had been rumours of sightings. Antek was to have been hanged, perhaps for killing a German, or perhaps it was for sabotaging production, but a sympathetic local official allowed him to escape. Apparently Antek and Frank had been in the Army together, so Antek asked for Frank's help. At the farm, a few weeks before that area was liberated, a mentally retarded Pole, also called Antek, who used to milk the cows at 5 am every morning, accidentally turned up at 2 am, and caught Antek milking a cow. Antek decided to flee. Frank helped with clothing, and Antek hurried away up the middle of a channel to fool the noses of the inevitable German Shepherds. Antek sent a cryptic post card saying he had made it to Hamburg, but he was never heard from again. Mum said that they thought that he had been killed when Hamburg was firebombed, which was in July 1943.

Probably unrelated to the Antek saga, there is a family story that Frank spent four weeks in a hard labour camp, working in a dangerous mine, probably for some misdemeanour. When Frank's dad Stanisław died in 1943, Frank was given leave to attend the funeral, but Frank came back the next day because he was refused a pass.

Liberation

When liberation was near, Frank hid for a few days. He was worried that the Germans might want revenge for sabotage or for aiding Antek. When the Americans arrived Frank met them and rode on the first M4 Sherman tank to roll into the village. Many of the Americans were Poles, from Chicago way. They gave Frank a rifle to settle any scores – prisoners were unofficially given two days to settle any scores, after which the strict rule of law was to be observed. The farmer that Frank worked for had been cruel, but Frank handed the rifle back. The American tank unit had a monkey as their mascot.

Auntie Helen, Irena's sister, told me that she and the family and a number of German soldiers were sheltering in the cellar, and the Germans gave themselves up when the tanks arrived.



Above: Frank (aged 31) & Irena (aged 16) married at Siestedt. As usual there was a registry marriage (7 June 1945, Walbeck), followed by a church wedding (10 June, Weferlingen).

Above right: Irena, when about 14, became permanently deaf in her left ear, because of an operation for an infection, which was caused by a small feather from her pillow entering her ear. The silly doctor had earlier failed to properly diagnose the cause of the pain.

Soviet Zone A friendly German (an ex officer) advised the Poles at Siestedt to move away, because Siestedt was to be a part of the Soviet zone. They had one day to move out, and they moved to the **Empelde DP camp**, near Hanover, which was in the British zone. My Uncle Mo (mum's brother Marian) told me that when he visited Siestedt in about 2008 he saw watch towers, built by the Soviets, as a part of a prison or some-such, still standing. The Olszewski family wanted to return to Poland, but daughter Alfreda, having hated being ruled by the Germans, said she would rather die than live in a Poland ruled by the Soviets, and she ran away for a time. Frank and Irena too wanted to migrate, so the Olszewskis & Rynkiewicz made the life changing decision to migrate



Above: Empelde, 1945

Life in Empelde DP camp 1945





Heerte camp

In 1946 the Olszewski family and mum and dad (now married) were moved to the Heerte DP (refugee) camp, near Brunswick, still in the British zone, West Germany. Marjan (Mac) was born in Wolfenbuttel on 2 July 1947. Frank paid for Irena to give birth in the good public German

hospital in Wolfenbuttel rather than in the third rate free hospital in the refugee camp. The refugee camp hospital had a poor record because the German doctors were not very interested in the welfare of aliens. Irena's brother Marian (Mo) remembers getting a dink on the bike when Frank bicycled to Wolfenbuttel (about 15 km) to make the arrangements.



Left: The Olszewski & Rynkiewicz clans at Heerte.

Life in Heerte camp 1947-49



Above: Pupils & staff at the Polish school, Heerte. Teresa Skrypko is probably one of the girls.

The Heerte soccer team

Uncle Mo Olszewski told me that the Heerte soccer team played in a tournament at a camp about an hour drive away. Players and spectators were transported on army trucks. The camp had been a concentration camp, and Mo and Stan spent all day playing around the deserted crematoria and rail tracks and buildings. Irena (mum) told me that the soccer had been at a village called Graue (Graue is 100 km north west of Heerte). Mo remembers one of the players in the photo, he was stabbed at a Heerte dance.



Swimming at the Seedorf DP camp fire pond 1949



Miscellaneous photos



Seedorf DP camp, Munster DP camp, and then Australia

Frank and Irena (and Mac) had the choice of going to Canada, America, South America, New Zealand or Australia. They chose Australia, or perhaps Australia was the first to accept. So, the Olszewskis too decided to go to Australia. The Rynkiewicz and Olszewski families moved to the Seedorf DP camp, near Hamburg, and then to the Munster DP camp, near Holland.





Bagnoli DP camp, and the Skaugum

In late 1949 they spent five weeks in the Bagnoli DP camp, near Naples, Italy, and then boarded the Skaugum in Naples and disembarked at Newcastle, Australia, on 29 November 1949.

Rynkiewicz & Olszewski IRO photos from the National Archives Canberra



Greta camp From Newcastle everyone was taken to the Greta migrant camp, NSW. During December 1949 and January 1950, Joseph (grandpa), Frank (dad) and other men were sent to northern Queensland for their two year contract, some cut sugar cane.

Below left: The Rynkiewicz & Olszewskis at Greta camp.

Below right: The Rynkiewicz, Olszewski, Skiba, Wisniewski and Łyszczarz clans at Greta migrant camp. The Skibas settled near Townsville, the Wisniewskis and Łyszczarz settled in Melbourne.



Stuart camp At Greta there were complaints regarding the men working far away in Queensland, so the government established the Stuart migrant camp (Stuart Commonwealth Immigration Holding Centre) at an ex-RAAF radio station near Townsville. The women and children moved to Stuart in February 1950, and the men could then reside with their family, or at least visit on weekends.



Above: Some views of Stuart migrant camp courtesy of National Archives Canberra.



Stuart camp Christenings & gatherings





Stuart camp kinder from the Blocki family album: circa 1950



Ballarat At least twelve of the Polish families that arrived on the Skaugum on 29 July 1949 or 29 November 1949, and then lived briefly at the Greta migrant camp, and later at the Stuart migrant camp, ended up living in Ballarat. These included the Andrejczuks, Caceks, Drons, Dziubas, Havlins, Jakiels, Jaroczeks, Mytyks, Olszewskis, Pileckis, Poltoraskys, Popovics, Walczaks and Rynkiewicz. The Shulhas, Wisniewskis and Łyszczarz and others settled in Melbourne. Some settled in Adelaide. Karel Havlin (Czech), one of the camp cooks, moved to Newcastle (hotel work), then Sydney (where he had a delicatessen), then Ballarat, and later to Melbourne. The Nykoluks (Jarosław and Daniela) lived in Townsville and then settled in Ballarat -- Daniela (Olszewski) had lived in Stuart migrant camp, but Jarosław had not.

Acme Motor Bike When at the Stuart migrant camp dad bought an Acme motor bike. When he was getting tested for his motorbike licence in Townsville he didn't stop at a STOP sign and the policeman asked why he hadn't stopped. Dad said in his usual poor English -- "no car, no stop". He got his licence. And in later years I don't remember him ever fully stopping at any STOP sign, if the way was clear -- and he never did learn proper English. Peter Rynkiewicz was born at the Townsville Hospital in September 1950 -- mum recovered at the camp infirmary -- I remember mum showing me my new baby brother at a window. Frank was good at chess. He played No1 for the Stuart migrant camp versus the Townsville chess club. In Ballarat Frank's Polish mates would regularly visit to play chess.

