

Polish Community Association in Geelong [Inc.](#)



"Establishing Our Roots in a New Land"

**A Collection of Personal Stories
of Polish Migrants in Geelong
(1950-2020)**



This project was supported by the City of Greater Geelong
'Healthy and Connected Communities Grants Program'

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In Memory of the late

Grażyna Brzostowski

President of the Polish Community Association in Geelong Inc.

2015 – 2020

Director of the “Krakowiak” Polish Dance Ensemble

1989 - 2020

Also

In Memory of the late

Stanisław Karpinski

Director of the Geelong Polish Choir “*Stanisław Moniuszko*”

1966 - 2020

A highly respected member of the Polish community in Geelong

PREFACE

In 2020, many Poles in Geelong celebrated the 70th Anniversary of the largest influx of migrants to Australia and eventually to Geelong. Most of the first migrants arrived in this “Promised Land” as Displaced People from Germany and other parts of war-torn Europe, including the UK and France, in 1949.

The 1960’s saw a smaller influx of Polish migrants, mainly in the category of the Commonwealth Government’s “Family Re-union” Program.

During and after the political upheaval in Poland, referred to as the “*Strajki Związków Solidarności*” or the “*Solidarity Union Strikes*” in the late 1970s and early 1980s, saw the final major influx of Poles migrating to Australia at that time.

Today, the Geelong’s Polish community includes migrants from all the above three immigration phases. Sadly, many of the original migrants are no longer with us now. Concerned that the rich and fascinating history of our migrant parents and grandparents could be lost forever, the Committee of the Polish Community Association in Geelong (PCA) decided to give the remaining migrants, their children or their grandchildren, the opportunity to tell their stories of how they established their roots in this beautiful City of Geelong.

To facilitate this “story telling” and to have as many of these stories of our rich history of life in Geelong recorded for posterity, members of the PCA Committee took on the task of coordinating this project, as well as assisting our elderly Polish members of the community to write their stories for them.

I am very pleased that we have not only collected 20 personal migration stories from individuals and families, but we were also recorded the history of most of the Polish organisations and clubs that were established in Geelong during the past 70 years. All these organisations worked tirelessly to ensure that our Polish culture and language was preserved. We are truly grateful to everyone who contributed to this project and ultimately to its success. I must point out that most of the stories have been written in English but some only in Polish and some in both languages.

We have always been indebted to Australian authorities and to the Australian people for welcoming us so warmly to this wonderful country; this sentiment was expressed in all the stories we collected. I am also sure that I am speaking on behalf of all Polish immigrants and their descendants when I express my even deeper gratitude to the *First Nation’s People*, who have cared for this land for more than 50,000 years and have kindly allowed us to share in its beauty and richness. As immigrants, we have always been proud of our Polish origins, our knowledge of Polish history and our ability to communicate in Polish, but yet, we often find it challenging to embed this rich history and traditions in the psyche of our children and grandchildren. That is why, I look with great admiration at our indigenous people, who have been able to maintain their culture, their language, and their traditions for the last 50,000 years, simply through their “Story Telling”, handed down from one generation to another.

Wouldn’t It be great if our Polish culture, our traditions and our experiences over the last 70 years, which have now been recorded in our own “Story Telling”, were passed on to our future descendants, perhaps not for the next 50,000 years, but at least for the next 50 years.

I would now like take this opportunity to express our thanks to the City of Greater Geelong Council for supporting our project with a grant of \$3,300 through the Council’s “*Healthy and Connected Communities Grants Program*”. I trust we have met all the Program goals, which we committed to achieve in our application. If we have achieved our project goals, it is because so many members of our Geelong Polish community took the time and effort to share their immigration stories with us. I, therefore, thank each of them for their contributions, which I thoroughly enjoyed reading, and which, I must admit, brought a tear to my eyes.

Henry Szkuta

Secretary

Polish Community Association in Geelong Inc.

June 2021



PRZEDMOWA

W 2020 r., Polacy w Geelong obchodzili 70tą rocznicę największego napływu imigrantów do Australii, a ostatecznie do Geelong. Większość pierwszych imigrantów przybyło po Drugiej Wojnie Światowej do tej "Ziemi Obiecanej" jako przesiedleńcy z Niemiec i z innych części Europy, w tym z Wielkiej Brytanii i Francji.

W latach 60tych, odnotowano mniejszy napływ polskich imigrantów do Australii, głównie w kategorii Złączeń Rodzinnych.

W trakcie i po przeżyciach politycznych w Polsce, określonych jako "*Strajki Związków Solidarność*", w latach 70tych i 80tych, został ostatni duży napływ Polaków migrujących do Australii.

Dziś wspólnota Polonijna w Geelong obejmuje imigrantów ze wszystkich powyższych trzech faz imigracji. Niestety, wielu pierwotnych imigrantów nie są już z nami. Obawiając się, że bogata i ciekawa historia naszych rodziców i dziadków na imigracji może zostać zagubiona na zawsze, Zarząd ZPG postanowił dać pozostałym imigrantom, lub ich dzieciom i wnukom, możliwość opowiedzenia historii o ich zakorzenia w tym pięknym mieście, Geelong.

Aby ułatwić tę opowieść i zebrać jak najwięcej opowieści o naszej bogatej historii życia w Geelong, członkowie Zarządu ZPG podjęły się zadaniem koordynacji tego projektu, a nawet z pomocą naszym starszym Polakom w pisaniu ich historię.

Bardzo się cieszę również, że nie tylko zebraliśmy 20 osobistych historii imigracji od osób i rodzin, także zostały opisane historie o 9 polskich organizacjach, które powstały w Geelong w ciągu ostatnich 70 lat. Wszystkie te organizacje niestrudzenie pracowały nad utrzymaniem naszej polskiej kultury, tradycji i naszego polskiego języka. Jesteśmy wdzięczni wszystkim, którzy wnieśli swoje osobiste historie do tego projektu, a ostatecznie do sukcesu tego projektu.

Zawsze byliśmy wdzięczni australijskim władzom i Australijczykom za to, że tak ciepło przywitali nas w tym wspaniałym Kraju. Jestem też pewien, że wymawiam się w imieniu wszystkich polskich imigrantów i ich potomków, kiedy wyrażam jeszcze głębszą wdzięczność dla Ludu „Pierwszego Narodu” („*First Nation's People*”), którzy opiekowali się tą ziemią i troszczyli się o nią przez ponad 50,000 lat, i uprzejmie pozwolił nam uczestniczyć na ich piękniej i bogatej ziemi. My, jako imigranci jesteśmy dumni z naszego polskiego pochodzenia i wielu z nas też ma uczciwą znajomość języka polskiego i polskich tradycji, ale wciąż mamy trudność w przekazaniu naszym dzieciom i wnukom tą wiedzę o tych tradycjach kulturowych. Dlatego patrzę się z wielkim podziwem na to, jak tubylczy tego kraju byli w stanie utrzymać swoją kulturę, swój język i swoje tradycję przez 50,000 lat, i tylko po prostu poprzez ustne przekazanie swoją historię z jednego pokolenia na drugie.

Byłoby wspaniale, gdyby naszą polską kulturę, tradycję i nasze doświadczenia z ostatnich 70 lat, które są yeras opisane w naszych "Opowiadaniach", zostały przekazane naszym przyszłym potomkom, może nie przez następne 50,000 lat, ale przynajmniej przez następne 50 lat.

Na zakończenie, chciałem okazać naszą wdzięczność dla City of Greater Geelong Council za wspieranie tego projektu i za dotację \$3,300 na koszty związane z tym projektem. Mam nadzieję, że osiągnęliśmy wszystkie cele projektu, tak jak zobowiązaliśmy się wykonać w naszej aplikacji na ten fundusz. Jeśli osiągnęliśmy nasze cele projektowe, to dlatego, że tak wiele osób z naszej polskiej społeczności w Geelong poświęciło czas, aby podzielić się z nami swoimi przeżyciami imigracyjnymi. Dziękuję wam wszystkim za wasze osobiste opowieści, wiele których, muszę przyznać, były bardzo wzruszające.

Henryk Szkuta

Sekretarz

Związek Polaków w Geelong

Czerwiec, 2021

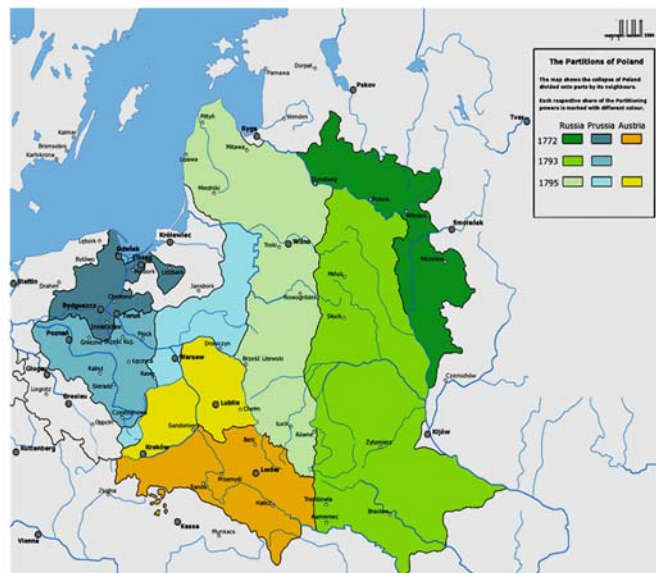


A Brief History of Poland's Road to Independence

1773 - 1918

The three partitions that resulted in the elimination of the Sovereign State of Poland began at the end of the 18th Century. When in 1773, the Czarist Russian Empire took over the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and most of eastern region of Poland, and made it a Russian protectorate.

By 1790, it was very evident that the first Partition greatly weakened the Commonwealth. In an attempt to save what was left, King Stanislaus Augustus put into effect a series of reforms; to strengthen Poland's military, revamp the Polish economy and democratise the political system. Thereby, he created a more egalitarian and united society. These reforms reached their climax in 1791 with the enactment of the famous Polish **3rd May Constitution**. This resulted in the establishment of a Constitutional Monarchy, strengthening the rights of the Polish middleclass and abolishment many of the privileges of the Polish nobility and the archaic laws dealing with serfdom. Unfortunately, for strategic reasons to promote Poland's standing in the international community, King Stanislaw reluctantly signed the Polish-Prussian Pact of 1791, thereby, ceding more of its territories to Prussia in exchange for a military alliance with it.



Poland in 1773

These democratic reforms enacted by King Stanislaw, and the establishment of the Polish-Prussian Pact, threatened the authority of Czarist Russia, causing it to invade Poland in 1792. Immediately, abandoned by its new Prussian "ally" and betrayed by its own Polish nobility, who were never happy with their loss of privileges, especially their loss of "veto" in the country's Legislature, Poland was partitioned for the second time in 1793, losing all its western provinces to Prussia and all its remaining eastern provinces to Russia.



Tadeusz Kościuszko

(Mount Kościusko named in his honour by Geographer/Explorer, Edmund Strzelecki)

Outraged by the further humiliation of Poland by her neighbours and incensed over the betrayal by the Polish nobility, the Polish peasantry quickly turned against the occupying forces of Prussia and Russia. Following a series of nationwide riots on March 24, 1794, the famous Polish patriot, **Tadeusz Kościuszko** (later, affectionately referred to as "*The Peasant Prince*"), took command of the Polish armed forces and declared a nationwide uprising against Poland's foreign occupiers. This marked the beginning of the **Kościuszko Uprising**. Catherine II of Russia and Frederick William II of Prussia were quick to respond and, despite Kościuszko's initial successes, by November 1794, the uprising was crushed. Tadeusz Kościuszko was arrested and

later exiled from his beloved Poland. He ended up fighting for the causes of other countries, including, as an American army officer, in the American War of Independence. All in the hope that one day, these countries would assist Poland to achieve its independence.

In the Third and final Partition of Poland (1795), the southern provinces of Minor Poland (*Mala Polska*) were annexed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The final blow came when the three partitioning powers

agreed to permanently erase Poland's name from any historical context in the hope of curbing any Polish dissidence and nationalistic fervour. To rub salt into the wounds, the Polish people living in these occupied regions, were never referred to as “Poles” and the word “Poland” was not used officially for 123 years.

In the years of the First World War (1914–1918), circumstances favourable to “*The Polish Question*” appeared at last in the world’s political discourse. Furthermore, as disputes between Poland’s occupiers intensified, their previous solidarity on the Russification and Germanisation of the Polish people and their active suppression of Polish culture began to breakdown. On the other hand, the aspiration of regaining an independent Poland began to blossom in the hearts of the Polish people.

On 11th November 1918, Poland officially regained its independence and, once again, was recognised as a nation on the world stage. This was mainly due to two reasons. First, the perseverance and dedication of the active part of Polish society, who, during the period of 123 years of servitude, secretly passed down the Polish language and Polish culture to the new generations of young Poles. The other reason was the confusion that the World War I inflicted on the three occupying empires within the partitioned Polish territories. This allowed Polish insurgent armies to form, often supported by the occupying empires, who now were fighting with each other. A

number of Polish heroes emerged from all this confusion; heroes like **Józef Piłsudski**, who became the Chief of State when Poland gained its Independence but rejected invitations to stand for President in the ensuing elections. Later he did agree to serve as the Minister for Defence.



Józef Piłsudski



Ignacy Paderewski

Two years after regaining Independence, the Soviet Red Army attacked Poland. In the famous Battle for Warsaw, the Polish army, under the command of General Piłsudski, defeated the Russians. Consequently, regained most of the original Polish territories, which included parts of what is now The Ukraine. Another Polish hero also emerged, **Ignacy Paderewski**, who was not a soldier but a famous pianist, Statesman and politician. Paderewski was elected as the first Prime Minister of an Independent Poland in 1918. Paderewski was also instrumental in getting US President, **Woodrow Wilson**, to include a demand for a “*Free and Independent Polish State*” in the President’s *Fourteen Point Peace Plan*, which he drew up in 1916.

It would be now appropriate to end this part of our history with the words, “*...and the Polish people lived happily ever after, in their beloved Homeland.*”

Sadly, this was not the case. But this is another sad story, for another day.....



Present day Poland, after WWII



Commemorating the Beginning of World War II, September 1, 2019

I was very honored to be asked by our PCA President, **Grazyna Brzostowski**, to represent her at the Official Launch of the Exhibition of *“Fighting and Suffering. Polish Citizens During World War II”*

The invitation was extended to Grazyna by the President of the Polish Community Council of Victoria Inc., **Mr Marian Pawlik**.



Guests attending the launch of the Exhibition

The launch of the Exhibition was held on 29th August in Queen’s Hall at Parliament House in Melbourne. It was jointly organized with the Gdańsk Museum of the Second World War and the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Canberra.

The Exhibition was part of the worldwide commemoration of the beginning of World War II, when German forces invaded Poland, 80 years ago, on September 1, 1939.

The event was attended by His Excellency, The Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, **Mr Michał Kołodziejcki**, The **Hon. Colin Brooks**

MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly; **The Hon. Robin Scott MP**, Minister for Veterans; Members of both Chambers of Parliament, including Co-chairmen of the Victoria Parliamentary Friends of Poland, the **Hon. Nick Wakeling MP** (also representing the Leader of the Opposition), and **Ms. Natalie Suleyman MP**, the **Hon. Bruce Atkinson MLC** and representatives of the various Polish community organisations in Victoria.

After inspecting the exhibits and reading about the suffering the Polish people endured, even during the first few days of the German invasion of Poland, I decided to watch the commemorative services held in Poland on 1st September and transmitted to Australia on



Polish Ambassador, H.E. Michał Kołodziejcki
& Mr Marian Pawlik



via PolBox from Warsaw, Westerplatte and from the little-known town of Wieluń, 90km east of Wrocław in the south-eastern region of Poland.

The memorial service from the town of Wieluń showed the people of Wieluń and the various dignitaries, including the President of Poland, **Andrzej Duda**, and the President of Germany,

Frank-Walter Steinmeier, gathered in the Town Square at 4.40am to commemorate the beginning of World War II.

Why Wieluń? I asked myself. Like me, I'm sure that not many people would have been aware that at 4.40am on 1st September 1939, the German Luftwaffe bombed Wieluń while her inhabitants were still asleep. One thousand-two hundred men, women and children were killed. This was the beginning of the invasion of Poland by the Germans.



Wieluń in 1939 and Wieluń today

Five minutes later, at 4.45am, Hitler's ground forces, his Luftwaffe and his Navy began their assault on the Baltic coastal guardhouse of Westerplatte, which, in 1939, was in what was called "the Polish Corridor" - the only access Poles had to the Baltic Sea. Westerplatte is not far from the port city of Gdańsk (in 1939 it was under the jurisdiction of Germany and was known as Danzig). Westerplatte was mercilessly shelled from the Baltic coast by the German Navy artillery; bombed from the air; and attacked by German land forces. Westerplatte terrain resembled a "moonscape" after the attack ended. For days, the Germans continued their assault but failed to break through to the stubborn resistance of the Polish guard. Sadly, after six days of a valiant defense, the Polish heroes of Westerplatte had no option but to surrender.

The might of the Hitler's Luftwaffe continued their assault on Poland, flying onto Warsaw, where they were ordered to destroy the city and to leave nothing that would remind the Polish people of their once-beautiful capital and their rich Polish culture.



Warsaw in 1939 and Warsaw today

Soon after the invasion of Poland, Great Britain declared war on Germany. At the same time, Hitler formed a pact with Stalinist Soviet Union. Poland found itself now being attacked from the west by the German army and from the east by the Soviet armed forces. In order to stop any organized Polish resistance to the Soviet invasion, Stalin ordered the arrest of around 22,000 Polish military officers and intellectuals, who were then transported into the forests of Katyn, in western Russia and there, they were all shot in the head from behind and shoved into mass graves.

The Memorial Service, held in Warsaw on September 1, 2019, was attended by the Presidents of the all the European Union member countries and other representatives from other parts of the world, including the Vice President of the USA, **Michael Pence**. The service was led by the President of the Republic of Poland, **Mr Andrzej Duda**.



The German President, **Frank-Walter Steinmeier** on the podium at the Memorial Service in Wieluń, September 1, 2019

It was very heartening to listen to the message of reconciliation in the speech made by the German President, **Frank-Walter Steinmeier**, at Wieluń, and the heart-felt apology President Steinmeier expressed to the people of Wieluń and to the people of Poland in general:

“I bow my head before the Polish victims of the German tyranny, and I ask for your forgiveness..... This war was a German Crime”.

President of Germany, **Frank-Walter Steinmeier**



At the Commemorative Service in the Piłsudski Square, Warsaw

From left,

President **Frank-Walter Steinmeier**
President **Andrzej Duda**
Vice-President **Michael Pence**

Henry Szkuta
Secretary
Polish Community Association in Geelong Inc

Uroczystości 80-tej Rocznicy Wybuchu II Wojny Światowej, W Australii i w Polsce, 1 Września 2019

Byłem bardzo zaszczycony, że prezes ZPG, **Grażyna Brzostowski**, poprosiła, aby reprezentował ją na oficjalnej wystawie pod hasłem: "**Walka i Cierpienie. Obywatele Polski w czasie II Wojny Światowej**".

Zaproszenie na tą wystawę Grażyna otrzymała od Prezesa Federacji Polskich Organizacji w Victorii, Pana **Mariana Pawlika**.



Goście na otwarciu wystawy II Wojny Światowej

Victorii, **Pan Robin Scott MP**, **Pan Colin Brooks MP**, **Pan Bruce Atkinson MLC** w tym współprzewodniczący Parlamentarnych Przyjaciół Polski, **Pan Nick Wakeling MP** (też reprezentował lidera opozycji) i **Pani Natalie Suleyman MP**, oraz przedstawiciele różnych Polskich organizacji w Victoria.

Po zwiedzeniu wystaw która ukazywała cierpienia narodu polskiego – cierpienia, które naród przeżywał nawet w pierwszych dniach niemieckiej inwazji na Polskę, postanowiłem obejrzeć nadany program w



Wystawa odbyła się 29 sierpnia, 2019 w Queen's Hall w Parlamencie w Melbourne. Współorganizatorami tej wystawy byli: z Gdańskie Muzeum II Wojny Światowej i z Ambasada Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w Canberra.

Wystawa była częścią obchodzenia 80-tej Rocznicy rozpoczęcia II Wojny Światowej, kiedy wojska niemieckie zaatakowały Polskę, w dniu 1 września 1939 roku.

Gośćmi tej wystawy byli, Ambasador Rzeczypospolitej Polski, **Pan Michał Kołodziejcki**, członkowie obu izb Parlamentu w



Ambasador Polski, Michał Kołodziejcki
i Pan Marian Pawlik

Polskiej Telewizji, nadany w Australii na *PolBox*, aby zobaczyć jak Polacy, w Polsce, obchodzili dzień 1ego września 2019r w Warszawie, w Westerplatte i w nieznanym dla mnie mieście, Wieluń, które leży 90km na wschód od Wrocławia w południowej zachodniej Polski.

W Uroczystości, która miała miejsce w mieście Wieluniu, wzięli udział mieszkańcy Wielunia i dygnitarze kraju, w tym, Prezydent RP, **Andrzej Duda**, oraz, Prezydent Niemiec, **Frank-Walter Steinmeier**. Rozpoczęto uroczystość na placu miasta o godzinie 4.40 rano.



Wieluń w roku 1939 i Wieluń dzisiaj

Czemu obchody w Wieluniu? Może wielu z nas nie wie, ale o godzinie 4.40 rano, 1 września, 1939, kiedy mieszkańcy Wielunia jeszcze spali, niemieckie Luftwaffe zaczęło, bez wypowiedzenia wojny, bombardować Wieluń. Tysiąc dwieście mężczyzn, kobiet i dzieci zginęło w tym napadzie.

Pięć minut później, o godzinie 4.45 rano, Luftwaffe i marynarka niemiecka rozpoczęli atak na Bałtyckim wybrzeżu na Westerplatte, które w 1939 było jedynym dostępem Polaków do Morza Bałtyckiego. Tak zwany „Korytarz Polski”, nie daleko od miasta portowego, Gdańska (w 1939 było znane jako Danzig). Westerplatte był bezlitośnie bombardowany przez niemiecką marynarkę z wybrzeża Bałtyckiego, przez Luftwaffe z góry i przez niemieckie wojska z lądu. Niemcy nie mogli przebić polskiej fortyfikacji. Niestety po sześciu dniach walecznego oporu, Polscy bohaterowie nie mieli możliwości dalej się bronić, musieli się poddać.

Niemieckie samoloty kontynuowały atak na Polskę, tym razem ich rozkazem było całkowite zniszczenie Warszawy i zniszczenie polskiej kultury i polskiego ducha.

Wielka Brytania natychmiast ogłosiła wojnę Niemcom. W tym samym czasie, Hitler utworzył pakt ze



Warszawa w 1939 i Warszawie dzisiaj

Stalinem. W rezultacie, Polska teraz została zaatakowana z zachodu przez Niemców i ze wschodu przez armię radziecką. Aby powstrzymać Polski opór przed inwazją sowiecką, Stalin nakazał aresztowanie około 22,000 polskich oficerów wojskowych i intelektualistów, którzy zostali wywiezieni do lasów Katyńskich, w zachodniej Rosji, gdzie zostali zamordowani i zakopani w masowych grobach.

Czterdzieści dwóch prezydentów państw z Unii Europejskiej i z innych państw świata, oraz Prezydent RP **Andrzej Duda** i Wice Prezydent USA **Michael Pence**. Uczestniczyli w uroczystości Wybuchu II Wojny Światowej w Warszawie, pod Hasłem, „*Pamięć i Przestroga*”.



Prezydent Niemiec **Frank-Walter Steinmeier** przemawia na podium w Wieluniu, 1 września 2019

Na uroczystości w Wieluniu, przemowa prezydenta Niemiec, **Franka-Waltera Steinmeiera**, była bardzo wzruszająca, szczególnie jego, naprawdę szczere, przeproszenie ludność Wieluński i ogólnie ludność Polski:

"Chylę czoło przed polskimi ofiarami niemieckiej tyranii i proszę o wasze przebaczenie.... Wojna ta była niemieckim przestępstwem".

Prezydent Niemiec, **Frank-Walter Steinmeier**



Na Obchodzie Uroczystości na Placu Piłsudskiego w Warszawie.

Z lewej strony,

Prezydent **Frank-Walter Steinmeier**

Prezydent **Andrzej Duda**

Wice - Prezydent **Michael Pence**

Henryk Szkuta

Sekretarz

Związek Polaków w Geelong Inc

Jadwiga Szkuta - THE VOYAGE OF OUR LIVES

“Childhood Memories of our journey to Australia in 1950”

Our five years as Displaced Persons ended in 1949 when Mum and Dad applied to migrate to Australia. Many countries answered the United Nations call to give millions of stranded refugees in Germany a new home. We had the option to return to Poland and live under the newly established Communist System or leave Europe altogether and settle in South America or Australia. Our parents, both thirty-seven years of age at the time, chose Australia as it was farthest away from the nightmare of war torn Europe. Little was known then about this distant land, so Mum and Dad reasoned that it was unlikely the country would ever get involved in war.



With only nine million inhabitants, Australia in the forties was hugely underpopulated, thus, the then Labor Government saw in the vast numbers of Europe's refugees a much needed labour force. Thus, a two-year work contract was introduced which all potential adult migrants were compelled to sign

before their application was even considered. Before we were given the green light to emigrate, however, we were obliged to undertake physical, psychological as well as literacy and numeracy tests. Although we three children, the author eight years old, Irena four and Henry two years old were spared the last three tasks, our parents expected us to behave impeccably during the interview; we had to smile a great deal, to bow and curtsy, “Because the immigration officials”, Mum reiterated, “held the

keys to our destiny.” We must have charmed the Australian authorities for they kept smiling benevolently from their elevated position as they contemplated our naïve performance. We passed the tests and the country we could call our own was soon to be our reward. Europe's refugees a much needed labour force.



All our worldly goods were packed into one large crate - pots, pans, cutlery, crockery, doonas, pillows, bed linen, a Bible and even a tin hip bath. Dad considered it of paramount importance to bring his carpentry tools for we expected to be “dropped off in the new ‘Wild West’ where we would be employed in clearing the land and building our new home in a forest away from civilization.” We felt confident we were well qualified, fully prepared and enthusiastic enough to tackle any task.

The journey from Germany was long and at times tedious, from Reckenfeld to Minden, followed by a further two refugee camps where women and children were hosted in large, crowded dormitories filled to capacity with bunks of all shapes and sizes. Men were accommodated in separate lodgings but were allowed to visit their families in the dormitories during the day for a specified time. At night, loud groaning, anxious muttering and deep sighs would lull us to sleep. One afternoon, while playing in the dormitory, I saw a fully



grown adult male “squashing” a breathless woman on one of the lower bunks. I was horrified! In my opinion, the woman had done nothing to deserve such maltreatment. I asked my mother to intervene, instead, she grabbed my hand and ushered me out of the dormitory. Her “lack of compassion” disappointed me.

Since there was no work for adults, no school for children and no money or facilities for shopping, cooking or entertaining, we did our best to fill our spare time as creatively as possible. We would walk to neighbouring huts to visit friends in their dormitories; we would listen to hair raising, often gruesome stories of loss and survival; in the evenings we would pray, sing hymns and patriotic songs and recite poetry. We had no reading material other than the Bible, an Elementary Polish Reader, a Prayer Book and a book of poems. On Sundays, the Polish Chaplain, who journeyed with his flock, celebrated Mass in a pokey little room which had been converted into an Ecumenical Chapel. The Sunday Eucharist so impressed two-year-old Henry that the family submitted to a repeat performance of this ritual quite frequently during the week. Adorned in a towel which served as a chasuble, the diminutive Father Henry would take us piously through parts of the Mass culminating in Communion which we received kneeling down. Finally, he would bless us with a “Dominus Vobis Cum” and the Mass would be over. We were very proud of this “saintly child” and Mum was convinced that one day he would fulfil her dream and he would become a priest. Months later when asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, he would answer emphatically, “Pope.”

In December 1949, together with throngs of other refugees from Eastern Europe, we left the camp and boarded a long train, which would carry us through Austria and over the Alps to Southern Italy. As the train snaked its way slowly through the snow clad winter wonderland, we watched enchanted,



our faces pressed firmly against the windowpane as picturesque villages, slender steeples and ancient castles disappeared into the darkness below. Deep down in the valleys magic lights twinkled and winked at the cargo of destitute nomads taking their final leave of Europe, the horror of War and what remained of their shattered past. Full of courage, hope and expectation, we were propelled forward towards “the land flowing with milk and honey” – our “promised land.”

On arrival in Naples, we were saddened to witness the devastation the War had wrought on the people in this part of the world. Barefoot young boys, wearing only rags in the cold mid-winter, tried desperately to peddle little bags of peanuts and used clothing in order to survive. If only we were in the position to help!

At midnight, after a long immigration process, we carried our heavy stacks of allocated blankets up the marble staircase of a crumbling palazzo to another dormitory. Bagnoli was to be our home for a month. The atmosphere in this tiny village was electric with the approaching

Christmas Season of love and goodwill. We enjoyed our family walks and admired the decorations on trees in the streets; we tasted our first oranges and peanuts and even appreciated the macaroni served daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner in the enormous dining hall. Since the tab for our food, travel and lodging was picked up by the Australian Government and the United Nations Relief Organisation, we were hardly in a position to complain.

Awards, Citations and Campaign Ribbons



Precedence of awards is from top to bottom, left to right

Top Row - American Campaign Medal - Europe, Africa, Middle East Campaign Medal - Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal
Second Row - World War II Victory Medal - Navy Occupation Service Medal (with Asia class) - National Defence Service Medal
Third Row - Korean Service Medal - United Nations Service Medal - Republic of Korea War Service Medal (retroactive)

USAT General M.B. Stewart



USAT *General M.B. Stewart* departing Bremerhaven, late 1940s early 50s.

Laid down (date unknown) as a Maritime Commission type (C4-S-A1) hull, under Maritime Commission contract (MC hull 707) at Kaiser Shipbuilding Corp., Yard No. 3, Richmond, CA. Launched, 15 October 1944. Commissioned **USS General M. B. Stewart (AP-140)**, 3 March 1945, at San Francisco, CA. Decommissioned, 24 May 1946. Struck from the Naval Register (date unknown). Transferred to the Maritime Commission for use by the US Army Transportation Service. Commissioned, **USAT General M. B. Stewart**. Re-acquired by the US Navy, 1 March 1950.

Struck from the Naval Register again (date unknown). Sold in 1967 for commercial service, rebuilt as a cargo ship and renamed **Albany** entering service in 1968. In 1974 **Albany** was converted to a drilling barge and renamed **Mission Viking**. Final Disposition, broken up in July 1987

USAT General Stewart arrived from the Port of Naples, Italy, at Station Pier, Melbourne on 29th January 1950 with displaced people from Europe. Among these passengers were:

Adolf Szkuta, age 37
Aniela Szkuta, age 37
Jadwiga Szkuta, age 8
Irena Szkuta, age 4
Henryk Szkuta, age 2

The family later settled in Geelong after living in Bonegilla for three months and Mildura for one year.

The long awaited day of embarkation finally arrived. It took many hours to accommodate us and our crates on board, to allocate bunks and to inform us about meal-times and relevant rules and regulations. **General Stewart** (pictured above), an American Navy Ship retired from service, was employed to ferry migrants from Europe to Australia before it was finally relegated to the scrap metal heap. Our sleeping and living quarter was a dormitory accommodating at least three hundred women and children. The triple storey bunks were placed so closely together we used to shake hands with our

neighbours while lying down. We shared bathroom and toilet facilities, often queuing up for both. We were organised in three shifts for meals, which we ate in a huge dining hall/mess.

Husbands and single, adult males occupying the dorms in the bowels of the ship were instructed to meet their families on the deck only at designated times.



Late that night, we heard the haunting sound of the ship's horn and felt ourselves being slowly pulled away from the land of culture, poetry and music and heading south for the "bush." With the last lights of Naples dimmed against the shore, we entered the open waters of the Mediterranean Sea. The excitement, mixed with sadness and apprehension diminished when crowds of young and old scurried down to their dorms smitten with severe seasickness. Some, like Mum, rose from their bunks only in ports of call or when the sea was unusually calm. The following day the dining hall was deserted and those of us who were still standing had little inclination to eat; dormitories reverberated with groans as kind individuals administered pills to the worst afflicted.

Other than the two hours we spent daily with Dad on the deck, the three of us had to fend for ourselves. We were quite used to being left to our own devices and took the opportunity to investigate the nooks and crannies on our level: we swanned back and forth on the deck or slid down when the boat rolled; we swung on or hung from the deck rails upside down; we peered into the portholes curious to see what was behind the glass; we climbed tall stacks of coiled rope and jumped from dizzying heights; we sat on the edge of the deck swinging our legs over the churning water. I have no recollection of us ever engaging with other children during the voyage, we were either too absorbed in our activities to notice them or their mums were well enough to keep a tight rein on their movement in the dormitory. We, on the other hand, were the proverbial "free range kids."

There were times when the responsibility of looking after a couple of inquisitive, lively siblings proved a rather onerous one: balancing two trays with meals and drinks, mine and Henry's, on a rocking boat became a daily nightmare; the regular drill practice freaked Henry out each time the siren sounded. "I don't want to drown, I don't want to drown," he wailed as I tried to put on his tiny life jacket and then force him up on deck where the three of us would stand wondering what would happen to Mum when the ship went down.

One day our little brother climbed a ladder next to a tall boiler and froze in fear not knowing how to get down. Dressed in his double breasted coat – a donation from the Red Cross - he clung with all his might to the top rung like a chubby bug, waiting patiently for help. Feeling utterly incompetent, I tried desperately to attract the attention of some sympathetic adult who would end his misery and mine. A sailor spotted Henry's predicament, "cherry picked" him off the ladder and placed him in my arms.



The monotony of the grey Mediterranean Sea was relieved when we stopped at Port Said and from there inched our way through the still waters of the Suez Canal. Sand and more sand stretched as far

as the eye could see in all directions on both the African and Asian side of the narrow passage. The expansive desert, shimmering in all its golden glory, was punctuated by women covered from tip to toe in black, walking majestically beside their men who rode astride a donkey. The unfair arrangement seemed a little unusual at first until it dawned on me that the men and women “were taking turns to ride their beast of burden.” Lured by the Red Sea, even the most incapacitated emerged from their beds onto the deck in order to gaze upon the waters that parted so miraculously for Moses and his Israelites; it was such a disappointment, though, to discover that the sea was not at all red.

During our stop over at Aden, in the Republic of Yemen, we were mesmerised by the dark, slender men wearing turbans and colourful “towels” around their waists. They paddled up to our ship in their tiny boats, white teeth and eyeballs flashing against their dark skin as they tempted us with exotic produce we had not seen before. Goods were raised to the deck in baskets - like pulleys - while payment travelled down the same way. One young man moved about so vigorously that the towel he was wearing slid off leaving his sleek, brown anatomy totally exposed. Picking up his garment, “Ali Baba” smiled cheekily, unperturbed by his indiscretion while we applauded him enthusiastically for the free “peep show”.

On reaching the Arabian Sea and warmer climates, Irena decided she no longer had need of her grey fur coat and promptly disposed of it by throwing it overboard - being the ever practical individual she believed in travelling light. It was around this time that she turned five but since Mum and Dad were unavailable and we had little or no idea of time, the day came and went unnoticed and unmarked.



One evening, during our daily ablutions in the communal bathroom, a young woman planted herself in front of our shower recess and proceeded to dry her voluptuous nakedness unashamedly before our very eyes. Finding the lady’s full frontal utterly sinful, my sister threw a handful of water at the offending nude. Outraged, the infuriated female slapped Irena hard on her bottom and dashed out of the bathroom to complain to the ship’s authorities. I froze in my tracks terrified that my little sister would be thrown into a dungeon, or worse, tossed overboard

for the heinous crime she had perpetrated. Anxiously we raced back to the dorm and I persuaded the culprit to climb to the top bunk and hide under the bed clothes. To my horror, the enraged female appeared charging in our direction, followed closely by a crowd of incensed supporters. I held my breath when they halted below our refuge. The expression on the “important man’s” face leading the pack mellowed when the irate female pointed to a demure golden-haired five-year-old gazing innocently down at him from her perch. He instructed Irena not to splash people with water again and we both nodded obligingly. The crowd turned and disappeared out of sight behind a row of bunks. To my great relief, Irena was saved!

Our last port of call was Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), where our eyes feasted upon a people whose appearance and culture was again vastly different from our own and reminiscent of the colourful pages from the story of Sinbad the Sailor. While the rest of the journey over the Indian Ocean proved long and uneventful,





The Three Immigrants, 60 years later at Station Pier - 2010

crossing the Equator was marked with the traditional celebrations on the deck. We, however, were more interested in swinging from the deck rails and missed this ritual entirely.

Remnant, our first glimpse of the Great Southern Land and the English Speaking World was greeted with loud cheers and great jubilation but our joy was short lived once we sailed into the open Southern Ocean, across the Great Australian Bight; decks were deserted, dining halls empty and even the toughest in our midst was forced to succumb to nature's fury.

Flickering lights in the distance, some days

later, announced that we were approaching our final destination. After a journey of twenty-six days we arrived at Station Pier, Melbourne, in the heat of summer, just before midnight on 29th January, 1950. Our excitement reached fever pitch as we gazed upon the beaming lighthouse and the skyline of Port Melbourne. Early next morning, after yet more processing, passengers who were joining friends or family rushed down the gangway to greet them while the rest of us were ushered onto a train bound for Bonegilla Migrant Holding Centre on the River Murray. Still smarting from years of painful experiences of betrayal, loss and deprivation, we were relieved to find that peace, order and tranquillity prevailed in our new homeland. Officials treated us with politeness and respect. No one "barked" orders at us or was impatient when we were unable to communicate. Those with whom we came in contact appeared genuinely pleased to help us. During our eight hour trip across Victoria, the train stopped at a hotel so we could eat a three course meal at charming little round tables; we could hardly believe our good fortune!

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GENERAL M. B. STEWART

(Passenger Reg.)

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
Immigration Act.

Form No. 2
(Mandatory)

PASSENGER LIST - INCOMING PASSENGERS.

Return of Passengers Brought to the Port of _____ from Places Outside Australia.
(To be furnished in Duplicate.)

Note - 1st Class, 2nd Class, and 3rd Class Passengers are to be entered in separate groups.

Name of Ship	Official Number	For Port of Registry (If Shipping Code)	Master's Name	Tonnage - (If Gross WT Tons)	Date of Arrival	Voyage
U.S.A.T. General M.B. STEWART		(a) Washington Dist. (b) U.S. HOME	C. F. J. GUTHRIE	12249 11, 906A	1950 Jan. 29	From NAPLES To SYDNEY

6289

Page No.

NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF PASSENGERS.

No.	Name	Description	Age	Sex	Mar.	Rel.	Remarks
41	Koplin	Kryzina	housewife	F	27	M	A
42	Koplin	Teresa	child	F	3	S	A
43	Koplin	Jerry	child	M	2	S	A
44	Konaleska	Cygnus	farmer	M	45	M	A
45	Michalski	Marianna	housewife	F	27	M	A
46	Michalski	Teresa	child	F	2	S	A
47	Modlinski	Franciszek	farmer	M	28	M	A
48	Modlinski	Kulana	housewife	F	33	M	A
49	Modlinski	Stanislaw	child	M	3	S	A
50	Modlinski	Jan-Franciska	child	F	2	S	A
51	Nowak	Stanislaw	auto-mechanic	M	25	M	A
52	Nowak	Miguelina	housewife	F	20	M	A
53	Nowak	Zofia	child	F	3	S	A
54	Nowak	Christyna	child	F	2	S	A
55	Podlinski	Stanislaw	farmer	M	27	M	A
56	Podlinski	Zenonia	housewife	F	24	M	A
57	Podlinski	Irena	child	F	2	S	A
58	Podlinski	Stanislaw	farmer	M	37	M	A
59	Podlinski	Adelina	housewife	F	37	M	A
60	Podlinski	Jadwiga	child	F	4	S	A
61	Podlinski	Irena	child	F	4	S	A
62	Podlinski	Henryk	child	M	2	S	A
63	Podlinski	Karlina	musician leader	M	34	M	A

* By Permanent Residence to be understood residence for a year or more.

The Official list of Passengers sailing on board the US ship "General Stewart"

As we sped through the dry countryside so vastly different from that of Europe, we were enveloped by a sense of security, trust and fulfilment. How could we not be overcome with gratitude towards this parched and thirsty ancient land whose inhabitants welcomed us so warmly!



Edward (Ted)

Our youngest sibling, Edward (picture on the left), born in 1953 in Geelong - a True Blue - did not share the journey with us, although he lived through our Odyssey many times over, if only vicariously.

No account of this voyage would be complete if we failed to acknowledge the wisdom, courage and moral strength of our dear Mum and Dad, who, when taking the risk to leave Europe and venture into this unknown territory half a world away from their extended family, familiar language, culture and friends, had our future welfare foremost in their minds. For this, we are

and always will be grateful.

It is equally fitting to recognise the endless opportunities this country has offered us - to live in peace, free from fear, free from discrimination, free from prejudice and above all free to pursue any direction in life we cared to imagine.

In 2010, sixty years after our family of five first settled in this country, four generations of our family today have the good fortune to call Australia, HOME.



The Szkuta Family in the 1960's



**Members of the Szkuta family who arrived in
Australia in 1950 and the Family today:**

Adolf and Aniela Szkuta born in 1912; **Jadwiga** (1941); **Irena** (1945); **Henry** (1947)

The youngest son, grandchildren and great grandchildren were born in Geelong:

Edward Szkuta (1953) married **Patricia**, whose sons are Daniel and Simon

Gregory (1972); **Christopher** (1975); **Paul** (1978) (Irena and Wojtek Lata's sons)

Andrew (1970); **Christian** (1973) (Henry and Krystyna Szkuta's sons)

Seth (2002); **Oaklei** (2004) and **Sage** (2010) (Andrew and Monika Szkuta's children)

Taylor (2012) (Andrew Szkuta's and Joanne Stevenson's son)

Toninio (Croatia, 2000) **Rea** (2003) (Danijela Luketic's children)

Anya Aniela (2008); **Milana** (2015) (Christopher Lata's and Danijela Luketic's children)

We have every reason to celebrate this auspicious date – 29th January 2010

Jadwiga Szkuta

January 2010

(Since then, some photos in the Family Tree, below, were updated in March, 2021)

Szkuta Family

Our Migrant Family

Adolf **Szkuta** (born in 1912) & Aniela (née Rosinski) **Szkuta** (born 1912), children: Jadwiga (born in Poland, 1941), Irena (born in Germany in 1945) & Henry (born in Germany in 1947) and Edward (born in Geelong in 1953).

A Background to Our Migration

When my parents, Adolf and Aniela, were born in 1912, Poland was not officially recognized as an independent state. Dad was born in Moscow, where his father worked and Mum was born in Łuck, which is now in The Ukraine. In 1912, and for the previous 150 years, this region was under Czarist Russian domination. After WWI, in 1918, Poland regained its Independence, and with that, regained most of its former territories from Russia in the East, its territories from Prussia in the West as well as the territories held by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in southern region of Poland. The population in the territories, regained



Dad in the 1930s



Mum and Dad in Germany, 1943

from Russia, was a rich blend of a number of different ethnic groups, including Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russian as well as three main religious faiths - Roman Catholic, Orthodox Catholic and Jewish. They all appeared to live in relative harmony until Poland was invaded by Hitler's armies. Conflicts quickly developed between members of these groups. The German invaders actually encouraged these conflicts, especially the abusive treatment of the people of the Jewish faith, these inhumane activities, referred to as "pogroms". Gradually, this abuse and violence spread between the other ethnic groups in the

community. During one of these inter-ethnic conflicts, Adolf's father, my Grandfather, and other Poles in the township, were herded into and locked up in the local community hall, which was then set on fire. There was no chance of escape - all perished inside, including my grandfather. Other members of my parents' family also lost their lives in these acts of ethnic and religious conflicts, including Mum's sister-in-law and Mum's seven-year-old niece, who were both murdered by the marauding locals just because Mum's sister-in-law was of the Jewish faith.

My two sisters, Jadwiga (Jadzia) and Witolda (Witalcia) were born in 1941 and 1942, respectively, during these horrible times. Due to a



Only Eddy was born in Australia

shortage of labour in Germany, as most of the German male workforce was sent to fight Hitler's wars all over Europe, the Germans transported Poles to work on German farms and in factories. My parents, as many other Poles, were part of this transportation from eastern Poland to Germany. In a way, they thought they would be better off working on farms in a foreign country rather than continue to live through the daily violence they were witnessing in the place that was once their happy home.



Parents and sisters, Irena & Jadzia, in Germany, mid 1945

During their long journey to Germany, Witalcia fell extremely ill and sadly died. My distraught parents had no other option but to bury her themselves “safely” under a tree, somewhere in Poland. Although we never met our sister, Witalcia, Mum would often talk about her when we were growing up in Geelong. In our minds Witalcia has always remained a part of our family.

Arriving in Minden, Germany, Mum and Dad were hired to work on various farms until the end of the War in 1945. After the War, with no place to go, they were classified by the *United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* as DPs (Displaced Persons, or today’s “Refugees”).



My parents would not and could not return to where they lived before the War, as that region, in the carve-up of Europe by Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin under the Yalta Agreement, was now part of the USSR.



The Szkuta kids, at the Mildura Migrant Camp Barracks, 1951

Furthermore, to appease Stalin and to maintain peace in Europe, Churchill and Roosevelt allowed Poland, together with other Eastern European countries, to be engulfed in the Soviet sphere of influence - part of the Communist Block; later, referred to by the West as the countries behind “*The Iron Curtain*”. Hence, returning to Poland was not an option my parents even considered. I must point out that many Poles have not forgiven Roosevelt and Churchill for abandoning Poland and allowing it to be consumed in the clutches of Stalinist USSR, especially after the suffering the Polish people endured during WWII.

In 1945, while my parents were still living in German refugee camps, my third sister, Irena, was born and two years later I, Henry, was born; both stateless children.

Our Ticket to the “Promised Land”

Like many of the DPs who were left stranded in Germany after the War, my father and his family were offered the opportunity to migrate to either the USA, Canada, Australia or even Argentina. My mother chose Australia, as this in her words was the “*country furthest away from Europe*”, where she spent most of her life living through conflicts, upheavals and daily uncertainties.

In mid-1949, the Szkuta family of five finally left the refugee camps in Germany and travelled by train to Naples. From there, they sailed to Australia on an American Army Supply Ship, *USAT General M.B. Stewart*. On arrival in Melbourne, we were first transferred to a migrant holding Camp in Bonegilla then to a migrant camp in Mildura, in North Western Victoria, where



Bell Park Saturday Polish School at Holy Family P.S. 1955. School Patrons: Rev. Fr. Lucjan Jaroszka & Rev. Fr. Joe Kelly

we lived for around two years in what were once army barracks. Like other DP migrants, my father was contracted by the Commonwealth Government to work on various projects around Australia. Dad mainly worked on railway construction projects all around Victoria. He also worked for a short time as a fruit picker in vineyards and orange groves, both in South Australian and in the Sunraysia region in North Western Victoria.

After Dad's contract ended in 1952, our family settled in Geelong, in the suburb of Bell Park, which later was affectionally referred to as "*Little Europe*"; after all, the majority of the newly arrived migrants from Europe settled in this area. The Szkuta family lived in a caravan for around eighteen months, while Dad built our own family home, which still stands today in "*Little Europe*". I still vividly remember the five of us sitting in our caravan, around a German-made *Singer* sewing machine, which served as a table to celebrate our traditional Polish Christmas Eve Dinner, *Wigilia*, which Mum so lovingly cooked on a kerosene "Primus" cooker. When part of the house was completed, my brother, Edward (Eddy), was born in April, 1953. We now had a real connection to Australia - our brother was a true Aussie!



Our Family before Church on a Polish National Day - 1961



Saturday Polish School at St.Mary's Parish- 1958. My sister, Jadzia, was one of the Polish Language teachers, at the age of only 17.

Life for us as kids was so uncomplicated then. The only sealed roads in Bell Park were Ballarat Road, Separation Street both connected by Anakie Road. With no more than a dozen houses in the whole of Bell Park, meant that the whole neighbourhood - acres of empty paddocks - was our "Adventure Playground".

I also recall, each morning the milkman would drive up to our caravan (later, to our house) on his horse-drawn cart to deliver our two (glass) bottles of milk (with a thick layer of cream floating at the top!);

"Kelly's Bakery" would deliver our fresh Vienna bread every second day, also on a horse-drawn cart. We would swarm around the horse to pat its mane and as a "reward" we would always each receive a bread roll from "Our Baker". The most intriguing, however, was the fortnightly visit from the "Nightman" – to this day, I cannot understand why that fascinated us so much.

There were no schools in Bell Park then, so we all attended St Patrick's P-8 School in Britannia St, West Geelong. None of us spoke a word of English and, at that



Jadzia and Irena on stage at a Polish celebration. 1953



My sister, Irena (with flowers) and me (in baggy pants) at St Patrick's School, West Geelong, 1952

opened in 1955. My brother, Eddy, followed me in 1959. Eddy and I completed our secondary education at Chanel College.

Because Dad, at that time, worked on railway construction programs in the country regions of Victoria, it meant that he was away from his family during weekdays most of the year. Later, he found employment on the nightshift at the International Harvester Company, in North Shore, where he worked until his death in 1970, at the age of only 58.



Dinner as a family after Mass every Sunday (I'm the photographer)

education, which, in the sixties and early seventies, was not free; and there was absolutely no Government assistance, unless students were able to receive scholarships, as I did in my second year at University and as Eddy did when he started his tertiary studies. At that time, in the early 1970s, it would not have been possible for Eddy to enrol in his Metallurgical Engineering Degree Course at Melbourne University, if not for the scholarship. This was because Dad died before Eddy began his University studies and Mum could not have been able to fund his studies on her widow's pension.

time, there were no special English classes for migrant children. I recall sitting in my class, with 50 other Prep kids, not understanding a word my teacher or my classmates were saying to me. Out of utter boredom, I wrote out, over and over again, the alphabet which our teacher had written so beautifully in different coloured chalk on the very top of the blackboard. We all survived and often reminisce on how thoroughly we enjoyed our education in the early fifties. Later, Jadzia and Irena continued their secondary education at Sacred Heart College in Newtown and I was transferred to Grade 2 in Holy Family PS, Bell Park, after it was



Henry, as an Altar Boy at Holy Family Church, 1956

While Dad worked at the International Harvester, my Mother, like other migrant women in Bell Park, supplemented the family income by doing seasonal work, picking peas on farms. This was well before the introduction of the pea harvesting machinery.

Being devout Catholics, my parents sent the four of us to fee-paying Catholic primary and secondary schools. They were even able to save up their money, on working-class wages, to give four of us a tertiary



Henry, with the "Syrena" Sports Club Volleyball Champions - 1964



Our family in our garden at home, in “Little Europe” - 1966

As soon as the Szkuta family settled in Geelong in 1952, Mum and Dad, and especially Mum, made every effort to ensure that their children maintained and appreciated their Polish language, culture and traditions. The whole family took part in all Polish national, cultural and religious celebrations. During the years they spent in Germany as DPs, Mum taught Jadzia to read and write in Polish and instilled in Jadzia the love of Polish literature, culture and traditions. Mum also encouraged (rather, I should say, “forced”) the other three children to attend Saturday Polish School to formally learn what Mum taught Jadzia in Germany. Our weekends

were filled with “things Polish”: Saturday, from 9.00am to 12.00pm – Polish Classes at Holy Family PS. Sunday 12.00pm to 1.30pm Polish Mass at St Mary’s. Lunch at home after Mass and then, each Sunday, back to the City, to St Mary’s Church Hall, from 4.00pm to 6.00pm for Polish dance rehearsals and Polish singing in preparation for the next Polish National Day celebration – Phew, how exhausting!!

I can still recall Mum often telling us, when we resisted her pleas to perform these “Polish chores” on Saturdays and Sundays, that, *“If you truly want to be good Australians, you must first be proud of and appreciate your Polish heritage”*. Not long after, my sister, Jadzia, wrote in her Bachelor of Education Degree Thesis on Multicultural Education, entitled, **“My Polish Background”**: *“If you know and understand one language and one culture, you have one soul, however, if you know and understand two languages and two cultures, you have two souls”*. These and Mum’s words of wisdom have guided all of Adolf’s and Aniela’s children to develop and maintain pride in their Polish heritage and, as Mum promised, we all did become good and proud Australian citizens.



Henry dancing the “Polonaise”. St Mary’s Hall, 1965.

Jadzia, as a teacher at The Girls Academy of Mary Immaculate in Fitzroy, 1992



As young kids, we were brought up on a diet of Polish literature. Mum and Dad happily agreed for Rev. Fr Jaroszka, our Polish Parish Priest in Geelong at that time, to set up a Polish Library in our house. Mum managed this library with pride and Poles from all over Geelong came to borrow books at our place. I recall, while Dad was working on his nightshift at the International Harvester, we would all cuddle up with Mum in her bed, under the *pierzyna* (doona) while Mum and Jadzia would take turns reading to us stories from books in this Library - novels by the Polish Nobel Laureate, Henryk Sienkiewicz, his Trilogy: *“With Fire and Sword”*, *“Lord Wolodyjowski”*, *“The Deluge”*, as well as his popular children’s novel about the adventures of a

Polish boy and an English girl in Africa, *“In the Desert and the Wilderness”*. No television or iPads in those days, thank God!



Henry was Principal at Laverton SC from 1996 -2007. Here with his staff

Secondary College and 12 years as Principal at Laverton Secondary College, until my retirement in 2007. In 1984, I was appointed and served for six years as one of twelve Commissioners for Ethnic Affairs in Victoria during the term of the John Cain Government. Irena completed her studies in Early Childhood Development and worked in kindergartens in country regions and in the Geelong area. Jadwiga completed her Teacher Training Certificate at Ascot Vale Catholic Teachers College and for a short time taught in Catholic primary schools in Geelong. She later completed her Bachelor of Education Degree at Melbourne University and taught for several years at Sacred Heart College in Geelong and later at The Girls' Academy of Mary Immaculate in Fitzroy, teaching English, French and Italian. She remained at The Academy until her retirement in 2006.

I am sure our parents were proud of their children's achievements: Edward completed his Engineering Degree in Metallurgy and worked with the *Copper Refineries Company* in Northern Queensland and later changed his career direction and turned to the Finance area, setting up his own Financial Planning Company: I completed my Bachelor of Science Degree with Honours and my Diploma of Education and took up a Teaching Career with the Victorian Education Department. I worked for the Department for 50 years, 10 of which as a Deputy Principal at Hoppers Crossing



Our family home from the early 1950s still stands in Hughes St, Bell Park, reminding us of our happy childhood.

Mum and Dad knew that when they boarded the American Army Supply Ship, *USAT General M.B. Stewart*, in Naples, they probably would never again see their family and their friends, who remained in Poland during and after WWII. However, they were certain that the very difficult decisions they had to make in 1949 would ensure their children would enjoy a secure and a happy future in their new "Promised Land".

Jadwiga, Irena, Edward and I have always been very thankful for the sacrifices Mum and Dad made and have always appreciated the difficult decisions they undertook to make our lives so much better than what they had experienced in their lives.

Adolf and Aniela have definitely achieved their dreams and goals, in my opinion, beyond their expectations!

Mum died at the Geelong St John of God Hospital in 1999, age 87, with her children and grandchildren at her bedside.

Aniela and Adolf never visited Poland after arriving in Australia in 1950.



Mum and Dad, around 1959

The two verses below from a beautiful Polish song, “*Polskie Kwiaty*” (Polish Flowers), which I roughly translated into English, is often sung by Poles during their nostalgic moments. To me, the verses reflect the emotions my parents must have experienced after leaving Poland, their Home, in 1943, forever!

A strange wind is singing,
It delights in the beauty of this world
But the heart still yearns.
Because somewhere, far away,
There is my family home and
That is where this beauty resides...

There, at this very time, the flowers are blooming -
Daisies, violets, marigolds and poppies
All under the Polish skies,
In the lush green fields, they grow
These native flowers,
Their scent, their beauty is Poland!

(Hold Ctrl + Click on the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cs8rfLnPnL8>
OR type in the URL to listen to this beautiful song in Polish. You can Skip the Advertising if it comes up.)

Henry Szkuta
March, 2021

The Szkuta Family Tree

1912 - 2020

Adolf
3/10/1912 - 2/10/1970



Aniela
15/12/1912 - 13/11/1999



Jadwiga (Jadzia)
6/4/1941



Irena
6/1/1945



Wojciech (Wojtek)
9/7/1945



Melanie
14/6/1981



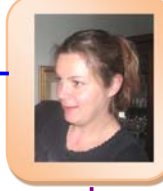
Paul
23/5/1978



Gregory
26/07/1972



Christopher
8/4/1975



Danijela
23/2/1977



Henry
12/7/1947



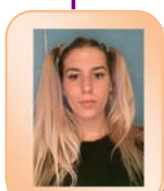
Krystyna
30/9/1947



Anya
12/11/2008



Milana
11/8/2015



Rea
5/4/2003



Tonino
30/6/2000



Joanne
6/4/1979



Andrew
29/8/1970



Christian
18/7/1973



Agnieszka
25/1/1985



Patricia
27/11/1954



Edward (Ted)
6/4/1953



Taylor
4/3/2012



Seth
29/4/2002



Oaklei
15/7/2004



Sage
31/1/2010



Daniel
6/10/1975



Simon
3/9/1973

Rodzina Brzostowskich

Zanim podzielę się z państwem swoimi życiowymi doświadczeniami przedstawię państwu moją rodzinę:

- Moj mąż Roman urodził się 5 marca 1949 roku w Wymoku koło Olsztyna na Mazurach
- Ja Grazyna Brzostowska z domu Langowska urodziłam się 20 października 1950 roku we Wrocławiu, na Dolnym Śląsku
- Syn Marcin urodził się 11 kwietnia 1972 roku we Wrocławiu.
- Córka Monika urodziła się 7 lutego 1975 roku we Wrocławiu

Krótką historią rodziny Brzostowskich przed imigracją do Australii



Ja, w Polsce, z dziećmi, Marcinem i Moniką

Koniec lat 70-tych i początek 80-tych był w Polsce bardzo trudny pod względem politycznym i gospodarczym. Ludziom średniej klasy nie żyło się lekko. Ludzie otrzymywali kartki na mięso- 1 kg na osobę na miesiąc i 1 czekoladę miesięcznie na jedno dziecko. Była również kartka na cukier, 1kg na miesiąc i to właściwie wystarczało. Z mięsem było gorzej, bo trzeba było stać w kolejce od drugiej czy trzeciej rano, żeby zająć sobie miejsce. Kto w niej stał? Byli to większości emeryci, ludzie starsi, którzy powinni dłużej zostać w łóżkach a nie stać w nocy w kolejce. Zdarzały się i inne wersje

zajmowania miejsca w kolejce. Tworzył się komitet, który zapisywał ludzi do kolejki. Gdy sklep otworzono każdy spodziewał się, że coś dostanie a tu „figa z makiem”, bo w tym czasie przyszło kilka pań w ciąży, inwalida z legitymacją itd. i gdy przyszła twoja kolejka to już mięsa zabrakło. A gdy doszedłeś do lady i jeszcze było coś do sprzedania to właśnie dostałeś to „coś” bo nie można było wybrać sobie, który kawałek mięsa chcesz. Dziecko, które zjadło swoją czekoladę, która należała mu się jedna w miesiącu, nie mogło zrozumieć dlaczego mama, czy tata nie może mu kupić drugiej. Co było na półkach? Oczywiście nie brakowało octu, czy zielonego groszku. Sklepy i wystawy sklepowe nie wyglądały ciekawie. Jak „coś” się pojawiło w sklepach to było tylko widać zatłoczony sklep, pełen nadziei ludzi, że „coś” będą mogli kupić.

Ludzie chodzili rozgoryczeni i bardzo zawiedzeni, żeby w tych czasach brakowało podstawowych produktów do życia. Trzeba było kombinować jak się da. Często słyszało się, że już nie ma lub nie dowieźli. I tak, pewnego dnia kiedy w sobotę stałam za chlebem parę godzin i przed zamknięciem sklepu powiedziano nam, że chleba nie dowiozą to mi wystarczyło! Podjęłam decyzję wyjazdu z Polski, żeby moje dzieci nie musiały patrzeć przez szybkę na czekoladę czy jeść placki kartoflane zamiast chleba. Mąż mój,



Roman z dziećmi w samolocie do Australii

Roman, wyjechał do Niemiec parę miesięcy przed nami, żeby zarobić. Roman będąc w Niemczech kilka razy namawiał mnie do wyjazdu, ale zawsze odmawiałam. Mieliśmy mieszkanie, Roman pracował jako inżynier elektryk w dużej firmie, ja byłam dyrektorką dużego przedszkola, ale czy to wystarczało? Nie! I tak jak wspomniałam wcześniej podjęłam decyzję **wyjazdu. Oczywiście nie było wolno nikomu o tym powiedzieć, jechało się na wakacje.** W walizce były tylko letnie rzeczy na dwa tygodnie. I to był nasz cały majątek. A pożegnanie z rodziną było najgorsze.

We wrześniu 1981 roku wyjechałam z dwójką dzieci z Polski. Syn Marcin miał 9 lat, córka Monika 6 lat. W Niemczech powitał nas Roman. Mieszkaliśmy w wynajętym u Niemca pochodzenia polskiego mieszkaniu.

Nagle słyszymy w telewizji, że 13 grudnia 1981 roku został wprowadzony w Polsce Stan Wojenny. Boże co za szczęście dla nas, tylko 3 miesiące i było by po naszym wyjeździe z Polski.

Czas mijał, Roman trochę dorabiał, Marcin poszedł do szkoły, gdzie przyjęto go bardzo serdecznie. Jak wyjeżdżał to dostał zegarek i „rower składak”, który przewieźliśmy do Australii.

Po paru tygodniach pobytu w Niemczech złożyliśmy podanie o wyjazd do Australii. Byliśmy na rozmowie, nawet zapytano nas gdzie chcemy jechać do Sydney czy do Melbourne. Zdecydowaliśmy, że jedziemy do Melbourne bo tu już był Romana kuzyn.



Nasze pierwsze dni w Geelong

Życie w Nowym Kraju

7 Sierpnia 1982 roku wylądowaliśmy w Australii w Melbourne. Była nas spora grupa imigrantów różnej narodowości. Co za radość, że jesteśmy już w Australii a z drugiej strony strach jak to będzie? Gdzie będziemy mieszkać, jak będzie z wyżywieniem i pieniędzmi? Ja nie znam języka angielskiego a Roman tylko trochę. Wiele pytań nasuwało się nam do głowy.



Marcin na rowerze przywiezionym z Niemiec

Było to wcześniej rano, jedziemy autobusem pełni strachu i niepewności. Pewnie zakwaterują nas w jednej sali z innymi ludźmi, będzie pewnie jedna łazienka dla wielu ludzi i wiele niepozytywnych myśli nasuwało się nam do głowy. Przyjechaliśmy do ośrodka, który nazywał się Hostel w Marybrinong. Jak się później dowiedzieliśmy był to 1956 roku ośrodek dla olimpijczyków kiedy to odbywała się olimpiada w Australii.

A co do naszego zakwaterowania to spotkała nas wielka i miła niespodzianka! Dostaliśmy 3-pokojowe mieszkanie z własną łazienką! Na posiłki chodziliśmy na wspólną jadalnię. Na jedzenie nie powinniśmy narzekać. Ale po jakim czasie brakowało nam polskiego, ciemnego chleba. Szukaliśmy w

sklepach chleba po podobnego do polskiego, ale było trudno. Dostawaliśmy pieniądze, które na początku nam wystarczały. Dzieci nasze były dowożone do szkoły, otrzymywały zapakowany posiłek. Ja od pierwszego dnia w Hostelu zaczęłam uczyć języka polskiego. Ksiądz Słowik przywiózł mi kilka elementarzy i polskich książek, z których mogłam uczyć.

W każdą sobotę dzieci zbierały się w jednym z budynków na lekcje języka polskiego. Były to dzieci w różnym wieku, ale jakoś sobie radziłyśmy. Była nauka, ale także polskie piosenki i zabawy. Robiliśmy różnorodne rzeczy, które Ksiądz Słowik zabierał na polskie wystawy. W niedziele zbieraliśmy się na parking hostelu czekając na Polaków, którzy zabierali nas do kościoła do Essendon. Podczas tych spotkań były różnorodne rozmowy, pytania dotyczące życia w Australii. Martwiliśmy się jak damy sobie radę z dwójka dzieci.

Pamiętam ja dziś jak jedna z pań powiedziała mi, „*Śłuchaj, jak konia przyczepią do wozu, też na początku nie chce ciągnąć, a potem ciągnie, tak samo jest z ludźmi, na początku jest ciężko zacząć nowe życie, szczególnie na imigracji, a potem ciągnie się nasz życia wóz tak jak ułoży się życie. Ale nie myślcie źle, bo na pewno życie wasze będzie dobre.*”



Wigilia w naszym własnym domu

Po paru miesiącach pobytu w Hostelu jeden z nasch kolegów kupił sobie samochód i chciał go wypróbować. Dowiedział się, że w Geelong jest zorganizowane zebranie dla nowo przyjezdnych Polaków. I pojechaliśmy. Na sali było pełno ludzi, którzy przyjechali dużo przed nami do Australii i kilka rodzin takich jak my. Był krzyk, jeden rozmawiał przez drugiego. Nie wiedzieliśmy o co chodzi. Ale jak coś pamiętam to chodziło o Dom Polski "Orzeł Biały" w Geelong. W tym czasie Prezesem Związku Polaków w Geelong był pan Eugeniusz Pędziński.

Wysoki, przystojny Ksiądz Smaga, który opuszczał właśnie Geelong starał się wszystkich uspokoić, a Ksiądz Zenon Brońarczyk, który właśnie zaczynał swoją pracę duszpasterską w Geelong spokojnie przypatrywał się całej tej sytuacji. Poruszano wiele tematów, ale te wszystkie rozmowy były chaotyczne i mało zrozumiałe, ponieważ każdy chciał coś ważnego powiedzieć. Poznaliśmy parę życzliwych nam osób, które już od razu gwarantowały nam pomoc i życzliwe serce. Poznaliśmy również kilka osób, które przyjechały do Geelong parę tygodni przed nami.

Po przyjeździe do Hostelul i po różnych rozważaniach zdecydowaliśmy się, że jedziemy do Geelong i nasze pierwsze święta Bożego Narodzenia chcemy spędzić we „własnym domu”. Zamieszkaliśmy w wynajętym domu na Bell Park przy ulicy Separation St. Pierwsze Święta Bożego Narodzenia były dla nas bardzo dziwne i różne od tych w Polsce.

Kolację zaczęliśmy o godzinie 6-tej wieczorem. Było ciepło i jeszcze widno. Na pierwsza gwiazdkę nie doczekaliśmy się.



Poświęcenie naszego rodzinnego domu

Siedząc przy wigilijnym stole, ubrani w letnie ubrania wspominaliśmy polskie Boże Narodzenie. Po paru miesiącach przeprowadziliśmy się na Thorburn St. Tam poznaliśmy jeszcze dwie polskie rodziny- rodzina Pawlak i Lipski. Podczas naszej rozmowy z rodziną Lipskich okazało się, że są z tego samego miasta co my z Wrocławia, a rodzina Pawlaków miała pole przez miedzę z rodziną mojej siostry męża. Jaki ten świat jest mały! Po jakimś czasie kupiliśmy swój własny dom. I tam dopiero wigilia nabrała wspaniałej atmosfery. Gościem na naszej wigilii był młody chłopak- Krzysiek, którego poznaliśmy w Geelong. Przyjechał sam, ale po jakimś czasie poznał młodą dziewczynę z Chin, ożenił się z nią i wyjechał do Melbourne. Przy stole nie zabrakło naszego kota Maćka, który rozumiał tylko po polsku.



Wyjazd na wędkowanie ryb

Wróć jeszcze na chwile do czasów kiedy mieszkaliśmy na Bell Parku. Gdy szło się na zakupy słyszało się jak ludzie rozmawiają w różnych językach – po polsku, ukraińsku, rosyjsku czy chorwacku. Jak w Europie. I, jak się okazało to Bell Park nazywano „Mała Europa”. Do dzisiejszego dnia robię zakupy na Bell Parku, bo tam można kupić wiele europejskich produktów

W pierwszych miesiącach naszego pobytu w Geelong otrzymaliśmy wiele pomocy od indywidualnych Polaków. Jedną z nich była pani Ola Andrus, która wprowadziła nas wspaniale w życie na Bell Parku. Piekała ciasta, gotowała zupy i

przynosiła nam do domu. Zaprowadziła mnie do rzeźnika i mówi, „To jest Polka, która dopiero przyjechała do Australii masz jej pomoc w zakupach”. Dostawialiśmy pomoc od Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul. Były to meble, pościel czy żywność. Pamiętam w jednej z paczek było Vegemite. Powąchałam, pachnie jak maggi, włożyłam więc do rosółu, no i wiadomo co było dalej. Rosół był czarny. Poznaliśmy wiele nam życzliwych ludzi, którzy przyjechali dużo przed nami. Zawiązały się między nami przyjaźnie, które trwają do dnia dzisiejszego.

Nasze dzieci rozpoczęły naukę w Holy Family. Roman znalazł pracę w Fordzie na popołudniową zmianę a w ciągu dnia chodził na kursy angielskiego.

Ja złożyłam podanie do Sobotniej Szkółki języka polskiego. Moje podanie zostało rozpatrzone pozytywnie i w każdą sobotę w Holy Family przez 5 lat prowadziłam lekcje polskiego na poziomie szkoły podstawowej. Następnie przez 7 lat uczyłam języka polskiego w North Geelong High School. Gdzie otrzymałam wspaniale wyróżnienie „Nauczyciela roku”. Przez pierwsze parę lat uczyłam klasy maturalne. Uczniowie moi zdawali pozytywnie matury z języka polskiego co dawało mi wiele satysfakcji. Później z roku na rok liczba uczniów szkoły średniej malała, więc łączono klasy podstawowe ze średnimi. I tak pomału klasy języka polskiego „wygasty” na parę lat. Po paru latach Jola Jabłońska podjęła się uczenia dzieci języka polskiego w tej szkole.



Roman obronił pracę Magisterską

Roman przy każdej nadarzającej się okazji chodził na kursy języka angielskiego. I tak podwyższył swoje umiejętności językowe, ze zdecydował się na zrobienie studiów magisterskich z dziedziny zarządzania. W tym samym czasie pracował Melbourne w Olex Cables jako inżynier elektryk. Dojeżdżał codziennie do pracy i w między czasie studiował na Uniwersytecie w Melbourne. Studia ukończył celująco. Był jednym z pierwszych ze swego kierunku, który zaliczył wszystkie egzaminy i obronił swoją pracę magisterską w terminie. Po 10 latach dojazdu do Melbourne postanowił otworzyć swój własny biznes. Projektował i robił maszyny dla różnych zakładów pracy. Niektóre zakłady pracy były solidne i płaciły na czas, a niektóre niestety nie. I tu był problem bo trzeba było zapłacić za materiał, z którego były zrobione maszyny, zapłacić ludziom za ich prace itp. Tak więc po paru latach Roman musiał zamknąć swój biznes. Nasze życie w Australii to nie tylko praca i nauka. Mile spędzaliśmy czas ze znajomymi i przyjaciółmi. Były to urodziny, wyjazdy na wycieczki na grzyby, na ryby czy BBQ. W pierwszych latach naszego pobytu w Australii nie było weekendu, żebyśmy gdzieś nie wyjeżdżali z naszymi dziećmi i znajomymi. W 2011 roku Roman zmarł co było szokiem dla całej

rodziny i przyjaciół, bo mając 62 lata mógł jeszcze cieszyć się życiem.



Dostałam Nagrodę „Teacher of the Year” za uczenie Języka Polskiego w Szkole Sobotniej

Dzieci nasze ukończyły szkoły średnie. Monika Sacred Heart, Marcin St, Joseph. Oboje ukończyli polskie matury w Australii. Marcin ma swój biznes budowlany i jest ojcem jednego syna - Miller. Monika pracuje w Tax Office, studiuje Prawo Administracyjne, jest matką 3 synów - Zak, Xavier i William. A ja jestem najszczęśliwszą matką i babcią na świecie !!

Wrócę jeszcze na chwile to siebie. Przez parę miesięcy pracowałam w fabryce butów, później w fabryce Zora (potem nazwano Kortex), gdzie szły się różne rzeczy od sukienek do bielizny osobistej. Nigdy nie lubiłam szyć i nie umiałam, ale tak ułożyło się życie i trzeba było się nauczyć. Przesiedziałam przy maszynie 7 lat. Jak było to powiedzenie poprzednio ‘Konia zaprzęgną do wozu.....’

Po siedmiu latach mojej pracy, Kortex zamknięto. Zostałam bez pracy, ale nie było takie złe, bo wysłali nas na kurs języka angielskiego w Gordon. Te 2 lata w Gordon to był bardzo dobry czas. Nauczyciele byli wspaniali. Mieli dla nas bardzo dużo cierpliwości. Na kursie tym poznałam wielu ciekawych

ludzi, których później spotkałam w mojej następnej pracy. A było to 1994 roku kiedy to otrzymałam pracę w Multicultural Aged Care. Przez 21 lat robiłam to co kochałam. Pracowałam z ludźmi starszymi, którzy potrzebowali pomocy pod każdym względem. Moim zadaniem było organizowanie różnorodnych zajęć dla mieszkańców tego ośrodka. Po tych 21 latach pracy odchodziłam ze łzami w oczach. Kochałam to co robiłam nie pomijając 12 lat pracy w Polsce jako nauczycielka.

Oprócz pracy zawodowej zajmowałam się pracą społeczną na rzecz Polonii w Geelong. W 1989 roku podjęłam się prowadzenia Tanecznego Zespołu „Krakowiak”. Prowadziłam lekcje tańca z kilkuletnimi przerwami. A ostatecznie zakończyłam swoją działalność w zespole w 2019 roku. Był to też wspaniały czas dla mnie, gdzie mogłam wykazać się umiejętnościami jako choreograf układając tańce z różnych stron Polski, jak także szyciem i dekorowaniem polskich kostiumów. Zorganizowałam i prowadziłam 3 bale debutantek.

A od 2015 roku jestem prezesem Związku Polaków w Geelong. Teraz jestem na emeryturze, a co będzie dalej to pokarże czas?

Grażyna Brzostowski

Styczeń, 2021



Zespół "Krakowiak" w 2019r, pod dyrekcją Grażyny Brzostowskiej

Postscript

It is with great sadness that I add this paragraph to let readers know the Grażyna Brzostowski passed away on 28th February, 2021 after a short battle with cancer. Included in her "Immigration Story" at the end of this document is the Eulogy read out at Grażyna's Funeral on 1st March, 2021. The text is in both Polish and English.

Akapit

Z wielkim smutkiem dodaję ten akapit, aby poinformować czytelników, że Grażyna Brzostowski zmarła 28 lutego 2021 roku po krótkiej walce z rakiem. W jej "Historii imigracyjnej" na końcu tego dokumentu znajduje się Eulogia odczytana na Pogrzebie Grażyny 1 marca 2021 roku. Tekst jest zarówno w języku polskim, jak i angielskim.



Na Pożegnanie Grażyny Brzostowskiej

Kto by pomyślał, że młoda kobieta, migrująca do Geelong 38 lat temu wraz z mężem i dwójką małych dzieci, będzie miała tak głęboki kulturowy i społeczny wpływ na naszą polską społeczność Geelong?



Życie w Polsce na początku lat 80. nie było łatwe. Trwające strajki Związku Solidarności przeciwko ówczesnemu komunistycznemu rządowi, niedobory żywności i artykułów pierwszej potrzeby, a wreszcie ogłoszenie stanu wojennego, były dla młodej rodziny Brzostowskich zbyt trudne. Grażyna i jej nieżyjący już mąż Roman postanowili potajemnie opuścić Polskę i szukać azylu w Niemczech, pozostawiając rodzinę, przyjaciół i większość dobytku.

Przybywając do Geelong pod koniec 1982 roku, Grażyna szybko zaangażowała się w życie bardzo prężnie działającej polskiej społeczności. Mając doświadczenie dydaktyczne z Polski, Grażyna zgłosiła się na ochotnika do uczenia małych dzieci języka polskiego w lokalnej Polskiej Szkole Sobotniej, finansowanej wówczas przez Stowarzyszenie Polskich Kombatantów Geelong SPK. Kilka lat później, Wydział Edukacji Wiktoriańskiej przejął administrację i finansowanie wszystkich sobotnich szkół etnicznych, a Grażyna została zatrudniona na kilka lat jako nauczyciel języka polskiego na poziomie VCE. W 1990 roku Grażyna została laureatką nagrody „Nauczyciel Roku” Sobotniej Szkoły Języków Nowożytnych.

Zainteresowania Grażyny wykraczają poza nauczanie języka polskiego. Nie było wątpliwości, że chociaż kochała wszystko w swoim nowym kraju, wewnątrz tęskniła za pięknymi tradycjami i bogatą kulturą swojej dawnej ojczyzny. Aby wypełnić tę pustkę, Grażyna zaangażowała się mocno w nauczanie polskiego tańca ludowego w lokalnym Zespole Pieśni i Tańca „Krakowiak”, który w tamtych czasach prowadziła pani Kątny. Po przejściu pani Kątny na emeryturę w 1989 roku, Grażyna przejęła kierownictwo Zespołem.

Pasja Grażyny do polskiego tańca ludowego, jej zamiłowanie do polskiej tradycji i kultury zapewniły Zespołowi sukcesy przez następne trzy dekady. Pod jej opieką reputacja zespołu rozprzestrzeniła się nie tylko lokalnie, ale także poza granicami – dotarła do Melbourne i innych stanów. Liczność zespołu szybko wzrastała, a do Zespołu zapisywali się Polacy od wieku młodzieżowego po entuzjastów w wieku 50+, Australijczyków oraz osoby innych narodowości! Grażyna zawsze miała talent do nakłaniania ludzi do robienia tego, czego nie chcieli i rzeczy, o których nigdy nie sądzili, że mogą robić. Zespół Pieśni i Tańca „Krakowiak” regularnie występował w różnych miejscach na terenie Wiktorii i brał udział w organizowanym co 3 lata Festiwalu PolArt, występując w Hamer Hall w Melbourne Arts Centre. Niestety w 2020 roku zespół został zlikwidowany z powodu braku uczestników.



Pamiętam też jak Grażyna zorganizowała swój pierwszy Bal Debiutantek w Domu Orła Białego na początku lat 90. Postanowiła, że Bal powinien nawiązać do królewskiego polskiego Średniowiecza. Przekonała naszą grupę do przekształcenia głównej sali bankietowej Domu Orła Białego w średniowieczny zamek. Tego wieczora, bawiło się, i to z ogromną przyjemnością, ponad 360 gości. To było wydarzenie, które na zawsze zapamiętam.

Niezadowolona ze wszystkich swoich osiągnięć, podjęła się organizacji uroczystości religijnych jako sposobu na zjednoczenie polonijnej społeczności. Grażyna co roku, przez wiele lat organizowała Jasełka przed rozpoczęciem tradycyjnej polskiej kolacji wigilijnej, naszej „Wigilii”, w Domu Orła Białego. Wydarzenia te były okazją do wspólnych spotkań polonijnych przed Bożym Narodzeniem, przełamania tradycyjnego Oplątka i wymiany życzeń bożonarodzeniowych. Wyobraźnia Grażyny nie miała granic. W czasie, gdy premierę miał słynny film Mela Gibsona „Pasja”, Grażyna postanowiła wyprodukować swój własny spektakl pasyjny tuż przed Wielkanocą w 2002 roku. Ponownie, jej umiejętność wciągania ludzi w role

aktorskie, o których nigdy się im nie śniło, była niesamowita. Nawet ci, którzy najwyraźniej nie mieli zdolności aktorskich, jak ja, byli wykorzystywani jako „dodatki” w mniejszych rolach, takich jak np. rzymscy żołnierze i obserwatorzy. Przedstawienie odniosło ogromny sukces. Polacy więcej mówili o produkcji Grażyny niż o wielomilionowej produkcji Mela Gibsona.

Umysł i ciało Grażyny nigdy nie były bezczynne. Nie zdziwiłbym się, że podczas gdy my tu oplakujemy jej smutną śmierć, Grażyna w niebie pracowicie mierzy Archaniola Gabriela, by dopasować go do jego krakowskiego kostiumu, i jednocześnie uczy dwunastu apostołów kroków do pięknego polskiego tańca polonez. W 2015 roku Grażyna, jako pierwsza kobieta, została wybrana na Prezesa Stowarzyszenia Polaków w Geelong. Prawdę mówiąc, uważam, że żadna inna kobieta w Australii nie została wybrana na takie stanowisko w polskiej organizacji. Przed wyborem Grażyny na to stanowisko, Dom Orła Białego niestety tracił polskość. Niepokoiły ją także wyzwania finansowe, przed którymi stanął Klub. Pamiętam, jak Grażyna mówiła do mnie „ale nie wiem nic o finansach”. Powiedziałem jej, że nie musi, bo powinna wykorzystać talenty, które najwyraźniej

posiadała i zbudować wokół siebie zespół wspierający, tak jak robiła to w swoich poprzednich przedsięwzięciach. I nigdy nie być zbyt dumną by słuchać rad ludzi, których obdarzyła zaufaniem. Grażyna zrobiła to i zrobiła to dobrze. Jako zespół poprowadziła PCA do osiągnięcia celów, które sobie wyznaczyła.

Jako Prezes, Grażyna wyraziła zaniepokojenie tym, że na przestrzeni lat nasza społeczność straciła tak wielu polskich migrantów, którzy przybyli do Geelong na początku lat pięćdziesiątych, przez co straciliśmy bogatą historię tego pokolenia. Dlatego też Grażyna i ja postawiliśmy sobie za zadanie przekonanie jak największej liczby pozostałych Polaków w Geelong do spisania ich osobistych historii migracyjnych. Grażyna i ja pisaliśmy nasze rodzinne historie i zachęcaliśmy innych do tego samego. Grażyna odwiedzała nawet emerytów w domach opieki i namawiała ich, by opowiadali jej swoje historie. Chcieliśmy zakończyć projekt i zorganizować oficjalną premierę w zeszłym roku, niestety COVID-19 pokrzyżował nasze plany. Pod koniec ubiegłego roku zrewidowaliśmy nasze ramy czasowe i ustawiliśmy czerwiec tego roku na oficjalną premierę. Niestety Grażyna nie będzie już z nami, aby świętować to wydarzenie. Bardzo się cieszę, że na bieżąco informowałem Grażynę o projekcie we wczesnym okresie jej choroby, przesyłając jej szkice, które napływały od różnych współpracowników. Będę rekomendował naszemu Komitetowi, abyśmy poświęcili oficjalną inaugurację projektu pamięci Grażyny i jej bezprecedensowemu zaangażowaniu na rzecz Polonii w Geelong.

Nie wierzę, że jest zbyt wielu członków jakiegokolwiek społeczności, którzy okazali tak wielkie przywiązanie do swojej kultury i tradycji, a co ważniejsze, którzy robili wszystko, co w ich mocy, aby promować uczucie polskości w naszej społeczności, tak jak robiła to Grażyna. Grażyna często mówiła, jakie mamy szczęście, że mieszkamy w pięknym kraju, w którym możemy być prawdziwymi obywatelami Australii, a jednocześnie swobodnie wyrażać naszą dumę z naszych polskich korzeni i przywiązanie do naszej poprzedniej ojczyzny, Polski, gdzie sama spędziła 32 lata swojego życia.



Na zakończenie mojej pochwały dla Grażyny chciałbym zacytować dwa wersy z pięknej polskiej piosenki „Polskie Kwiaty”. Piosenka, której wielu Polaków często słucha, a nawet śpiewa w nostalgicznych chwilach, gdy wspominają swoje rodziny i przyjaciół, których zostawili w Polsce kilkadziesiąt lat temu; utwór, który Grażyna wybrała do swojego repertuaru podczas odbywającego się co roku wydarzenia „Popołudnie polskiej muzyki i pieśni”, które zorganizowała w Domu Orła Białego w zeszłym roku. Mam nadzieję, że moje tłumaczenie na język angielski wywoła te same emocje, co oryginalne słowa w języku polskim.

*Śpiewa ci obcy wiatr, zachwyca piękny świat,
Lecz serce tęskni, bo gdzieś daleko stąd,
Został rodzinny dom – tam jest najpiękniej.*

*Ref.: Tam właśnie teraz rozkwitły kwiaty:
Stokrotki, fiołki, kaczeńce i maki.
Pod polskim niebem w szczerym polu wyrosły,
Ojczyste kwiaty.
W ich zapachu, urodzie jest Polska.*

W imieniu Komitetu i członków Stowarzyszenia Polaków w Geelong, Grupy Mercury, pracowników Domu Orła Białego, zespołu Johnny & Martin's Bistro, Geelong Society of Operatic and Dramatic Arts, byłych członków Zespołu Pieśni i Tańca „Krakowiak” oraz Breakwater Eagles Soccer Club, składam kondolencje synowi Grażyny – Marcinowi i córce Monice oraz ich małżonkom, Jej wnukom, partnerowi Grażyny – Frankowi, Jej siostrze Eli i szwagrowi, Henrykowi, jej siostrzeńcom Kacprowi i Bartkowi. Nasze myśli i modlitwy są z wami wszystkimi w tym smutnym czasie.

Żegnaj cię Grażyno. Będzie nam Ciebie brakowało, ale nigdy nie zostaniesz zapomniana.

Henry Szkuta

Sekretarz

Związek Polaków w Geelong Inc.

1 marca 2021 r.

Grazyna Brzostowski Eulogy

1st March 2021



Who would have thought that a young woman, migrating to Geelong 38 years ago, together with her husband and two young children would end up having such a profound cultural and social impact on our Geelong Polish community?

Life in Poland in the early 1980s was not easy. The rolling Solidarity Union strikes against the then Communist Government, shortages food and of basic necessities and, finally, the declaration of a State of War on the Polish Nation, was too much for the young Brzostowski family to handle. Grazyna and her late husband Roman, decided to secretly leave Poland and seek asylum in Germany, leaving behind their family, friends and most of their possessions.

Arriving in Geelong at the end of 1982, Grazyna soon became very involved in the life of a very vibrant Polish community. Having worked as a teacher in Poland, Grazyna volunteered to teach Polish to young children at the local Saturday Polish school, which at that time was funded by the Geelong Polish Ex-Servicemen's Association, the SPK. A few years later the Victorian Education Department took on the administration and funding of all Saturday language schools and Grazyna was employed to teach Polish at VCE level for several years. In 1990, Grazyna was the proud recipient of the Saturday School of Modern Languages "Teacher of the Year" Award.

Grazyna's interests stretch beyond teaching of Polish. There was no doubt that although she loved everything about her new country, internally, she did yearn for the beautiful traditions and rich culture of her former homeland. To fill this void, Grazyna became heavily involved in teaching Polish Folk Dancing with the local Krakowiak Dance Ensemble, which at that time was led by Mrs Kątny. When Mrs Kątny retired in 1989, Grazyna took over and was the Ensemble's Director.

Grazyna's passion for Polish folk dancing, her love of Polish traditions and culture had ensured the Ensemble's continued success for the next three decades. Under her tutelage, the Ensemble's reputation spread not only locally but beyond, to Melbourne and interstate. Its membership grew rapidly and included Poles from pre-teenage years to enthusiasts beyond the age of 50 and people from Australian and other ethnic backgrounds! Grazyna always had the knack of getting people to do what they didn't want to do and things they never thought they could do. The Krakowiak Dance Ensemble regularly performed in various locations around Victoria and took part in the PolArt Festival every three years, performing in Brisbane and in Victoria at the Hamer Hall, Arts Centre. Sadly, in 2020 the Ensemble was wound up due to lack of participants.

I also recall Grazyna organising her first Debutante Ball at the White Eagle House in the early 1990s. She decided that the Ball should take on Royal Polish Medieval theme. She convinced a group of us to transform the main function hall at the White Eagle House into a Medieval Castle. The evening was thoroughly enjoyed by over 360 guests, an event I will always remember.



Not satisfied with all her accomplishments, she took on the organisation of religious celebrations as a way of bringing the Polish community together socially. Each year, for many years, Grazyna organized Nativity Plays before the start of our traditional Polish Christmas Eve Dinner, our "Wigilia", at the White Eagle House. These occasions gave members of the Polish community an opportunity to meet together before Christmas, break the traditional Oplątek and exchange Christmas wishes.

Grazyna's imagination had no bounds. At the time when Mel Gibson released his famous movie "Passion of the Christ", Grazyna decided to produce her own Passion Play just before Easter in 2002. Again, her ability to rope in people into acting roles they never dreamed they could do was uncanny. Even those who obviously had no acting ability, like myself, were used as "Extras" in minor roles such as Roman soldiers and on-lookers. The play was a tremendous success. The Polish community talked more about Grazyna's production than they did about Mel Gibson's multi-million-dollar production.

Grazyna's mind, and for that matter her boy, was never idle. I would not be surprised that while we are here mourning her sad passing, Grazyna is in heaven busily measuring out Arch Angel Gabriel to fit him out for his Krakowski costume and, at the same time, teaching the twelve Apostles the steps to the beautiful Polish Polonaise Dance.

In 2015, Grazyna was the first woman to be elected President of the Polish Community Association in Geelong. In fact, I believe no other woman in Australia has been elected to such a position within a Polish organisation. Before Grazyna's election to this position, the White Eagle House was sadly losing its "Polishness" and she was

also concerned about the financial challenges the Club faced. I recall Grazyna saying to me “but I don’t know anything about finance”. I told her she does not need to, she should use the talents which she obviously had and build a supportive team around her, as she had done in her previous endeavours, and never be too proud to listen to advice from people she would learn to trust. Grazyna did this and did it well. As a team, she led the PCA to attain the goals she set out to achieve.

As President, Grazyna expressed her concern that over the years our community had lost so many of our Polish migrants who arrived in Geelong in the early 1950s and with this we had lost the rich history of that generation. Grazyna and I, therefore, set ourselves a task to convince as many as possible of the remaining Poles in Geelong to record their Personal Migration Histories. Grazyna and I both wrote our family stories and encouraged others to do the same. Grazyna even visited retirees in nursing homes and got them to relate their stories to her. We aimed to complete the project and hold the official launch last year, unfortunately COVID-19 put a stop to our plans. Late last year, we revised our timelines and set June of this year for the official launch. Sadly, Grazyna will not be with us to celebrate this occasion. I am so glad that I kept Grazyna up to date with the project during the early period of her illness, by sending her the drafts that were coming in from various contributors. I will be recommending to our Committee that we dedicate the Official Launch of the project to Grazyna’s memory and her unprecedented contribution to the Polish community in Geelong.



I don’t believe that there are too many members of any community that have demonstrated so much affection for their culture and their traditions and, more importantly, who went out of their way to promote that affection in the Community as Grazyna has done. Grazyna often said how lucky we are to be living in a beautiful country where we can be true Australian citizens and yet be free to express our pride in our Polish roots and our affection for our previous homeland, Poland, where, in Grazyna’s case, she spent 32 years of her life.

I would like to conclude my eulogy to Grazyna by quoting two verses from a beautiful Polish song, *Polskie Kwiaty* – Polish Flowers. A song many Poles often listen to or even sing in nostalgic moments when they reminisce about their families and friends whom they left behind in Poland many decades ago; a song which Grazyna selected in her repertoire at the last annual function of “An Afternoon of Polish Music and Song” which she organized at the White Eagle House last year. I hope my English translation will bring out the same emotions as the original words do in Polish.

*A strange wind is singing,
It delights in the beauty of this world
But the heart still yearns.
Because somewhere, far away,
There is my family home and
That is where this beauty resides...*

*There, at this very time, flowers are blooming -
Daisies, violets, marigolds and poppies
All under the Polish skies,
In the lush green fields, they grow
These native flowers,
Their scent, their beauty is Poland!*

On behalf of the Committee and members of the Polish Community Association in Geelong, the Mercury Group, employees of the White Eagle House, Johnny & Martin’s Bistro team, Geelong Society of Operatic and Dramatic Arts, the former members of the Krakowiak Dance Ensemble and the Breakwater Eagles Soccer Club, I would like to extend our condolences to Grazyna’s son Marcin and daughter Monika and their spouses, her grandchildren, Grazyna’s partner, Frank, her sister Ela and her brother-in-law, Henry, her nephews, Kacper and Bartek. Our thoughts and our prayers are with you all at this very sad time.

Grazyna, I bid you farewell. You will be greatly missed but never forgotten.

Henry Szkuta
Secretary,
Polish Community Association in Geelong Inc.

Maria Dąbrowska/Dynowska

Urodziła się 27.7.1927 rok w Proszowicach w rejonie Krakowskim.

Krótką historią rodziny Dąbrowskich przed imigracją do Australii



Maria i Edward Dąbrowscy w Niemczech

W 1941 roku Pani Maria została wywieziona do Niemiec na roboty do dwóch obozów Zandre i Bocham. Ciężko pracowała na farmie i w kuchni. W Niemczech poznała swego przyszłego męża, Edwarda, który pracował w kopalni. W 1947 roku wyszła za niego za mąż.

W 1950 roku Pani Maria przyjechała do Australii wraz z mężem i synem Zbyszkim. Pierwsze lata w Australii były trudne.

Pani Maria i jej syn Zbyszek mieszkali w obozie dla uchodźców w Bonegilla. Mąż Edward był oddelegowany do pracy w lesie. W obozie było dużo polskich rodzin z dziećmi, z którymi Pani Maria utrzymywała bliski kontakt. Była to rodzina - Jabłońskich, Zdanowicz, Parks i Godlewski.



Ślub p. Marii i p. Edwarda w Niemczech,

Życie w Nowym Kraju



Syn, Leszek, w stroju Góralskim

W 1958 roku urodził się Pani Marii i jej mężowi drugi syn Leszek.

Pani Maria od pierwszych dni pobytu w Bonegilla pokazała swoje zdolności pracy z dziećmi i dorosłymi. Organizowała Jasełki, oraz różnorodne przedstawienia. "Królewna Śnieżka" była ulubionym przedstawieniem Pani Marii i dzieci. W obozie w Bonegilla były odprowadzane Msze Św. podczas których Pani Maria śpiewała.

Jej zdolności zaobserwował Żyd i Major mieszkający w Bonegilla. Pomogli oni Marii i jej mężowi zamieszkać razem.



Występ z panią Kątną

Z Bonegilla, cała rodzina Pani Marii przyjechała do Geelongu. Edward, mąż Pani Marii dostał pracę w kuchni, a pani Maria pracowała w szwalniach - Pelaco a potem w Zora.

Pani Maria bardzo mocno zaangażowała się w prace społeczne wśród polonii w Geelongu. Organizowała akademie i różnorodne przedstawienia z dziećmi i dorosłymi. Uczyła wierszyków



Jedno z wielu przedstawień p. Marii

i piosenek na różnorodne okazje i uroczystości. Pani Maria bardzo mile wspomina współpracę z Księdzem Jaroszką, który po wielu latach przysłał jej wzruszający list, w którym dziękuje Jej za wspaniałe lata współpracy.

Tak pisał w liście do Pani Marii, z Pabianic 4/8/1997:

„A teraz pragnę napisać kilka słów do Pani, skierować w imię dawnej, a tak bardzo serdecznej przyjaźni. Swoim podpisem przypomniła mi Pani te dawne lata, kiedy u początków naszego życia organizacyjnego, organizowaliśmy różne uroczystości z okazji wszelkich naszych rocznic. Dobrze się stało, że byłem „zwieraczem” wówczas wykonywanych zdjęć. Dzięki temu dawne chwile tak żywo stają przed oczyma. Pamiętam jak wówczas Pani wielką rolę spełniała w organizowaniu każdej akademii, jak Pani wówczas nie szczędziła swego czasu, ofiarowując czasami na nasze spotkania swój własny dom.”.....

Pani Maria należała również do grupy teatralnej w Domu Polskim i brała udział w wielu występach.

Przez 12 lat była prezesem Koła Pań przy Związku Polaków w Geelong. Koło to organizowało pokazy mody, z których dochód przeznaczony był na cele dobroczynne. Przez 9 lat Pani Maria prowadziła kuchnię w Domu Polskim. Serwując polskie dania.

W 1978 roku zmarł pierwszy mąż Pani Marii.

W 1981 roku Pani Maria wyszła ponownie za mąż za Franciszka Dynowskiego

„Lubiłam i lubię bardzo śpiewać” – mówiła Pani Maria - „Przez 55 lat należałam do Polskiego Choru, a kiedy wyszłam ponownie za mąż mój mąż dołączył się do grona chórzystów.”



Zdjęcie ślubne p. Marii i p. Franka Dynowskich 1981r.

Za swoją społeczną działalność na rzecz Polonii Pani Maria otrzymała Srebrny i Złoty Krzyż Zasługi.



Chór im. „Stanisława Moniuszki” razem Ks. Kardynałem Karolem Wojtyłą i z Ks. Mon. Lucjanem Jaroszką

Do późnych, 80-tych lat swego życia Pani Maria była zaangażowana w życie społeczne Domu Orła Białego w Geelong.

Potem wiek i zdrowie nie pozwalały Pani Marii na dalszą pracę społeczną. Ale gdy w Domu Polskim odbywały się jakiegokolwiek polskie imprezy Pani Maria wraz z mężem byli na nich obecni. Cieszyli się każdą chwilą, że mogą spędzić czas wśród znajomych.

Ze względu na stan zdrowia, Pani Maria przebywa obecnie w Domu Opieki Dla Osób

Starszych. Mąż Jej, Franek odwiedza Ją codziennie i wspólnie spędzają czas. Często zabiera Panią Marię do ich własnego domu, gdzie wspólnie oglądają DVDs ze swoich występów.

„Serce mi się kraje, gdy oglądam nasze występy, bo to był dla mnie wspaniały czas” - powiedziała Pani Maria.



Zjednoczenie Kola Pań w Domu Orła Białego, 1983



Inscenizacja z dziećmi przygotowana przez p. Maryję

Siedząc z Panią Marią w jej mieszkaniu i oglądając albumy ze zdjęciami, widać było na Jej twarzy smutek i żal, że to już nie powróci. *„To są tylko wspomnienia z tamtych lat”* - wtrącił mąż Pani Marii, przynosząc nam ciepłą herbatę.

Podczas naszego spotkania Pani Maria często mi powtarzała:
„Brak mi dzieci, brak mi polskości.”

Wywiad z Panią Marią Dynowską przeprowadziła

Grażyna Brzostowski.

Marzec, 2020

Olszak-Kot Family

My Migrant Family

Piotr and Michalina **Olszak** (both born 1896 in the Poznań region). Krystyna **Kot** (later Szkuta) was born in 1947, in Bydgoszcz, Poland)

A Short background to our migration

Poland did not exist on world maps for 150 years. In the 1700s, Poland was divided up between three of its neighbours: Russia took possession of the eastern part of Poland; Prussia (Germany) the Western regions of Poland and the Austro-Hungarian Empire took control of the southern part of Poland. It was not until the end of WWI, in 1918, that Poland once again regained its independence and with that most of the former territories it held as the “Kingdom of Poland” in the early 1700s.



The Olszak Family in Poznań, Poland in late 1920s

Therefore, Piotr and Michalina, (Krystyna Kot’s grandparents), were, in fact, born in Prussia. At the age of 20, Piotr served and fought with the Prussian army during WWI. When Poland regained its independence in 1918, Piotr joined the Polish army, established by General Józef Piłsudski. He was stationed to serve in the newly regained territories of eastern Poland, in the town of Równo. Równo is now a part of The Ukraine and was very close to where Adolf and Aniela Szkuta lived at that time. Little did the Olszak and the Szkuta families know that 45 years later their paths would cross, of all places, in Australia, and that Adolf’s and Aniela’s son, Henry, would marry Piotr’s and Michalina’s grand-daughter, Krystyna, in Geelong in 1970.



Michalina and Piotr Olszak with daughter Stefania, early 1930s, in Równo, then part of Poland

When WWII broke out in 1939, Piotr’s regiment was sent to fight in the western part of Poland, leaving his wife and daughter in Równo. Captured by the Germans, Piotr was imprisoned in a German Labour Camp, where he remained until the end of the War. While in Germany, he discovered that his nephew was also there. Piotr had no idea of the whereabouts of his wife and daughter but, like many other Displaced Poles in Germany, he was reluctant to return to Poland because the country was now under a Communist regime and within, what then was called “*The Iron Curtain*”. He therefore decided to accept the invitation to migrate to Australia with his nephew and his young family.



Michalina, her daughter, Stefania, son-in-law and Krystyna in Bydgoszcz Poland - 1950

Family Re-unites

On arrival in Melbourne in 1952, Piotr, together with his nephew’s family, was transferred to the migrant camp in Bonegilla. He found work as a house painter and settled in Beechworth, in north eastern Victoria. He began to search for his wife, Michalina and daughter, Stefania, through the Red Cross. Piotr discovered that



Michalina Olszak's first day in Australia, 1958

his wife, Michalina, was living in Bydgoszcz, Poland, with their daughter, Stefania, her husband, Władysław Kot and their two daughters, Krystyna and Wiesława. Michalina agreed to join her husband in Australia. His daughter, Stefania, decided not to come to Australia because her husband, Władysław, was serving as an Officer in the "Polish People's Army"; at that time Polish authorities would not have allowed Władysław to leave Poland, even on a vacation.

Michalina arrived in Australia in 1958 and settled with her husband in Beechworth. At that time, Beechworth was a very isolated country town with no Polish community, no one, except her husband and his

nephew, to communicate with in Polish and, more important, there was no Polish church, which she could attend on a Sunday. She was not happy living there, so, in 1961, both decided to move to Geelong, where there was a large Polish community, a Polish priest and Polish Mass every Sunday. They settled in a "cottage" house in West Geelong and remained there till they died in the mid-1980s.

Piotr and Michalina became heavily involved in the Geelong Polish community. They regularly attended functions organized by the Polish Ex-Servicemen's Association in Geelong, of which Piotr was a proud member.



Mrs Andrzejczyk, the Olszaks with Mr&Mrs Aszenbrenner in late 1960s

In 1967, they were able to convince me, Krystyna Kot, their granddaughter, to leave Poland and come to live with them in Australia. At first, I was reluctant to leave my parents, siblings and the many friends I had in Bydgoszcz. However, when my grandparents promised me that they would pay for my trip back to Poland, should I not be happy in Australia, I agreed. I just turned 19 years of age when in February 1967, I sailed on the Italian Liner, Galileo Galilei, from Naples, arriving in Australia on 13th March 1967.



Krystyna at Grandparents' place, first day in Australia, 1967

I soon found work in Geelong. At first, at the Geelong Hospital in the kitchen (thanks to Marjorie Taylor, who was the Matron of Nursing at the Hospital and very closely involved with the Geelong Polish Community and a personal friend of my Grandparents). Later I found employment in the "rag trade" at *Pelaco* in Corio, making exclusive men's shirts.

Not speaking a word of English, I attended all the Polish functions in Geelong with my Grandparents as soon as I arrived in Geelong. At that time, the Polish community was thriving, with Polish functions and events being held, what then to me seemed to be, on a weekly basis. I took part in the Geelong Miss Polonia contest, in which I was a runner-up. Later in August 1967, I took part in another memorable community event, the Geelong Polish Debutante Ball. There, I met Jadwiga Szkuta, who was preparing the young



Krystyna (far left) in Naples, Italy on the way to Australia. February 1967

Polish girls and boys for their Deb Ball. Jadwiga later told me that she told her brother, Henry Szkuta, that *“there was this very nice Polish girl in her Deb group, who recently arrived from Poland...”*. At that time, Henry was attending La Trobe University and living in Melbourne. He came down to Geelong for the Deb Ball and was invited by someone in the group to attend a private after-party. That is when I met Henry for the first time.

Three years later, Henry and I were married and later had two sons, Andrew and Christian. Many years later we became very proud grandparents of four beautiful grandchildren, Seth, Oaklei, Sage and Taylor.



Runner-up in Miss Polonia Quest. Photo with proud Grandparents and friends, 1967



Polish Community Debutante Ball, August 1967

Naturally, I loved everything about Australia and have always been happy with my life in my new country. I did not return to Poland – happy to have saved my grandparents the money they promised for my return trip!! I did, however, return to visit my family and friends in Poland, together with Henry, on many occasions and my sons and two of my grandchildren on one occasion.

Henry and I were very pleased and honoured to have had the opportunity to build a very close and very happy relationship with my grand-parents, Michalina and Piotr. To me, they were like parents. Henry and his brother-in-law, Wojtek Lata, spent many Saturday evenings at St James St in West Geelong with “Dziadek” (Grandfather Piotr) playing cards and enjoying shots of Napoleon Chatelle Brandy till late in the night, and with “Babcia” (Grandmother Michalina) supplying us with delicious Polish snacks to go with the Brandy!

Both Piotr and Michalina visited their families in Poland, during the early 1970s.



Grandparents with Krystyna on her Wedding Day, 1970

Both Piotr and Michalina lived to the ripe old age of 88. Michalina dying peacefully in her sleep in their West Geelong home in 1984 and three months later, Piotr died of cancer, also at home, under dedicated palliative care of a long-time friend of the Olszak family, Matron Marjorie Taylor. His daughter, Stefania, who was visiting her Mum and Dad from Poland, Matron Taylor, Henry and I were at my Grandfather’s bedside when he died.



Krystyna and Henry 1968

Krystyna (Kot) Szkuta

March 2021

Rodzina Obalskich i Błaszczków

Leonarda Obalska urodzona 13 marca, 1924 w Wilnie a mąż, Bolesław Obalski urodzony 2 lutego 1912 w Działoszynie Łódzkie Polska.

Edward Błaszczyk urodzony 18 marca 1942, Halina Błaszczyk 29 lipca 1945, Beata Apostolou, (Błaszczyk) urodzona 26 marzec 1967 i Wioletta Wilson (Błaszczyk) urodzona 8 kwiecień 1975.

Krótką historia rodzin Obalskich i Błaszczków przed imigracją do Australii



Leonarda, jak wiemy, urodziła się w Wilnie na Litwie, w 1924, sześć lat po odzyskaniu Niepodległości Polski. Dzieciństwo miała bardzo ciężkie gdyż straciła wczesnie Matkę i wychowała ją ciocia. Mając 15 lat, wybuchła Druga Wojna Światowa. Została wywieziona do Niemiec na przymusowe roboty. Tam poznała swojego męża, Bolesława Obalskiego i pobrali się w 1945r w miejscowości Wierdaden, Niemcy.



Bolesław i Leonarda Obalscy w Niemczech, 1945(po lewej) i w Australii, w 1960r



Polacy w Niemczech nosili te nalepki



Bolesław po prawej stronie w Niemczech po roku 1945

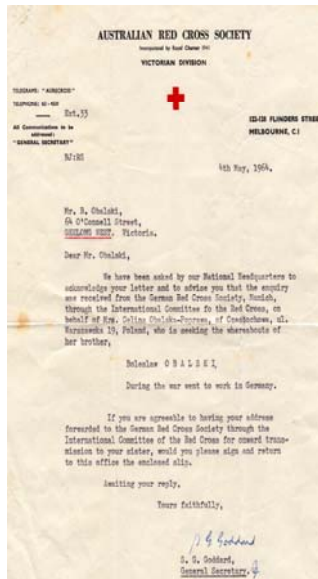
Życie w Nowym Kraju



W Bonegilla, w latach 1950tych

Leonarda i Bolesław emigrowali z Niemiec do Australii w 1949r. Zaraz po przybyciu do Australii, byli osiedleni w obozie imigracyjnym w Bonegilla, Victorii. Tam spędzili dwa lata i pracowali na kontraktach dla Australijskiego Rządu. W 1952r, przyjechali do Geelongu i osiedlili się w Geelong West, wpierw na Clarence St a potem na Autumn St.

Nie długo po przyjeździe do Geelongu Bolesław dostał prace w *Geelong Cement Works* w Fyansford, nie daleko West Geelong. Leonarda dostała prace w kuchni.



W 1964, Bolesław otrzymał list od Australian Red Cross (Czerwony Krzyż), informując Bolesława że jego siostra, Celina poszukuje brata i pytają o pozwolenie podanie adresu dla siostry Celiny w Polsce. Po dwóch latach, Bolesław odwiedził Polskę aby zobaczyć się z siostrą i jej rodzinę w Częstochowie. Tam zapoznał siostrzenicę, córkę Celiny, Halinę Błaszczyk.



Leonarda i Bolesław na Eastern Beach, Geelong, lata 1960te

Bolesław i Leonarda nie mieli własnych dzieci ani krewnych, po powrocie do Australii, zapragnął pomóc Halinie Błaszczyk, wraz z rodziną przyjechać na stałe do Australii w ramach złączenia rodzin oraz opiekować się nimi. Niestety, w roku 1970, Bolesław zmarł. Leonarda została sama, bez żadnej rodziny w Australii i w Polsce.



Celina z bratem Bolesławem

Dopóki zdrowie dopisywało Leonarda jeździła po świecie i zawsze odwiedzała rodzinę męża w Polsce. Tęsknota za Polską i za męża rodziną po wielu odwiedzinach, zawsze pozostała w sercu. Zdecydowała spełnić Bolesława marzenia przyjazdu Haliny z rodziną do Australii.



Halina z córkami, Beata & Wioletta w Poland, 1980

W okresie Strajków Związków Zawodowych, „Solidarność” i wywołaniu Stanu Wojennego w Polsce, udało Leonardzie sprowadzić męża rodzinę, Halinę i Edwarda Błaszczyk i ich dzieci, Beatę i Wiolettę, aby im dać szansę szczęśliwego ułożenia sobie życia w Australii. Także żeby miała pomoc i opiekę rodzinną.



Pierwsze dni w Australii

Niestety ostanie trzy lata życia, ciężka choroba zmusiła ją do przebywania w Nursing Home na West Geelong. Halina Błaszczyk z swej strony dokładała wszelkich starań aby umilić jej pobyt w Nursing Home. W roku 2000, kiedy skończyła 76 lat, spokojnie odeszła z tego świata, pozostawiała rodzinę i przyjaciele w smutku.

Dwa tygodnie po przybyciu do Australii, w grudniu 1983 roku, zamieszkaliśmy u ciotki Leonardy na West Geelong, gdzie znalazłam pracę w Zora Fashions, również w West Geelong. Minęło trochę czasu, zanim Edek znalazł pracę w Alcan, Aluminium Fabryce w North Geelong.

Po przybyciu, zaaklimatyzowały się szybko. Po półtora roku wyprowadziliśmy do własnego domu na Bell Park. Nareszcie, mieliśmy własny dom!

Córki poszły do szkoły, Beata do High School a Wioletta do Primary School. Od razu zaprzyjaźniliśmy się również z Polonią z Geelong i bardzo zaangażowaliśmy się w lokalnych działaniach.



Edek, dumny z swojego pierwszego auta w Australia



Edek i Wioletta na podwórku nowego domu

Rzeczywiście, uczestniczyliśmy Mszy Świętej. Było to również miejsce, gdzie nasza rodzina mogła spotkać się z polonią w Geelong, która w tych czasach była bardzo duża.

Beata i Wioletta, należały do Polskiego Zespołu Tańca "Krakowiak" i Polskiego Chóru "Promyki". Chór często śpiewała w Kościele. Razem z Krakowiakiem, też bawili polską społeczność przez wiele lat na licznych imprezach organizowanych w Sali SPK i w Domu Orła Białego.

Życie w Australii było o wiele lepsze niż my sobie wyobrażali. Beata i Wioletta zdali Maturę i obydwie pracują na wyższych pozycjach w Commonwealth Bank. Szczęśliwie założyli sobie rodzinę. Beata ma dwie córki, Maia i Monika. Wioletta ma Córkę, Chloe i dwóch synów, Max i Zak.

Kilka razy odwiedzaliśmy rodziny w Polsce i też mieliśmy przyjemność gościć w Australii moją Mamę, Celinę, i Edka siostrę i siostrzenicę z synem.



Ceremonia obywatelstwa australijskiego z p. Celiną, mama Haliny,

Edek i ja poszliśmy na emeryturę, w 2005 r. Po jakimś czasie, Edek zaczął chorować i po długiej walce z chorobą, zmarł w Geelong Hospital, 3 maj 2016r. Ale życie toczy się dalej, i chociaż też choruję, udzielam się nadal społecznie w grupach Seniorów.

Nadal jestem bardzo związana z Domem Orła Białego. Jestem już szósty rok w Zarządzie Związku Polaków.



„Idziemy do Kościoła w naszych Polskich strojach”



Halina z córkami. 1984



Kibicujemy za Polską drużyną w Piłce Nożnej Światowej, 1990



A Salute to Mrs Alfreda Kątna



Alfreda Kubiczowska was born on 30th May, 1920 in the small town of Proszowice, in the region of Kraków, Poland.

History of Pani Alfreda Kątna before migrating to Australia

In all official documents, Alfreda's marriage surname is "Kątny". However, Poles would refer to her as Alfreda Kątna, which is the Polish feminine version of "Kątny". In this document, I will be using the Polish version, Pani Kątna (Mrs Kątna).

Pani Kątna was born near the beautiful historical City of Kraków, in Poland, two years after Poland regained its Independence. Her father joined the newly established Polish army under the leadership of General Józef Piłsudski. We know very little of Pani Kątna's early life, only that her mother died when Alfreda was only three years old. As her father was serving in the army, Alfreda, at the age of four, had to be sent to a Catholic orphanage, outside of Kraków, where she was looked after by nuns.



In England with husband
Antoni

Alfreda was 19 years of age when Poland was invaded by Hitler's forces and World War II broke out. Soon after, Alfreda was transported to Germany where she worked in one of the country's factories. When the War ended in 1945, Alfreda left Germany and migrated to England. It was there where she met her future husband, Antoni Kątny. While in England, she also fell in love with the theatre and became heavily involved in theatrical work.



With Friends in Germany

Life in her New Homeland

In 1952, Mr and Mrs Kątny emigrated from England to Australia and settled in Geelong, raising three healthy and happy children, Urszula, Wacław (Wally) and Cecylia. In 1958, Pani Kątna began teaching young Polish children folk dancing. To get as many participants as she could muster, Pani Kątna drove her car to homes of Polish families in the Geelong area to encourage young people to join her group. In those days, many of the families did not have their own cars, so she would also drive around each week and literally pile the kids into her car to bring them to either St Mary's or St. Peter & Paul parish Halls for dance practice.



1952 Performance celebrating Poland's "3rd May Constitution Day" at St Mary's Parish Hall, Geelong

In the late 1960s, Pani Kątna formally established the Polish Dance Ensemble, “*Krakowiak*”. The members of the Ensemble were delighted and very honoured when in the early 1970s, they were invited to perform at Hamer Hall in Melbourne and at the Geelong West Town Hall with other ethnic dancing groups.



Pani Kątna (behind the Eagle Banner) taking part in a dramatic play!

These were the first of many performances the “*Krakowiak*” Ensemble took part in. The group performed each year at the Geelong Gala Day Parade, later at the Pako Festas in Geelong West and regularly for various fundraising events both in Geelong and Melbourne. As a result, strong relationships between the members of the Ensemble were forged over the years and these relationships continue to this day.