Havlins Alfreda Olszewski and Karel Havlin (Czech)(camp cook) were married at St Brigid's church, Stuart, in 1950. The Havlins bought a deli in Sydney for a few years before moving to Ballarat in 1955. In Sydney Karel used to bake pastries for himself and for Frank Lowy who had a wholesale delivery service. Lowey asked Karel to join him in a shopping development venture, but Karel declined. The venture later became Westfield Group, with 103 shopping centres around the world.



Czechoslovakia In 1938, in Czechoslovakia, Karel Havlin had completed a four-year apprenticeship in hotel management and catering in the Moravian capital of Brno when it became part of Third Reich's long sought-after *Sudetenland*. In 1940, he was drafted into the *Luftwaffe* as a radio operator, but was discharged in 1942 without seeing active service. He then commenced a commerce course while being employed as a bookkeeper in the city's food market, and later he was a bank clerk. Following the Yalta agreement, Czechoslovakia, like Poland, after the war, was under Soviet rule. The new communist Czech regime was on the hunt for any Nazi collaborators and considering his brief stint in the *Luftwaffe* Karel

now faced re-education in a gulag. The bank was forced to terminate his employment, and in 1949 Karel decided to escape to Austria and the western world. It was mid-winter in Moravia and the border lands were covered in snow. He'd purchased a fur-lined winter overcoat and leather hiking boots, compass, some food, and a revolver. He used public transport to travel to a village near the border. Late in the night, under a new moon, he proceeded cross country, avoiding villages and farms. It was snowing, and there was lightning and thunder. He accidentally walked in a circle because the compass needle was affected by the revolver, so he threw the revolver into a stream. Later he thought that he heard footsteps and a barking dog getting closer, so he quickened his pace, but the footsteps seemed to get nearer, so he hid in a thicket. After a time he realised that the footsteps were actually the beat of his heart. He recovered from this false alarm and crossed a stream which he knew was the border, and soon made contact with Austrian border guards. Karel was given refugee status, and he travelled to Vienna where he stayed with his uncle, and worked in a hotel. Karel applied to migrate to Argentina and also to Australia, and the Australians responded first. Karel boarded the Skaugum in Naples, and disembarked in Melbourne on 29 July 1949. He was sent to Bonegilla migrant camp, then Greta migrant camp, and then to the Stuart migrant camp near Townsville.

St Brigid's Church & Rectory in Stuart



Above: Charles Havlin, Christening of Peter Rynkiewicz 1951.

Right: A recent photo. St Brigid's is 1 km south of Stuart migrant camp.



Zabrowarnys Irena's sister Helen married Peter Zabrowarny (Ukrainian) at Ingham near Townsville in November 1951. Peter had spent his two year contract at the Queensland Department of Forestry at Chinchilla, then as a gardener at the Sacred Heart College in Townsville. After his contract ended he cut cane, and then worked as a carpenter (with Frank) at the Townsville power-house project. Peter's mum (Maria) and dad (Theodore) worked for two years as caretakers and gardeners for Bishop Ryan in Townsville, after which Theodore too cut cane. The Zabrowarnys all settled in Adelaide, where Peter, now 91, is in a care-home, near his wife Helen who still lives in their home of almost 70 years.

Below: Peter & Theodore Zabrowarny during a break from cutting cane, with their red heeler Rusty.



On the far left in the above photo appears to be Michal Solski (Ukrainian), a friend of Peter Zabrowarny, who sailed on the Gen Sturgis to Sydney 14 May 1948. Michał was killed in a motorbike accident in Brisbane on 23 July 1955.

Superman Theodore Zabrowarny flew back to Ingham to cut cane in 1953-54, and got into a fist fight with six or seven Italian cutters at the hotel. Theodore had been a professional soldier in the French Foreign Legion -- he backed into a corner and cleaned them up one by one. He injured his hand and while in hospital he heard that the police were looking for him -- so he hid in some sugar cane, then caught the train to Townsville. He flew to Melbourne, took the train to Ballarat, and then a taxi to the Olszewski home. His hand was bandaged and in a sling, and he regaled us with the story. He later found out that the police were not wanting to arrest him, they wanted to see this superman.

Nykoluks Irena's sister Daniela (Dunka) Olszewski married Jarosław (Sławko) Nykoluk (Ukrainian) in Jan 1952, at St Brigid's church, near Stuart migrant camp, and the reception was held at our home in Garbutt (*photo below*). The next day the Olszewski family (Joe and Karolina and four children) and the newlyweds left by train for Maldon, Victoria, the newlyweds having their honeymoon on the crowded train.

Sławko sailed from Venice on the Gen Sturgis and disembarked at Sydney on 14 May 1948, and was taken to the newly built Bathurst migrant camp. His two year contract required him to work on the construction of Warragamba Dam near Sydney, as a helmeted diver. After his contract he cut cane near Townsville. In Ballarat Sławko played soccer for the Kosciuszko soccer club, & worked for MB John Valves as a fitter and turner. Dunka worked as a ward assistant at the Ballarat Mental Hospital.

Daniela & Sławko Nykoluk had their wedding reception at the Rynkiewicz home in Garbutt. We see Stan Dziuba, Fr Karol Warzecha, Stan Jakiel & Jarosław Sawczak (the Sawczaks settled in Adelaide).



Stuart camp At the Stuart migrant camp, John, Mo and Stan, my young uncles, would throw quartz stones onto the tarmac road, to make sparks at dusk. They showed me how, if you coloured the stones with red crayon, they made better sparks. I remember that one day John was pushed off the overhead bars at the camp playground and injured his wrist and ran home crying. He got to wear a plaster cast for a few weeks.

Mum's sister, Daniela (or it might have been her sister Helen) worked at the camp Infirmary, and she saw an incident on the main road at the front of the camp. The driver of a small truck pushed his wife out as they were going past, and Daniela gave evidence at the trial. Some trucks didn't have doors back then. I remember a large crowd gathered at the front fence of the camp as the poor lady, with bad head abrasions, was attended by an ambulance.

Wallabies I remember John, Mo and Stan duelling with wallaby tails, in the bush near the camp. An Aussie crocodile hunter had a home in the camp, and he had pet cockatoos and dogs -- he must have shot the wallabies for dog food, but strangely he left the tails. In 1994 and 2001 when I visited the site of the camp I never failed to see or hear wallabies in the long grass. There were new residential areas on two sides, but the camp site backs onto the steep slopes of Mt Stuart. In the 1960s, James Cook University temporarily used the camp for student accommodation. The camp buildings were removed in the 70s, after permanent accommodation had been provided on campus. In 2001, the concrete floors of the old laundry and toilet buildings were still in place, and I could see the gravelled underfloor areas marking the footprints of the other buildings. The roads and tennis courts were still there. Part way up the hill there is a large WW2 concrete communication center, now burnt out and fenced off.

Kissing Point Army Base Frank was required to work as a carpenter at the Kissing Point Army Base, but he was released from his two year government contract after only six months.

Garbutt In 1950 we moved out of the Stuart migrant camp after Frank bought an old house in Garbutt, Townsville. Frank worked on the Townsville powerhouse project, then on an RAAF housing project, and in 1952 on a cement plant project. The cement plant was brought from Japan to Townsville as a part of war reparations. Frank was the site AWU representative during a long union pay-strike. I saw an article in a Brisbane newspaper mentioning dad and the strike, but I can't find that article today. In 1953 he worked for himself, modernising and relocating two houses belonging to the Schmidt family -- they had a dairy at the end of our street. Barbara Rynkiewicz was born in December 1951. I started school at Garbutt State School in 1953.