Pani Kątna performing with Mrs Dąbrowska (Dynowska)

One of Pani Kątna’s biggest achievements was when the “*Krakowiak*” Ensemble first took part in the PolArt festival of Song and Dance in Adelaide in 1980. This was followed by PolArt performances in Melbourne in 1984 and Brisbane in 1988. These were unforgettable experiences - meeting other members of Polish dance groups from all over Australia and New Zealand.



Pani Kątna (far left), in the mid-1950s, with ladies in Polish costumes at one of many Polish National Day celebrations in Geelong

Pani Kątna’s passion for Polish folk dancing and performing in general, saw no bounds. She often covered the costs for the costumes she sewed or purchased. Pani Kątna often paid for the of hiring halls for rehearsals when spaces were not available at the Holly Family Primary School or if the Polish Ex-servicemen’s Hall in Ryrie St was booked for other functions.

Poles in Geelong were entertained by the *Krakowiak* Dance Ensemble every year on National Days, such as Poland’s Independence Day on 11 November, the annual Poland’s Constitution Day on 3 May and many religious celebrations. Polish Folk Dancing in Geelong was synonymous with Pani Kątna’s name!



“*Krakowiak*” Ensemble at Melbourne PolArt Festival, 1984



Never missed a Chance to perform

The Polish community in Geelong was in awe of Pani Kątna's commitment to and her passion for everything to do with Polish culture. Pani Kątna would burn "the midnight oil" sewing Polish Folk costumes, meticulously threading beads and sequins onto the fabric of these costumes. The Polish community was proud of how beautiful their children looked when they came out to perform in public, dressed in the costumes Pani Kątna so lovingly created.

Not satisfied with all her work in promoting Polish cultural activities in the Geelong area, at the end of the year, Pani Kątna would also organise Christmas gifts for all the children who participated during the year, as well as offer an end-of-year excursion to some exciting venue.

Although she was not a "spring chicken" in the 1980s, and also of very small stature, Pani Kątna was very agile and did not have second thoughts about jumping into dance routines, which even the young participants in her group often found difficult to execute.

As the members of the Ensemble grew older and began to perform more regularly, Pani Kątna arranged for the purchase of originally designed Polish folk costumes made in Poland.



1975 – Members of Pani Kątna's first „Krakowiak” Dance Ensemble



The next generation of Pani Kątna's young "Krakowiak" troupe

All this work was not enough for Pani Alfreda Kątna! She also gave up her time as a volunteer with the Red Cross, the Grace McKellar Centre and the Geelong Hospital Auxiliary Group. Added to this, she was heavily involved with the Geelong Migrant Resource Centre, organising activities which involved dancing of any kind.

In her later years, sadly, a lady who was so independent, strong and healthy all her life and who made such a tremendous contribution to the Geelong community became ill and was dependent others. Sofie Kovac (Tomaszewski) from the Australian-

Polish Community Services and a former member of Mrs Kątna's "Krakowiak" Ensemble, became her main caregiver. Mrs Kątna spent the remainder of her life as a resident at the Grace McKellar Centre in Geelong. Pani Kątna died on January 12, age 85 at Grace McKellar Centre, Geelong, where she worked as a volunteer for many years.

Pioneer rewarded

ALFREDA Katny, a powerful force in Geelong's Polish community, has received a Victorian Award for Excellence in Multicultural Affairs.

"She helped create all the old Polish places in Geelong and hasn't been given any credit for it until now," her son Wally Katny said.

Shortly after emigrating in 1952 Mrs Katny created Krakowiak, the Geelong Polish National Dance Ensemble.

The dance troupe has performed regularly across the region, including at Pako Festa and the Gala Day Parade.

She was nominated for the award by Jola



Award winner Alfreda Katny

Jablonski, her carer and a past dance student, who told of the elderly woman's life and achievements in a poem.

Mrs Katny was an energetic woman who loved dance and music and "changed the lives of many", her son said.



Pani Kątna with other Reward recipients at Government House after the Award presentation on 10th December, 2003

Geelong Advertiser, December 2003

Pani Alfreda Kątna's life in Geelong centred around the promotion and the maintenance of her Polish heritage, culture and traditions. This tiny woman with a big heart, left a legacy for the Poles in Geelong that will live for a long, long time.

The gratitude for her work with Polish youth in Geelong was also beautifully demonstrated when **Jolanta Jablonski**, a member of the "Krakowiak" Ensemble, nominated Pani Kątna for the 2003 *Award for Excellence in Multicultural Affairs in Victoria*. Pani Kątna was officially presented with this Award by the Victorian Governor on 10th December, 2003 at Government House in Melbourne.

Sofie Kovac (Tomaszewski), another one of the members of the "Krakowiak" Ensemble, was so impressed and appreciative of Pani Kątna's contribution to the Polish Community in Geelong, that Sofie took the time to write a poem dedicated to Pani Kątna, simply entitled, "**Alfreda**":

ALFREDA

*Our Alfreda is one of a kind,
Who she is will blow your mind!
A talented woman with natural flair
Who loves to sing and dance...beware!*

*A Polak, of course, with style and grace,
What she wears puts a smile on your face.
National dress she models with pride;
She's someone full of colour and a spring in her stride.*

*Our favourite lady should really reign high
On a throne with a crown, or wings with which to fly
For she's one of those folk that deserves great rewards
For a lifetime of devotion, sweat, tears, and hard work.*

*Many youngsters look back at their past and ponder
The evenings spent learning a dance to remember;
For it was an Oberek, Krakowiak, Polonez or Mazur
That convinced us lost souls that she's no puzzle.*

*She's taught us respect, pride, grace and priority
For life's too short to miss all the glory.
"Are you all crazy?" she'd shout from the hall,
We were convinced it would be heard in Geelong's mall.*



Pani Kątna with Sofie Kovac

*"Lift your feet," "Smile a while," "Start all again!"
This national dance eventually stuck in our brain.
"Raise those arms! "Listen to me," "Stop chewing, my child!!!"
"Your insolence is absolutely driving me wild!"*

*Thankyou, Alfreda, it's your turn to bow,
'Cause if it wasn't for you, we'd be lonely now.
Dozens of partners from decades of dancing
Are now wedded with children and still in a trance.*

*What a woman can do with time and devotion
Should really be bottled and sold as a potion.
We all have fine memories of the days of instruction,
And her limousine, an F.C.; a fine contraption.*

*So now that you know about this fine treasure
Who has devoted her life to bringing us pleasure;
There'll always be fond memories of this lady we all know,
She's really so gorgeous and always stealing the show.
Such a character is she and an artist for ever!
A sweet, dear old lady that was baptised Alfreda!*

Sofie Kovac, 23/1/2003



Pani Kątna at a last function in her honour at the White Eagle House, Geelong, 2004

This short history of **Pani Alfreda Kątna's** life was written by me from the notes ("*A Salute to Pani Alfreda Kątna*") prepared by **Mark Filipowicz** for a function specially organised by the members of the "*Krakowiak*" Ensemble on 22nd February, 2004, in honour of this incredible lady and also from conversations I had with **Jacek (Jack) Tomaszewski**, who was a prominent member of "*Krakowiak*" for well over three decades.

Henry Szkuta
April, 2021

The Karpinski Family

Our Migrant Family

Stanisław Karpinski (born 1932, Poland), Maria (Mary) Karpinska (née Pędzinska, born 1938, Poland), Anna Pędzinska (born 1906, Poland), Jacek (Jack) Karpinski (born 1960, Poland) Jolanta Baldasso (née Karpinska, born 1962 Poland)

A background to our migration

Our family arrived in Australia by ship, disembarking in Melbourne on the 24th September 1963. To tell the full story of how it came to be that we moved to Australia, we have to go further back in time.

World War II broke out in 1939 when Germany invaded Poland and established their occupation of the country. I was a young boy at the time living in Poland with my family. They were tough times for all in Poland.

Bronisław Pędzinski (who was to eventually become my father-in-law) was a primary school teacher. Anyone with any formal education was seen by the Nazis as a potential leader and a threat, likely to organise an uprising, so Bronisław went into hiding. He was, however, captured soon after, and sent

to Auschwitz (Oświęcim) concentration camp (in southern Poland) on the first train load. His



Family and friends from Murowana Goślina came to the town's train station to farewell us as we set out to leave Poland for Australia



My father-in-law, Bronisław (rear right) and Polish friends in Geelong hosting the Polish Women's Olympic Team 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games

prisoner number was 280 was tattooed on his arm. He was imprisoned there with other Catholic Poles, Jews, artists, and anyone seen by the Germans as a threat or assessed as inferior. Soon before the war ended, Bronisław was moved to another concentration camp called Mauthausen, in Germany. The Americans liberated that camp in May 1945. Bronisław stayed on in Germany as a displaced person before making

his way to Australia, rather than going back to the newly established Communist government in Poland.

During the war, Bronislaw's wife, Anna, and two children, Eugene and Mary, toughed it out, first escaping from their schoolhouse residence under the dark of night, finding refuge on a family farm, and later moving to the town of Murowana Goślina, near Poznań. It happened to be the town where my family, the Karpinski's lived

In 1958, I was fortunate to marry the lovely Mary Pedzinski, Bronislaw's daughter. Both of us were working - Mary was a building technician, and I was a qualified potter (building large domestic ovens which were a necessity for harsh Polish winters). I was also a musician - playing my trombone with a small band and for a while, I also played with the Poznań Operatic Orchestra. Mary's mother was the housekeeper. We led a good simple life - lacking nothing.



Boarding our Ocean Liner, Galileo Galilei, in Genoa, Italy

In 1962 Bronislaw, by then an Australian citizen, was finally able to visit us in Murowana Goślina, Poland. With the aid of a fellow ex-prisoner, who now worked for the Polish Communist Party, he managed to get clearance for our family to leave Poland and move to Australia. Generally, at that time, it was very difficult for families to emigrate from Poland.

In 1963, we packed up our most needed belongings in a few suitcases, bidding Murowana Goślina, our family and friends farewell, we set out for Australia, somewhere on the other side of the world, in search for a better life in a free country. Our travelling party consisted of Ania (my mother-in-law), my wife Mary, our 2 children, Jacek and Jolanta and me.



On the ship's deck, sailing through the Suez Canal

We were filled with emotion when we saw most of the people of our small town at the train station to farewell us. We travelled across Europe to Genoa, Italy, where we embarked on the ocean liner, Galileo Galilei, for our long passage to 'The Promised Land'.

We sailed on through the Suez Canal and eventually made our way to Australia, disembarking in Melbourne 21 days later. For us, the journey was like an extravagant holiday

adventure – apart from the seasickness, which, I must admit, caused issues at times. We were served meals and drinks, there were dances, concerts, a cinema and a swimming pool. We all imagined Australia to be a hot and dry country. Imagine how surprised we were, when, in the early morning of 24th September 1963, just as we were about to dock, we came out on the ship’s deck in light summer clothes – instead of the burning hot sun we had been expecting, we were met with a very strong and cold wind!

We were interviewed and photographed by a reporter from the “Herald” newspaper and an article was written about our family reunion. Bronislaw and Eugene did the talking – as we had not yet learnt English. Sadly, at customs, we had 2 bottles of spirit confiscated from our suitcases – truly devastating for any Pole!



Eugene and Bronislaw
welcoming us in Melbourne

Bronislaw drove us to Geelong, and we had our first experience of eating an Aussie hamburger at a roadside stop.



I, Stanislaw Karpinski, Jadwiga (engaged to Eugene), Eugene Pedzinski (my brother-in-law). Front row: Anna and Bronislaw Pędzinski (my in-laws), holding Jolanta (my daughter), Mary (my wife) and Jacek (my son).

We worked hard, saving as much as possible. I managed to get work in the office of International Harvester - a factory producing farm machinery. Mary found work in a woollen factory – the Federal Mills. A few evenings each week, we would go to English language classes. Those years were not easy. Every penny we could save went into our bank account. We didn’t have much of a social life. Not a bottle of beer was bought! It was hard, but, somehow, we endured these hard times – trusting that better and easier times were ahead for us.

Yesterday was a happy day in Liston Street, Bell Park. Members of the Pedzinski family were re-united for the first time in 24 years. The family became separated in 1939 when the Germans occupied Poland. Father of the family, Mr. Bruno Pedzinski, was sent to a concentration camp in Germany and after the war came out to Australia. He was naturalised in 1955. Later he received news of a son, Eugene, who eventually arrived in Australia. The rest of the family arrived in Geelong yesterday. Picture shows the re-united family (with additions) of Mr. Bruno Pedzinski. Sitting, from left: Mrs. Anna Pedzinski, Jolanta Karpinski (grand-daughter), Mr. Pedzinski, Mrs. Maria Karpinski (daughter), Jacek Karpinski (grandson); back row: Mr. Stanislaw Karpinski (son-in-law), Miss Jadwiga Szkuta (engaged to Eugene), and Eugene Pedzinski.

The Article
from the
**Geelong
Advertiser** on
the day after
our arrival

Within a few years, we had saved enough money for a deposit and qualified for a housing bank loan. We built our first home in Liston Street, Bell Post Hill, on a block of land we were given by Bronislaw, my father-in-law.

With time, life became easier, we met other Polish families, joined in activities run by the Geelong Polish Community Association. I joined the Geelong Polish Choir, and soon after became the choirmaster. We socialised with our new friends, went to parties, dances, gatherings and barbeques.

Our move to Australia had its struggles – language, social isolation to start with, being far away from our relatives in Poland, especially my own parents and siblings who remained in Poland.

We arrived in Australia with not much more than some clothes in our suitcases. We were lucky that we managed to be always employed, allowing us to slowly build our lives in our new country.



I was the Director of the Geelong Polish Church Choir, which, together with Monsignor Lucjan Jaroszka, welcomed the future Pope Paul II, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, in Geelong

Having built a home for our family and settled them in, we didn't forget our family back in Poland, so, from time to time, we would send some money, or 'hard to get' goods, to our family in Poland, where Communism wasn't overthrown till 1989.



Our first family home in Bell Post Hill in Geelong, 1965

We were fortunate to become very involved with the Polish community in our early days in Geelong and have been blessed to be surrounded by wonderful friends for many years.

Once our children became adults, we travelled back to visit our relatives in Poland on many occasions. These were wonderful holidays. Recently our children, and some of our grandchildren, have also made close bonds with their extended

family in Poland. We are happy with our decision to move to this 'Land of Opportunity' 57

years ago, yet we are also content in the knowledge that our Polish roots are still acknowledged and remain dear in the hearts of our children and grandchildren.

Written by: **Stan Karpinski**
 153 Lifestyle, North Geelong
 Edited by: **Jolanta Baldasso**
 March, 2021

Tears welcome the ship of happiness



GREETING. — Bouquets to greet their womenfolk are waved on Station Pier, Port Melbourne, today by Mr Bruno Pedzinsky (left) and his son, Eugene, as the liner Galileo comes alongside.



KISSES ALL ROUND — Mr Pedzinsky and daughter, Mary (left), Mrs Pedzinsky and son, Eugene (right).



REUNION. — All the family together on board the Galileo. **FROM LEFT** (front): Mary, Mrs Pedzinsky, Mr Pedzinsky and Yacek, 3, grandson. (Back): Jolanta, 1, granddaughter; Stanislav Karpinski, son-in-law; and Eugene.

Family's 24 year wait is ended

A Polish family was reunited in Melbourne today after being separated for 24 years.

Waving two big sheaves of flowers and with tears streaming down his face, Mr Bruno Pedzinski ran to embrace his wife Anna and daughter Mary when they arrived in the liner Galileo Galilei.

"This is the happiest day in my life," he said. The family was broken up when Mr Pedzinski, a teacher, was taken to Auschwitz concentration camp soon after the Germans over-ran Poland in 1939.

For the next 17 years Mr Pedzinski did not know if his wife and two children were alive or dead.

He was allowed one letter a month in Auschwitz and later in Mauthausen concentration camp—but none arrived.

He later learned his family's letters were not delivered.

FREED

Mauthausen was liberated by the American army in 1945 but Mr Pedzinski could not return to Poland where Communists had taken control.

He was turned back to health in a camp for displaced persons in West Germany.

In 1949 he set sail for Australia still ignorant of his family's fate.

He settled in Geelong and was naturalised in 1953.

The first news of his family came when the Polish Olympic team arrived in Melbourne in 1956.

One of the athletes had a message for Mr Pedzinski from his son Zdzislaw who had found out his father was in Australia.

BATTLE

Then began a battle through red tape before Mr Pedzinski got permission for bringing Eugene to Australia.

Eugene left Poland in 1958 — one day before he was to be drafted into the army for three years.

After dozens of letters and appeals to government departments in Poland, Mr Pedzinski succeeded in obtaining exit permits for his wife and daughter.

But Mr Pedzinski became sick and the visa lapsed.

SCRAPED

Last year, scraping to gather and borrow every penny he could, Mr Pedzinski went to Poland and after weeks of being sent from one government official to another, he got permission to take his wife and daughter and her family to Australia.

Article from the Herald Newspaper on the day of our arrival in Station Pier

My pride and joy today:

My Son and daughter, six grandchildren, some of their partners, my first great-grandchild and my wife, Maria



Our Family today

Barbara Kiliński i Jej Rodzina

Urodziłam się w Polsce, w mieście Gliwice. Gdy miałam 8 lat, cała moja rodzina zamieszkała w Tychach w województwie Śląskim.

W 1972 roku jako młoda dziewczyna przyjechałam do Australii. Był to przyjazd na zaproszenie mojej Babcji Władysławy. Matki mojej mamy Stefanii Zawadzkiej.

Babcia moja Władysława Szałapska, później Zajęc, urodziła się w Niemczech 18 Marca 1915 roku. Do Australii przyплыnęła na zaproszenie swojej siostry Marii i szwagra Edwarda Dąbrowskich w 1958 roku.

Życie w Nowym Kraju



Barbara przy swoim domu w Lara

Początki mego pobytu w Australii były trudne. Tęsknota za rodzinnym domem, mamą, rodzeństwem, przyjaciółmi, szkołą.

Nieznajomość angielskiego języka była dużą barierą w porozumieniu się z ludźmi. Często były momenty, że chciałam wracać do domu rodzinnego, ale niestety bilet był tylko w jedną stronę.

Po krótkim pobycie w Australii zaczęłam pracę w Zora Fashion gdzie przepracowałam 5 lat. Potem jeszcze były inne miejsca pracy.

W latach 70-tych w Geelongu były polskie szkoły i grupa taneczna. Postanowiłam wstąpić do grupy, żeby oderwać się od pracy i spędzić czas wśród polskiej młodzieży. Uwielbiałam tańczyć dawało mi to wiele zadowolenia.



Ja z Mamą jak była na urlopie w Australii

W tej grupie tanecznej, Krakowiak, poznałam mojego przyszłego męża Jana Kilińskiego. W 1976 roku odbył się nasz ślub. Jan jest synem Heleny i Jana Kilińskich. Jan urodził się w Niemczech. Mama Jana okazała się wspaniałą teściową, kochającą i czującą kobietą. Potrafiła przytulić, dać dobre rady. Było że traktowałam ją jak swoją rodzoną Mamę a Ona mnie jak swoją córkę. A to młodej dziewczynie na imigracji było bardzo potrzebne.

Po roku, a może i więcej, rozpoczęliśmy budowę naszego wymarzonego domu w Lara. Mieszkamy w nim do dnia dzisiejszego. Jest to dom i miejsce gdzie cała rodzina czuje się swobodnie.



Babcia z Mężem, p Zajęc.
1972

W 1978 roku urodził się nam syn Marek a dwa lata później urodziła się nam córka Paula. Marek po ukończeniu szkoły średniej w Chanel College, ukończył studia, Bachelor of Accounting, w Victoria University.



Rodzinka Kilińskich

Paula po ukończeniu szkoły, średniej w Sacred Heart College, ukończyła studia Bachelor of Science. w Swinburne University. Po ukończeniu studiów otrzymała pracę w Geelong Hospital na wydziale kardiologii.

Często spotyka Polaków i jest dumna z tego, że może porozmawiać z nimi po polsku.



Paula i Marek

Marek i Paula uczęszczali na lekcje języka polskiego w sobotniej szkole na Bell Parku przez kilka lat. Nauczycielką ich wtedy była bardzo miła nauczycielka Pani Paul.

Nasze dzieci przez wiele lat tańczyli w Zespole „Krakowiak”. Przez taniec poznawały polską kulturę, obyczaje, muzykę i tańce z różnych stron Polski. Marek i Paula zawsze powtarzają, że będą mile wspominać spędzony czas w Zespole. Wspomnienia te zostaną na zawsze w ich i naszych sercach. A to dzięki pani Grażynie Brzostowskiej, która okazała się wspaniałą, ciepłą, miłą, inteligentną nauczycielką polskich tańców, a także, języka polskiego za co jesteśmy jej bardzo wdzięczni.



Na wycieczce w Disneyland, USA

Nasze dzieci wyniosły bardzo dużo z domu rodzinnego. Staraliśmy się rozmawiać z nimi po polsku i przybliżyć im Polskę jak tylko umieliśmy. Ja i mój mąż jesteśmy dumni z tego, że nasze dzieci- Marek i Paula rozmawiają po polsku i czują się Polakami.

Marek i Paula założyli swoje rodziny. Marek ma dwóch synów, Joseph i William, Paula także ma dwóch synów, Tobias i Osten. A my z Janem jesteśmy najszczęśliwszymi dziadkami na świecie.



Marek i Paula w strojach Krakowskich

Mimo tego, że żyjemy już tyle lat w Australii, bardzo mocno jesteśmy związani z Polską. Z Jej tradycjami, obyczajami kulturą, no i oczywiście, z polską kuchnią. Nigdy nie zabrakło na naszym stole polskich potraw a szczególnie podczas Bożego Narodzenia czy Wielkanocy.

My jako rodzice pragniemy, aby te wartości, które otrzymali od nas przekazali swoim dzieciom.



Rodzinka Kilińskich

Kończąc te chwile wspomnień o mojej rodzinie, chcę napisać parę słów o moim mężu -Janie i o mnie samej, bo to nie tylko pierwsze chwile w Australii, to wiele następnych lat w kraju dalekim od Polski.

Tak więc, Jan po ukończeniu studiów pracował 22 lata w Board of Works jako Civil Engineer, następnie 12 lat w City of Werribee i 12 lat w Geelong Barwon Water.

Od młodych lat Jan pasjonował się grą w tenisa stołowego. Przez wiele lat był prezesem klubu tenisa stołowego Geelong. Wielokrotnie był zapraszany do sędziowania tenisa stołowego w Domu Polskim w Geelong. Zawody zawsze były przeprowadzone w sposób fachowy.

Jan również jest wieloletnim członkiem Związku Polaków w Geelong

Ja, gdy głębiej zapuściłam swoje korzenie i opanowałam język angielski, ukończyłam maturę w Gordon Institute i następnie Diploma of Counselling z Australian Institute of Professional Councillors.

Obecnie pracuję jako wolentariuszka w Domu Opieki. Praca ta daje mi wiele zadowolenia i satysfakcji.

Jestem również wieloletnią członkinią Związku Polaków w Geelong.

Dziś jestem zadowolona i szczęśliwa, że w 1972 roku zgodziłam się w tak młodym wieku wybrać sama w podróż do Australii i zamieszkać z Babcią.

Zwiedziliśmy wiele pięknych krajów, ale przyjazd do Polski i wakacje w Polsce są dla nas najpiękniejsze. Polska była i będzie zawsze w moim sercu i moich myślach.

Barbara Kilińska
Kwiecień, 2021



Babcia z wnuczkiem, Tobiasz



Nasz Rodzinny Dom w Lara

The Kilinski and Wierzbicki Family

Our Migrant Family

The story of Jan Kilinski and Helena Kilinska, immigrants to Australia 1950, as told by Helena to their son, Jan.

KILINSKI, Jan (born 1916), Osiek, Poland, KILINSKA (née Wierzbicka, born 1927), Kostopol, Poland. Children: Jan (born 1949) Salzkotten, Germany, Regina (born 1950) Brisbane, Qld, Elizabeth (born 1954) Geelong, Vic

A background to our migration

During WW11, Jan Kilinski was required to undertake military service in the Polish Army and served in the Artillery Regiment. When Germany invaded Poland in 1939 the Polish army artillery units had difficulty in setting up their horse drawn artillery guns due to the speed of the advancing mechanised German army. Before the Polish guns were set up, the German army were too close to be fired upon and as a result Jan was captured and spent the rest of the war as a prisoner of war.



Jan Kilinski 1949

Helena (Wierzbicka) Kilinski was born in Poland prior to World War 11 in Kostopol. After World War II, this part of Poland was annexed and now forms part of the Ukraine. Helena was the eldest of six daughters born to Jan and Paulina Wierzbicki.

Helena lived on a small farm and had fond memories of wrapping her feet with rags and skating on the frozen river; accidentally firing a shotgun inside the home; and watching their dog, Nero, rip off skirts off from passing elderly women - this cost her father a fortune to replace. Her interest in medicine started at an early age when she rescued a piglet and conducted "surgery" on it. Unfortunately, its survival was short lived. Helena's father passed away in 1935 and life became more difficult for her and her family. Helena helped with many chores. During this time, she got swept away by the river and almost drowned, resulting in a lifetime fear of open water. It was whilst visiting her aunty that she was separated from her family during World War II and, at the age of 12, she and her aunty were taken by the German Army to work for the German War Effort.



Helena Kilinska, 1944

They firstly worked in the farm fields during summer and autumn, and then during the winter months they were forced to work in a munition factory cutting cordite for bullets. Helena recalled that during their time in the factory it wasn't very pleasant, the cold conditions, very little to eat and the harshness of the guards. In the following spring, Helena and her aunty were sent back to the farms to work in the fields where they spent the remainder of the war.

At the end of the War, Helena went to France to look for her cousin, whilst her aunt returned to Poland. In Paris, she signed up for the Polish Armed Forces and the very next day she was forced to



Helena at Wacol Hostel
1950

go on a train to be repatriated back to Poland. When the train stopped, she and some men of the men travelling with her, jumped off the train in the darkness of night onto the track embankment and to her horror almost fell into a river. They followed the railway track back to a Belgium town and were they were found by the Belgium authorities. Helena, although petite, showed her bravery by admitting it was her idea. She lived in Belgium and worked as a nursing aid before ending up in a refugee facility in Germany. Here she met and married Jan Kilinski in 1946, and became acquainted with the future Mr and Mrs Grabowski, who later became their neighbours in Lara.

Following the birth of their son Jan Richard in 1949, they travelled to Naples to try to obtain passage as displaced persons to either Brazil, United States, South Africa or Australia. After having difficulties trying to get to the USA, they took the first available ship, that happened to be going to Australia in 1950, whilst Helena was pregnant with Regina.

Arriving to our “Promised Land”

The family arrived in Newcastle and were sent to a migrant camp in Wacol near Ipswich, Queensland. The Wacol Immigrants Holding Camp was purpose-built barracks for the American Army during World War 11. In 1947, they were to receive and house non-British postwar immigrants.

Jan and Helena with their son, Jan, lived in the camp whilst Jan (senior) did odd jobs and looked for permanent work. During their stay in Wacol, Regina was born in Brisbane in 1950.

Eventually, they made contact with the Grabowski family, now living in Lara. In late 1950 or early 1951, the Kilinski family moved to Lara, Victoria. A block of land was purchased next to the Grabowski's in Walkers Road (later renamed Curletts Rd) for £60.00 in 1951, where Jan designed and built the Kilinski residence.



Helena & Jan Kilinski with Jan R. &
Regina, Wacol Hostel, 1950



The Kilinski Home in Curletts Rd, Lara

Elizabeth was born in Geelong in 1954. Jan and Helena became Australian citizens in 1956, and their son Jan was included on his father's naturalisation certificate. Helena kept in contact with her aunt (Marianna, known as Maria, Wierzbicka), and sponsored her for permanent residency in Australia in the mid 1950's. Maria became an Australia citizen in 1962 and lived with them at No 6 Curletts Road until, due to her failing health, was placed in a high-level nursing ward at Grace Mckellar. Maria passed away at the age of 86 years, in

1985, and was laid to rest in the Western Cemetery, Geelong. Jan found work as a carpenter building houses, and as the work wasn't full-time, he took on a permanent job as a welder with the Ford Motor Company in Norlane. He travelled to and from work each day on a bicycle. Jan died from a tragic motor vehicle accident in 1960.

After the tragic death of Jan, Helena successfully brought up her children on her own. Through all the adversity Helena's creativity enabled her to be skilled in sewing, cooking, gardening and many other handyman projects. Her children and grandchildren always looked forward to her delicious baking and preserves.



Left back: Jan R. & Helena. Middle right: Marianna. Front: Elizabeth & Regina

All of the Kilinski children received a well-grounded education. Jan began his formal education at St Thomas Aquinas PS in Norlane then Corio Technical School and, finally, The Gordon Institute of Technology. Regina studied at: Lara Lake Primary School, St Thomas Aquinas Norlane, and Norlane High School. Elizabeth also studied at: St Thomas Aquinas, Lara Primary School and Norlane High School.

After completing his studies, Jan was employed most of his working life in the water industry prior to his retirement in 2016. In 1970 he was employed by the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (Melbourne Water) for 22 years, in 1993 he joined the City of Werribee (Wyndham City Council) and was employed there for over 11 years, and then followed employment with Barwon Water in Geelong for approximately 11 years .

Regina was employed at the Ampol Petroleum Company where she met her future husband Rudi Winkler. In the 1980's they set up a catering business, Hungry Hamper, which is still run by the Winkler family.

Elizabeth found employment in the General Insurance industry with Legal and General (now QBE) where she travelled by train to work in Melbourne until she retired.

Jan R. became a member of the Lara Tennis Club, in the 1960's and played in the Werribee District Church's Tennis Association Competition as a junior for a number of years winning several pennants and playing on as a senior player for several years. He took up table tennis in the mid 1960's and continues to play pennant to this day. He was Junior Table Tennis Co-ordinator for many years, was a member of the Geelong Table Tennis Committee, and was President for several years. He was honoured with life membership for services to the club.



Back: Mark & Pauline Front: Phillip, Helena & Cathy

All three children were involved with many of the Polish community activities such as dancing and picnics. Jan and Elizabeth joined the dancing group and participated in many performances within the Geelong Area for a number of years.

Helena continually searched through the Red Cross for her family. No details were found, as the Soviet Union suppressed all information leaving Ukraine. In Ukraine, people weren't allowed to speak their native Polish language, they had to speak Russian. Helena spent many years searching for her mother and sisters. It wasn't until Gorbachev gained power in the USSR, ushering in the new era of *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*, thereby ending the cold war, that my Mother was able to make contact with her family, after 50 years of searching.



Regina Kilinski in Polish costume

Following the exchange of several letters, she travelled to Ukraine, alone, (despite family members offering to accompany her), to be reunited with her three surviving sisters. Unfortunately, her mother had passed away a few years prior to her arrival. Her mother always believed that Helena was still alive.



Elizabeth & Jan in Polish costume

The visit was challenging as her sisters were unable to converse in Polish. However, their reunion was one full of many hugs and

tears. When Helena received letters from her family in The Ukraine, she would go to her friend, Mrs Gontscharow, to translate the letters and to get her assistance in replying. This was also done with seasonal greeting cards.

All Helena's children married, and they still live in Lara, all within six kilometres of each other. Helena became the proud grandmother of four grandchildren Cathy, Phillip, Mark and Paula.

At the age of forty, Helena met Jozef Gil and remarried. She then became an active member of SPK, (the Polish Ex-Servicemen's Association in Geelong, similar to the RSL) and held the position of Treasurer for 18 years. She had a love for dancing and organised many balls and dances where kings and queens of the ball were selected. Helena involved Elizabeth, Mark and Paula in making paper carnations, folding raffle tickets and preparing sashes for the lucky kings and queens of the ball. Mark and Paula had a lot of fun helping her with these activities. Helena really enjoyed having her grandchildren visiting her and always had time for them.

Sadly, Helena was widowed again in 2001 shortly after she and Józef moved into a granny flat. Józef was laid to rest in the lawn section at the Eastern Cemetery, East Geelong. Helena lived in the granny flat for six years. She enjoyed outings to St. Laurence Park, and White Eagle House, for lunches and activities.

After many years of strokes and falls, in 2006 Helena became wheelchair bound and spent the remainder of her years at the Wallace Lodge, Grace McKellar Centre, where she was regularly visited by all her family. Here, she learnt how to paint with her left hand and produced many beautiful paintings. She also enjoyed regular "rummikin" (numbers game) challenges with Regina and Elizabeth, and movie nights with her granddaughter Cathy. In 2012, she became a great grandmother and really enjoyed holding her first great-grandson, Joseph. She passed away in her sleep in 2014 and was laid to rest in the Flinders Memorial Park, in Lara.



Back: Regina, Jan R. & Elizabeth
Front: Helena Kilinska

The Story of Marianna WIERZBICKA

WIERZBICKA, Marianna (born 1899), Kostopol, Poland



Marianna Wierzbicka

Marianna was the aunt of Helena (née Wierzbicka) Kilinski. Helena and her aunt experienced many difficulties during WW11 time together especially while being forced to work for the German war effort.

Marianna was believed to have been married prior to WW11, and her husband had died. It was whilst Helena was visiting her aunt that the Germans raided their area and sent Helena (aged 12 years) and Marianna for work on the farms and in factories in Germany.

After Helena and her husband, Jan Kilinski, and their baby son, Jan R., left Europe and immigration to Australia in March 1950, it is believed that

Marianna found work looking after children. As the years passed and she was no longer able to work she looked to her only known relatives, the Kilinski family, now residing at 6 Curletts Road, in Lara for possible assistance.

Marianna was able to apply for a passage to Australia under the Family Sponsorship Program and arrived in Australia in 1957. Migrating under the Family Sponsorship Program, meant that the Kilinski family had to agree to be responsible for her accommodation and ongoing welfare.

Marianna lived with the Kilinski family and helped with the household chores. She was there during the difficult times after Jan was tragically killed in 1960. In 1962 Marianna chose to become an Australian Citizen.

Soon after, Marianna's health deteriorated, and she was cared for by Helena. There came a time, sadly, that this was no longer possible for Helena, and she was moved to Grace McKellar Aged Care in North Geelong. Here she passed away in 1985, at the age of 86 years.



Proud Parents & Grandparents, Basia and Jan,
with their children and Grandchildren

Jan R. Kilinski,
April, 2021

The Grabowski Family

Our Migrant Family

Henryk Grabowski (born 1919 Poland); Janina Grabowska, (née Brzezinska, born in Charnów, Poland); Krystyna Matczak (née Grabowska, Rheda Germany); Henia (born 1952 Australia); Frances (born 1962 Australia).

A background to our migration

Henryk Grabowski was born in 1919 in Drażdzewo Nowe, in the Mazovian Region of Poland.



Proud Father with Daughter,
Krysia, In Germany

Being the youngest son of five boys, it was up to his elder brothers to take care of Henryk after his parents both died when he was very young.

After turning eighteen, Henryk joined the Polish Army and following the outbreak of World War II, he was captured by the Germans and spend some time in a Prisoner of War Camp in Austria.



Janina with daughter,
Krysia, in Germany

At the end of the War, he was

taken to a Displaced Persons Camp in Rheda, Germany where he stayed for a couple of years. My father often spoke of the hardships he and his friends had suffered during these difficult times.

Whilst at the wedding of one of his many friends, he met Janina Brzezinska, who lived at a nearby camp. They eventually married and had their first daughter, Krysia.

In 1947, they were given a choice to migrate to a number of countries which were willing to accept Displaced People from Germany. Henryk and Janina were able to choose from countries like the UK, Canada, USA and Australia. They chose Australia because of its warmer climate and more important because it was far enough from Europe to not be affected by the constant conflicts that people had to endured for centuries in Europe.



Krysia's Christening in Germany

Arriving in our “Promised Land”

The family left Germany in November 1949, travelling to Naples, where they boarded the ship “Goya”, arriving in Australia on Christmas Day.



Krysia with her little friends in the Rushford Migrant Camp

Christmas and Boxing Days being a public holidays, we spent these two days on board the ship. After disembarking, we were transported to a migrant holding camp in Bonegilla. It was the middle of summer when we arrived in Bonegilla. It was not surprising that Janina was disappointed with the inhospitable, hot, dry and fly infested environment they were brought to. Nevertheless, her stories about their experiences in this new country were always entertaining.

In the meantime, Henryk was employed at the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) as part of a two-year Government contract. The two-year contract which all newly arrived migrants had committed to was part of their contribution to the cost of their passage to Australia. However, Henryk was happy working at MMBW and remained there until his retirement.

During the first two years that my father worked in Werribee, my mother, Janina, and I, her only daughter at that time, were transferred to various migrant camps, first in Cowra, then Rushworth and finally Somers, in the Mornington Peninsular. Henryk visited us whenever time allowed. Janina worked in various jobs – fruit picking and laundry work in a Frankston.

In 1951, my parents purchased a block of land in Lara for £100. The house was quickly built and our family moved into their new home in 1952. Soon after, their second daughter, Henya, was born. Ten years after, their third daughter, Frances, was born in 1962.



Our family with friends in Migrant Camp in Bonegilla, Victoria

Henryk was well known in the Lara area for his gardening expertise. He was an expert in grafting fruit trees and roses. Many of his neighbours’ trees were so beautiful and healthy, as a result of him grafting them for his new local friends.



Three sisters, Kryisia, Henya and Baby Frances in Lara

Henryk planted a Linden tree from a seed his brother sent him in a letter from Poland. He was a very well-known and highly respected man in Lara, often seen riding his bike or walking his dog in the township of Lara.

Janina also enjoyed her garden which was always blooming with beautiful, colourful flowers, which she so lovingly looked after. Passersby would often stop for a chat and to admire her garden from which she would proudly offer cuttings. Janina was very proud that her flowers always adorned the altar of the local Catholic Church every Sunday and on special occasions, and there were many such occasions.

Janina and Henryk never lost contact with the many friends they made in the displaced persons camps in Germany and the migrant camps in Australia. They remained lifelong friends with all of them.

When Dad sadly passed away in 2006, Mum continued to live in Lara until 2010, when, due to her failing health, she went into the Multicultural Aged Care Centre (MACS). She was there for two years and passed away in 2012.



Kryisia in Mum's Garden in Lara

Krystyna Matczak

This story was written by me, Henryk's and Janina's eldest daughter, based on the stories my parents related to me over the years.

February, 2021

Eufemia Aszenbrenner

Krótką historia mojej imigracji do Australii

Nazywam się Eufemia Aszenbrenner z Domu Witt. Urodzona w Bydgoszczy, Polska w 1934 roku. Rodzice Zuzanna i Feliks. Było nas siedmioro rodzeństwa, 5-ciu braci, siostra i ja. Po Drugiej Wojnie, czterech braci się ożeniło i siostra wyszła za mąż. Pozostało w domu nas dwoje najmłodszych, mój młodszy brat i ja. W tym czasie zaczęłam uczęszczać do 3 klasy szkoły Podstawowej Nr. 1 w Bydgoszczy.



Liceum Handlowe – Szkoła do której ja chodziłam w Bydgoszczy

- i od razu skojarzyłam sobie że osoba ta musi być z żydowskiego pochodzenia. Z ciekawości wyjęłam list a do listu załączone było zdjęcie. Nawet przystojny gość, pomyślałam sobie. Ale co z tego kiedy nie wiem kim jest. Tylko zawracanie głowy!

Czytając list, dowiaduję się że sprawcą tego wydarzenia jest moja bratowa, Jadwiga. Ona mając swoją rodzinę w Australii, Geelong, razem z moim bratem, zdobyli się na ten dyskretny sposób. Byłam trochę niezadowolona, ale nie chcąc ranić ich uczuć, nie robiłam wymówek i milczałam. Wiedziałam że nie tylko snuli swoje rodzinne plany o Australii, ale planowali i mój wyjazd do Australii, by nie zrywać naszej bliskiej łączności. Odpowiedź na ten list wysłałam. Nastąpiła wymiana listów. Mijają dni, tygodnie, a ja wciąż żyję w niepewności.

W międzyczasie nagle zdarzyło się coś, co zmieniło moje plany życiowe. Dostaję wiadomość, że polski ksiądz z Geelong, Kś. Lucjan Jaroszka jest na wakacjach w kraju i wkrótce nas odwiedzi. Radość nie miała granic! Czekałam na ten moment z nadzieją że zdobędę więcej informacji o Janie. Na umówioną wizytę Ksiądz przybył punktualnie. W czasie tej nieprzeciętnej niespodzianki, Ksiądz sprawił naszej rodzinie dużo radości swoją obecnością. Dowiedziałam się wiele o Australii, o Janie i jego rodzinie. Bardzo pozytywna opinia o wszystkim. Po tym wszystkim długo rozmyślałam o dalekiej Australii i o mojej przyszłości. Walczyłam sama z sobą by przezwyciężyć swoją



Na moim przyjęciu pożegnalnym

niepewność. Sytuacja nie jako odwróciła się i świadomie podjęłam ostateczną decyzję wyjazdu do Australii z nadzieją w sercu.

Dwa i pół roku minęło, zbliżał się 1960 rok. Zaraz po Nowym Roku był mój

W 1952 roku, ukończyłam Liceum Administracyjne Handlowe w Bydgoszczy. W tym samym roku dostałam pracę w Wojewódzkim Komitecie Kultury Fizycznej i Turystyki w Bydgoszczy w sekcji księgowości. Polubiłam swoją pracę i byłam dumna że mogłam już na siebie zapracować. Zaczęłam marzyć i planować swoje życie w Polsce.

Pięć lat później, było to przy końcu 1957r, kiedy jednego dnia, wracając z pracy, dostałam list z Australii. Byłam zdziwiona, przecież nikogo nie znam w Australii. To chyba pomyłka, a może to żart albo ktoś podstępnie to zrobił!

Zerknęłam na nazwisko i imię– *Aszenbrenner. Jan*



Poczta w Bydgoszczy nad Rzeką Brdą



Z kolegami na moim przyjęciu pożegnalnym

ostatni dzień w pracy. W dniu tym zaskoczono mnie miłą niespodzianką – moment pożegnania. Dla mnie chwila przykra.



Moje przyjaciółki na statku

Wreszcie nadszedł wtorek, ostatni dzień z moimi najbliższymi i przyjaciółmi. W nocy o godzinie 3.00 rano, rozstając się z rodziną i moim miastem Bydgoszczą i jadąc z siostrą i bratem do Warszawy. Jadąc z Warszawy do Wiednia w pociągu, była również grupka młodych polek, mających pewne oczekiwania i marzenia o dalekiej Australii.

Zaprzyjaźniłam się z trójką miłych i sympatycznych dziewcząt. Od tego momentu, Genia, Mirka, Ania i ja byłyśmy nierozdzielną czwórką. Z Wiednia, późnym wieczorem zajeżdżałyśmy do Genowy. Noc spędziłyśmy w hotelu znajdującym się przy porcie Morza Śródziemnego w Genoa. Nazajutrz wczesnym rankiem jesteśmy na porcie. Dzień ponury, niebo zachmurzone, silny wiatr rozbija grzbiety fal na morzu. Zmarznięte, wsiadamy na okręt linii Włoskiej, „Neptunia”. Czteroosobowa kabina zrobiła na nas wrażenie miłego, przytulnego miejsca i ciepła. Było nam dobrze i wesoło, lecz niedługo potem, gdy okręt wypłynął z portu na morze, po nie całej godzinie, czuliśmy się fatalnie, nastąpiła cisza i humory gasty. Byłyśmy chore, ale sytuacja niejako odwróciła się i po dwóch dniach męczarni, powróciliśmy do zdrowia.

Dalszy rejs był bardzo ciekawy i interesujący bez komplikacji. Chwile różnych i miłych wydarzeń rozrywkowych na okręcie przyspieszyły bieg czasu.

W ostatnią noc na okręcie nie mogłam zasnąć, leżąc na łóżku przy oknie wpatrzona na światła lśniące wspaniałym blaskiem wśród spienionych fal rozmyślałam jaki będzie teraz nowy rozdział mojego życia w nieznanym dalekim kraju. Nazajutrz nadszedł długo oczekiwany dzień, 12 lutego, 1960 rok. Od samego rana jestem na pokładzie i obserwuję jak okręt powoli dobija do portu w Melbourne. Na porcie było mnóstwo ludzi, a między nimi zauważyłam Jana czekającego z kwiatami. Pożegnałam się z przyjaciółkami, bo podróżowały dalej do Tasmanii i do Sydney. Na przystani portowej pierwszy powitał mnie Jan i osoby towarzyszące mu. Po poskładaniu bagaży, jechaliśmy do Geelong. W domu czekali na nas rodzina Jana i rodzina Jadwigi oraz kilku przyjaciół Jana.

Wczesne życie w naszym nowym kraju



Jan wita mnie z kwiatami

Wchodząc do mieszkania wrzucił mi zapraszający gest ciepły i serdeczny radość, powitanie itd. Po smacznym obiedzie przy kawie i torcie celebrowano moje urodziny. Wzniesiono toast na zdrowie, śpiewano *Sto Lat* i wiązanki polskich piosenek. Dzień pełny miłych wrażeń minął. Natomiast w pierwszą noc w Australii przydarzyła mi się inna historia. Wieczorem sortując swoje bagaże, nie zauważyłam że za firankami okno szeroko było otwarte. Z myślą o odpoczynku po odbytej podróży, zgasiałam światło i wskoczyłam na łóżko. Noc była ciepła nie nakrywałam się. Nagle poczułam, że coś mnie gryzie, niesamowity brzęk komarów w uszach które nielitościwie mnie kąsały. Walczyłam z nimi, ale nic nie pomogło. Wstałam, zapaliłam światło, zamknęłam okno a na ścianach zobaczyłam setki komarów czekających

na atak. Nie chcąc budzić innych, wyłączyłam światło, owinęłam się w prześcieradło i ułożyłam się ponownie do snu. Zasnąć nie mogłam. Komary miały dobrą ucztę, gryzły mnie przez prześcieradło i radośnie brzęczały. Nie spałam do rana. Wcześniej rano Jan szedł do pracy i nic o tym nie wiedział. Rano wstałam z twarzą czerwoną i opuchniętą, a na całym ciele czerwone plamy jak bym miała wieczną ospę. Widząc to, ojciec Jana pojechał autobusem do miasta i kupić siatkę na komary. Zbił ramkę, naciągnął na nią siatkę i wstawił do okna.



Eufemia



Jan



Mój pierwszy dzień w Australii



Obchodziłam moje Urodziny w dniu
mojego przyjazdu do Australii

Tydzień później odbyły się nasze zaręczyny. W drugie Święto Wielkanocy, 17 kwietnia, był nasz ślub w kościele St. Mary's w Geelong. Sakramentu Małżeństwa udzielił nam Ks. Lucjan Jaroszka, obecnie już nieżyjący. W okresie nowego naszego życia, rodzice Jana tymczasowo zamieszkali z nami do chwili ukończenia ich domu.

Powoli zaczęłam się dostosowywać do nowych warunków życia. Czas stał się bardziej wypełniony i ciekawszy. Rok mojego pobytu w Australii dobiegał końca i zbliżały się Święta Bożego Narodzenia.

Pamiętam jak ważne były w okresie adwentu w Polsce przygotowania na oczekujące Święta Bożego Narodzenia, które jak zauważyłam tu w Australii dla wielu osób nie miały znaczenia. Obudziła się we mnie tęsknota za krajem rodzinnym i tradycjami Świąt Bożego Narodzenia. Marzyłam po cichu by stworzyć atmosferę świąteczną i przygotować moją pierwszą wigilię w Australii taką jaką miałam w domu rodzinnym, pełnym ciepła i miłości.



Mąż, Jan, i ja

W Wigilię przed rozpoczęciem wieczerzy, mąż pojechał po swoich rodziców i powrócił ze smutną nowiną, że Mama chora i nie będą rodzice z nami na Wigilii. Poczułam w sobie głęboką pustkę. Martwiłam się że Święta będą smutne pozbawione blasku radości.

Pod wieczór światła gasły w całym domu. Odświętnie ubrani rozpoczęliśmy wieczerę przy zapalonych świecach od przeczytania Ewangelii o Narodzeniu Jezusa Chrystusa, którą zamiast ojca, czytał Jan. Potem modlitwa i dzielenie się opłatkiem. Po złożeniu życzeń, śpiewaliśmy kolędę i po odmówieniu modlitwy Pańskiej, zasiedliśmy do stołu nakrytego białym obrusem. Na środku stołu od grubej płomiennej świecy padał blask na okruchy opłatka, słowa Ewangelii według Św. Łukasza i potrawy Wigilijne. Na stole oprócz dwóch nakryć były dwa nakrycia dodatkowe dla rodziców.

Posileni wieczerzą przy choince w blasku świeczek choinkowych rozpraszających ciemności, śpiewaliśmy kolędy, dzieliliśmy się wspomnieniami z lat minionych, myślą i sercem byliśmy daleko za oceanem z najbliższymi. W ten wieczór przeżyaliśmy chwilę wzruszenia i łez, które nie wiadomo skąd i dlaczego cisnęły się do oczu. Właśnie tego wieczoru w serca nasze złamane i smutne po cichu wstąpiła otucha radości.

Rok 1961 na początku zapowiadał się dla nas szczęśliwie. Z radością przyjęliśmy wiadomość, że brat mój, Janek z żoną, Jadwigą, i czworgiem dzieci przyjeżdżają do Australii. Również ważnym wydarzeniem rodzinnym było oczekiwanie narodzin tak bardzo upragnionego naszego pierwsze go dziecka. To wszystko zmobilizowało nas do przekształcenia domu. Napełnieni wielką radością mimo upałów zabraliśmy się ostro do pracy. Naszą bolączką była kanalizacja i dobudowa jeszcze jednej sypialni. Po zrobieniu planów domu, mąż długo nie czekał na zezwolenie do budowy. Wracając z pracy, do późnego wieczora spędzał czas przy budowie. Pomagali mu także sąsiedzi. Czas stał się bardziej wypełniony i ciekawszy.



Rodzina Aszenbrennerów: Eufemia, syn Paweł, Mąż,
Jan, wnuczka, Melissa, córka, Urszula, i wnuk, Tomasz



Z przyjaciółmi w domu u Aszenbrennerów

Ciesząc się, że mieszkam w swoim własnym domu, chętnie przejęłam obowiązki domowe. W ogrodzie mieliśmy jarzyny, owoce, kury jajka znosiły, nic nam nie brakowało. Korzystając z przywilejów takich jak dostarczanie mleka każdego ranka do domu uważałam, że życie w Australii jest o wiele lepsze niż w Polsce, nie musiałam rano pędem biec po mleko do sklepu. Poza tym raz w tygodniu Polski rzeźnik z Melbourne przywoził mięso i wędliny i tu właśnie ominęły nas długie kolejki za kawałkiem mięsa!

W ciągu trzech miesięcy prace przy domu zostały wykończone. Obydwoje z mężem mieliśmy niewielkie wymagania. Ogólnie, byliśmy zadowoleni i szczęśliwi. Przy końcu kwietnia, rodzinka z Polski była już w Australii. Przygotowałam przyjęcie powitalne. Zaprosiłam Jadwigę całą rodzinę, Jordanów i Zasedków, naszą rodzinę i naszych przyjaciół, których zapoznałam tu w Australii. Dzień ten był dla mnie bardzo ważny. Po rocznej rozłące uradowani byliśmy znowu razem. Serca nasze wypełnione były radością, ale niezadługo, bo w tym czasie źle się poczułam. Nikomu nic nie mówiąc, żeby nie psuć wesołej atmosfery, często wychodziłam do sypialni na kilka minut odpoczynku. Miałam niesamowite przeczucie, że coś się stanie. Wtedy właśnie stało się coś nieoczekiwane.

Przy końcu maja, urodziła się nam córeczka, ale już nieżywa. W tym przykrym momencie w szpitalu dali dziecku imię Barbara i udzielono chrztu świętego.

Tak bardzo pragnęłam ją zobaczyć, wziąć ją na ręce i przytulić, ale jej nie zobaczyłam. Dla mnie był to okrutny wyrok losu, coś się we mnie załamało. Po dwóch dniach był pogrzeb maleńkiej Barbary, w którym nie uczestniczyłam, będąc jeszcze w szpitalu.

W międzyczasie, szwagier Jadwigi, Zbigniew Jordan, znalazł dom do wynajęcia, w Grovedale, gdzie Jadwiga i Janek chętnie się ulokowali.

Wracając ze szpitala do domu miałam uczucie pustki, patrzyłam na wszystko pustym wzrokiem, byłam załamana. Zaczęłam się budzić z tego odrętwienia wtedy kiedy Polskie Stowarzyszenie Millenium przygotowywało Jasełka Rydla i zapytano mnie czy bym przyjęła rolę Matki Boskiej, Przyjęłam. Ucząc się dość długiej roli zapomniałam o swoim smutku i szybko przystosowałam się do normalnych warunków życia. Od tego czasu, jeśli zaszła potrzeba brałam udział w niektórych imprezach w Polonii Geelong.



Pogrzeb naszej małej Barbary



Jan i Ja z członkami Klubu Seniora Golden Age

zajmowałam się szyciem. Oboje z mężem mieliśmy niewielkie wymagania i oczekiwania. Nie przerażały nas trudności i niewygody. Ogólnie byliśmy zadowoleni i szczęśliwi. Dzieci uczęszczały na lekcje pianina, treningi sportowe i tańczyły w Zespole „KraKowiak”, pod dyktando p. Alfredy Kątnej. W soboty chodziły do szkoły polskiej. W tych latach także przyjąłam Obywatelstwo Australijskie.

Również zwrócono się do mnie i męża z propozycją przyjęcia pracy w kuchni na Polanie, Healesville w czasie kolonii letnich dla dzieci. Praca zespołowa w kuchni była bardzo przyjemna i zgodliwa.

Czas szybko przeleciał i niestety nasze lata, gdy w październiku 1962r, urodziła się córeczka, Urszula, a cztery lata później w lipcu przyszedł na świat syn Paweł. Moje marzenie spełnione i dom był wypełniony radością! Często jeździłam z dziećmi autobusem do miasta, na plażę i do parku. Były to moje najmiłsze chwile spędzone z dziećmi.

Gdy dzieci zaczęły chodzić do szkoły, postarałam się o „part-time” prace w Federal Mills na sprawdzaniu materiałów. Ten cały system nam odpowiadał. Ja byłam z dziećmi z rana a mąż wieczorami.

Po trzech latach, fabrykę zamknięto i poszukałam sobie drugą pracę w *Taurus Fashions*. Tam pracowałam siedem lat,



Przygotowania do Jasełek w Domu Orła Białego

Dzięki społeczności polskiej w Geelong, za włożenie dużego wkładu pracy przy rozbudowie Domu Polskiego, już, na początku następnego roku w lutym było otwarcie głównej Sali z barem. Nadszedł sierpień, kiedy kilku osób niespodziewanie zwróciło do mnie, czy mogłabym zająć się amatorską grupą teatralną i przygotować akademię listopadową. Po namyśle krótkim, zgodziłam się. W grupie teatralnej pod nazwą, „Tęcza”, było 28 osób chętnych i zdolnych! Na akademię przygotowałam część oficjalną i inscenizację pod tytułem, „Wracam do Warszawy”.

Zbliżały się Święta Bożego Narodzenia i pomyślałam, że powinnam coś przygotować na Wigilię Związkową w Domu Orła Białego. Postanowiłam przygotować Jasełka. W domu każdy mi pomagał. Mąż zbudował szopkę i żłobek. Dzieci pomagały robić zwierzęta a ja szyłam stroje. Pierwsze Jasełka w Domu Orła Białego były dużym sukcesem.

Organizowaniem imprez na różne uroczystości zajmowałam się przez 25 lat.

Pierwszy Klub Seniora przy Związku Polaków w Geelong, powstał 1993 roku. Byłam w zarządzie i pełniłam funkcję skarbnika. Prócz funkcji skarbnika zajmowałam się sekcją kulturalną i oświatową. Ze strony muzycznej pomagał mi mąż. Z funkcji skarbnika zrezygnowałam po dziesięciu latach.



Z organizowana wycieczka Klubu Seniora, Golden Age

Golden Age Polish Seniors Club Presents:

Polish Art Festival
24 & 25 October 11am-4pm

Free Entry

Enjoy:
Food
Music
Arts & Crafts
Migrant Stories
Film Screening (Sunday)

Enquires:
Halina
Ph: 5229 7067

White
Eagle House
Fellmongers
Road
Breakwater

W środę, 17 października, 2007, w Domu Orła Białego, Geelong, założony został nowy klub polskich seniorów, pod nazwą „Golden Age” (Złotego Wieku). O powstaniu tego Klubu mówiono i myślano od kilku lat. Powstał w odpowiedzi na prośby Polaków, którzy chcieli się spotykać w przyjemnej atmosferze szacunku i wsparcia.

Wybory do Komitetu odbyły się sprawnie. Ja zostałam Prezeską.

Już na początku Klub zaczął prężnie działać. Głównym zadaniem Klubu jest przełamywanie izolacji występującej wśród ludzi starszych. Klub oferuje swoim członkom wspólne wycieczki, uczestnictwo w imprezach artystycznych i kulturalnych. Służymy pomocą dla członków znajdujących się w trudnej sytuacji życiowej. Obchodzone są uroczystości takie jak, Dzień Matki, Dzień Seniora, Dzień Ojca i spotkania Wigilijne. W każdą środę odbywają się spotkania przy herbatce.

W roku 2020, zrezygnowałam ze swojej funkcji jako Prezes, ze względu na zdrowie, ale na spotkanie dalej uczęszczam.

Oboje z mężem Australię traktowaliśmy jak rugą naszą ojczyznę. Po prostu pokochaliśmy ten wielki kraj, ale nigdy nie zapominaliśmy o naszych Polskich korzeniach, zawsze byliśmy związani z tym co i byliśmy szczęśliwi że mogliśmy wychowywać nasze dzieci w tej pięknej Australii.



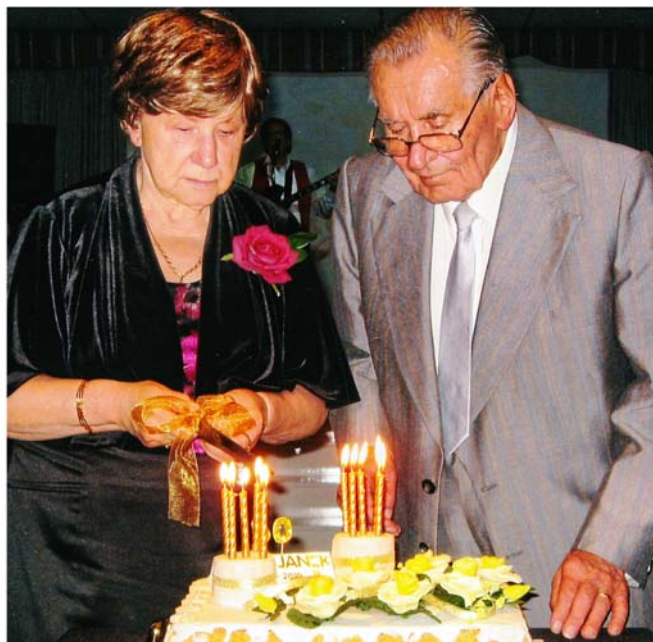
Rodzina Aszenbrenner i państwo Olszaki

Mąż zawsze starał się pomóc mi dosłownie we wszystkich moich zmaganiach życiowych. Niestety, po 54 latach przyszedł czas, że musiałam się rozstać z najbliższą ukochaną osobą w moim życiu. Mąż zmarł 15 stycznia, 2014r ale zawsze zostanie w moim sercu.

Mój ojciec zmarł w 1976 r. a Mama zmarła w 1972 r. w Polsce. Całe moje rodzeństwo w Australii i w Polsce również odeszło z tego świata. Teraz mam tylko dwoje moich dorosłych dzieci, Urszulę i Pawła, ich rodziny i piękne wspomnienia, własnych imigracyjnych doznań, przeżyć i doświadczeń.

Eufemia Aszenbrenner

Maj, 2021



Nasze 50cio Lecie Ślubu – 2010 r.

Eufemia Aszenbrenner

A brief history of my immigration to Australia

I was born Euphemia Witt in 1934 in Bydgoszcz, Poland daughter of Susanna and Felix Witt. There were seven children in our family, 5 brothers, a sister and me. After the Second World War, my four brothers and my sister married, I remained at home with my younger brother. During this time, I attended the 3rd grade Primary School in Bydgoszcz.

In 1952, I graduated from the Commercial Administrative High School in Bydgoszcz. In the same year, I got a job at the Provincial Committee of Physical Culture and Tourism in Bydgoszcz, in the accounting section of the government office. I enjoyed my job and was proud to have been able to support myself on my wages. I started dreaming about and planning my life in Poland.



Liceum Handlowe – Bydgoszcz – High School, which I attended in Bydgoszcz, Poland

Five years later, this was at the end of 1957, when one day, returning from work, I found a letter from Australia in my mailbox. I was surprised, after all, I did not know anyone in Australia. At first, I thought it was probably a mistake, or maybe it was someone playing a joke on me!

I looked at the name on the envelop, it was, *Aszenbrenner, Jan*. I immediately associated the name with a person of Jewish origin – no one came to mind. Out of curiosity, I took out a letter and found that a photo was also enclosed with the letter. What a handsome guy, I thought to myself. But who is he? That bothered me!

Reading the letter, I learn that the perpetrator was my sister-in-law, Jadwiga and her family in Australia. Jadwiga had two sisters in Australia, Geelong. My brother, Janek, and Jadwiga were planning to emigrate to Australia, at that time under the category of “Family Reunion”. At the same time, they were making plans for me to emigrate with them. Secretly with Jadwiga and her sisters in Australia began their match making plans. I was not very happy, but I didn't want to hurt their feelings, so I kept silent. In a way, I did appreciate that they wanted me to have a better life overseas. I really was not that eager to leave Poland, but I did reply to the letter Jan sent me via my sister-in-law.

In the meantime, something happened that changed my life plans. I got news that a Polish priest from Geelong, Fr. Lucjan Jaroszka, was on vacation in Poland and would be visiting our family. Joy had no limits! I looked forward to this moment with the hope that I would get more information about Australia and about Jan. On the day, the priest arrived on time, his visit brought a lot of joy to our family. I



At my farewell Party at work

learned a lot about Australia, and especially about the positive things he had to say about Jan and his family. After listening to what Fr Jaroszka said about Jan, about how wonderful Australia was and what a beautiful place Geelong was



Post Office on the banks of the River Brda in Bydgoszcz



With work colleagues at my farewell party

to live in, I began thinking about this distant land and what my future would hold being so far away from Poland. I fought with myself to overcome my fear of making a decision, no confident it would be the correct one. Nevertheless, I eventually made the final decision to move to Australia, with a revived hope in my heart.



With my travelling companions on the Ocean Liner "Neptunia"

Two and a half years passed, just after the New Year in 1960, I went to work for my last time. I was leaving Poland to live in Australia! I was very pleasantly surprised when my work colleagues organised a farewell party for me that day. A day I will always remember and cherish.

Finally, Tuesday came, the day I was to leave my dear Mum and Dad, six of my siblings and all my dear friends. Late that night, at 3.00 am, I said good-bye to my family and to my beautiful city of Bydgoszcz and travelled with my sister and brother to Warsaw. From Warsaw, I travelled by train to Vienna. There I met a group of young Polish girls who were living with the same expectations, the same anxieties and dreams as I had of starting my life again in a distant, unknown land, Australia.

The three lovely girls befriended me and I them. From that moment on, Genia, Mirka, Ania and I were an inseparable foursome. From Vienna, late in that evening, we travelled by train to Genoa. We spent the night in a hotel located on the banks of the Mediterranean Sea, in the City of Genoa. The next morning, we woke up to a very gloomy day, the sky was overcast and cold. The strong winds were lashing against the waves at sea. Frozen, we boarded the Italian liner, "Neptunia". Entering our four-person cabin immediately put smiles on our faces. It gave us a feeling of coziness and warmth. We were relaxed and cheerful. Unfortunately, these feeling did last not long. After the ship set sail from the port onto the open Mediterranean Sea, we felt terrible and overcome by sea-sickness. The joy and laughter that filled the cabin at the very beginning were extinguished. But to our surprise, the situation changed quickly and after two days of torment, we all recovered. This gave me the opportunity of "exhaling" all my fears and anxieties on what my future held for me.

The remainder of our trip to Australia was without major problems. We enjoyed the sights and the entertainment that was provided for us and it made the time go by quickly.

During the last night on the ship, I was restless and could not sleep. Lying on the bed by the port hole, staring at the lights, which were shining with a wonderful glow and reflecting off the foaming waves. Again, I pondered about what the new chapter in my life will be in this distant country to which I would soon be arriving. That long-awaited day arrived, February 12, 1960. I was on the deck of the ship from early morning, watching the ship slowly approaching the Port of Melbourne. There were lots of people on the pier, and amongst them, I noticed Jan, waiting with a bouquet of flowers. I said goodbye to my three friends as they continued their journey, further, onto their respective destinations - Tasmania and Sydney.

Jan and his friends, who accompanied him, greeted, and welcomed me very warmly when I disembarked. We collected my luggage and drove to Geelong. Jan's family and Jadwiga's sister's family and a few of Jan's friends were waiting to greet me at Jan's home.

Early life in our new country

When I arrived, I was touched by the warmth and joy with which Jan's family and friends greeted me. After a deliciously prepared dinner, coffee and cake, they surprised me with birthday greetings. The usual Polish birthday toast was raised to my health and they all sang the Polish birthday song, wishing me "*One Hundred Years of Healthy Life*" as well as a large repertoire of other Polish songs. The day gave me a very positive impression of the people and my new environment.



Eufemia



Jan



Jan welcoming me with flowers

Unfortunately, my first night in Australia, was a different story. In the evening, after sorting out my luggage, I didn't notice that, behind the curtains, the window was wide open. With the intension of having a good rest after the trip, I turned off the lights and jumped into bed.



My first day in Australia

The night was warm, I didn't cover myself. Suddenly, I felt something bite me. I then heard the loud buzzing of mosquitoes which were mercilessly biting me. I fought some of them off, but to no avail! I got up, switched on the light, closed the window, but saw *hundreds* of mosquitoes on the ceiling waiting to attack me. Not wanting to wake up others, I turned off the light, wrapped myself in the bed sheet and tried to go to sleep but couldn't. Still

happily buzzing around, the mosquitoes continued to feast on me. They must have bitten me through the sheet I wrapped myself in. Early next morning, Jan went to work and knew nothing about my battle with the mosquitoes. When I got up, my face was red and swollen. There were also red spots all over my body, as if I were infected with smallpox. Seeing this, Jan's father took the bus to the city and bought a mosquito net. He constructed a frame, covered it with the net and secured it to the window.



Celebration my Birthday on my first day in Australia

A week later, we got engaged. On Easter Monday, April 17, Jan and I were married at St. Mary's Church in Geelong. The marriage celebrant was the late Father Lucjan Jaroszka, who visited our family in Poland before my departure. For a short time after we were married, Jan's parents stayed with us until their home was built.

I slowly began to adapt to my new life and new living conditions. Time became more fulfilling and more interesting. The anniversary of my first year in Australia was approaching and as was my first Christmas in my new country.

I remembered how important the Advent period before Christmas was in Poland and the preparation which we went through at that time preparing for Christmas. I noticed that in Australia, it was not the same. I began to miss my home country and the beautiful traditions of Christmas. I was so eager to create the same festive atmosphere and prepare for my first Christmas Eve in Australia as our family did in Poland - full of joy, warmth and love.



Aszenbrenner Family: Eufemia, son Paul, Husband Jan, daughter-in-law, Angela, daughter, Urszula, and grandson, Tomasz



My Husband, Jan, and I, in our later years

Before beginning the traditional Polish Christmas Eve dinner, "*Wigilia*", my husband drove out to bring his parents to our place for *Wigilia* but returned with the sad news that Jan's Mum was sick and that his parents would be unable to share *Wigilia* with us. I immediately felt a deep emptiness. I was worried that Christmas would be sad, without that joy I usually associated with Christmas.

In the evening, the lights were turned off in the house. We began the supper by reading the Gospel of the Birth of Jesus Christ, which Jan read, in his father's absence. We then shared the traditional *Opłatek* (white wafer). We exchanged Christmas wishes and then we sang Christmas carols. After saying the Lord's Prayer, we sat down at the table, which I covered with a white tablecloth. On the middle of the table, I placed a large candle. The glow from the candle spread over the remaining pieces of *Opłatek* and onto the words of the pages of the Gospel according to St. Luke. I continued the long

accepted Polish tradition of leaving additional settings on the table in case an unexpected guest or guests arrived. That evening I had two extra settings one for Jan's Mother and one for his Father, who were not able to be with us.

After dinner, we again sang carols in the glow of the lights from our Christmas tree and shared the happy memories of years gone by. Our thoughts were far across the oceans with our loved ones in Poland. That evening, we experienced a moment of emotion, holding back our tears, not knowing where or why they were brought on. It was on this evening that our broken and sad hearts were also silently engulfed in happiness and joy.

Year 1961 started off well. We were delighted with the news that my brother, Janek, and his wife, Jadwiga, and four children were coming to Australia. Also, an important family event was announced! It was the birth of our first child. All this mobilized us to renovate our house. Filled with great joy, despite the heat, we went straight to work on our renovation project. The main tasks

included work on the sewerage system and adding an extra bedroom. After completing the plans and organising the building permits, each day, after returning from work, Jan would spend the rest of the evening working on our project. He was fortunate that our neighbours were prepared to assist whenever they could. Time went by quickly and I was also engaged in the work with great interest and expectation.



Jan and I with members of the *Golden Age Seniors*

I enjoyed living in my own home and happily took on my household chores. We established our garden and grew our own vegetables, fruit and kept chickens - we did not need anything else! Having the privilege of milk being delivered to our home every morning was an added bonus. I found that life in Australia was much easier than in Poland, no rushing to the store each morning and no standing in queues for basic necessities. Besides, once a week, the Polish butcher even came to our home from Melbourne with meat and cold cuts. What else would a housewife want?

Within three months, the renovations were completed. Both my husband and I had little other requirements. Overall, we were very happy. At the end of April, my brother and his family arrived in Australia from Poland. I prepared a welcoming dinner party at our home. I invited Jadwiga's whole family, the Jordans and Zasedkas, as well as Jan's parents, family and our friends, whom I got to know here in Australia. The day was very important to me, after a year of separation from my brother and his family, we were happy to be together again. Our hearts were filled with joy, but not for long because it was at this time that I started to feel ill. Without telling anyone, so as not to spoil the cheerful atmosphere, I went out to the bedroom for a few minutes to rest. I had an incredible feeling that something was going to happen.

At the end of May, a daughter was born to us, but sadly she was stillborn. The hospital staff took care of our little daughter had her christened and gave her the name Barbara. I wanted to see her so much, take her in my arms and hug her, but sadly I didn't see her. For me, it was a cruel judgment of fate, something broke in me. There was a funeral for my little Barbara, but I could not be there, I had to remain in hospital.



With friends at the *Aszenbrenner's Home*



Funeral of our little baby, *Barbara*

In the meantime, Jadwiga's brother-in-law, Zbigniew Jordan, located a rental accommodation, in Grovedale, where Jadwiga and Janek were happy to live.

Coming home from the hospital, I had a feeling of emptiness, I looked at everything in a daze, I was heartbroken. I began to wake up from this daze when the Polish Millennium Association was preparing a nativity play, "*Jasełka Rydla*" and I was asked if I would accept the role of the Virgin Mary, I accepted. Trying to learn Virgin Mary's dialogue

in the play, I forgot about my sorrow and quickly adapted to my previous normal life. From this time on, whenever I was invited to participate in events organised by the Geelong Polish community, I always happily agreed.

Time quickly passed and unfortunately with that, we all grew a little older. When our daughter, Ursula, was born on October 1962, and then, four years later in July, our son Paul was born, my dreams were fulfilled and both Jan's and my lives were filled with joy! I often took with my children by bus to the city, to the beach and to the local park. These were my best moments I spent with the children.

When the kids started going to school, I was able to take up part-time work at the Federal Mills, checking faults in fabrics. The employment arrangements of my working the afternoon shift, suited us very well. This meant that I could be with the children in the mornings and my husband in the evenings.

After three years, the factory closed down and I had to look for another job and found one quickly at *Taurus Fashions*. I worked there for seven years. My job was in sewing. Both my husband and I did not have high expectations in life, we were happy with what we had. We were not afraid to confront difficulties and setbacks that we did encounter in our lives. Overall, we were very satisfied and very happy with what we had and what we were able to achieve. Our children attended piano lessons, sports training and danced in the Polish "Krakowiak" Ensemble, under the direction of Mrs. Alfreda Kałna. On Saturdays, they attended Saturday Polish school.



An organised excursion of the Golden Aged Club

During this same period, I was granted Australian citizenship.

My husband and I were asked to accept a job in the kitchen at "Polana", a summer camp for Polish children. Teamwork in the kitchen was very pleasant and we enjoyed working with people we had never met before.



Przygotowania do Jasełek w Domu Orła Białego

November. Naturally, I was happy to accept that role. We called the Theater Group, "Tęcza", meaning "Rainbow". The Group consisted of 28 willing and capable budding actors! In addition to the official items that were to be presented on this special day, I prepared the staging of a skit, "We are returning to Warsaw".

After this the Independence Day Concert, Christmas was approaching, and I felt like I should prepare a Nativity Play ("Jasełka") during our Traditional Polish Christmas Eve Dinner, "Wigilia", at the White Eagle House. Work on that idea began at our place. Members of the Theatre Group volunteered their time on this project. My husband built the Stable and the Crib for the nativity scene, my children constructed the animal and I, with the help of the members of the Theatre Group, did the sewing of all the outfits for the different characters. These were the first "Jasełka" organized at the White Eagle House and they were a great success.

Thanks to the Polish community in Geelong, the work on the renovation and expansion of the Polish White Eagle House in Breakwater made great progress. The main works were completed at the end of 1981. The beginning of the following year in February, saw the official opening of the premises, which included a large Function Hall, a fully licensed Bar, a number of community rooms and a regulation size Soccer pitch.

In August of the same year, I was unexpectedly approached by a few people asking me if I would manage an amateur theatre group and prepare the group for our Polish Independence Day concert on 11th

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I continued to organise events for various celebrations for the next 25 years.

The first Polish Senior Citizen's Club in Geelong was founded in 1993. I was on its first Committee and served as Treasurer. In addition to being Treasurer, I was involved in the cultural and educational activities for the group. The musical side of any activities was my husband's forte. I resigned from the position of Treasurer after ten years.

On Wednesday, October 17, 2007, a new group for Polish Seniors was founded as part of the White Eagle House in Geelong. We called it the "Golden Age Club". The creation of this Club became very popular among our older Poles in the Geelong community, mainly due to the popular activities that were organised each week for the members. The Club was established in response to requests from Poles who wanted to meet in a pleasant atmosphere of respect and support.



Aszenbrenner Family with Mrs&Mrs Olszak
1960s



Jan and I with our grandchildren, Melissa and Tomasz

Elections to the Committee were held and I was elected President.

Right from the start, the Club operated professionally and very efficiently. Its main task was and continues to be to engage our seniors in healthy and enjoyable activities and to break down the walls of isolation which many elderly people build around themselves. We also worked to encourage members interact with other members of the same age. The club offered and still continues to offer its members regular group excursions, participation in artistic and cultural events, exercising and enjoying lunches together at the White Eagle House and at other venues around Geelong. The Club is also

there to help members in difficult life situations. Celebrations such as Mother's Day, Senior's Day, Father's Day and Christmas Eve are run on days when the members meet, this being, every Wednesday.

Unfortunately, for health reasons, I had to resign as President of the Club this year, 2020. However, I still attend the meetings each Wednesday.

Many years ago, both Jan and I had accepted Australia as our new homeland. We have always had great affection for this great country and for what it had allowed us to achieve. I was also always grateful to Jan, who was always by my side supporting me in all my endeavours, right from the beginning when I arrived from Poland in 1960. Not only was he the best husband but also a good Australian citizen and very proud of his Polish background and interested in all things Polish. Sadly, I lost the love of my life when Jan died on January 15, 2014.

My father passed away in 1976 and my mother in 1972 in Poland. All my siblings in Australia and in Poland have also passed away. I now only have my two children and their families to comfort me.

Personally, I have no regrets that I made the decision to migrate to Australia 61 years ago, for it was the right decision and this country turned out to be the best place to have raised my two children, Paul and Urszula.

Euphemia Aszenbrenner

(Translated into English by Henry Szkuta)
May, 2021



Our 50th Wedding Anniversary – 2010.

Edward & Kinga Godycki Family

Our Migrant Family

Edward Godycki-Ćwirko & Kinga Godycki-Ćwirko (née Werakso), Regina and Andrew

My parents, Edward and Kinga (Werakso) Godycki-Ćwirko, now deceased, met and married in Osnabrück Germany in the refugee camp established there after the War in 1945. By the time we arrived in Australia, via Naples, I (Regina) was three and a half years old and my brother, Andrew, was one.