Irena, Barb, Mac, Peter & Frank: Our house after it was relocated to the front of the block: 1952.

Memories of Garbutt

On a rainy day in 1952 dad walked to a nearby swamp to fish for wild duck. He had a large wooden hand caster, and used cheese for bait. It might have fooled Polish ducks, but not Aussie ducks. Dad didn't do any better fishing on the breakwater at Townsville harbour in 1951 using that hand caster, with thick fishing line and big hooks. Dad decided to change bait, so he walked into town and bought some prawns, not green, but fried red. After a few hours without a bite, we ate the rest of the bait.

Dad and his workmate, Sławko decided to fish for Barramundi in a creek north of Townsville. Dad rode his motorbike with me sitting on the petrol tank, and Sławko pedalled his bike. We went north along bush tracks, looking for the creek. After a while the motorbike ran out of petrol. Luckily we saw a farmer driving around his paddock, loading cow dung into his Ford ute. So we helped, and the farmer gave us a lift home, with the motor bike, bicycle and us on the pile of dung.

Dad went exploring the Townsville countryside on his motorbike, with me on the petrol tank. We promptly came to a ford at a wide creek. The water wasn't deep, but there was a long-horn cow standing in the middle of the road on the other side, staring at us. Dad's family had a big farm back in Poland, but these were the longest horns that he had ever seen. We stared at the cow for a while, and then dad did a u-turn, and that was the end of the expedition.

Dad worked as a carpenter and cabinet maker in Warsaw. When the Olszewskis and Rynkiewicz were to migrate to Australia dad made wooden cases for our possessions. In Townsville dad made a shaving case, and the lid had an inset of Australia, with an Emu and a Kangaroo. Dad shaved every day. He used a shaving brush to soap his face, and he



sharpened his cut-throat razor on a fat leather razor strop. In about 1959 he bought an electric shaver.

One day mum and I walked to the shop while little Peter stayed at home alone. Walking back home we could see a big bird on the roof. When we got closer the bird was Peter, he had climbed a ladder onto the water tank, and then onto the roof.

I was having a snooze when the house began to shake. I looked out the back door, and I saw dad, workmate Sławko, uncle Peter Zabrowarny, Peter's dad (Theodore), and grandpa (Joe), with crowbars, levering and rolling the house, on logs, to the front of the block. There they turned the house 90 deg. Later dad and Sławko raised the house up onto the new log-posts. I remember dad and Sławko playing chess by candlelight, this must have been after the house was shifted, before power was reconnected. Shifting the house opened up a large area for a veggie garden, and perhaps raising the house slowed the termites. We grew pawpaws, watermelons and bananas, and we had chooks. Dad pulverised shells from the beach for the chooks.

After our house was relocated to the front of the block mum *spied* on the guy in the RAAF house across the street, he walked around in the nude on hot nights. Dad had worked for the builder who built the 19 RAAF houses. Mum would often get me to take tea across the road to dad for smoko or lunch.

When going to the outdoor *dunny* at night I would run the gauntlet of dozens of giant (to little four year old me) cane toads. The outlet pipe from our bath emptied onto the dusty ground under the house. I would run some water into the bath, then pull the plug, and run outside and block the outlet pipe with my hands. After a while I would let the water go, and lots of beautiful big green tree frogs would come tumbling out onto the ground. They liked the cool, shady dampness in the pipe. Every bed had a mosquito net, I suppose that rich people had well sealed houses and fly screens. Before bedtime we used a hand-pump bug-sprayer, there were no pressure-packs back then.

We lived near the aerodrome. Lincoln bombers flew low overhead when landing, and rattled the crockery. I waved to the pilots of Vampire jets. One day a Lincoln bomber crashed, and I remember the column of black smoke rising high into the sky.

During our last few weeks in Garbutt, before we moved to Ballarat, we rented a farm house at the end of our street, a house belonging to the Schmidt family. We had heavy rain for three days non-stop. The Schmidt's dairy cows huddled under our verandas, and they made a deep moat of cow poo.

Our old house was gone when I visited in 1994. Neighbours said that hippies lived in it, then it was relocated to a farm. That side of the street is now industrial but some RAAF houses (that dad built) and other houses remain. I visited Mrs Jaques, she was still living behind our old place, but the old wartime prefab barrack had been replaced with a new house, still sitting very high up – Mrs Jaques remembered us very well. I used to play with Patricia and Raymond Jaques. Mum rang Mrs Jaques and talked about old times. And in 1994 I visited Warren Schmidt, another playmate, who was still living in the Schmidt's original home at the end of our street -- in the 50s it was a dairy farm.

Cairn Curran Dam The Olszewski family moved out of the Stuart migrant camp in December 1951, and moved to Baringhup, near Maldon, Victoria, where they rented a house next to the Loddon River, next to the Cairn Curran Dam. George Poltorasky (Russian), who had been at Stuart migrant camp,

had organised the rental. The Poltoraskys rented a house on the same property, and George Poltorasky probably worked on the construction of the Cairn Curran Dam. Shortly after, the Andrejczuk and Droń families, also from the Stuart migrant camp, moved in with the Olszewskis. The Pilecki and Dziuba families, also from Stuart, moved in with the Poltoraskys. In 1953 all six families would end up living in or near a *Little Poland* in Sebastopol, Ballarat. Baringhup was suffering a rabbit plague, and they soon got sick of eating rabbit. The Olszewskis, not knowing about bushfires, started a large fire when they dumped embers in the back yard during summer. They started to empty their belongings from the house, luckily the local fire brigade saw the smoke and were quickly on the scene and saved the house.

Sebastopol In 1952, finding that houses in Melbourne were expensive, the Olszewskis bought a house in Albert St, Sebastopol, Ballarat. The house was bought jointly with Jarosław and Daniela Nykoluk (Irena's sister). Grandpa (Joseph) worked for Ford making car doors, and later he worked at the flax mill, and then with the Victorian Railways. Grandma, Karolina, worked as a Ward Assistant at the Ballarat Mental Hospital, as did many other Polish mums.

Garbutt to Sebastopol The Rynkiewicz family left Garbutt and followed the Olszewski family to Ballarat in early 1954. I remember that when we left Townsville it had been raining heavily for three days, and in some places the train tracks were under water. At one location, when the train had to stop, a railway workman showed us an Echidna that had been swimming past. At the Burdekin River the rail bridge and the road bridge were under water, and everyone was taken across in small boats. I remember that whilst crossing at night the outboard motor on our boat came loose and luckily the boatman managed to grab it to save it from falling into the drink. When I drove past in 2002 the old low rail bridge was still there, next to a new high bridge. Initially the Rynkiewiczzs stayed with the Olszewski family, and Frank built a new home nearby while working on the Ballarat powerhouse project. Moving house became a habit and over the years Frank and Irena moved home ten times in Ballarat.



1926 Morris Cowley Frank sold his Acme motor bike to Julian Pilecki, and bought his first car, an old 2-door 1926 Bull Nose Morris Cowley ragtop coupe with a dickey/rumble seat and spoked wheels. On one occasion a wheel came off on the way to work. Frank removed the dickey seat to make a kind of ute, to cart bricks and building materials.



FJ Holden In 1955 Frank replaced the Morris with a new FJ Holden panel van. Frank built a home across the road for the Nykoluks (Irena's sister). Then he helped Karel and Alfreda Havlin (Irena's sister) to build their new home, after which Frank built spec houses. Later Frank helped grandma and grandpa to build a new home in Alfredton, but grandma and grandpa decided to stay in their original home, and sold the new home. Frank then helped John (Irena's brother), who had married Anna Andrejczuk, to build their first new home.