In March 1950 we disembarked from the *General Muir* in Sydney from where we were directly transported to a refugee camp in Parkes in the Central west region of NSW. My father was immediately sent to the Illawarra district to work off his two year 'transport contract' on the Water Board laying pipes on the south coast, around Port Kembla and

Wollongong. I remember the rounded brown bus that brought us to camp via Bathurst and Orange through the scrubby bush and reddish brown dirt where we all had to pile out when the bus got bogged crossing a muddy creek. This same bus then took my father and the other men away to work, I knew not where.



The Godycki Family in Osnabrück, Germany



In Parkes, NSW

I rather liked our time in camp in Australia. There was so much space to roam around in and there were so many children to do it with. Even though we were small, our mothers seemed to think we were safe in numbers, and we had such fun! There was a little boy called Endel among us, a very hyper-active child who chased rabbits around the long low rounded barracks while we chased after him and then we all lay low on our bellies to look under a barrack as he pounced on a rabbit that he'd cornered. He would stand on the doorstep or window ledge of his own quarters and pee in our direction as a gang of us walked past, while we giggled and gave him a wide berth. The older girls wouldn't let us little one's colour in the new pages of their colouring-in book, but one time they relented and gave me a green crayon to go over the leaves of a tree they'd already finished. I

also attended a kindergarten once or twice and remember looking up into the chimney of a cupboard stacked floor to ceiling with toys and teddies. I was in heaven! While away working, within the first three months, Dad bought a block of land with a garage on the Princes Highway in Albion Park Rail, about a 30-minute train ride south of Wollongong. Here my mother and we children joined him to set up house.



At our Garage „Residence” in Albion Park, NSW

We arrived by train at night and waited on the deserted railway station for my father to pick us up. I seem to recall the shrilling of locusts (though it must have been winter) and remember thinking as we sat there how tall the grass was around us, as tall as me! While we lived in the garage, Dad began to build our house of timber and fibro teaching himself as he went along, this house where I lived for the next 18 years.

My uncle, Wiluś, my mother’s younger brother joined us there, also from Germany, via Perth, while we were still living in the garage. While he and Dad built the house and worked – now at Lysaght’s in Port Kembla, Dad as a fitter and

turner, Uncle in the Accounting Department – Mum raised us, worked the big vegetable garden and a little orchard that took up the whole back yard (hiding the outdoor dunny), as well as keeping chickens for eggs and meat. We’d regularly find red bellied black snakes, that had come for the eggs, hanging from the wire boundary fence after Dad had dispatched them. Mum also kept a cow in the paddock at the back which we ‘leased’ from the butter factory that owned it and which abutted our back fence. From the milk and cream, Mum made our own cottage cheese and butter. We were basically self-sufficient, only supplementing our provisions with a little extra meat from the butcher shop between the railway station and saw-mill – I still remember the carcasses hanging from hooks behind the counter and the sawdust on the floor - and fish on Fridays, freshly caught by the fisherman who served his customers while mending his nets in front of his house next to the Caltex Service Station up the road past the stand of eucalypts that hosted the kookaburras that carolled us first thing each morning and early dusk.

Our house was two doors down from a Progress Association Hall where the Australians used to have Housie-Housie nights (Bingo) every week and regular dances and parties. Andrew and I used to play with the discarded housie-housie tickets that littered the bins at the back the next day, and peek in and listen to the band playing the national anthem of *God Save the Queen* before couples took to the floor for the barn dances



Godycki Family 1950s. Albion Park NSW

that followed. Our only neighbours at first were the Goodwins who lived between us and this Progress Hall, and it was their older teenage daughter and a young niece who taught us to play cricket in the back yard – on our long grape-vine covered driveway from the garage to the highway. We also had a dart board set up there; and once Yvonne dinked me on her bike to the Albion Park Showground on the other side of the small aerodrome that separated our house on the Princes Highway from the township of Albion Park proper where the schools were situated and which was surrounded by farmlands. There she took me inside a boxing tent, bought me fairy floss and a kewpie doll, and showed me around the prize bull rings and harness racetrack.



Mum and Dad in our first car, a Holden, at the front of our house on the Princes Highway, Albion Park Rail NSW in the 1950s, before the Highway was widened right up to the front fence.

This is the same Holden that brought my parents down the Hume Highway to Geelong in 1973, packed to the hilt and laden on top like the Beverley Hillbillies 😊



Mum with Regina and Andrew in NSW

Albion Park was rather pretty in those days of the early 50s – before the Princes Highway and the population expanded – surrounded by green rolling hills, the Macquarie Rivulet and Lake Illawarra. We had extensive paddocks to roam at will, the river to swim in during the summertime, the railway line to play around, the lake to skirt on foot with lots of other children on our way to neighbouring Oak Flats for Saturday picture shows that played double feature cowboy films with a pianist supplying music during the intervals.

Soon after we moved into our house, Dad was asked by some new Polish neighbours, the Łopuszynskis, to help them build their house next door on the other side. This Dad did, then the one after that for their tenant, and one more on the way to Oak Flats for the Kras family, before calling it quits! I think all these houses were identical.

When my uncle married my aunt Katherine in Perth, they returned to live with us for another couple of years until their second child was due, whereupon they bought their own house in Coniston in Wollongong. My uncle and some of my



Mum, Dad, Regina and Andrew in their home in Thompson Rd North Gelong

cousins are still in the area and in Sydney with their own children. Andrew and I attended St Paul's Catholic School run by the Sisters of St Joseph (Mother Mary MacKillop's Brown Joeys) in Albion Park and later Andrew went to the Christian Brothers' College in Wollongong while I attended St Mary's College there run by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. After I finished Catholic Teachers' College at the Mother Mary McKillop Convent in Mount Street North Sydney, and after completing a 4 year 'bond' teaching at St John's Primary School Dapto, I moved to Geelong in 1968 to get my Victorian Registration. Immediately I loved it here. My godmother, Anna Kot, lived in Newcomb with her husband Józef and 13 year-old daughter Barbara, and they welcomed me with open arms. As did all the friends I made in the Polish community right from the beginning. I couldn't believe how lucky I was. I certainly hadn't ever experienced such warmth and comradeship during my years in Sydney! I stayed with the Kot family for a year before marrying and having three children – Annette, Justyn and Nicholas.

Within two years of my marriage, my brother joined us in Geelong followed by my parents who left Wollongong for good and came in 1973 to be 'with their children' (as Andrew didn't want to leave Geelong either).

After a brief spell in Newtown, they settled closer to Bell Park's ' little Europe' on Thompson Road, North Geelong, sharing a back fence with Mr and Mrs Więckowski.

In time, Andrew met, fell in love with and married Lucy Strzelecki and established his family in Highton, with three children of their own – Karoline, Alice and Mark (all now with their own partners).

In Geelong, I first taught at St Thomas's Primary School in Plume Street Norlane, this posting being organised for me by the Bishop's House in Wollongong before I arrived for the start of the school year. Here I worked with Veronica Kabala (now Reszka) and where I first met the young Monsignor Murray at a Confirmation ceremony. Later I also taught at Holy Family School, Bell Park, and for seven and a half years at Chanel College.

My children went to Polish school on Saturday mornings and strengthened their ties with the friends they made, the children of my friends. They played volleyball with Syrena Sports Club, and Justyn also played soccer and cricket. All three were musical, played instruments, and took part in *Akademjas* (concerts), Polish Masses, and dances. We bonded with the Australian environment with days spent at the beach, with bush barbecues and camping trips...



Mum and Dad in North Geelong



Dziadek Godycki, fishing with his three grandchildren, Justyn, Annette and Nicholas at Yarrawonga

Both my parents came from the *Kresy* region, which is now Belarus, Lithuania and The Ukraine, often referred to as, '*za Bugiem*' (over the River Bug). For a short time from 1920 to 1945, the *Kresy* region was part of Poland. My father was born in Stary Kopyl near Minsk (now in Belarus), and my mother born in Bryniczewo near Baranowicze, (home of the immortalised Polish poet and patriot Adam Mickiewicz) near Wilno (Vilnius, Lithuania). Dad and his large family had had to flee their estate when the Russian Revolution broke out, moving for safety with the White Army in exchange for the Radziwiłł estate on the Pripet Marshes. Dad worked as a forester for Prince Radziwiłł on his extensive holdings. In Geelong later we met another Godycki-Ćwirko family, living in Lara, and apparently unrelated but from the same Radziwiłł estate background! I think these men looked like each other too!!

Although coming from the same part of old Poland, my parents didn't know each other during this period, meeting only after the war in the Osnabrück camp. Dad had been in the Polish cavalry that had to surrender after only three months or so after the German invasion. On capitulation, the orders were for all soldiers to make their way to a make-shift POW camp on the outskirts of Kraków. From there, shortly afterwards, Dad was sent to a POW camp near Munich and finally to the most rigorous of the camps near the Dutch border where inmates had to work in forced labour digging peat and building canals. On release, he worked for a German Fertiliser company not far from where Mum was working on a farm.

Meanwhile Mum, Kinga, at age 22, along with her youngest brother, Wilhelm, were sent by train, also as forced labour, to work on a German farm for the Laumann family on the outskirts of Osnabrück. Their parents, Kasper and Józefa [Zapolska-Downar] Werakso, whose farmhouse had been taken over as German headquarters for the area, waved them off tearfully at the local station, and that was the last they would see of their children. Their father never saw them again, while their mother was finally reunited with them briefly in Choszczno near Szczecin when they visited in 1973, their only short trip back to Poland.

Mum's other brother, Napoleon, had escaped capture by the Germans because he had joined the partisans hiding out in the nearby virgin forests. After the war, he found his sister, new



Holiday in the Grampians with our two children, Justyn and Annette

brother-in-law, Edward, and younger brother in the refugee camp in Osnabrück after they had been freed by the British army, but he himself returned to Poland, rather than emigrate, to be nearer his parents, and where he married and raised his own family in Choszczno, in the region of Pomorze (Pomerania).

Dad's own siblings, six brothers (two of whom did not return from the war) and two sisters were scattered all over Poland, although three of the brothers and the two sisters as well as his mother settled in the repatriated ('na Ziemi Odzyskanej') part of Poland, Lower Silesia (Dolny Śląsk), in the Grębocice area in the village of Rzeczyca where, apart from the mother, they still live today.



With my best friend, Elizabeth Socha, in my front garden in Albion Park.

In the refugee camp in Germany, my parents made many friends, among them Anna Lichtenfeld (a widow who became my godmother), and the Korb family, with whom they reconnected in Geelong. My parents used to play cards every week with the Korbs. Mrs Lichtenfeld had remarried and was now Mrs Kot, living in Newcomb. And in 1968, this was where I came in...

I loved the vibe of the Polish community in Geelong. It was so much more vibrant than what I'd found in Wollongong although I made, and still retain, many friends there. Even Sydney's Ashfield Polonia was not as welcoming of newcomers as

were the Polish people of Geelong. I was befriended by the Gumienik family, Liz Lipinski (and Eddie Strzelecki) and her two sisters Kris and Maria, the Parks and Szkuta families, and became good friends with Halina and Adam Zychla, Kris (Widecki) and Zbig Stawicki, Maria (the Kubinas) and Frank Filipowicz, and many of their family and friends. Zbig Stawicki was particularly helpful in encouraging me to extend my stay with my godmother and her family. I'd been too shy to ask them! My mother made friends with Mrs Downar (of the Timonowicz family), her mother's namesake though unrelated and visited or spoke to her often on the phone... There were also the Pietrzaks, Mr and Mrs Gacesa and later their family Kovac, our very good friends and neighbours the Givoyes, then the Zielinskis and the Stopinskis, the Doyle family (Barbara Kot, Peter and their children), and many others including our extended families – Costas and Strzeleckis – in Geelong.

With the arrival of the new wave of Poles around the mid-1980s, the Pronobis family became and remain our good friends. Our stories and connections continue to live on!

I will be forever grateful to my dear friends, Poles in particular, for helping me and my family to call Geelong our home

Post Script: And I *did* get my fateful Victorian Teaching Registration after all, in the early 1970s, that is what led me to Geelong in the first place – after teaching for two weeks at Norlane Primary School where I was sent, supervised by Karl Karamatic, who gave me a glowing report as a teacher, with ‘straight A s’ for teaching his class there.



With my friends, Maria Filipowicz,
Kris Stawicki and Halina Zychla

***Written by Regina Parks
March, 2021***

Jolanta Baldasso (Karpinski)

My early childhood memories of family and Polish tradition.

I was only 15 months old when my family arrived in Australia from Poland in 1963 – our travelling party consisted of my parents, my almost 3-year-old brother Jack (*Jacek*), and my maternal grandmother. We had travelled by train from Murowana Goślina, in Poland, to Genoa in Italy, and then boarded the Italian liner, Galileo Galilei, for our month-long trip to Australia. We were reunited with my grandfather and uncle once our ship docked in Melbourne. They then drove us to Geelong, the city in which we were to settle.



My Grandfather and Uncle (back row) my Grandmother holding me (middle) my parents on either side, Mum holding my brother, Jacek -1963

My parents continued to speak to us in Polish – they were only just starting to learn English at evening classes, as they worked all day at their factory jobs. My grandmother, who also only spoke Polish, looked after my brother and me up until we went to school. Weekends were filled with outings to the beach, the Geelong Botanic Gardens, picnics at the You Yangs, and gatherings with other Polish families at each other's houses.

When my brother started kindergarten in 1965, I started picking up words and phrases in English from him, and it wasn't long before we started conversing with each other in English. Yet as soon as we turned to our parents, we would speak to them in Polish. And that is how it has remained to this day. My brother and I became naturally bilingual, with English becoming our favoured language within a short space of time.

My grandfather, who had been a teacher in Poland prior to World War II, took it upon himself to teach my brother and me to read and write in Polish. We had some informal teaching at home, but as he was also a teacher at the Saturday Polish School at Holy Family School, we were also enrolled there as soon as we were old enough.

As I sat with my *dziadzia* (grandfather) reading and writing, I remember asking him what the numbers were on his arm. I don't recall what he told me at the time.



Dziadzia teaching me to read in Polish - 1968



My brother and I dancing *Góralski* Dance – A Polish Highland dance 1966

Little did I know the horror behind the answer - what he had endured through the war - being imprisoned at Auschwitz for most of World War II. His only 'crime' was being a teacher – he had been in the first prisoner transportation to Auschwitz - his arm tattooed with the number 280. He spent most of the war in Auschwitz, later being moved to another concentration camp in Germany, from which he was eventually liberated at the end of the war. He stayed on in Germany for a while, then made his way to Australia under a migrant program. Later he beckoned the rest of his family to also move to Australia – which he saw as the land of opportunity. By the time the family was allowed to leave Poland in 1963, my brother and I had been born.



One of many Religious Celebrations which played a big part of our teenage lives

I was not very happy about going to Polish school on Saturday mornings. Back then of course, we were not allowed to question our parents – we just did what we were told. How happy I am now that they insisted that we continue to learn our mother tongue – it has allowed us to stay bilingual, it fostered closer bonds with our relatives who live in Poland, and to easily travel and communicate in our motherland.

As we grew up, the Polish community in Geelong was very close and became our extended family – bonded by Polish traditions, the Catholic faith (we went to Polish mass each Sunday at St Mary of the Angels for midday mass), our Polish language, and the commonality of being displaced from relatives in Poland. There were often concerts where both

old and young performed – songs, poetry, and dancing. As I look back at that time, I see the people in the Polish community were proud to be Polish, to be Catholic and to have a strong sense of tradition.

Jack and I often wore our beautiful Polish costumes at Polish concerts – usually held at various church, community or council halls. In later years, they were mostly held at the 2 Polish halls which the Geelong Polish community had purchased – the Polish Ex-Servicemen’s (SPK) Hall in Ryrie St and The White Eagle House in Breakwater. We learnt Polish dancing, first as small children, and years later, when we were part of the Geelong Polish teenage dancing group, *Krakowiak*.

One of my first performances at a Polish concert was when I was about 4 years old – I recited a short children’s rhyme with my namesake:

*Poszła Jola do przedszkola, zapomniata parasola.
Bo parasol był zepsuty, połamane wszystkie druty.*

This translates (without the rhyme) to:

*Jola went to kinder, forgot her umbrella
‘cos the ribs were all damaged,
her umbrella was worthless.*



Jacek and I – Proud Little Poles - 1966



Us taking part in a Nativity Play (*Jasełka*) in Polish National Dress - 1966

Our family’s Easter celebrations included painting and dyeing eggs in the days leading up to Easter. In later years, we also learnt to use wax as part of the egg dyeing process. We went to *Święconka* each year on Easter Saturday, when the Polish community gathered at a venue, where the Polish priest would bless each family’s basket of prepared breakfast food. This blessed food was then eaten on Easter Sunday morning, before we went to the midday Polish Mass. Easter Monday was a fun day loosely based on a Polish tradition - it started with us flicking a few drops of water onto others in the family, as we said ‘*Śmigus Dyngus*’. This eventually escalated to full on friendly water fights with our Polish friends, using hoses and buckets of water in our front yards and local streets.



My brother, Jacek (left), and some members of *Krakowiak* Dance Ensemble with my uncle, Eugene, who was President of the PCA - 1981

children. The camp was situated in a beautiful bush settings of the Yarra Ranges. I met and became close friends with many other Polish girls and boys – the children at the camp were mostly from Melbourne, but some also were from Geelong. They were wonderful holidays with many fun activities, with the added special bond of us all being of Polish heritage.

I participated in the Annual Polish Victorian Sports Days held each February/March. This event was held in Werribee in my early years, later it was moved to Lara, and later still, it was held at Geelong's White Eagle House sporting grounds. It was always a fun day – I usually enrolled for the races and field events. Running was my forte, and I received many medals from these events.

I also was able to reconnect on these days every year with my Melbourne based Polish friends from summer camp.



My family with our first car -1965

As I grew up, I knew my Christmas was different from those of my friends – we celebrated Christmas Eve with *Wigilja* (Christmas Eve dinner) which was a traditional meal with fish and vegetable dishes (no meat), and after dinner, *Gwiazdor* (the equivalent of Santa – usually a family friend) would visit us and after making sure we had been good throughout the year, by asking us a series of questions, he would hand us out our presents. We thought we were so lucky getting our presents a day early – as our Australian friends told us they didn't get their presents till Christmas Day! The following day, our Christmas Day lunch was just like a normal Sunday lunch.

Every summer as children, my brother and I attended *Kolonie* (Summer Camp) at *Polana* in Healesville. This was a 2-week summer camp for Polish



My friends and I at „Polana” Camp 1971

We had a happy and idyllic childhood. My parents worked very hard and were very frugal. Although we had just a few belongings, we always had a roof over our heads and adequate food on our table; my parents were always employed and were part of a close knit community - they had a purpose and had deep faith. I feel fortunate that we came to Australia when we did – Poland continued to be an oppressed Communist country for many more years, while here in Australia, we had freedom and a comparatively good standard of living.

My parents sacrificed a lot to bring us to this land of opportunity – they missed their relatives and their friends – it took many years before they felt comfortable in this new country and could communicate easily in English. It was also many years before they allowed themselves the luxury (due to the high cost of airfares) of returning to Poland for a holiday, to see their loved ones again.

Jack and I both married non-Polish partners, yet our children still have a good sense of their Polish roots, and feel a strong connection to their Polish heritage, including spending time with their beloved Polish grandparents – their *Babcia* and *Dziadzia*. The girls in the family (my mum, sister-in-law, Rita, niece, Elise, and myself) continue the tradition of making

pierogi (Polish dumplings) and *pierniki* (Polish gingerbread biscuits). I hope to continue this with my daughters-in-law in future years. I am now a grandmother myself, and my grandson also calls me *Babcia*.

I feel fortunate that our bonds with our relatives in Poland continue to be strong – my husband and I have visited Poland a number of times, and once with our children when they were young. Two of our children have also been to Poland as adults, picking up more of the Polish language and customs, as well as spending time with their *kuzyny* (cousins).

Our family's bond with the Polish community in Geelong continues. We visit and dine at Geelong's Polish Club, White Eagle House, when we celebrate many of our family occasions, and my brother, Jack, is on the committee of the Polish Community Association in Geelong. Jack and I are also still friends with some of our childhood friends with whom we danced on stage in our Polish national costumes back in the 1960s and 1970s.



Our *Krakowiak* Dance Ensemble late 1970s

Although Jack and I grew up in Australia after leaving Poland as young children, we still feel a strong connection to our Polish heritage. We say proudly that we are both Polish and Australian.

Jolanta Baldasso (née Karpinski)

March 2021

Widecki & Krilek Families

My Migrant Family

Tadeusz Widecki (born 1915, Lublin Poland.) Kazimiera Widecki (née Krilek, born 1926 Lwów, Poland.) Basil Krilek (born 1901, Zawadów, Poland.) Maria Krilek (born 1903, Lubaczów, Poland.) Krystyna Stawicki (born 1947, Düsseldorf, Germany.)

A Short Background to our Migration.

Watching the 75th Anniversary of VE Day celebrations this year, I asked my mother how did she feel when she found out the war was over.

“When we heard the expected broadcast from the loudspeakers in our camp it was not with a feeling of excitement, just relieved confirmation. For us in our British Displaced persons’ camp, in effect the war had been over for some time. While we waited for the Americans and Soviets to fight for Berlin, we had already been liberated from factories and workplaces and the process of trying to re-establish identities, reunite with family members and create sense and order had begun.”



For our Polish cohort the confirmation was tinged with bitterness that it was the Soviets who were first into Berlin. Our history had forewarned us that those “Allies”, that military force that had pushed through Poland would become an army of occupation, not liberation.”

And so, it came to be. The appeasements to Stalin at the Yalta convention meant that for many from Eastern Poland, home would remain only as a memory. They had become political refugees under the guardianship of UNRRA. They had to find a new home.

My mother, Kazimiera Krilek, born in 1926 in the city of Lwów, a major historical city close to the Russian border, was 13 when Hitler attacked Poland from the West and within weeks the Soviets moved in from the East.



Tadeusz - middle front with army mates.

As it was school holidays, she had been staying with family in the village of Zawadów, and it was decided it would be safest for her to stay there. Her father, Basyl Krilek, was in France, exploring future possibilities for his family and her mother, Maria, was in the family's apartments in the city, but was eventually conscripted to work in Germany.



Tadeusz the "suitor."

Kazimiera witnessed two years of chaotic troop movements, with both armed forces seizing what resources they could, including labour, for the war machine then she too was assigned for deportation to Germany. She recalls that some of the girls schemed about escaping and joining the partisans in the forest but she had no such ideas, she knew she would not survive that life and reasoned better the lorries going west than the trains heading to Siberia. Besides, she knew that her mother was already somewhere there and prayed every day that her father was alive in the hope that they would all be somehow reunited. The war could not last forever.



Kazimiera in a nearby German village.

And in fact her father was alive. Born in 1901, he had done his military service in Pilsudski's fledgling re-established Poland, so in France he immediately had joined General Sikorski's Polish forces and was now a prisoner of war in a German Stalag.

Kazimiera happened on a good family and while the farmer grumbled about what use to him was this city child, his wife was motherly. She had to work hard physically in the fields but ate at the table with the family and was well treated. She recollects the leap of hope on the day Herr Storm came in saying "The Americans have joined the war, we're done." Initially they helped her established contact with her mother who was in Düsseldorf, and who then, with their agreement, managed to organise a swap with a Russian girl in her factory as the probable Allied occupation zones became evident. On release from his POW status her father joined them there and so reunited, the family considered how to face the future.



Wedding day, with Kazimiera's parents

Now 19, Kazimiera attracted many admirers. One particularly enterprising suitor, Tadeusz Widecki, from a neighbouring camp, would regularly appear, riding his bike. He was a keen photographer, a good conversationalist, well read, played the harmonica and was very likeable. Her parents felt confident that here was the young man with whom to venture into the unknown. Kazimiera and Tadeusz married in 1946 and I, Krystyna, arrived in June '47. So it was as a family of five that we underwent the interminable processing for migration to Australia.

My mother often reflects on that time. How so much depended on who was the interpreter and the processing official as to the flexibility and type of negotiation that could occur. Due to age restrictions, it was

originally suggested that we, the Widecki family of three, would be first to go, then the parents could join us later. My mother would have none of that. She vehemently declared that as she and her parents had been separated for years by enemy forces, now having been reunited she was not leaving them behind. She proposed that she also would sign a two year contract with her mother thus nominated as my carer. She then defiantly



Krystyna & parents on her Christening

averred that if three working adults couldn't support another woman and a child then "it was not a country worth going to." So it was that in March of 1950 the entire family of five boarded the USAT General William Black naval supply ship in Genoa and sailed for Melbourne.

Early Life in Our New Country



Kazimiera visiting Tadeusz at the hut

Very soon after disembarking at Station Pier on the twelfth of April and being moved to Bonegilla migrant camp, dispersal of the family occurred. My father, Tadeusz, was deployed to Heywood in the Western District to work on the railway, my mother, Kazimiera, was assigned to work at the Leura hotel in Camperdown and my grandfather was sent to Morwell to work in the logging industry. Babcia and I remained in Bonegilla.



Heywood railway hut - Tadeusz right.

Four Polish men had been allocated to Heywood. They initially were quartered in a little railway cabin while they tried to organise ways to house their waiting families. Initially a curiosity, they were well received by the little town of 500. The owner of the Heywood hotel was Irish Catholic and helped my father organise a transfer for my mother to his establishment, where she would work and board – and where the glamorous young European waitress was very good for business. Next it was negotiated for my grandfather to be reassigned to their railway contingent. In the meantime the other two men had managed to rent houses and so reunite their families. Babcia and I then were able to come and room with the Troc family.

In this way we became country "New Australians" – a term we saw positively, inclusive in that we were no longer "DPs or Reffos," but had been given an identity by the land to which we'd come, and full of promise of a new future to work for and establish.

Thus a treasury of humorous stories about initiatives, blunders and adjustments of those first couple of years developed. Many of these involved the one local general store which was faced with pantomime explanations of implements and materials being requested. Quite quickly these became focused on building tools and products.



Main street in Heywood



The "hut children"



Krystyna's passport photo

In our case the absolute priority was to have our own home. My father and Stefan Troc were both enterprising and hard working. Within 12 months they had bought land and began to help each other construct modest dwellings. This was second shift. First, Day job, then eat and "na budowę" where by the light of kerosine lamps they would work to midnight, then sleep and Day job. We children, aged four and five, would play there collecting off cuts and constructing our own little edifices.



The Krilek's house, Geelong West

By the beginning of 1953 our family had moved into our first little home but my grandparents had had to look to new horizons. There was no more railway work and while my father, who absolutely hated the idea of incarceration in a factory, had obtained employment with the PMG installing country telephone lines, Dziadzia looked to Geelong and Fords. There he would work on the production line, pressing car doors- and later other tasks- for 13 years until retirement at 65. My grandparents were able to buy a little Miners Cottage in Lupton Street Geelong West and that became the focal point of family gatherings for many years. There was sufficient land to develop a large vegetable garden and fruit trees, as well as Babcia's fuchsias, roses, dahlias and the lilacs.

While there were only four main rooms, including the kitchen, and a lean-to which became the bathroom and a little cubicle with a cut-off bed that was mine, it somehow hosted numerous people and numerous celebrations in that little kitchen gathered around the wooden table always laid out with starched, white embroidered linen which had emerged after being boiled in the copper in the outside laundry, as had all the crisp, starched bedding.

Thus whilst we, back in Heywood, appreciated the camaraderie and freedom of country life- for me, building treehouses catching tadpoles in the open gutters, playing tippety run in the middle of red gravel streets, mushrooming, long country hikes and camping with the girl guides was heaven- for my parents increasingly Geelong beckoned. On our first visit, when helping my grandparents relocate, we had been to Saint Mary's, experienced the full church singing hymns in Polish then gathering outside to exchange greetings and wishes. That became the magnet - the draw of which strengthened on each subsequent visit.

At home my parents took a keen interest in world affairs and I can still hear the introductory music to "This is the BBC broadcasting from London," and the "Voice of America" theme. They mail-ordered books from Tazab company in England which we would read aloud at night and somehow my father rigged up a turntable and we could play records- also imported.

In day to day life we ran chooks and ducks- for meat and eggs, with the duck down being saved to become doona filling and also developed an extensive vegetable garden. This became problematic in terms of watering. There was no town water – only rain runoff into tanks. Ever resourceful, my father sank a bore- a town first- and in the hot, dry summer weeks it was wonderful to run through those spinning sprinklers rather than risk the unknown in the local river waterhole.



Our first car.

In 1954 my father acquired his first car, a Ford Zephyr for which he had to wait for three months and then had to go to Hamilton to take delivery. He had managed to obtain his licence by persuading the town milkman to let him practice driving the milk-cart on his early morning rounds, and then to vouching for him to local policeman who issued the coveted document. With this achieved, the excruciating 10 hour railway trip to Geelong would be no more.



Our first house in Heywood

On the weekends that my mother had off from work we would leave at 4 in the morning, singing Polish patriotic songs accompanied by my father on his mouth organ -no such thing as a car radio. By Colac I would have been carsick twice and we would arrive by nine, meet and greet the grandparents and off to the ABC café and the city shops. During each return journey with our cache of continental sausage and rye bread, plans would be discussed how best to make that move to the city. That car also extended entertainment options from just the Saturday night movie screening seated on benches in the local RSL hall to driving to a proper cinema in Portland. One month Friday night was ranch night, another it would be horror and so on.

Finally the anticipated move did happen. My father managed a transfer with the PMG to Queenscliff, bought a block of land in Newcomb and commenced to build our fourth house- we had upgraded a couple of times while in Heywood. My mother was able to obtain work at the Britannia Hotel while I chose to remain at Loreto in Portland as a boarder for my last two years of school.

In that time my parents had become fully involved in the rich and varied activities of the Polish community. At 18, I met my husband to be - Zbigniew Stawicki - at a gathering at Saint Peter and Paul's Hall. Newly arrived from Poland, at 21 he was a charming, courtly mannered young man from a family who had been heavily involved in the AK and Partisan movement during the war and thus fitted in well with our family's experiences and values. As a soccer player he also was welcomed into the *Syrena* Sports club and contributed much to both sporting and social activities including cabaret items with Joe Parks. We married in 1970 and our son, David, arrived in 1974.



My mother and I on our first visit to Geelong.

Tragically my father did not live to see those two events. He died in a car accident a year after Zbigniew's arrival in Australia. Prior to that we have one wonderful trip to remember. My parents and the two of us drove to Sydney, attended the consecration of the Polish Commemorative Chapel and then returned via Mount Kosciuszko and the Alpine way – much of it with Zbigniew driving on L plates. Along the way we discussed my parents plans to finally commit to the big trip back “home” to Poland – or at least, to my father's region of Lublin as

my mother's fear of the Soviets meant that Lwów, now in the Ukraine and part of the USSR was out of the question. That planned trip was not to be.



The Widecki family with Zbigniew.

My mother, Kazimiera, widowed at forty, continued to work at Soldiers Woollen Mills then Winchester Ammunition's Factory and did not visit Poland until she retired at age 60 in 1986. An intense patriot, she went again, with the Australian contingent of Polish returned soldiers – the SPK- when, after the establishment of the Third Polish Republic all military colours held in trust by the Polish Government in exile in London were ceremonially returned. Then, after the fall of the Soviet Union, she finally made that return journey to Lwów.



Parked at the top of Mt. Kosciusko. Not possible today!

She has continued to participate in Polish community activities, particularly the choir which she loved but reluctantly left at 90 because she no longer felt confident to drive to practice at night. For many years her parents had somewhat helped fill an emotional void. They lived a contented retirement, even celebrating their Diamond wedding at which my grandfather simply could not let go that telegram from the Queen. We farewelled Dziadzia, aged 88 after contracting pneumonia and Babcia at 94.

For my mother, turning 95 this year, as the numbers from that first wave of migrants have faded away and there are few left with whom to connect, the focus becomes more and more not on the road ahead but on the view through the rear-vision mirror. That leads all the way back to the young girl on the threshold of

a journey she could not possibly have foreseen and would have been afraid to undertake if she had a choice. She talks about how the beloved autumnal golden leaves of the European forests in which she played and through which she travelled on that journey west turned into the golden wattle and the silveriness of the Australian bush in the first years of life in her new homeland. Through the daily kaleidoscope anecdotes, recited poems and lyrics of songs, she marvels at the scope of it all and her own resilience. **“Czy naprawdę to przesyłam.”?**

Krystyna Stawicki

March 2021



Arrival at Station Pier on 12/04/1950.
Babcia, Dziadzia, my mother and I on deck of the
USAT *General William Black*. Photo by Tadeusz

Kubina Family

Our Migrant Family

Michał Kubina (born 1922 in Devetina, Yugoslavia), Michalina Kubina (née Posadowska, born 1926 in Devetina, Yugoslavia), Maria Kubina (born 1949 in Różynec, Poland), Jan Kubina (born 1951 in Różynec, Poland), Helena Kubina (born 1953 in Różynec, Poland), Anna Kubina (born in 1959 Różynec, Poland)

Short history of our life before Migrating to Australia

Michał Kubina was born in 1922 in Devetina in the old Yugoslavia and Michalina Kubina (née Posadowska) was also born in Devetina Yugoslavia in 1926. They knew each other well, as many Polish migrants lived in the same town. They attended the local school and were taught the Yugoslav language, still speaking Polish at home. In 1947, Poles were encouraged by the Polish Government to resettle in former Polish regions which were reclaimed from the Germans after World War II. Whilst Michał's younger sister Anna married a Serbian friend in 1947, she decided to remain in Devetina. Michał and Michalina resettled in Poland, in a town called Różynec (Bolesławiec) where they married in 1948 in Gromadka and had four children: Maria born 1949; Jan born 1951; Helena born 1953 and Anna Born in 1959.



Marriage Certificate 1948



Kubina family in Różynec 1961

Michał and Michalina owned and worked their own very successful farm in Różynec, Poland. The Polish Government reclaimed part of their land to extend the Russian military base for an airfield. Living 100 metres from this airfield was difficult, as listening to planes landing and taking off all hours during the day and night causing windows to constantly rattle.

In 1965 Michalina's brother, Józef Posadowski, together with his wife Maria and their family of six children emigrated from Poland to Geelong, under the Family Reunion Program.



Maria (Left) with her teacher and classmate in Poland

The Posadowski family had close relatives who migrated to Australia in the early 1950s and were living in Geelong.

Soon after, in 1966, having sold their farm and sending all their belongings including furniture, electrical and personal belongings by ship to Australia, Michał and Michalina migrated with their family to Geelong, also under the Family Reunion Program.

Life in our New Country

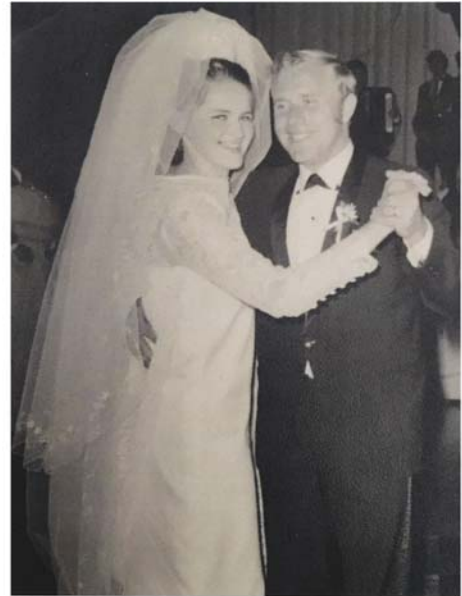
After a long 26-day voyage, Michał and Michalina Kubina, together with their son, John, and daughters, Maria, Helena and Anna, disembarked the Italian cruise ship “Galileo Galilei” at Station Pier in South Melbourne in November, 1966 to begin their new life in Australia.

All their closest relatives, namely, the Posadowski family, who migrated to Australia two years before, and who sponsored the Kubina family’s migration to Australia, came out to welcome them at Station Pier. Anna Kubina, who was the youngest daughter in the family, remembers her parents’ tears of joy,



Maria and Frank were partners at a Polish Deb Ball in 1967 at the Geelong West Town Hall

as they embraced members of the Posadowski family after seeing them for the first time in over two years. Anna also recalls a man saying something to her in a foreign language (English), which she did not understand but which her cousin, Josia, who had already been attending school in Geelong for two years, explaining to her that the man was telling her not to lean on the barrier ropes as she might fall off the ramp. Anna’s thoughts were. “Why didn’t he say that in Polish?”



Maria and Frank’s Happy Wedding -1969

After arriving in Geelong, on a hot November afternoon, the Kubina family settled in a four-bedroom house in Bell Park. They all shared this accommodation happily with the eight members of the Posadowski family. Maria and Anna still cherish the wonderful memories and the generous hospitality of their extended family. A year later, their parents Michał and Michalina purchased a small property a few doors up from the Posadowskis and later built their new house in Bell Post Hill.

Maria vividly remembers their first, very warm November month in Geelong, the beautiful roses in her auntie’s garden and the friendliness shown to them by the people of Bell Park.

Soon after their arrival in Geelong, a special tutor was arranged to hold English classes once a week in the Posadowski home for members of both families. The reasoning was that it would be easier for the tutor to come to their place rather than for 14 members of the two families to attend evening English classes outside their home.

Anna, the youngest Kubina child was the only one that attended mainstream school in Australia, the rest of the family worked six days a week on various market-gardens from just before sunrise and arriving back home



Three generations of the Kubina and Posadowski Clan
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late in the evening. It is no wonder their enthusiasm to learn English, with their special Home Tutor, was not a high priority.

Anna also recalls her mother packing her lunch with Polish sausage sandwiches, naturally with a strong scent garlic, which, to her embarrassment, emanated when she opened her lunch box at school. Nothing like the bland vegemite and cheese sandwiches other students had in their lunch boxes!

Geelong had a very vibrant Polish community in the 1960s. This community became the Kubina's "sanctuary" for the next eight years. Being devout Catholics, the whole family attended Polish Mass each Sunday at St. Mary's Church in Yarra St Geelong.



Maria & Frank with their first born, Tony, and Maria's Grandparents

The Kubina family attended local Polish social and religious functions as well as Polish sporting festivals which were held both in Geelong and in various Polish communities all over Melbourne.



Maria and Frank with all the participants in the 1967 Debutant Ball

In the first few years of their arrival, members of the Kubina family often yearned for the memorable times they spent with friends and places they often frequented in Poland but now missed so much. However, as the years went by, the circle of very close friends expanded, and they began to become emotionally attached to their new surrounds in the same way they did to friends and places in their home country. More importantly, they all quickly realized the opportunities that were open to them in their new adopted country. Nothing compared to

what they would have had to accept under the Polish Communist regime in the 1960s.