Top photo: A Morris Cowley.

Above: Frank & Irena in their new FJ Holden, 1956.

Right: The Olszewski clan moved to Sebastopol Ballarat in 1952 & the Rynkiewiczzs followed in 1954.



Above: Some of the kids that lived in Little Poland, Sebastopol, in 1954, including a couple of visiting kids. Frank sold his Acme motor bike to Julian Pilecki, and we can see the rear wheel here (13). (1) Mac Rynkiewicz, (2) George Nykoluk, (3) Andrew Nykoluk, (4) girl Pilecki, (5) girl Pilecki, (6) girl Pilecki, (7) Peter Rynkiewicz, (8) Barbara Rynkiewicz, (9) Charles Havlin, (10) Jenifer Pilecki, (11) Alice Walczak, (12) Joseph Cacek.

Jersey Cow I used to tend our family Jersey dairy cow on the grassy road verge at our house in Sebastopol in 1955 when I was 8. We had a 2 acre block behind our house, but that wasn't enough for a cow. Our cow provided milk for most of *little Poland*. Mum often tended the local dairy cows in Poland in 1936 when she was 8.

Garrick Frank used to smoke, but he gave up smoking before the war. To help give up, he made a bet -- *money always does the trick!* However, in 1956, Irena started smoking secretly. Once a week I would go to the shop to get a packet of Garrick and a Womens Weekly, and once a month a Pix magazine, and sneak back past dad. My bribe was a choc-wedge ice-cream. Funny, dad hated comic books, I don't know why, perhaps it was because they cost one shilling. If he saw one of my comics, he would immediately tear it into little pieces. So, naturally, I tried to keep them hidden. Dad didn't understand that my comics cost me very little, or nothing, because my friends and I would swap our comics for free, and I rarely needed to buy a new comic.

Ballarat Mental Hospital Irena worked as a Ward Assistant at the Ballarat Mental Hospital in 1954 (called Ballarat Asylum in 1867, Ballarat Hospital For The Insane in 1903, Ballarat Mental Hospital in 1933, Lakeside Hospital Ballarat in 1969, decommissioned in 1996). In 1964 Irena left to help Frank to run the Royal Exchange Hotel. Irena returned to the hospital in 1969, while still helping at the Hotel. Irena's English was very good, and she completed a psychiatric nursing course and became a Charge Nurse in charge of a ward, retiring in 1986 at age 58. Irena's mum Karolina also worked at Lakeside as a Ward Assistant (1953 to 1975). So did Irena's sisters, Freddie, Daniela, and Zofia, and brother-in-law Karel Havlin (Czech)(married to Freddie), and sister-in-law Anna Olszewski (married to John). At least 10 other Polish mums worked at the mental hospital. Also, in later years, Irena's son Peter (1972), plus six nephews and nieces and their spouses.



Below: Migrant nurses at Ballarat Mental Hospital: circa 1956.





A large gathering attended an afternoon tea held to farewell five Lakeside senior charge nurses who retired yesterday after serving a total of 154 years' service. Pictured at the farewell are, from left, acting director of nursing Ria Pepplinkhouse, Jack Martin (who worked at Lakeside for 29 years), Miram Manfreds (35 years), Irene Rynkiewicz (29 years), Ron

Kennedy (33 years) and psychiatrist superintendent Dr Steele Haughton. Retiring nurse Bert Armstrong was absent. All of the nurses said they had seen many changes since they started. More than 30 years ago Lakeside had more than 1100 patients and the same number of staff as there is now. There are now 480 beds with no more than 30 patients to a ward.

Chisholm St In 1956 the family moved to an old house in Chisholm St, Black Hill. Dad built a new house behind the old house. On Saturday night, 27 July 1957, Frank and Irene were painting inside their new home, and the three kids were in the old house with the open fire blazing. Barbara reached for a pen and paper off the mantelpiece, and her flannelette nightdress was sucked into the fire and quickly became a giant flame. I (Mac, ten years old) tried to douse the flames with glasses of water, but the nightdress burnt in seconds. Irene ran to the neighbours who rang for an ambulance. Poor Barbara (five and a half years old) had burns to 75% of her body, mainly on her back. The doctors expected her to live for just two days, and the nurses left her lying on her belly, with almost no care. Grandpa (Joseph Olszewski), visited Barb, and he was shocked that she was not being properly cared for, and he complained angrily, which possibly saved Barb's life. As the days went by the doctors realised that Barb might survive after all, which luckily she did, after almost three months in hospital. While in hospital, Barb would eat nothing but mum's soup. After leaving the hospital, for many months, Irene would have to take Barb back every few days for fresh dressings. Barbara's burns eventually healed, and fortunately her severe scarring did not negatively affect her.

St Patrick's Cathedral Poles met at St Patricks before and after Polish Mass.

Far right: Anna Jarecki, Irena, Anna Droń, Lidja Zabinski, Helena Wach, Zofia Niziorski, Stanisława Dziuba.

Right: Irena and Andrzej Jaroszek.

Below right: Anna Jarecki, Danuta Przekwas, and Irena.





Frank's brother Stan Rynkiewicz and his family

In 1960 Frank made arrangements and met the costs of bringing his younger brother Stanisław (Stan), his wife Czesława (Ciesza), and their two daughters, Danuta (Denise) and Janina, from Poland to Ballarat. They sailed on the Oceania and disembarked in Melbourne on 3 Sep 1960. The family lived in Ballarat for a while and then settled in Essendon, Melbourne. Frank died in 1994, Stan died in 1995, and Czesława died in 1996. After Frank died Irena went through dad's paperwork and found receipts going back to the 50s showing that dad sent large sums of money to his family in Poland without telling her. Denise married Stan Slazyk, and they live in Melbourne. Janina married Angelo Bernadino, and she has adopted her mother's maiden name (Luty) -- Janina and Angelo live in Melbourne and Creswick.

Below: Stan Olszewski (uncle), Irena (mum), Frank (dad), Mac (me), Karolina Olszewski (grandma), Denise Rynkiewicz (cousin), Stan Rynkiewicz (uncle), Joseph Olszewski (grandpa), Ciesza Rynkiewicz (aunt), Fr Władysław Ziółkóś: Front row: Peter (brother), Janina Rynkiewicz (cousin), Barbara (sister).



Below: Ciesza, Denise and Stan in Poland in 1951.

Below: Frank and Stan in about 1992.



Duck Shooting Frank's first love from 1956 to 1966 was duck shooting at swamps and creeks. Often dad and I (Mac) walked for miles along Burrumbeet Creek, shooting ducks, rabbits and hares. Dad bought a wooden rowboat in 1960, and we showed Irena how to put a worm on a hook, and she fell in love with fishing in Lake Wendouree. I would row with mum, and often Peter, out into the tall reeds, and we caught *tons* of redfin and tench. I never saw anyone else fishing in the tall reeds, they might anchor near the reeds, but always fished into open water. We caught more fish than everyone else combined. However, when we got better, we too caught trout in the open water. Dad would smoke eels caught in Lake Colac and other lakes. In about 1978 dad bought an aluminium runabout with a 40 hp Mercury, and built a caravan, and the family spent summers at Portarlington, fishing in Port Phillip. Dad's smoked flathead were delicious.



Lexton St In the 1960s we kids often tended our six geese on the road verge at our house at 111 Lexton St, near Lake Wendouree. It was a very long block, and we also had one sheep, ducks, chooks, pigeons, a big veggie patch, a hot house, and an orchard with 25 kinds of fruit trees. We had 17 bee hives at Lexton St, because in the 1930s dad's family had had an apiary on the family farm in Poland. At Lexton St, dad and I would collect our swarming bees off neighbours' verandas. Dad made a large centrifugal honey extractor. We had a small room full of honey, eventually some of it fermenting. Dad and his Polish mates would on many Sundays sit at the back of the shed sipping honey liquor dripping from a still. We had a big veggie garden at the back of every house that we ever had, sometimes potatoes instead of a front lawn. In the 70s mum and dad sold 111 Lexton St and bought a house with a similar long block at 117 Lexton St, and once again this was soon converted into a mini-farm.

Frank and Irena had weekly card nights, with friends and relatives, usually playing Polish 1000, always for a small stake.

Right: Chess with Fr Krasocki: Chess with Tad Jarecki & Wally Kitlowski.



THE COURIER, Ballarat, Friday, Jan. 1, 1971 Page 11



NO MORE BEER AT STREATHAM

Last night, one of the first hotels built in Western Victoria closed down.

Enjoying a final beer at the Royal Exchange Hotel yesterday were regular customers and the licensee Mr F. Rynkiewicz, (left), barman Mr Alby Adamthwaite and Mrs Rynkiewicz.



Royal Exchange Hotel

Frank was the Licensee of the Royal Exchange Hotel from 1964 to 1966, and again from 1969 to 1970, until its closure on New Year's Eve 1970. Our Barman was Alby Adamthwaite, and Anna Droń helped with cleaning and cooking. The historic old hotel was torn down, and the State Regional Office (the ugly, modern glass house) now stands on that corner in Mair St. Frank was not only a builder, carpenter and hotelier, but over the years he worked at the paper mills, a caravan factory, and he established Learmonth Road Smash Repairs, which was managed by Irena's brothers, Marian Olszewski (panel beater), and John.

It was the Streatham Hotel, one of several Victorian hotels to close because they can't afford the cost of renovations to be brought up to the standard required by the Liquor Control Commission. Cobb and Co. coaches first rolled through Streatham's wide main street about 120 years ago.

But the hotel was built well before then because Cobb and Co. built stables next to it. Although no-one can positively say when the hotel was built, according to the licensee, Mr J. Allen, locals generally believe it has been established at least 120 years.

MILES AWAY

There are only three shops in Streatham and Mr Allen believes their business could suffer because of the hotel closing.

Clinders and hairdriers from the surrounding area usually do their shopping and drinking on the same visit. Now that there is no beer at Streatham, they could go to Lake Bulac, 17 miles west, or Skipton, 13 miles east of Streatham.

Drinkers in the area must now dread New Year's Eve. This time last year, the Southern Cross Hotel at Moy-ston, north-west of Streatham, was forced to close.

Ballarat also lost another of its century-old hotels last night.

The 103-year-old Royal Exchange Hotel in Mair street served its last beer before demolition.

It will make way for a \$1 million hotel-motel complex.

Present licensee, Mr and Mrs P. Rynkiewicz have been in the hotel for about four years.

Mr Rynkiewicz will go in-betweens to the parceling business now that the hotel has closed.

Ararat and Stawell have also not done because they did not meet the commission's standards.

The Post Office Hotel in Main street, Stawell, which is run by former Geelong and Victorian footballer, Roy West, closed on Wednesday.

Ararat's Terminus Hotel closed its doors for the last time last night.

Bendigo drinkers now have three fewer hotels to drink at following the closure of the Sandhurst, European and View Point hotels.

The combined age of the three hotels is 343 years and the last to be built was the European which was opened in 1858.

But the loss of the hotels should not unduly worry local drinkers. There are still 59 hotels left.

Copernicus Hall Frank and Irena were popular Polish Association members. Being a builder, Frank supervised the building of Copernicus Hall in 1976. The hall was sold to the local scouts after the Polish Association wound up in 2018.

Copernicus Hall opening in 1976.



Frank working at the hall in 1976



Below: The Olszewski clan used the hall for birthdays and anniversaries.



150 at their anniversary



Josef and Karolina Olszewski at their 50th wedding anniversary.

A group of 150 people gathered at the Copernicus Hall, Sebastopol, to help Mr and Mrs Josef Olszewski celebrate their golden wedding anniversary. The couple were married at Krasna, Poland, and have eight children, 31 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Guests travelled from Adelaide, Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat and from around the district.

When Mr and Mrs Olszewski entered the hall they were welcomed by their grandson, Mark Olszewski, and great-grand-daughter, Colleen Pammaray, who greeted them with flowers and a traditional plate of bread, salt and wine. Before the party, Mass was celebrated at St James' Church, Sebastopol, by Father J. Kranski and Father Kelly. Mr and Mrs Olszewski live in Albert street, Sebastopol.

Poland 1973 Irena and Frank were thrilled to visit their old farm and homes and relatives in Poland. Frank's mum and dad had died of old age in 1943 and 1945, but three of Frank's sisters were still alive. A number of relatives visited Ballarat in later years.



Thursday, December 2, 1999

1999 Reunion

Below: A snippet from The Courier.

50 years in the lucky country for the Olszewskis



HAVING escaped war torn Poland 50 years ago, the Olszewski family have celebrated half a century in Australia.

About 120 members of the family enjoyed a family reunion at Lake Wendouree.

The family's journey began when Jozef and Karolina left Poland with their eight children in 1949.

The family's survival is more remarkable as some members survived labour camps.

They initially lived in Newcastle on their arrival in Australia but were attracted by Ballarat's cooler climate and engineering opportunities in 1952.

Five generations and about 200 Olszewskis later, and many of the family members have stayed firmly planted in Ballarat.

"It's an amazing story," said Stan Olszewski who was one of the eight children to come to Australia with his parents.

"We packed up lock, stock and barrel and came to Australia," He said the family was thankful it came to Australia.

"We're very proud of our heritage," he said.

"And we're very much home — it is the lucky country."

Happy to be here: John Olszewski, Angela Andreczuk, Irene Rynkiewicz, Daniele Nykoluk, Zofia Franczak and Stan Olszewski with other family members at the reunion.

2023 Irena's sister Helen Zabrowarny lives in Adelaide, brother Mo lives in Adelaide, and brother Stan lives in Melbourne.

1978 Irena's sister Freddie died in Melbourne aged 47 (liver cancer).

1983 Irena's mum Karolina died in Ballarat aged 73 (lymphoma cancer). After Karolina died the ever growing clan had their parties at Irena's home. Through the 1960s most of the clan lived in Ballarat, except for Helen and Peter Zabrowarny, who moved to Adelaide in 1953. As time went by the remainder of Irena's siblings got married and some moved to Adelaide or Melbourne, but Daniela and Zofia and John stayed in Ballarat.

1992 Irena's dad Joseph Olszewski died in Ballarat aged 87 (pneumonia).

1994 Frank died in Ballarat aged 80 (Parkinson's). Irena cared for dad until he had to go into the Jack Lonsdale Lodge nursing home.

2010 Irena's brother John died in Melbourne aged 70 (infection following heart surgery).

2018 Irena's sister Daniela died in Ballarat aged 83 (heart attack).

2019 Irena died in Ballarat aged 91 (Alzheimer's). About 8 years ago Irena developed Alzheimer's, and Barbara moved to Ballarat (from Melbourne) to care for her at home. Irena spent her last four years in the Jack Lonsdale Lodge, passing away in her sleep at 6am on Tuesday 12th November 2019, aged 91 years. Both mum and dad died at the Jack Lonsdale Lodge, just two blocks from the clan's original historic sentimental ground zero, the Sebastopol home that was owned by Irena's mum and dad from 1952 to 1990, and just three blocks from the Rynkiewicz family home of 1955.