Maria, the eldest daughter in the Kubina family, soon met the love of her life, Frank Filipowicz, who was also of Polish background and migrated to Australia in 1949 with his parents and sister, Christina. Maria and Frank were married in Geelong in 1969 and over the years became parents of three children, Tony, Carol and Mark. All three children also became involved in the life of the Geelong Polish community.

The children all attended Saturday Polish Language Classes, participated in Polish national and religious celebrations and all three were enthusiastic members of the



The Kubina Clan – Mr & Mrs Kubina Snr. with their son and daughters, their respective partners and their grandchildren with their partners

Geelong Polish Dance Ensemble “Krakowiak” which was directed first by Mrs. Kątny and then by Mrs. Grażyna Brzostowski.

They also took part in the Polish Debutante Balls. All three children were active member of the Geelong Polish “Syrena” Volleyball Club of which their father, Frank was the President for many years.

Maria recalls that the first few years in Australia were very difficult for her because of her lack of knowledge of the English language.

Fortunately, before leaving Poland, Maria completed a course in dressmaking.

She even brought the sewing machine, she purchased in Poland to Australia, to do this course, with the view of setting up a dressmaking business in Australia. Soon after her arrival in Geelong, Maria was employed at Pelaco, a firm that made exclusive men’s shirts in Geelong.

Maria, like her children later, was also a member of the Geelong Polish Dance Ensemble “Krakowiak” under the directorship of Mrs. Kątny. Being involved in the activities of the Polish church in Geelong, Maria soon became, and still is, a member of the *Stanisław Moniuszko* Polish Church Choir, whose director was Mr Karpinski.



Mara Filipowicz and grand-daughter



Maria and her grand-children

Since arriving in Geelong, Maria also took part in many Polish religious and national celebrations in Geelong. One of her memorable events was her participation, as a member of the Krakowiak Dance Ensemble, in the Pol-Art festivals in Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane; and the visit of Pope John Paul II to Melbourne in 1986 at which she attended as part of the Geelong Polish Choir.

Maria says that she has never regretted her parent’s decision to migrate to Australia and them making Geelong their home. Geelong is now also the home of her children and grandchildren. In fact, she is greatly indebted to her Mum and Dad, who made that difficult decision in 1966 to migrate so far away from their homeland.

Both Michal and Michalina visited Poland many times to

be with their family, as well as visiting Yugoslavia to stay with Michal’s younger sister Anna and her family. Unfortunately, both parents have now deceased, but they did witness the success their children made of their lives in this, their “Promised Land”.

Maria, Anna and their families have also returned to Poland and Yugoslavia with their children to visit their beautiful birthplace, Poland.



Maria and husband, Frank, with grand-daughter

Written by Henry Szkuta

*Using the information gathered from the Maria Filipowicz (née Kubina) and Anna Irminger (née Kubina)
March 2021*



The Filipowicz Clan - 2019

Filipowicz Family

The Migrant Family

Mr Franciszek Filipowicz (Senior) (born 1923 in Malanów, Poland, Mrs. Maria Filipowicz (née Jasnowska, born 1918 in Wierzchnas, Poland), Frank Filipowicz (born in 1943, in Grossvalderberg, Hallendorf, Germany, Krystyna Styzinski (née Filipowicz, born in 1944, in Grossvalderberg, Hallendorf, Germany),

A background to our migration



Franciszek Filipowicz Snr (left), in Germany 1940

Soon after WWII broke out in 1939, when the Nazi Army invaded Poland, Franciszek and Maria were independently transported by the Germans from Poland to Germany to work on German farms in 1940. Franciszek and Maria both worked on nearby farms the village of Grossvahlberg, Lower Saxony. They were married there in that small town and where both Frank and Krystyna were born. The family of four remained in Germany until 1948. Frank and Krystyna were old enough to attend German kindergartens when they were 4 years of age. When the War ended, all non-German citizens were classified by the *United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA)* as Displaced Persons (DPs), today's refugees. Families were given the option of either returning to their home countries (Poland, in the case of the Filipowicz family) or the choice of migrating to one of several countries willing to settle these Displaced Persons. Franciszek chose to migrate with his wife and two children to Australia. According to Frank and Krystyna, that was the best choice he would ever make!

The family embarked on an American Naval supply ship, *General Langfitt*, in Italy. Being a Naval Supply Ship, it didn't have the comforts of a cruise ship. It basically had communal sleeping areas and the passengers were treated to three meals a day for their three-week long of journey to Australia. The family began their journey from the Port of Genoa, Italy, on 27 August 1949, sailing through the Suez Canal and across the Indian Ocean. The Ship berthed at Fremantle Port and then headed for Melbourne, where the Filipowicz family disembarked on 22 September, 1949.

Early Life in Our New Country

For some reason, while Franciszek was still working on the Rockland Dam, the remaining family of three was transferred to another army camp facility in Woodside, South Australia. The family was happy with the location as it was close to a small township where Maria could do her proper shopping! Unfortunately, Franciszek was only able to visit his family once a month on a weekend.

Geelong Here we Come!

On one of Mr Filipowicz's monthly visits to his family in Woodside, he came with some good news. He found a job at the International



Frank's parents with Friends in the Ocean Grove Migrant Camp. Mr&Mrs Filipowicz, couple on right, Mr&Mrs Zychla on the left

Harvester in Geelong as well as accommodation for his family in Wynndeen Holiday Resort in Ocean Grove – no more army camps!! So, in 1950 the Filipowicz family travelled to Ocean Grove. Their accommodation was a private bungalow – not the holiday accommodation one would expect today. The Filipowicz family all lived, slept and cooked on primuses in their one-room bungalow and shared an outside laundry. While the adults used the camp’s public shower facilities with other families, the kids were bathed in the bungalow. They were happy that they were all together.

Franciszek had a heavy vehicle driver’s license and was asked to drive the International Harvester night-shift workers, living in Ocean Grove, to work each day.

Frank and his sister, Krystyna, were sent off to the local State School. They recall that it was not easy for them as they did not speak a word of English. Nevertheless, very quickly both children became fluent in English. Unfortunately, it wasn’t that easy for the parents, who struggled for years with the new language as they had little contact with English speakers.



Frank with his sister, Christine, in the Ocean Grove Migrant Camp -



Frank’s Primary School Class in Ocean Grove - 1953

made it easier for him secured that position. He continued in this trade till his retirement in 1982. Frank, recalls his father saying that the migrants who arrived after the War, were greatly respected by their employers because of their very strong work ethic and their overall commitment to what they were doing.

After a number of years of living in the bungalow in Ocean Grove, the Filipowicz moved to Belmont. However, a majority of the Polish migrants settled in Bell Park, or *Little Europe* as it was often referred to. Frank says that although he or his family never lived there, he has very fond memories of Bell Park, which he visited frequently because that was where the majority of young Poles lived and where the Polish way of life seemed to continue to flourish. Frank recalled

The migrant families living in Ocean Grove received a lot of assistance from the Resort owner, Mr Wynn, as well as assistance from the local Catholic community, especially Mrs. O’Brien, who devoted so much time and effort with the local migrant community.

Franciszek worked as a labourer at the International Harvester for a number of years. Working in the foundry was hard, hot and very dusty. Later, when his son, Frank, began working in Myers, he was able get a job for his father, Franciszek, at Myers Emporium as a washing machine repairer. The fact that Franciszek had experience as a motor mechanic



Members of the Senior Saturday Polish Language Class. Many of the students remained Frank’s friends to this day. Fr Jaroszka was instrumental in setting up the Polish Saturday School . Mr Blumhof and Mr Stopinski were our teachers - 1959



Frank and Maria's Wedding Day -1969

that the Shire of Corio Council encouraged Poles and other newly arrived ethnic groups to promote their culture, national day celebrations and naturally their traditional foods at the different events the Shire organised. Very quickly, the very enthusiastic and supportive Rev. Fr. Joe Kelly, who was appointed to serve that catholic people in Bell Park and to set up the Holy Family Parish and Catholic Primary School in Separation St, Bell Park. The primary school was staffed by the Sisters of Mercy Nuns, who lived in the Newtown Convent, at Sacred Heart Girls College. Fr. Kelly not only worked closely with the Polish, Ukrainian, Italian, Yugoslav, German and other smaller ethnic groups, he also went out of his way to learn speak three of the main languages at that time they were, Polish, Italian and Croatian. Frank vividly recalls the first Mass celebrated in Polish in the School classrooms by the Polish Priest, Rev. Fr. Lucjan Jaroszka, at which, to the delight of the Polish congregation, Fr. Kelly welcomed those present in Polish.

The Filipowicz family was ready to make its commitment to their new Country. So, in 1959 the family officially became Australian Citizens – they were “Naturalised”, which to Frank’s family, sounded strange, as if they were not “Natural” before that ceremony.

Franciszek and Maria did not have any relatives living in Australia. The last time they saw their parents, siblings and cousins was when they left Poland in 1940. Like most Poles who migrated in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Franciszek and Maria never visited Poland because of the political situation in Poland at that time.

Although Frank was a regular visitor in Bell Park, he and his sister, Christina, attended St Bernard’s Primary School in Belmont and also developed friendship groups in that area. He completed his secondary education at the Christian Brothers’ St Mary’s Technical School in Geelong. While Christina completed her secondary education in 1960 at St. Agnes Catholic School, which was like similar to technical school but for girls and was located in Myers St next to St Mary’s Church in Myers St., Geelong.

Both Frank and Christina attended Saturday Polish School, took part in Polish Folk dancing and singing. With encouragement from their Mum and Dad, they participated in all Polish National Day and religious day celebrations, which in the 1950s were held either at the St Mary’s Church Hall in Myers St or at the Ashby Hall which was part of St. Peter and Paul’s Parish in Mercer St, Geelong.

After completing their secondary education, Frank began his working career as a Bank Clerk in 1960 and then as the Manager of the Furniture Department at the Geelong Myer Emporium where he worked for 21 years. Christina began her employment earlier, also at Myers.



Filipowicz and Styzinski families with the late Rev. Fr. Zenon Broniarczyk

When travel restrictions from Poland to Australia were eased in the early 1960s, (unfortunately, with insurmountable red-tape still to deal with) Frank's future wife, Maria, migrated with her parents and siblings to Australia and settled in Bell Park. Being a regular visitor to this part of Geelong, Frank got to know Maria and soon they got married in 1969. The junior Filipowicz family began to expand with the birth of their three children Anthony (Tony) in 1969, Carol in 1974 and, finally, Mark in 1975.

In 1963, Franciszek's and Maria's daughter, Krystyna, married John Styzinski. Before WWII John Styzinski's parents and brother, Henry, migrated from Poland to France, where John was born in 1938. After the War, the whole family migrated to Australia from France in 1952. After Krystyna married John, she left Geelong to live with her husband in Melbourne. Krystyna and John have two children - Andrew and Maria.



Filipowicz Family in the 1980s



Filipowicz Family in the 2000s

Frank always had a passion for all sports, Aussie Rules, Soccer but most of all Volleyball. In 1961, Frank was instrumental in setting up the Syrena Volleyball Club, later known as the Syrena Sports Club, and was a member of the first Syrena Volleyball team which played its first match at the Palais Hall in Moorabool Street, Geelong. In 1986, Frank was elected the President of the Club, a position he still holds. Soon after, the Club also set up a Soccer team which competed in Geelong competitions. Unfortunately, because of the aging Polish population in Geelong, the Syrena SC is no longer what it used to be, it now only has members who mainly take part in monthly golfing activities.

Frank has always been heavily involved in the Geelong Polish community, especially Saturday Polish Language School in Holly Family Parish in Bell Park from 1980-1990. In 1996, Frank was awarded the Silver Cross Medal by the Government of the

Republic of Poland for that dedicated work with Polish Community in Geelong and beyond.

Frank and his wife, Maria, visited Poland in 1977 and again in 1984, this time with their three children. The three children, then aged fourteen, ten and nine, very much appreciated seeing the country where their mother and their grandparents came from. They also got to meet their aunts, uncles and cousins. Maria and Frank believe that Tony, Carol and Mark will cherish those memories of Poland for a long, long time.

All their children have been back to Poland as adults: Carol with her husband, David, took their daughter Annabelle, to Poland on their last trip in 2018. It was a Great Experience for the three of them.

Written by Henry Szkuta
 (Using the information gathered from the Filipowicz family)

March 2021

Documents of Interest


- **Immigration Documents**

Issued by the International Refugee Organisation

Serial N° 000061
 Issued at FALLINGBOSTEL
 INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION

CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

- The holder of this Certificate is the concern of the International Refugee Organization.
- 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.
- This certificate is NOT valid for travel unless it bears the signature of the I.R.O. certifying officer AND a australian visa, and the appropriate military exit permit has been granted.



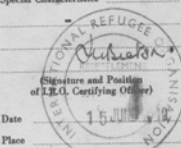
FAMILY NAME FILIPOWICZ CHRISTIAN NAMES Franciszek
 MAIDEN NAME (where applicable)
 DATE OF BIRTH 5.3.22 SEX M DP NO. 20912k
 PLACE AND COUNTRY OF BIRTH Malanow / Poland
 NATIONALITY Polish
 OCCUPATION auto-mechanicor
 FATHER'S NAME Maciej
 MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME Kyohlewska Katarzyna

Franciszek Filipowicz
 (Signature of Applicant)

Description of Holder
 Height 176 cm Weight 64 kg
 Hair light brown
 Eyes brown
 Nose normal
 Shape of Face oval
 Special Characteristics

NAME	SEX	PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH

Children up to 16 years accompanying holder.
 (Dependents over 16 years of age must have separate documents).


 Signature and Position of I.R.O. Certifying Officer
 Date 15 JUNE 1949
 Place

Exit Permit Visa No. Bu 56471
 dated 21.7.49 issued 21.7.49

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
 For insertion of
 Name FILIPOWICZ FRANCISZK


Seen at the Australian Office Naples Valid for single journey to Australia within a period of 6 months.
 Grantee will be admitted to Australia on the exemption from the provisions of the Immigration Act 1901-1948 for a period of 2 years.
5/9/1949

Franciszek Filipowicz's Certificate of Identity for the purpose of Immigration to Australia. Issued by the International Refugee Organisation

Serial N° 000061
 Issued at FALLINGBOSTEL
 INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE ORGANIZATION

CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

- The holder of this Certificate is the concern of the International Refugee Organization.
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- This certificate is NOT valid for travel unless it bears the signature of the I.R.O. certifying officer AND a australian visa, and the appropriate military exit permit has been granted.



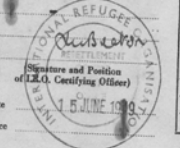
FAMILY NAME FILIPOWICZ CHRISTIAN NAMES Maria
 MAIDEN NAME (where applicable) Jasnowska
 DATE OF BIRTH 24.5.18 SEX F DP NO. 209125
 PLACE AND COUNTRY OF BIRTH Wioszczlas / Poland
 NATIONALITY Polish
 OCCUPATION housewife
 FATHER'S NAME Jasnowski Andrzej
 MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME Wojdyla Antonina

Maria Filipowicz
 (Signature of Applicant)

Description of Holder
 Height 157 cm Weight 60 kg
 Hair light brown
 Eyes grey
 Nose normal
 Shape of Face oval
 Special Characteristics

NAME	SEX	PLACE AND DATE OF BIRTH
<u>Franciszek</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>Gross-Yehlberg 4.7.43</u>
<u>Krzyszyna</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>" " 22.7.44</u>

Children up to 16 years accompanying holder.
 (Dependents over 16 years of age must have separate documents).


 Signature and Position of I.R.O. Certifying Officer
 Date 15 JUNE 1949
 Place

Exit Permit Visa No. Bu 56471
 dated 21.7.49 issued 21.7.49

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
 For insertion of
 Name FILIPOWICZ MARIA

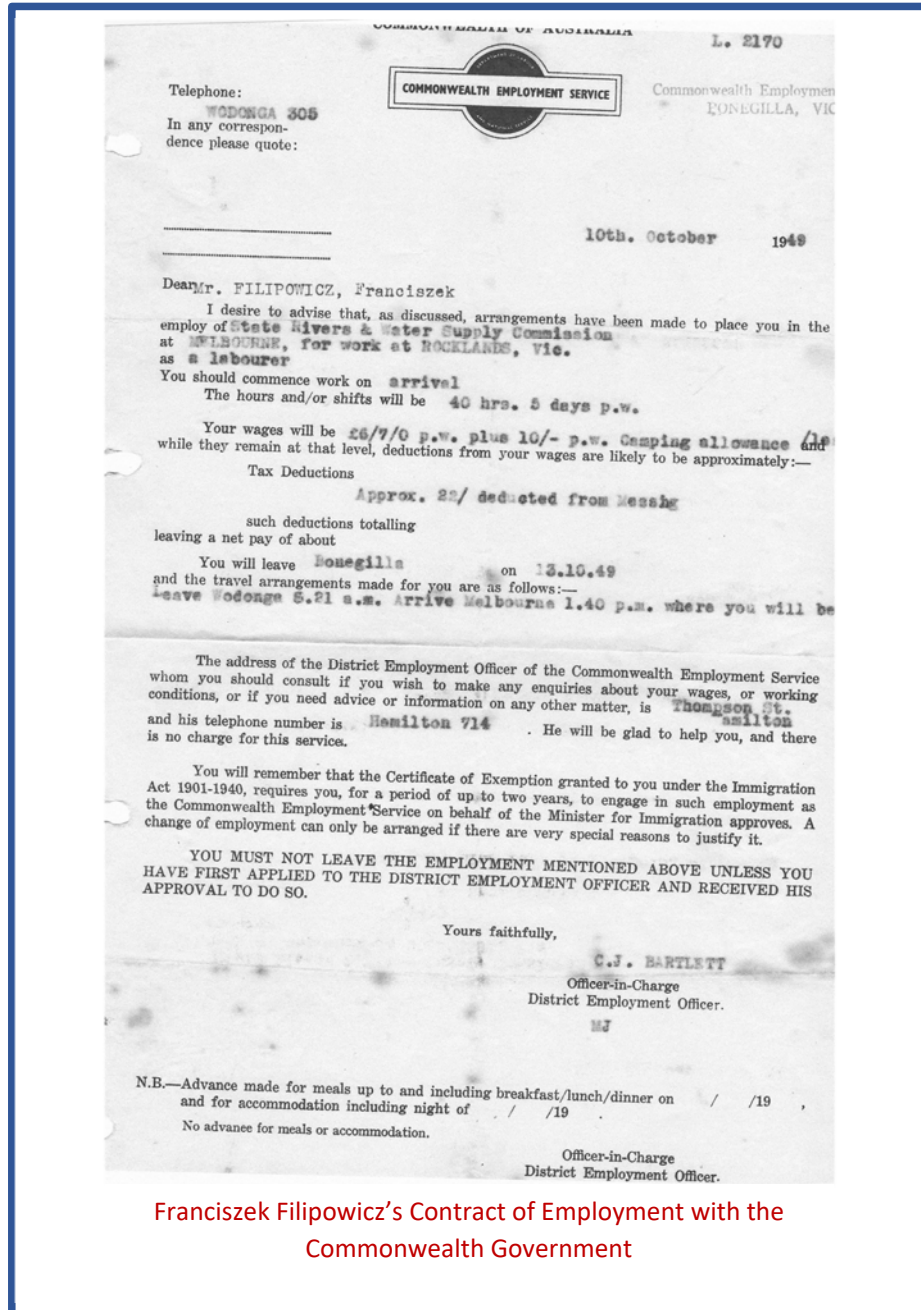
Seen at the Australian Office Naples Valid for single journey to Australia within a period of 6 months.
 Grantee will be admitted to Australia on the exemption from the provisions of the Immigration Act 1901-1948 for a period of 2 years.

Maria Filipowicz's Certificate of Identity for the purpose of Immigration to Australia. Issued by the International Refugee Organisation

- **Contract of Employment Document**

How times have changed and how inflation took over since 1949!

- 48-Hour week, 5 days per week at £6/7/0 per week, plus 10/- (10 shillings) per week for camping allowance.
- Total tax deduction of 22/- (or £2/2/0)



Franciszek Filipowicz's Contract of Employment with the Commonwealth Government

Urszula Gacesa

The Migrant Family

Urszula Gacesa (née Kacprzak) born 1930, Kranik (near Poznań), Poland, Vlado Gacesa in Yugoslavia (Serbia).

A Short background our migration



The very Young Urszula

Urszula was born on 6th July 1930 to parents, Władysław and Marianna Kacprzak in Kramsk (near Poznań) Poland. She was the eldest of six children, brothers Stanisław, Tadeusz, Janek and Wincenty and younger sister, Jadwiga (Jadzia). All but one of the children were born in Poland; Jadzia was born in Germany during the Second World War.

Urszula's parents were farmers, who worked their small farm in Poland. In 1940 her father, like many Poles after the invasion of Poland, was taken to Germany to work on German farms. In 1941, the family was re-united with Władysław after he arranged for the whole family to come and stay with him in Germany. The whole family worked on Germans farmers until the War ended in 1945. Urszula, then only 11 years of age, remembers that the work she was expected to do was very hard and, for a young girl like her, very tiring and uninspiring. Urszula also recalls that in her spare time, when not doing farming work, and being the eldest child, she was given the added responsibility of looking after her five younger siblings. Urszula looks back on those years with sadness that, as a young girl in her very formative years, she did not have the opportunity of going to school

– something she regrets to this day. She also recalls that as children they were all expected to speak German. In fact, speaking Polish or attending Polish religious celebrations, if there was access to them, was frowned upon by their German farmers for whom they worked.

Sadly, during the Kacprzak family's time in Germany, three of Urszula's brothers passed away from poor nutrition and other causes which Urszula, as a young girl, was not aware of.

Finally, 1945 arrived and the War ended. The Kacprzak family were liberated by the Americans and were taken to the English Quarters. Being moved from one Displaced Persons' (refugee) camp to another, they eventually settled in Hanover, where they stayed for some time.

Hanover had a number of Displaced Persons camps as well as army barracks not too far from where the family stayed. To Urszula's delight, there were a number of well-educated people in the camp and these people established a Polish school. Finally, Urszula was able to learn to read and write in Polish, something she cherished for the rest of her life. Urszula, proudly admits that after a year or so, she read all the books "she could lay her hands on". She adds that this thirst for knowledge remained with her for the rest of her life.

Urszula remembers being in her late teens, just after the War ended, when she and her girlfriend began going out to dances, which were



Urszula 1947 in Germany

organized by various groups in the camp. At one such function, Urszula met a young man and after a short courtship, and with her parents' blessing and encouragement, they got married. She was only 17 years old.

Urszula's parents decided to return to Poland with her remaining younger siblings, Stanisław and Jadzia. While Urszula and her new husband decided to go their own way and they eventually migrated to Australia.

Early Life in Our New Country

Arriving in Sydney in early December, 1949, they were sent to a Migrant Camp in Parramatta. Not long after, they found private accommodation and lived there for a couple of years. During this time, Urszula discovered that her husband was already married, with a wife and family in Poland. Naturally, Urszula was devastated and decided that this situation was totally unacceptable. The marriage broke down and she left him, telling him to go back to Poland to his wife and children.

Urszula was left on her own. Fortunately, this also gave her an opportunity to meet lots of very nice and kindhearted people who were migrants like she was. She moved in to live with friends in Ashfield, sharing the facilities and the costs. Life was even more enjoyable when she got a job and could afford to go out socially to dances and to the movies. She made friends with two Serbian couples and it was at one of these social gatherings that Urszula met Vlado, her future husband.

When the relationship between Urszula and Vlado became serious, both decided to make a new life for themselves and move to Geelong in Victoria. They shared a place in Autumn St., West Geelong with another family. Not long after, both were able to find employment and they began building a new life for themselves. Having qualifications as a civil engineer and being very talented and resourceful, Vlado was contracted to the Victorian Public Works Department and worked at various Government locations around Victoria. Urszula found work at the Ford Motor Company in Geelong and worked there for a number of years. Some years later, she changed her employment and worked as a cleaner at Herne Hill Primary School. In the 1950s and 1960s, Saturday nights were spent at dances that were organized in Geelong by ethnic groups, including the Polish dance nights held at the Geelong West Town Hall or the Railway Institute Hall.



Urszula, niece, Jola, sistet Jadzia and her good friend Mary Mnich



Urszula and Vlado when they moved Geelong



Urszula's and Vlado's Wedding Day 1957

It was at one of the Polish dance nights that Urszula and Vlado met the Mnich, the Więckowski and the Konieczko families, and became lifelong friends with them.

It was around that time, that Urszula and Vlado decided to get married and their good friend, Mrs Konieczko, was the official witness to their marriage.



Early years in Geelong

Vlado and Urszula spent many happy times together and with their new friends. They travelled with them to Bali, Fiji, Singapore and many beautiful places around Australia. One of their most memorable trips was when they took a long trip to the USA, Canada and flying on to Poland and Serbia, where both of them were able to catch up with their respective relatives.

In early 1970, Urszula and Vlado sponsored Urszula's sister, Jadzia and her three children to migrate to Australia. At that time, they purchased a large house in Neil St Bell Post Hill and were able to provide accommodation for the new family until they raised enough funds to purchase their own place.

They later were able to sponsor the migration of Urszula's nephew and his family from Poland, followed by Vlado's niece from Serbia.

The Gacesas lived in the Bell Park and in the Bell Post Hill area from early 1950s and when their large property became too much to maintain, they purchased a smaller place, also in Bell Post Hill.

Sadly, Vlado passed away on 23rd June, 2008. Then on 1st March, 2021, Urszula's very good and longtime friend, Mary Mnich died. Urszula ended her story by saying to me, in a sad, quiet voice that she is now the only one left from that happy period of her life of the 1950s.



Later years in Geelong

Epilogue to Urszula's Story

When Henry Szkuta, who edited the collection of these personal stories and read Urszula's story about her love of reading, he remembered a very elegant lady who come at least once a fortnight to his parent's place in Hughes St Bell Park to borrow books. Around that time, 1956/57, Henry was ten years of age when his parents, Mr & Mrs Szkuta, kept a library of Polish books at their home at the request of the then Polish parish Priest, Fr Jaroszka. Poles from around Geelong came to borrow from this library. Mrs Gacesa was one of those avid readers who visited the Library regularly. Henry recalls that Mrs Gacesa was not only always elegantly dressed and well spoken, she also had a very kind and quiet manner about her. Every time she came to borrow books, she would leave us kids a block of chocolate.

Henry said that later in his adulthood, he got to know Mr Gacesa very well. According to Henry, Vlado was a very intelligent and also a very kind person. Although he was Serbian, he became very involved in the Polish community and was on the Committee when Poles purchased the Breakwater property, now known as the White Eagle House.

Vlado was also a highly respected member of the Serbian community and just as involved in it as he was in the Polish community in Geelong.

Written by Krystyna Matczak.

The story was written after I arranged a couple of sessions with Mrs Gacesa at which she related her experiences.
April 2021

Rodziny Posadowskich

Moja rodzina imigrantów

Józef Posadowski, urodzony 1922 w Jugosławii; Maria Posadowska, urodzona 1923 w Jugosławii; Adam Posadowski, urodzony 1943 w Jugosławii; Anna Janiec (née Posadowska), urodzona 1945 w Jugosławii; Michalina Podgurski (née Posadowska), urodzona 1948 w Polsce; Genowefa Szalinska (née Posadowska), urodzona 1950 w Polsce; Marian Posadowski, urodzony 1957 w Polsce; Józefina Tobolov (née Posadowska), urodzona 1959 w Polsce.

Krótką historia naszej imigracji

Styczeń 22, 1965r Różynec - Wyjazd do Australii.

Godz.18:00 – śnieg po kolana, mróz gryzie w nos. Autobus podjeżdża pod dom, 16 walizek, 8 osób wyjeżdża do Krakowa na pociąg narodowy do Genowa, Włochy. Józef Posadowski, Przewodniczący Gromadzkiej Rady Narodowej w Różyncu przez 10 lat, wraz z żoną Maryją i sześciorgo dzieci: Adam, Anna, Michalina, Genowefa, Marian i Józia. Wszyscy wyruszają do Australii na stałe do Babci i Dziadka - rodzice Maryji Posadowskiej.



Styczeń 24. Jesteśmy w Włochach, Port Genowa i wsiadamy na statek Galileo Galilei. Spędzamy jeden miesiąc na morzu. Płynęliśmy przez Kanał Suez, historyczny przejazd. Podróż wspaniała - śniadania, obiady, kolacja. Prywatny pokój obiadowy, kapliczka, szpital, dancingi (dla starszych), kina, baseny, spacery – co więcej nam było potrzebne?!

Luty 27, godz. 15:00. Statek dopływa do Port Fremantle, Western Australia. Pozwolenie od Kapitana że nam można wyjść i pochodzić po Fremantle i dotknąć ziemi! Nogi nam się kołyszają. Mój tato klęka i całuje ziemię. Temperatura 35 stopni – „O BOZE! jak gorąco”. Godz.18:00 płyniemy dalej do Melbourne, już do naszej destynacji, do naszego celu.



Wczesne życie w naszym nowym kraju

Następny dzień nareszcie, godz. 20:00. Ciemno wszyscy wychodzimy na pokład wyglądamy za rodzinę która ma nas odebrać. Chociaż jest ciemno i nie za wiele widać, Mama szybko poznaje swoją siostrę, którą nie widziała 20 lat. Przyjeżdżamy do Geelong. Płacz radości nasza, dziadków, wujków i kuzynów. Nareszcie odpoczynek przez dwa dni. Potem, wszyscy do pracy oprócz Józi i Mariana bo byli za młode. Nikt nie zna języka, jesteśmy zgubieni.

I tak powoli zaczęliśmy zapoznawać polskie rodziny w Geelong. Brat, Adam, zapoznał kolegów bardzo szybko i do domu przyprowadził nowych znajomych, z którymi my też zapoznaliśmy się.



The Rodzina Posadowskich (Geni niema na zdjęciu)

I tak zaczęło się nasze życie w Geelong. Wszyscy dostaliśmy pracę i zaczęli budowę naszego domu. Wszyscy braliśmy lekcje po angielsku. Co niedziele cała rodzina szła do kościoła St. Mary's. Ja się zapisałam do chóru kościelnego, do Zespołu Tańca Ludowego, Krakowiak i braliśmy udział w koncertach na Polskich narodowych uroczystościach.



Moi rodzice , Józef i Maria Posadowscy

Nie minął rok kiedy dołączyła druga nasza rodzina do Australii. Rodzina Kubinów z Różyńca – siostra Taty, Michalina Kubina, z całą rodziną. Nareszcie są z nami w Geelong!

56 lat później, niestety Mama, Tata i nasza najmłodsza siostra, Józefina, zmarli. Adam, Anna, Marian i ja żyjemy szczęśliwie w Queensland, a siostra, Michalina, wyjechała do Kanady i mieszka w Vancouver.

Genowefa Szalińska (née Posadowska)

Marzec 2021

Opisane przez Henryka Szkutę

Using the information gathered from the Maria Filipowicz (née Kubina) and Anna Irminger (née Kubina)

March 2021



Kuzynostwo z Rodziny Posadowskich i Kubinów



Trzy pokolenia rodzin Posadowskich i Kubinów

Czesław Godlewski

Czesław Godlewski urodził się 18 września 1919 roku we wsi Tymianki Bucie¹ koło Białegostoku w centralnej Polsce, jako najmłodszy syn z piątki dzieci Teofila i Michaliny Godlewskich. Jako chłopiec chodził do szkoły w Tymiankach i razem ze swoim bratem Stefanem pomagał utrzymywać rodzinne gospodarstwo rolne. Ojciec Czesława - Teofil - był nie tylko rolnikiem, ale również brał udział w spotkaniach i działalności rady sołectkiej. Inny brat Czesława - Włodek - ożenił się w późnych latach 30-tych i kupił sklep, w którym na specjalne okazje miał „alkohol spod lady”. Obie siostry - Bronia i Marysia - wyszły za mąż i urodziły dzieci jeszcze przed wybuchem Drugiej Wojny Światowej w 1939 roku.

Czesław miał 19 lat kiedy Niemcy zaatakowali Polskę z zachodu, a armia Sowiecka ze wschodu. Ludziom w panice i dezorientacji wydawało się, że Sowiecka tyrania będzie lepsza niż Niemiecka niepewność i mieli nadzieję, że Rosjanie mogliby pokonać armię Niemiecką. Czesław i Stefan tygodniami unikali schwytania. Rosjanie zatrzymali się na linii Bugu, niedaleko miejsca gdzie mieszkał szwagier Czesława, Stanisław Grodzki. Bracia planowali ucieczkę do Warszawy (pod Niemiecką okupacją), aby uniknąć przymusowego wcielenia do Armii Czerwonej. W Warszawie chcieli przechować się u ciotki i żony starszego brata Stanisława Grodzkiego. Zostali złapani przez Niemców, kiedy przekraczali w nocy granicę na rzece Bug.

Stefan i Czesław zostali aresztowani przez Niemców i umieszczeni na miesiąc w więzieniu w Warszawie, zanim zostali przetransportowani do Niemiec pod koniec października 1942 roku.

W listopadzie bracia zostali skierowani do obozu pracy przymusowej na rzecz Niemieckiej rodziny Arning'ów. Tam pozostali przez dwanaście miesięcy po których uciekli. Po ucieczce zostali złapani i skierowani do pracy w gospodarstwie rolnym

¹ Tymianki Bucie to wieś w gminie Boguty Pianki powiatu Ostrow Mazowiecka w województwie Mazowieckim w północno-wschodniej części dzisiejszej Polski. Wieś jest położona około 4 kilometry od Bogut, 38 kilometrów od Ostrowi and około 120 km na północny wschód od Warszawy. Mieszka w niej około 90 osób.

rodziny Schwarting'ów gdzie pracowali przez cztery lata jako przymusowi robotnicy.

Rodzice Czesława i Stefana za karę, że synowie uciekli przed wcieleniem do Armii Czerwonej, zostali zesłani na Syberię. Była to dla nich już druga zsyłka, gdyż przed Pierwszą Wojną Światową Teofil Godlewski i jego żona Michalina żyli w Rosji za czasów ostatniego cara Mikołaja II - przed Rewolucją Październikową 1917 roku i nastaniem komunizmu. Po powrocie do Polski Teofil pracował w fabryce papierniczej i rodzina z tej pracy się utrzymywała aż do wybuchu wojny. Próba ucieczki z kraju nie powiodła się i podobnie jak wielu innych zostali wywiezieni na Syberię, gdzie wielu umierało z głodu i w cierpieniu. Po zakończeniu wojny Teofil i Michalina zostali uwolnieni i wrócili do Polski, ale zsyłka pozostawiła na nich psychologiczne i fizyczne piętno. Oboje zmarli wkrótce po tym jak ich syn Stefan powrócił do Polski z Niemiec. Czesław wyemigrował do Australii ze swoją żoną Jadwigą i córką Haliną. Z rodzicami już nigdy więcej się nie widział.

W gospodarstwie rodziny Schwarting'ów Jadwiga Mycka pracowała w obozie niezamężnych kobiet. W tym samym czasie Czesław w sąsiednim obozie przechodził kurs na mechanika. Trwało to jednak krótko. Instruktor skończył pracę, a zbliżające się wyzwolenie oznaczało rozwiązanie obozów. Czesław odnalazł też swojego brata Stefana w obozie, w którym przebywało 10 tysięcy uchodźców, po tym jak wojska Amerykańskie, Angielskie, Francuskie i Polskie zajęły te tereny. W roku 1946 przenieśli się do Wilhelmshaven, miasta zajętego przez dywizję generała Maczka. Wojsko Polskie w tym mieście stanowiło część alianckich sił okupacyjnych. W mieście tym, położonym niedaleko Oldenburga² na zachód od Hamburga, mieszkali w domach niegdyś należących do armii Niemieckiej. Niemcy teraz mieszkali po drugiej stronie kanału, równoległe do domów zajmowanych przez Polskich uchodźców. Wzajemna niechęć jednak rosła i Niemcy wkrótce chcieli, aby Polacy opuścili ich miasto, aby obie grupy nie musiały się na co dzień spotykać.

Czesław mieszkał w dwupokojowym domu rybackim, po tym jak spotkał Jadwigę w obozie Schwarting. Wkrótce postanowili się pobrać. Na ceremonii zaślubin było

² W 1945 roku, po zakończeniu II Wojny Światowej urósł do ponad stutysięcznego miasta, gdy uchodźcy przybywali do niego, jako że prawie w ogóle nie był bombardowany.

trzydziestu gości, Stefan przygotował na tą uroczystość samogon z żyta, a suknia Jadwigi była uszyta ręcznie ze starych zasłon, którą otrzymała w prezencie od rodziny dla której pracowała. Czesław nie czuł urazu do rodziny Schwarting'ów i nawet rozpoczął z nimi biznes sprzedaży biżuterii, którą kupował w obozach dla uchodźców żydowskich, jeżdżąc 100 km pociągiem do Amerykańskiej strefy okupacyjnej. Razem ze swoim przyjacielem Wiktorem prowadzili kwitnący, czarnorynkowy biznes, handlując pierścionkami, papierosami, kawą, herbatą i materiałami do połowu ryb słodkowodnych w niedalekim porcie. Grupy Żydów otrzymywały te towary przysyłane w ramach pomocy na Amerykańskich statkach, a ludzie tacy jak Czesław i Wiktor sprzedawali je za bekon, masło i jajka. Kolega Czesława - Józek Ciaś - który również spotkał swoją żonę w obozie, zauważył że w Francuskiej strefie okupacyjnej nie ma śledzi. Postanowili zatem wspólnie kupić 20-sto litrową beczkę tych ryb, ale zostali ostrzeżeni, że w razie kontroli mogą zostać posądzeni o spekulację i kradzież. Gdy kontrola się zbliżała, ukryli się wraz ze śledziami w toalecie, aż do momentu gdy się zakończyła. Śledzie w polskim obozie sprzedały się w przeciągu dziesięciu minut, z całkiem dobrym zyskiem. Jednocześnie we francuskiej strefie okupacyjnej władze wydzielały racje wina w obozach. Czesław i Józef trochę wypili sami, a resztę wzięli na sprzedaż do swojego obozu.

'Józek wypił trochę więcej niż powinien' - wspomina Czesław - 'i chodził bardziej do tyłu niż do przodu. Ledwo zdążyliśmy na pociąg i na szczęście już mieliśmy bilety powrotne.'