2020 Irena's sister Zofia died in Ballarat aged 83 (cancer). Zofia's death certificate said that she had lung cancer for 6 years, and peripheral vascular disease for 5 years (which is related to type 2 diabetes which she had for 10 years), and she had a shadow on her liver which had not been diagnosed.

2019 The staff at the Lodge adored Irena, she was their favourite (especially for activities coordinator Robyn), we can't thank them enough for their wonderful work.

During Irena's last year she looked and sounded like the same old lovely mum we used to know, she was almost always happy, and often laughed, sometimes cried -- she was a young girl again -- and worried about her mum and dad.

2023 Irena leaves three children (Mac, Peter, Barbara) -- 9 grandchildren (Kelly, Leigh, Warren, Adam, Emma, Anita, Nicole, Colleen and Mark) -- and 15 great grandchildren (Ella, Jemima, Milla, Lila, Wren, River, Madison, Isabella, Jack, Tom, Lucy, Macey, Ruby, Ella and Kai). We are all so lucky to have had Irena's love all of these years, and we will love her for ever.

Below: Irena at Jack Lonsdale Lodge, Sebastopol: 2018.

Below: Frank & Irena at Peter's wedding to Maxine Hannah.



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CH17 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS by Wanda Mann (Skirzynski)

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I wish to thank everyone who encouraged me to keep writing -- emphasising the value of recording the Association's history.

CH18 DISCLAIMER

The authors and contributors assume no responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions in the content of this book. The information contained in this book is mainly from the personal information, family stories and memories of the migrants and their descendants, with no guarantees of completeness or accuracy.

APPENDIX A

Polish Families in Ballarat -- Polish Association Members

Migrant camps: (B) Bonegilla. (Ba) Bathurst. (C) Cowra. (G) Greta. (M) Mildura. (N) Northam. (R) Rushworth. (S) Stuart. (U) Uranquinty. (V) Villawood. (W) Woodside.

Andrejczuk (G)(S)		Luter
Anioła (B)(M)	Harasimowicz (B)(M)	
Antosiewicz (U)	Havlin (S)	Maciąg (B)
		Majda (Hon) (B)
Biała	Iwanowicz (B)(M)	Majewski
Blasiak (B)	Iwanowski (B)(M)	Markiewicz (B)
Bobik (B)(M)	Izidorczyk (B)	Materna
Borecki (B)(M)		Mierzwa (B)
Borowiak (B)	Jagiełło	Młynarczyk (B)
Brodziak (Hon)(B)	Jakiel (G)(S)	Mroczkowski (Hon)(Ba)
Broniarczyk Fr Zenon (Hon)(Geelong)	Jarecki (Hon)(B)	Mytyk (G)(S)
Buczek (B)(M)	Jaroszek (G)(S)	
Burcon (Hon) (B)	Jaskulski (B)	Nebozuk (W)
Buzo (B)	Jurkowski (Hon)(B)(C)	Nerings
Byrne Bill	Juzwin (B)(C)	Nikel Fr Henry (Hon)
	Kaciczak (B)	Niziorski (B)(M)
Cacek (G)(S)	Kawa (Hon) (B)	Nykoluk (Ba)
Cham (B)	Kicinski	Olszewski (G)(S)
Cięzki (B)(M)	Kitłowski (B)	Oparski (B)
Czurłowski	Klicki (B)	Ostrowski (Hon)
	Klimkiewicz (B)	
Dański (B)(C)	Kloss	Pamuła (Hon)(B)
Dębski	Koleczko (N)	Parfilo (B)
Droń (G)(S)	Kopycinski (B)	Pawlik
Drzymulski (Hon)	Kornas (Ba)	Piątek (B)
Dziaczko (B)(R)	Kotlarz/Thurling (B)(M)	Pieczka (B)
Dziuba (G)(S)	Kowalewski (B)	Piłat (Hon)(B)
	Fr Krasocki (Hon)	Pilecki (G)(S)
Eliasz (B)	Kulesza (V)	Płotecki (B)
	Kulman (B)(M)	Płokita (N)
Filipiak (B)	Kurnik (B)	Polak (B)
Fillipowicz (B)	Kurtz Wilhelm (Bishop)(Hon)	Poltorasky (G)(S)
Franczak (Hon)(B)	Kusiakiewicz (B)(M)	Pomorska
Fugiel (M)		Popovic (G)(S)
	Lagowski (B)	Przekwas (B)
Gradkowski	Legenza	Przybyt (B)
Grodz Fr Zenon (Geelong)	Lenartowicz	Pszczołkowski (B)
Gzik	Lewicki	

Raczek (B)
Rakiej Fr (Hon)
Różycki (B)
Ruszkowski
Rynkiewicz (Hon)

Skirzynski (B)(M)
Skrypko (B)
Skrzypczk
Sliwa (B)(M)
Sołtys
Sopotnicki (B)
Spadzinski
Stefanko (B)
Stehlik
Stępień (Ba)
Stodolny (B)(M)
Studzinski (B)(U)
Szapiel (B)(U)
Sztojko (B)(M)

Urbanski

Wach (B)(M)
Wajda
Walczak (G)(S)
Wible
Wieruszewski (Ba)
Wojciechowski (B)
Wojdat (B)
Wozniak (B)

Yaworowicz (Jaworowicz)(Ba)

Zabinski (B)(M)
Zakrzewski (B)
Ziółkós Fr Władysław (Hon)(M)
Zajac (B)

Oldest member Michalina Raczek, born 10 Sept
1903, died 27 May 2003 (nearly 100).

Honorary Members

1953 Fr Władysław Ziółkós
1972 Stanisław Jurkowski
1972 Fr Jozef Krasocki
1976 Bronisław Brodziak
1976 Cr M Brown
1976 Hon. ML Byrne CMG LLB JP
1976 Cr A Harris
1976 Andrzej Majda
1976 Cr J McKay
1976 Sir Arthur Nicholson
1976 Frank Rynkiewicz.
1977 Zdzisław Drzymulski
1978 Mrs Alice Burcon
1978 Zdzisław (Jack) M Burcon OAM
1978 Cr G Collins
1978 Mrs Zofia Franczak
1978 Tadeusz Jarecki
1978 Alojzy (Alex) L Kawa
1978 Mrs Marianne Lewicki
1978 Kazimierz Mroczkowski
1978 Mrs Maria Mroczkowski
1978 Edward Piłat
1978 Cr A Rizzoli
1987 Fr Stanisław Rakiej (Adelaide)
1987 Fr Zenon Broniarczyk (Geelong)
1989 Mrs Helena Drzymulska
1990 Bishop Wilhelm Jozef Kurtz (New Guinea)
1994 Mrs Zofia Pamuła
1994 Jakob Pamuła
1994 Fr Henry Nickel

APPENDIX B ~ FUNERAL BOOKLETS AND HEADSTONES

We remember our deceased Polish Association members and friends.



*"All I ask
of you
Is forever to
Remember Me
As Loving You"*



JAN MLYNARCZYK

27th December, 1921

-to-

6th October, 1990.

Michalina Raczek

10th September, 1903 to 27th May 2003



In Loving Memory of
Alojzy 'Alex' Kawa



9th September, 1924 ~ 26th November, 2004

*The tide of life ebbs and flows,
But the gates of memory ~ never close.....*

*In Memory For The Life
Of*

Jakob Pamula



25th July 1925 - 24th February 2005
- Aged 79 Years -

In Loving Memory of
Helen Izydorczyk



Born February 14, 1930
Entered Eternal Life February 14, 2005

Mass To Celebrate The Life Of
Jozefa 'Josie' Fugiel



31st December, 1920 - 6th July, 2006

St. Aloysius' Church, Redan
10th July, 2006

We Celebrate and Remember
Antonina "Toni" Yarworowicz



11 May 1925 - 19 October 2007

St. Aloysius' Church, Redan
23 October 2007

A Celebration of the Life of
Tadeusz 'Ted' Franczak



'Rough...but strong'

1st January, 1926 - 20th December, 2006

St. Aloysius' Church, Redan
22nd December, 2006

Requiem Mass for the Repose of the Soul of
Stanislaw "Stan" Szapiel



24 March 1916 - 20 December 2007

St. Columba's Church, Ballard
27 December 2007

Requiem Mass for the Repose of the Soul of
Halina Kowalewski



27 February 1918 - 29 December 2007

St. Aloysius' Church
3 January 2008

We Celebrate and Remember
Zofia Walczak

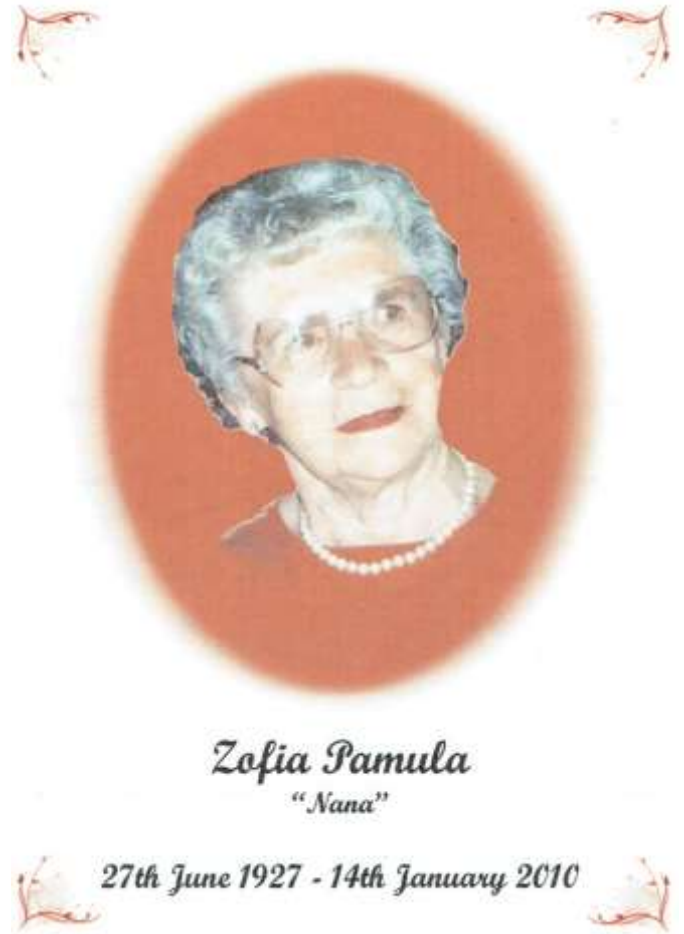


St. Aloysius' Church, Redan
16 July 2008

In Loving Memory of
Franciszka Stodolny



28-5-1922 - 9-9-2008



In Loving Memory Of
Matthew "Toey" Kornas

Born: 27 April 1947
Died: 22 January 2010

Rest In Peace



Celebration of Thanksgiving Mass for

Katarzyna (Kathy) Sztojko



24 September 1923 - 16 October 2010

*St Aloysius Church, Redan
22 October 2010*

Thanksgiving Service
for the Life of

Adam Zakrzewski



6th January 1924 - 11th January 2011

Pbelan Chapel,
Clarendon St, Maryborough, Victoria
2pm Tuesday 18th January 2011

Clergy Wayne Kelly

Requiem Mass in Loving Memory of

Frank Rozycki

28 September 1925 - 8 March 2011



*To us you were someone special,
Someone loving, kind and true,
You will never be forgotten,
As we thought the world of you.
Always in our hearts.*

Barbara "Barb" Astrums



12/03/1951 - 07/07/2011

THE FUNERAL MASS OF HELENA JACKIEWICZ

JACKIEWICZ. —
The Funeral Mass for Mrs Helena Jackiewicz will be held at Our Lady Star of the Sea Church, John Doy Drive, Ocean Grove on TUESDAY (May 17) at 10:30 am, followed by burial at the Western Cemetery (Norwood St entrance). Flowers appreciated.



JACKIEWICZ, Helena. —
Passed away peacefully on May 10, 2011 at the Homestead surrounded by her loving family; aged 91 years.
Loving wife of Michael (dec) and Leo (dec).
Loved Mum of Ursula and mother-in-law of David.
Devoted Nana of Cameron, Myree and Timothy.
Proud great-grandmother of Joshua, Georgia, Ryan, Hannah, Ella and Daniel.

We will miss you
So sleep peacefully.

The family would like to thank the staff of the Homestead for their devoted care and support of Helena.

18th. September 1919 – 10th. May 2011

Helena Knut was born in Poland on the 18th. September 1919, one of seven children. Her mother died when Helena was only 14 years of age. She grew up in a time that the world would prefer to forget: the Great Depression swept through Europe and then followed the Second World War and the ruthless German Occupation of Poland. She was taken to Germany into enforced labour. There she worked hard on a farm dawn till dusk caring for the animals. The farmer responsible for her employment fed her well.

At war's end she spent time in a German refugee camp where she met, courted and married Michael Bobik. They had one child: Ursula.

In 1950 the family of three arrived in Port Melbourne and traveled by rail to Bonegilla Migrant Camp.(12 Kilometres from Wodonga) Ursula recalls the queues of refugees lined up for fruit and milk. Camp life does not have the comforts of home but Australia promised much.

Their first home was in Ballarat. Helena worked as a house cleaner. Her spiritual home was St. Alipius' church which she faithfully attended each week. Michael died of a massive heart attack in 1975.

Eventually she married her second husband, Leo Jackiewicz. They moved to North Geelong. She lovingly nursed him through his recuperation from a triple by pass until his death from lung cancer in 1997.

Part of her loving devotion to her two deceased husbands was to lovingly tend their graves for the Commemoration of All Souls every 2nd. November.

For just over three years she has lived at the Homestead Nursing Home where dementia gradually sapped her energy. After a troublesome life she died nobly last week – truly a valiant woman.

She is much-loved by her daughter, three grandchildren and six grandchildren. The words from the Book of Proverbs apply to Helena:

Who shall find a valiant wife? She is far beyond the price of pearls? Her husband's heart has confidence in her; from her he will derive great joy.

May Helena enjoy the blessedness of the saints promised by Jesus' Sermon on the Mount:

Blessed are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven

*Thanksgiving Mass Celebrating the Life of
Zdzislaw Marian (Jack) Burcon*



*He began life's journey
February 2, 1934*

*and departed peacefully on
September 29, 2011*

*A Funeral Mass to Celebrate the life of
Stanislaw Sliwa
"Stan"*



15th February 1934 ~ 8th February 2012

*In Loving Memory
of
Frank Joseph Stodolny*



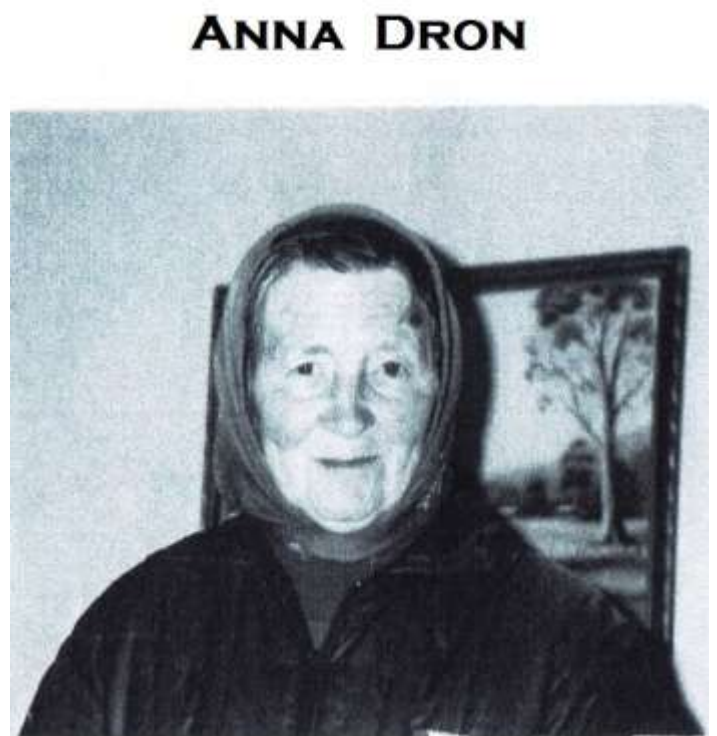
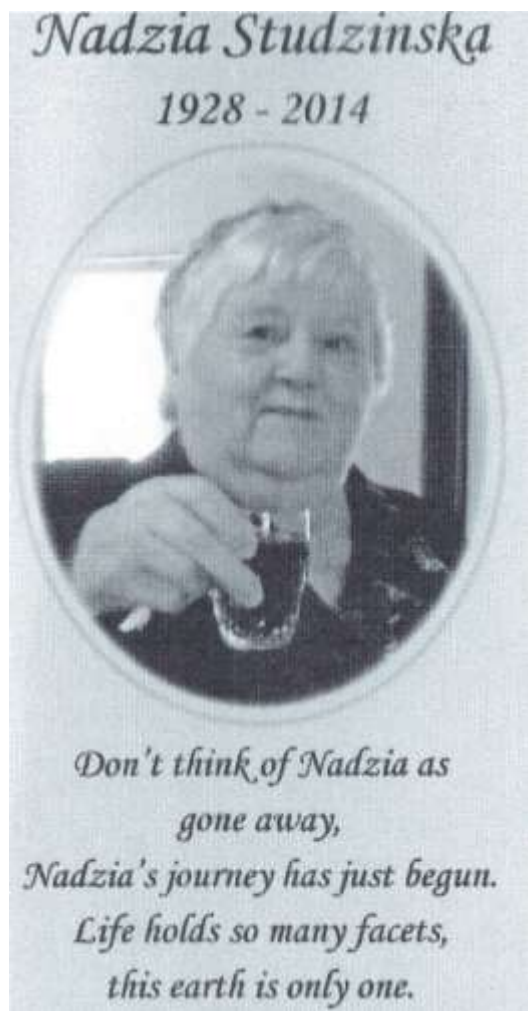
17th March 1961 ~ 30th April 2012

*Requiem Mass in Loving Memory of
Stefan 'Waldemar' Burcon
'Waldek'*

2 October 1936 ~ 18 May 2012



*To us you were someone special,
Someone loving, kind and true,
You will never be forgotten,
As we thought the world of you.
Always in our hearts.*







**Daniela
Nykoluk**

21-1-1935 — 10-5-2018



Stan Izydorczyk

29 April 1928 - 20 February 2019



Cecylia
Mlynarczyk

30 August 1926

24 June 2019

*"All I ask of you is forever
to Remember Me
As Loving You."*

Celebration of Thanksgiving for

Zofia Buzo

11 December 1922 - 11 October 2019



St. Aloysius, Redan

18 October 2019



Irena Rynkiewicz
17 September 1928 - 12 November 2019

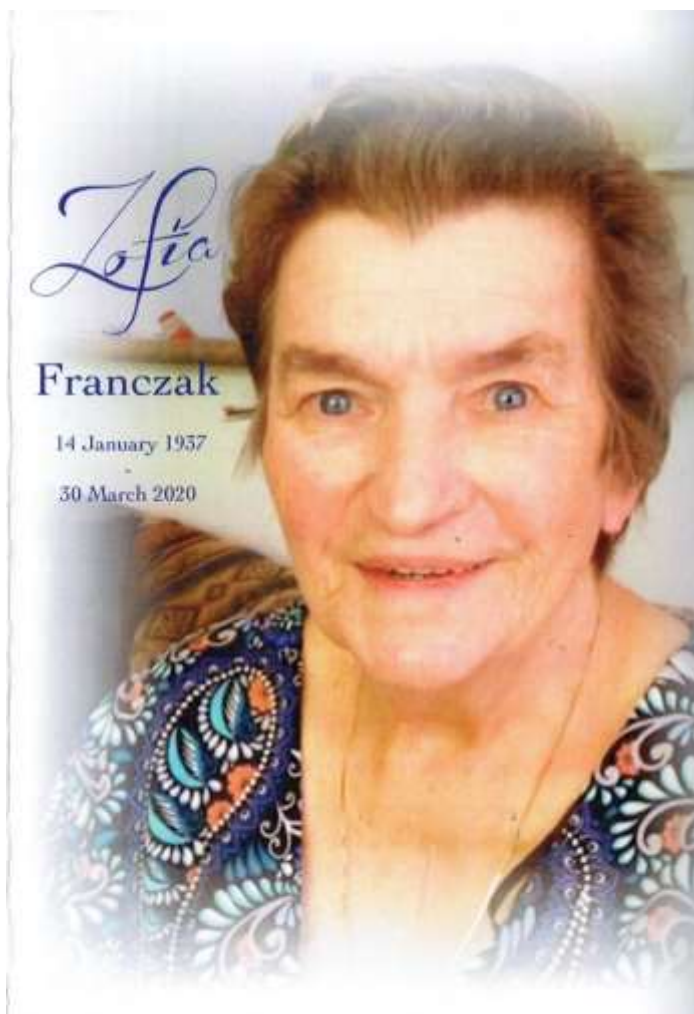


Tadeusz
JOHN
Buzo
7.7.1951
-
17.12. 2020

*In Loving
Memory*



*Stefania (Stefa)
Majda*



Zofia
Franczak
14 January 1937
-
30 March 2020

In loving memory



*Stanislaw
(Stan)
Markiewicz*

*05.05.28 - 11.06.21
93 years*

*A Funeral Mass to Celebrate
the life of
Klara Sliwa*



24 May 1940 - 16th February 2023

**ROMAN
MICHAEL
SKRYPKO**

14th May 1928

~

20th March 2022



Arriving in the early 1950s, Polish migrants established the fledgling Polish Association in Ballarat. Respectfully, with enormous pride and a sense of achievement, we honour our mums and dads for their strength, resolve and contribution to the Polish and Australian community in Ballarat. The love and patriotism within the Polish spirit, is reflected in this historical recount of the Association – honouring its inspirational members. The accompanying migrant stories embody sheer determination to succeed and prosper, in a new country, Australia.