Czesław i Józef wymieniali stare marki niemieckie, za co byli w stanie z zyskiem kupować towary w amerykańskiej strefie okupacyjnej. Podróżowali w obie strony, wymieniając różne dobra za jedzenia dla nich i ich rodzin. W kuchni obozowej była tylko zupa, a oni byli w stanie zdobyć dodatki takie jak bekon czy jajka. Życie upływało im głównie na takich aktywnościach, podczas kiedy kobiety pozostawały w obozie opiekując się dziećmi. Czesław kupił czarny garnek za stoik kawy, który do dziś jest używany w kuchni w domu rodzinnym w Geelong.

Po tym jak Polacy (Polska Armia) opuścili Niemcy, nowe marki niemieckie stały się wartościową walutą. Stara straciła wartość i była używana jako zapałki do papierosów. Niemcy pożyczili pieniądze w Stanach Zjednoczonych, aby odbudować kraj. Tworzyły się nowe miejsca pracy i gospodarka kwitła. Wielu Polaków wracało

do z powrotem do ojczyzny, ale wielu też emigrowało do Kanady, Stanów Zjednoczonych, Francji, Belgii, Ameryki Południowej i Australii. Kanadyjczycy potrzebowali młodych kawalerów do wyrębu lasów, którzy wytrzymaliby mroźne zimy. Francuzi i Belgowie szukali postawnych, którzy mogliby zostać górnikami. Żadna z tych opcji nie podobała się Czesławowi.

W 1949 roku, Czesław, jego żona Jadwiga i córka Halina opuścili Bremerhaven³ w Niemczech i na statku rozpoczęli swoją trudną podróż do Australii. W drodze zawinęli do portu w Neapolu. Pasażerowie musieli przejść pięcioletnią kwarantannę w mieście Aversa⁴ z powodu epidemii wietrznej ospy.

Czesław sprzedał koce za chleb, masło i inne rodzaje „znajomego” jedzenia, jako że Jadwiga nie była w stanie jeść spaghetti i włoskich sosów pomidorowych. Jadwiga także sprzedawała kawę za ubrania dla Haliny. Zakupili wtedy też metalową wanienkę dla dziecka, która wciąż jest gdzieś w domu rodziny. Wszystkie zakupione rzeczy były wyjątkowo dobrej jakości. Ten standard Jadwiga utrzymywała dalej w Australii.

Miesiąc później - 14 stycznia 1950 roku - rodzina przyплыnęła do Australii na „Station Pier” w porcie w Melbourne. Stamtąd przejechali pociągiem do Bonegilla⁵

³ Bremerhaven to duży port morski w karju związkowym Bremy w Niemczech. Usytuowany jest na wschodnim brzegu ujścia rzeki Wezery, gdzie stanowi swoistą enklawę w kraju związkowym Dolnej Saksonii. Samo miasto jest relatywnie młode, ale ma już długą historię jako port handlowy i dziś jest jednym z najważniejszych niemieckich portów, odgrywając kluczową rolę w handlu tego kraju.

⁴ Aversa to miasto w Kampanii w południowych Włoszech - około 15 km na południe od Neapolu. Jest centrum regionu rolniczego *agro aversano*, produkującego wina i sery (słynną „buffalo mozzarella”).

⁵ Do centrum emigracji w Bonegilla w obwodzie Wodonga, pierwsi emigranci przybyli w 1947 roku. Bonegilla jest położona w północnej Vicrorii na granicy z Nową Południową Walią. Ludzie przybywali tam w ramach powojennej umowy emigracyjnej (nazwy polskiej dla „Commonwealth Post War Migration Scheme” nie znalazłem).

Pierwsi emigranci to byli przesiedleńcy, ludzie których życie zostało poważnie zaburzone w czasie Drugiej Wojny Światowej. Późniejsi przybysze to już raczej dobrowolni emigranci, zachęceni przez kampanię ogłoszeniową w Europie.

Bonegilla była jedynie obozem tymczasowym dla nowych emigrantów, którzy w zamian za możliwość przybycia do Australii zgodzili się na dwa lata pracy w miejscu przydzielonym przez rząd Australii. Po tym czasie emigranci dostawali wolną rękę w tym co ze sobą zrobić.

Bonegilla była największym centrum w Australii. W ciągu 24 lat działalności, przez jej bramy przeszło 320 tysięcy ludzi z wielu różnych krajów i 31 grup etnicznych. 60 tysięcy stanowili Polacy. Warunki życia były bardzo proste, domy budowane z blachy falistej. Jedzenie też nie było wyszukane, nieznanne dla wielu emigrantów, choć typowe dla Australii.

, a później do Rushworth, gdzie utworzony został obóz uchodźców i gdzie druga córka Irena urodziła się w grudniu tego samego roku.

Czesław pracował jako asystent kucharza dla Dyrekcji Budowy Dróg stanu Victoria. Musiał zapewnić budowniczym „Hume Highway” trzy gorące posiłki dziennie. Później pracował dla Manglore Alliance Airport⁶ w Avenel, gdzie miał więcej swobody i okazji, aby spotkać lokalną ludność. Zbierał także owoce w Shepparton i Tatura dla SPC. Do żony i dwójki dzieci w domu przyjeżdżał tylko na weekendy. Przez ten okres zaoszczędził już wystarczająco pieniędzy, aby kupić kawałek ziemi i przeprowadzić rodzinę do Geelong, gdzie wybudował dom i na świecie pojawiła się trzecia córka Barbara. Od lat sześćdziesiątych, aż do emerytury w 1980 roku, Czesław podejmował różne prace. Do Polski z Jadwigą wrócili na krótko w 1993 roku. Pierwszy raz po ponad pięćdziesięciu latach oboje spotkali swoje rodziny w tym brata Stefana i siostrę Marię. Jadwiga niestety zmarła w październiku 1999 roku - zaraz po tym, jak Czesław skończył 80 lat. Dziś obchodzi on swoje 90-te urodziny w Geelong w Australii z trzema córkami - Haliną, Ireną i Barbarą, z wnukiem swojej siostry Marii - Grzegorzem, jego żoną Kasią i synem Robertem. Wszyscy chcielibyśmy mu pogratulować jego niezwyklej i heroicznej drogi życia i życzyć zdrowia, i szczęścia na przyszłość.

⁶ Lotnisko Mangalore zostało założone przez rząd federalny podczas II Wojny Światowej jako miejsce treningu dla „Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)” oraz jako centrum poboru.

Po wojnie lotnisko zaczęło być intensywnie używane w celach cywilnych i rekreacyjnych. Wydarzeniem, które nie powinno ująć uwadze, był doroczny pokaz lotniczy organizowany przez „Australijskie Zrzeszenie Sportów Lotniczych”, aż do roku 1997. Lotnisko Mangalore miało również duże znaczenie w powojennym rozwoju komercyjnego ruchu pasażerskiego.

Przed rozbudową lotniska Tullamarine w Melbourne, lotnisko w Essendon stanowiło główny terminal krajowy. Było ono jednak regularnie zamykane z powodu mgieł panujących na tym obszarze i Mangalore stanowiło alternatywę dla lądujących samolotów. Jednak wraz ze zwiększaniem się rozmiarów maszyn pasażerskich, Mangalore traciło znaczenie, gdyż pas startowy miał jedynie 2027 metrów długości. Rząd federalny z czasem sprzedał lotnisko rządowi lokalnemu, a ten później prywatnemu konsorcjum.

Mangalore Airport Pty. Ltd. jest teraz dostawcą usług w zakresie szkolenia oraz infrastruktury lotniczej. Firma obsługuje centra szkoleniowe, akademie pilotów i „latające” szkoły. Dostarcza usług dla departamentów rządu federalnego i stanowego, CFA oraz odbiorców komercyjnych. Mangalore Airport Pty. Ltd. Kiedyś znane jako Manglore Alliance Airport Pty. Ltd. zostało założone w roku 2006 z siedzibą w Avenel w Australii.

Czesław Godlewski



Czesław Godlewski and Family



Czesław Godlewski

Czesław Godlewski, the youngest of five children, was born to Teofil and Michalina Godlewski on the 18th of September, 1919 in Tymianki-Bucie¹, near Białystok East Poland. As a young boy he attended primary school in the small village of Tymianki and together with his brother Stefan helped to tend the family farm. As well as being a farmer, Czesław's father Teofil attended council meetings and as a part-time councillor collected rates and looked after the village's needs. Czesław's other brother Władek married in the late 1930's and bought a general store selling liquor under the counter on special occasions. The brothers' two sisters Bronia and Marisia married and had children before the start of the Second World War in 1939.

Czesław was nineteen when the Germans invaded Poland from the West and the Russians marched in from the East.

People panicked preferring Russian tyranny to German uncertainty and believed the Russians would overthrow the German army. Czesław and Stefan avoided capture for a week. The Russians advanced towards Lake Bug, the vicinity in which Czesław's brother-in-law Stanisław Grodzki lived. The brothers planned to hide at the home of their maternal aunt, and wife of Stanisław Grodzki's older brother, but were captured by the Germans as they crossed the Lake.



Jadwiga and Czesław Godlewski in Germany

The German Army arrested Stefan and Czesław imprisoning them for a month in Warsaw before taking them to Germany towards the end of October 1940.

In November, the brothers were taken to work in a forced labour camp for the German Arning family where they stayed for twelve months before escaping. Upon their capture they were taken to the Schwarting family farm where they remained for four years working as slave labourers.



Jadwiga and Czesław in Australia

As punishment for not surrendering their sons to the Russian Army, Czesław and Stefan's parents were transported to Siberia for a second time. The first time they were transported to Siberia was prior to WW1. At that time, the Eastern part of Poland was under the control of Tsar Nicholas II and hence part of Russia. Teofil Godlewski and his wife Michalina were living and working in Russia during that time, before the revolution of 1917. Teofil worked in a paper factory and the couple prospered until World War II broke out. Their attempt to flee the Russia failed and they were taken to Siberia where many inmates in the

¹ Tymianki-Bucie is a village in the administrative district of Gmina Boguty-Pianki, within Ostrów Mazowiecka Country, Masovian Voivodeship in east-central Poland. It lies approximately 8 kilometres south of Boguty-Pianki, 38 km south-east of Ostrów Mazowiecka and 109 km north-east of Warsaw. The village has a population of ninety.

Siberian Camps died from hunger and torture. Most of the prisoners were liberated in 1945 and Teofil and Michalina returned to their native Poland, psychologically and physically scarred. They died shortly after being reunited with their son Stefan. Czesław did not return to Poland but migrated to Australia with his wife, Jadwiga, and daughter, Halina, never to see his parents again.



Czesław on a dairy farm in Australia

At the Schwarting family farm, Jadwiga Mycka (Czesław's future wife) was working in the single women's camp whilst Czesław was in a neighbouring camp training to be a mechanic. His apprenticeship was short-lived when his instructor left, and the impending liberation meant the amalgamation of a number of camps. He found his brother Stefan in a large camp occupied by 10,000 refugees after the American, English and French armies began their occupation of Germany. In 1946 they relocated to Wilhelmshaven, the site of the Polish camp, West of Hamburg near Oldenburg² where they stayed in houses previously occupied by the German army. The Germans lived on the other side of the canal parallel to the Polish refugees. As their resentment grew, the German people wanted to purge themselves of the Poles they faced on a daily basis.



Czesław, our Dad

Czesław had a two-bedroom fisherman's cottage when he met Jadwiga at the Schwarting camp, whom he married, soon after, in a small ceremony celebrated with 30 guests. Stefan brewed his own Vodka made from rye for the party and Jadwiga's gown was hand sewn from discarded curtains given to her as a gift from the family for which she toiled. Czesław held no animosity towards the Schwarting family and began a business relationship selling them jewellery, which he obtained by taking a 100km train journey past the American occupied territories to the Jewish camps. Czesław's and his friend Wiktor's black market business thrived as they traded rings, cigarettes, coffee, tea and material for freshly caught fish from the nearby port. The Jewish communities received these commodities for free from American relief ships and handlers such

as Czesław and Wiktor sold the goods for bacon, butter and eggs. Czesław's friend Joseph Cias, who met his wife at the camp too, observed that the French occupied territories had no herrings. Acting swiftly, the pair bought a 20-litre container of the popular fish and on their return train journey were warned to conceal the contraband due to theft. The goods were hidden in the toilets until the inspection was over. Upon delivery to the Polish camp, the herrings were sold in ten minutes flat for a tidy profit. In the French occupied territories, the authorities rationed out wine to the camps. Czesław and Joseph drank some of the wine and took the rest to sell at their camp.



Irene, Halina, Grzegorz and Dad (Barbara taking photo)

² In 1945 after World War II, Oldenburg grew to more than 100,000 inhabitants when refugees migrated into the city that was only sparingly bombed during World War II.

'Joseph drank more than he should have', said Czesław 'and he was walking backwards instead of forwards. We barely made the train and luckily we still had our return tickets.'



Daughters Halina and Barbara with their Dad, a short time before he passed away. (Irena is taking the photo)

Czesław and Joseph bartered with old German Marks, so they were able to buy goods in the US occupied territories for a profit. They travelled up and down swapping items and buying much needed food items for themselves and their families. The kitchen at the camp only had soup and they were able to get a variety of foods such as bacon and eggs. This was the way of life for the men while the women remained at the camp looking after the children. Czesław bought a black cooking pot in exchange for a jar of coffee, which is still used for cooking today at the family home in Geelong.

After the Poles left Germany, the German Marks became valuable. The old currency was worthless and used to light cigarettes. The Germans then borrowed money from the United States to rebuild the country, jobs were created, and their economy thrived. Polish refugees migrated to Canada, United States, France, Belgium, South America and to Australia. Many returned to their Polish homeland. Canada wanted single men to work in the logging industry where, according to some of Czesław's friends, they had to endure freezing winters. France and Belgium sought out migrants who were strong and not afraid of hard work to work as miners. Neither option appealed to Czesław.

In 1949 Czesław, his wife, Jadwiga, and daughter, Halina, left Bremerhaven³, Germany by ship and began their arduous journey on the General W. C. Langfitt to Australia. Unfortunately, the ship docked at the Port of Naples due to a Chicken Pox epidemic and the passengers were quarantined at Aversa⁴ for five weeks.

Czesław had blankets which he sold for bread, butter and more familiar food as Jadwiga was unable to eat spaghetti and tomato sauce native to Italy. Jadwiga also bartered for clothes and apparel for Halina in exchange for coffee. A metal baby bath was also purchased, which still remains in the family home today. All of the items bought were of an exceptionally high quality, a standard of buying which Jadwiga continued in Australia.



Robert, Kasia (Grzegorz's wife), Grzegorz, Halina, Irene, Barbara, Gavan Robert, Kasia (Grzegorz's wife), Grzegorz, Halina, Irene, Barbara, Gavan

³ Bremerhaven is a seaport of the free city-state of Bremen a federal state of Germany. It forms an enclave in the Lower Saxony and is located at the mouth of the River Weser on its eastern bank, opposite the town of Nordenham. Though a relatively new city, it has a long history as a trade port and today is one of the most important German ports, playing a crucial role in Germany's trade.

⁴ Aversa is a town in the Campania region of Southern Italy, about 15 kilometres north of Naples. It is the centre of an agricultural district, the *agro aversano*, producing wine and cheese (famous for the typical buffalo mozzarella).

The family arrived at Station Pier, Port Melbourne Australia a month later on January 14, 1950 and travelled by train to Bonegilla⁵ and later to Rushworth, where a refugee camp was established and Irene, a second daughter, was born in December.



Robert Uszynski, Gavan Costin, Jas Uszynski, Grzegorz Uszynski, Halina, Irene and Barbara

Czesław worked as an assistant cook for the Victorian Country Roads Authority ensuring the Hume Highway construction workers had three hot meals a day. Later his job at Mangalore Alliance Airport⁶ in Avenel gave him more freedom and the opportunity to meet the locals. He also picked fruit in Shepparton and Tatura for SPC coming home on weekends to Jadwiga and the two children. By this stage Czesław had saved enough money to buy a block of land and moved the family to Geelong where he built his own home, and the couple had a third daughter Barbara. Czesław had several jobs during the 1960s through to his retirement in the 1980s returning to Poland briefly in 1993 with Jadwiga where he was reunited with his brother Stefan and sister Marisia for the first

time in over fifty years meeting their respective families. Jadwiga sadly passed away in October 1999 just after Czesław turned eighty. Czesław joined Jadwiga on 25th January, 2015, passing away aged ninety-four, never forgetting his family in Poland. His sister Marisha's grandson Grzegorz, who lives in Canberra, visited Czesław every Christmas with his wife Kasia and their sons Robert and Jas. Our connection with both Mum and Dad's family will always remain.

⁵The first migrants arrived at the Bonegilla Migrant Reception centre in the Wodonga district in 1947. Bonegilla is in northern Victoria -- on the border with New South Wales. They had come to Australia under the Commonwealth's Post War Migration Scheme.

The first migrants were displaced persons (DP's) whose lives had been disrupted by the horrors of World War II. Later migrants were attracted to Australia by immigration advertising in Europe.

Bonegilla was a staging camp, temporary accommodation, for new migrants who had exchanged free or assisted passage to Australia for 2 years of labour at the Australia government's choice. After this service, migrants were free to make their own way.

Bonegilla was the largest centre in Australia. During the 24 years of its operation, 320, 000 people passed through its gates. Persons were of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds 60,000 of whom were Polish. People came from 31 different ethnic groups. Conditions at Bonegilla were basic with accommodation being in fibro and corrugated iron huts. The food was also basic and, while unfamiliar to many migrants, was typical of Australia.

⁶ Mangalore Airport was established by the federal government during World War II (1939-1945) to train pilots for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and as an enlistment centre.

After the war, the airport became a busy recreational airfield for civilian flyers. An event not to be missed was the annual air show conducted by the Sports Aircraft Association of Australia, which continued until 1997.

Mangalore Airport was also a major player in the expansion and development of post-war commercial passenger traffic. Before the development of Melbourne Airport at Tullamarine, Essendon Airport was the main domestic terminal. It was regularly closed by fog, due to its location and altitude, and Mangalore became the alternative landing location. However, as the size of passenger planes increased, Mangalore Airport, with its take-off and landing distance of 2027 metres, became victim to air travel's success. The federal government then sold the airport, and the asset was vested in local government until it was again sold to a private consortium.

Mangalore Airport Pty. Ltd. provides aviation training service facilities and infrastructure. The company operates aviation-training centres, including pilot academy and flying schools. It serves federal and state government departments, the CFA, and commercial organizations. Mangalore Airport Pty. Ltd. was formerly known as Manglore Alliance Airport Pty. Ltd. The company was founded in 2006 and is based in Avenel, Australia.



Robert Uszynski, Irene Godlewski, Jas Uszynski, Grzegorz Uszynski, Halina



Barbara with husband Gavin Costin



Halina, Irene and Barb with Grzegorz Uszynski (Dad's great nephew)

Written by

Barbara Costin (Godlewski)

June, 2021

(The original story of Czesław's life was written for his 90th Birthday in 2009)

A Brief History of the Polish Community Association

The first influx of Polish migrants to Australia began between 1949 and 1951. Most came from war-torn Europe after spending more than five years in Germany as Displaced Persons, today's Refugees. Some of these people returned to Poland, which borders with Germany, while many thousands refused to return to their



Poles come out in National Costumes to welcome Queen Elizabeth II in Geelong 1954

homeland as it was now engulfed in the Soviet Communist Block of countries. The Poles never fond of any of the Russian regimes over many centuries, especially the Soviets. Nevertheless, their decision not to return was not an easy one. For many it meant severing ties with family and friends, who may survived the War, living in Poland.

For many the decision to migrate to Australia from Germany turned out to be the right decision. They all saw Australia to be the safest place in the world – so far away from the conflicts and the suffering that they endured in Poland and later in Germany for more than six years was too much to endure again.

When arriving in Australia, families were dispersed all over Victoria, wherever a workforce was required. Even though all lived in migrant camps in places like Bonegilla and Mildura, they considered themselves so lucky that they received free accommodation and meals and, most important, their children were at last attending school.



Young Poles in National dress celebrate an occasion in Geelong 1957



Soon as the two-year employment contracts with the Commonwealth Government ended, the “New Australians” were able to settle anywhere they chose in Australia.



Several thousand of these Polish migrants settled in Geelong in the early 1950s, as did many other people from various other European nationalities. The Bell Park area was a very popular settlement for many of these migrants. In fact, after several years it was nick-named “Little Europe”.

Geelong Advertiser Photo 16/4/1980 showing PCA Secretary **Kazimierz Mnich**, Committee Members **Adolf Posadowski**, PCA President, **Eugene Pedzinski** discussing the proposed re-development plans with **Cr. Ian Stacey** for the newly acquired property at Breakwater and soon to be known as the **White Eagle House**

Very quickly, after settling in Geelong, the Polish community began to set up different organisations according to the needs of the new community. The Polish Community Association was set up in 1953. With memories of Poland and of their families they left behind still fresh in their minds, the main priority of the Association was to ensure that the children were formally taught the Polish language and were exposed to Polish culture, songs and folk dances.



Geelong Advertiser Photo & Article. Official Opening of the White Eagle House in 1981

The first Saturday Polish School was set up at St Mary's Parish Hall in Myers St in Geelong, followed by a Folk Dancing group, which evolved later into the "Krakowiak" Dance Ensemble.

Resigned to the fact that they would never be able to even visit homeland again and, many cases, would not be able to even correspond with their immediate families because of the restrictions imposed by governments of countries "Behind the Iron Curtain", they began to build their own "little Poland" in Geelong. The Geelong Polish community celebrated Polish National Days, Religious Feast Days with concerts performed by the Dance Ensemble and by children from the Saturday Polish School. To raise funds for projects they planned to achieve, by organising monthly social dances at the Geelong West Town Hall in Pakington Street.

During WW2, after the invasion and occupation of Poland by the German Armies, young Polish men formed regiments under the leadership of the Polish General Władysław Anders, and they fought in places like Tobruk in the Middle East and in Western Europe. Many Polish pilots joined up with the British Air Force and played an important role in the war under the British Flag.



Members, David Pundj and Mr&Mrs Adam and Halina Zychla joining in the 25th Anniversary Celebrations - 2006

Many of these young men migrated to Australia and settled in Geelong. In the early 1960s they established a Geelong Branch of the Polish Ex-servicemen's Association (SPK). Under the Ex-serviceman's Association's patronage, another Saturday Polish Language School was set up at the Holy Family Parish in Bell Park – the centre of "Little Europe". With funds raised collectively by the Geelong community, the Ex-Servicemen's Association purchased the disused Temperance Hall in Ryrie St and very quickly established a close relationship with Geelong Branches of the Returned Soldier Leagues. For over 50 years, The SPK Association proudly marched with all the Geelong RSL Groups in the ANZAC Day parades.



Shirley & Ian Stacey with Mr & Mrs Irene and Eugene Pedzinski at the White Eagle House 25th Anniversary celebrations in 2006



White Eagle House before renovations 1980s



Interior of the White Eagle House in the late 1980s

Around the same time in the mid-sixties, the Polish Community Association in Geelong purchased a building in Malop St Geelong. They named it “The Polish Millennium House”. It was in 1966 that Poland was celebrating its 1000th Anniversary of its conversion to Christianity, hence the name “Millenium”. At that time Mr Ryszard Baumgart was the PCA President, in fact, one of the longest serving presidents of the PCA in Geelong.

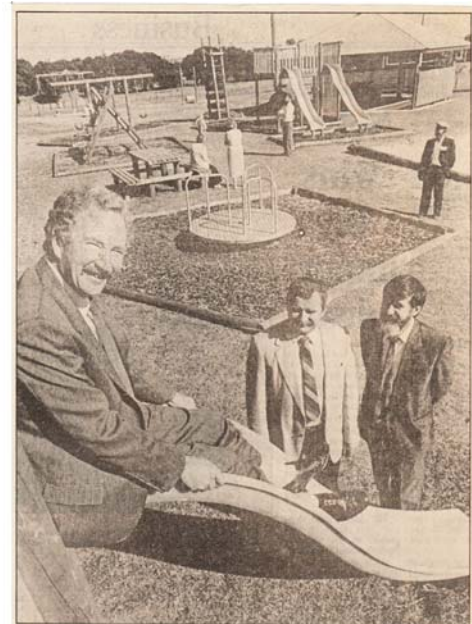
The late 1970s and early 1980s saw the uprising against the Communist Government by the workers in Poland under the Banner of “Solidarność”, led by Lech Wałęsa. Not only were the living standards in Poland deteriorating for nearly a decade but also the basic freedoms the Polish people were rapidly being eroded. This forced thousands of young Poles and their families escape from Poland to countries outside the Warsaw Block.

Consequently, this resulted in the second large influx of Polish migrants to Australia. Once more, many settled in Geelong and soon became an integral part not only of the Geelong Polish community but also the broader Geelong community.

The Polish community flourished at that time. As the children of these migrants grew older, the young people also began to contribute to the life of the Geelong Polish community. They established the Polonia Soccer Club, the Syrena Volleyball Club, the “Krakowiak” Dance Ensemble, and Polish Women’s Association in Geelong. These groups were all supported by Polish Community Association in Geelong and Polish Ex-servicemen’s Association.

In 1980, the Polish Community Association (PCA) decided to purchase a disused Japanese ball bearing factory in Breakwater.

Now known as the White Eagle House. The PCA’s vision was to embrace all the different Polish sporting and cultural groups in Geelong and welcome them to use its new venue. This vision did materialise and was extended even further by welcoming members of the broader Geelong community to its venue.



* GEELONG mayor, Cr Brian Fowler, cast off grown-up cares and tried the slide at the official opening of a Polish community adventure playground yesterday. He is pictured being watched by Polish community association president, Mr Stan Jakubowski, and secretary, Mr Zygmunt Krywulit. The playground, at White Eagle House, was built by voluntary labor and cost about \$40,000 in materials. It was “a terrific achievement,” Cr Fowler said. “They have set an example to the rest of the community. They are good people.”

Photo: Official Opening of the Adventure Playground at White Eagle House by Mayor of Geelong. Cr Fowler and standing below are Mr Stan Jakubowski, President of the PCA and Manager, the late Mr Zygmunt Krywulit



Children from PCA's Saturday Polish School paint a mural on their classroom wall. Late 1980s

The White Eagle House became a popular place to socialise. Unfortunately, the money the PCA was making from sales at the bar and meals prepared by volunteers on Sundays and monthly Saturday dances wasn't enough to pay for the upkeep of the venue or the support the PCA had committed to give to groups affiliated with the Association. Hence, in the late 1990s, when poker machines were introduced in Victoria, the PCA threw its hat into the ring, applied for and was successful in obtaining five Gaming Licences. It envisaged that these extra funds coming into the PCA would be used to improve the PCA's facilities for its members and affiliated groups to enjoy.

The PCA started with only five electronic gaming machines but as the number of Gaming Entitlements were increased for the Geelong area, the PCA Committee applied for and received an extra 30, giving it a total of 35 poker machines. Over the past 10 years, the financial position of the PCA varied from year to year. During the last 10 years, there were large losses and sometimes only small profits.



Krakowiak Dance Ensemble performing in the early 1990s

In 2015, when the new and current Committee was elected, the PCA decided that the only way to increase its profitability was to engage the expertise of the Mercury Group to give the Association invaluable financial advice and support to become a truly viable organisation.

As a result, the management structure and the Association's operations were overhauled, and proper financial practices were instituted. In 2017, the PCA was able to repay its very large bank loan and large overdrafts. More importantly, it was able to repay all debts to its creditors. For the first time in many years, the PCA was able to report to its members at the October 2017 AGM that it had a substantial profit.

Even before the PCA purchased the Breakwater property in 1980, when the Association was then located in Millennium House in Malop St, it was very much involved in and financially sponsored the Polonia Soccer Club. Unfortunately, the Polonia SC disbanded in 1967. The void was quickly filled by the Syrena Sports Club, which was already heavily involved in Volleyball. Syrena SC quickly set up its own soccer team and at the beginning played under the name of Belmont Syrena.



Celebrating Seniors Month at White Eagle House - 2016



Celebration of Holy Mass before the start of the PCA Sports Picnic in 1989

When names of ethnic origins were not permitted to be used, the soccer team's name was changed to Bell Post Hill United. In the late 1970's, The Pyramid P.B.S. offered to sponsor the Polish soccer team and the name was again changed to Pyramid PBS. When the property in Malop St was sold and the Breakwater property was



PCA President, S. Jakubowski and the late Ziggy Krywult, Manager of White Eagle House early 2000s, testing out our first five Poker Machines

purchased in 1980, the Soccer team changed its name to the Breakwater Eagles Soccer Club (BESC). This name remains to this very day. Over the years, we saw a dramatic increase in the membership of the Soccer Club. Although the Soccer Club may have one or two members of Polish background, to this very day, the PCA continues to heavily sponsor the Breakwater Eagles Soccer Club.

The BESC is free to use all the facilities of the PCA. This included the use of the soccer fields at the White Eagle House, the change rooms, function facilities for their social events and, naturally, our Bar facilities. The maintenance of the soccer field, cleaning of the change room facilities and utility costs continue to be all covered as part of the informal sponsorship agreement the PCA had with the Clubs.

Until July 2015, the wages of the part-time Secretary of the Breakwater Eagles Soccer Club were funded by the PCA for 4 years. Unfortunately, with the financial pressures the PCA was experiencing in 2015/16. The PCA decided to discontinue that part of the funding. All funding areas other areas of the Soccer Club continued.

With improved management of the PCA's finances by the new Committee in mid-2015, the PCA was confident enough to apply for Commonwealth Government 1:1 funding to install soccer field lights on two of our junior soccer pitches. The cost of this project was just over \$33,000, of which the PCA had to contribute \$17,000. The application was successful. This demonstrated the PCA's long-term commitment to the Breakwater Eagles Soccer Club and to the young kids, of various backgrounds, in our local area.



Krakowiak Group performing at the Centenary of Poland's Independence Day celebrations at the White Eagle House - 2018



Syrena Team finals winners 1965

The Syrena Volleyball Club has enjoyed a long and very successful history in Geelong, State and National competitions. The Club was set up in Geelong in 1961. The founding members were Peter Wołosewicz, Eugene Pedzinski, Leszek Kuźma. This group set up the Syrena Volleyball Club Committee of which Zbigniew Niewinski was President and Zbigniew Zembrzuski was Secretary. Soon after, the membership began to expand when Mr Josef Stopinski, who later became the Club's mentor, Frank Filipowicz, Adam Zychla and Joe Parks joined the Club. Within a couple of months this small group established the first official Polish volleyball team and began playing in the Division 2 of the Geelong Volleyball competitions in 1962. Training sessions were run on vacant blocks in Bell Park, owned

by the Geelong Polish community. The membership quickly grew from the initial 15 members in the first year, to over 100 playing and non-playing members. The Club initially funded itself by running regular dances at the Railway Institute Hall in LaTrobe Terrace.

Due mainly to the drop in the popularity of Volleyball in the Geelong region and because the original players were reaching their “retiring age”, the Club discontinued its involvement in volleyball in 2015 but continues to operate, on a smaller scale, as the Syrena Golf Club. Credit must go to Frank Filipowicz, who, due to his efforts and dedication to the Syrena Sports Club, was able to ensure the Club continued to exist for four and a half decades.



Poles at the Annual Pako Festa Parade

With the introduction of Gaming Machines, the PCA was able to improve and expand the facilities for its members. What was then an informal Darts Group, which played darts regularly in the evenings at the White House, soon expanded into a large Darts Club with men’s and ladies’ teams taking part in competitions with other clubs at various venues around Geelong.

Each year, the PCA has sponsored the National Darts competition at the White Eagle House over a weekend in October. Dart teams from all over Australia, some even from NZ and the UK, participate in this competition each year. Not only did the PCA cover most of the costs in staging this event, it also provides its the facilities free of charge.



Breakwater Eagles SC match on White Eagle House soccer pitch

For over a decade, the PCA has also been sponsoring our 8-Ball Club, which meets at the WEH formally twice a week as well as informally on a regular basis. Having the 8-Ball Club using our facilities, the PCA was the main sponsor of the Victorian Eight-Ball Tournament for a number of years. This major event was held at the White Eagle House annually, with hundreds of competitors from around Australia competing for various prizes.

Each year, since the PCA moved to its new facilities in Breakwater in the early eighties, it had been organising its Annual Sports Picnic for around two decades. This event encouraged family participation in various sports. Naturally, exhibition soccer matches were played between our Breakwater Eagles SC teams and invited teams from other Clubs in the Geelong area. Unfortunately, this event is no longer held mainly due to the ageing membership and a lack of interest shown by our third and four generation of Poles in Geelong.

Late in 2017, the PCA supported the Soccer Club to convert a large rotunda structure, which the general membership of the PCA once used for BBQs. It is now used specifically by the Soccer Club, for raising funds by selling of soft drinks, coffee and tea and BBQ foods to spectators at soccer matches on Sundays. The Secretary of the PCA has worked closely with the Soccer Committee to organise the required Council permits. Once again, the PCA has agreed to cover the costs of utilities to assist the Soccer Club to use the all the money it raises some to fund their soccer activities.



White Eagle House today

The PCA has its own Website, www.whiteeaglehouse.com.au, in which we promote all the activities of the PCA as well as the activities of the Clubs which we sponsor. We encourage affiliated sporting clubs as well as other groups affiliated with the PCA to add to our website.

The PCA does have a very complex Membership structure, which it will be looking to change in the very near future. As it stands currently, the PCA's Constitution lists six membership categories:

- **Ordinary Members** who are of Polish heritage or spouses/partners of members of members of Polish background;
- **Associate Members**, these members are not of Polish heritage.
- **Honorary Life Membership**. These members are nominated by the Committee at an AGM and can come from any of the above membership categories. Members in the above categories can attend and vote at all general meetings. However, only Ordinary Members and Life Honorary Members can serve on the Committee of Management.
- **Sporting Members**. They have the same rights and access to all PCA facilities as the above three groups but are not able to vote.
- **Social Members**. They have the same rights and access to all PCA facilities as the above three groups but are not able to vote or attend the PCA's general meetings.
- **Eagle Members**. They have access to all PCA facilities but are not able to vote or attend the PCA's general meetings and they do not pay annual membership subscriptions



Senior's Deb Ball



Main Hall ready for "Wigilia" – Christmas Eve Dinner

Members of the various sporting clubs affiliated with the PCA, have the choice of joining the PCA as Social Members or to nominate themselves as Associate members. If the Committee believes that any member has substantially contributed in any way to the betterment of the PCA or its affiliates, those members can be nominated for Honorary Life Membership.

Because the age of the majority of members of Polish background is well into the 70s and 80s , the PCA will be

looking at simplifying our membership structure by making membership of the PCA more inclusive of the wider Geelong community.

Relationship of PCA with affiliated Groups

Each entity, which includes the Soccer Club, the Men's & Women's Darts Club, the 8-Ball Club and non-sporting groups, the three senior citizens' groups and the Jukebox Rockers, all have their own management committees. These Committees manage their own day-to-day affairs with minimal interference from the PCA Committee. The PCA Committee has appointed a representative on the Committee to oversee and report on groups/clubs which the PCA sponsors. This representative, together with the Secretary, attends committee meetings of



Members catering for a special PCA Function

these groups whenever the PCA Committee wishes to have an input into any discussions. Representative from these groups/clubs can also attend PCA Committee meetings.

This relationship have served all parties well over the last two to three decades.

The PCA has informal agreement with all the sporting groups we are supporting. The support PCA has been offering sporting and non-sporting groups either sponsorship funding or free access to all the PCA's facilities or both. Some of these groups include:

1. Breakwater Eagle Soccer Club

- The Soccer Club has access to the main soccer field which is set up with floodlights
- Access to two junior soccer fields with floodlighting on both, thanks to a Grant from the Commonwealth Government's "Stronger Communities" Funding Program.
- The Soccer Club manages their own funds, paying the registration fees to the FFV and Referee fees. The same agreement applies to any extra funds they raise via their own fundraising. Sponsorships include:



Live Nativity Play at the White Eagle House



- Soccer Club's full access to the change rooms and well as a special change room for visiting Soccer Referees. The cleaning and maintenance cost are totally funded by the PCA.
- The mowing, watering and maintenance of the soccer fields is also totally funded by the PCA
- The PCA also funds all utility costs associated with the use of all the facilities used by the Soccer Club.
- Each year, the PCA gives the Soccer Club a grant of up to \$4,000 to cover the costs of trophies and other items associated with the end of season Soccer Presentations.
- The PCA has estimated all these support costs to be over \$55,000 per annum.

It is not a requirement of PCA Committee members to be formally involved in the promotions of Soccer or any other sporting activity. However, a member of the PCA Committee has been delegated to work with the sporting clubs, especially the Soccer Club.



One of many outings organized by the PCA

2. 8-Ball Club

- The PCA was happy to welcome the 8-Ball Club to our venue for them to run their weekly 8-Ball competition at our venue. There are not many facilities in the Geelong area that can provide the necessary equipment and the large area for such activities. They have been using the WEH venue for just on 10 years
- Neither the 8-Ball Club itself nor the players are charged for using our facilities. Everything is provided free of charge.

3. Jukebox Rockers

- For over three decades, we have hosted the Jukebox Rockers group at our venue. Members of this group range from late teenage years to well past the retirement ages.
- The Jukebox Rockers use the venue twice a week for practising dance routines and assisting beginners and each month, they hold their Rock 'n Roll Dance.
- In January of each year, the group organises a Rock 'n Roll Festival on the grounds of the White Eagle House. This weekend event culminates with a Rock 'n Roll Dance, which is held in the main function area of our venue. The use of our entire facility during that weekend is provided by the PCA free of charge

4. Senior Citizens Groups

For over a decade the PCA has supported the three Senior Citizens Groups who use our venue, including our back kitchen free of charge. As part of this, we also support the promotion of the State Government's Senior Citizens Month. We have been holding a weekend of Multicultural activities, entertainment, ethnic crafts and cooking and welcome all the Geelong senior citizens to participate.



President of the PCA, the late Grazyna Brzostowski, addressing guests at the Seniors Festival in 2015

5. Bridge Club

Again, the WEH does not directly sponsor the Bridge Club, it does welcome members of the Club to use our facilities, free of charge, for their card games each Thursday.

6. Cribbage Club

Although the WEH does not directly sponsor the Cribbage Club, it does welcome members of the Club to use our facilities, free of charge, for their competitions each Wednesday and informally at any time during the week.



Annual General Meeting of Members at the White Eagle House - 2019

The Polish Community Association in Geelong Inc. is grateful to the Geelong community for supporting us throughout the last four decades. Now that we will likely be in a better financial position in the future, we

would like to give something back to the community, not just the Polish members but also to anyone who would like to come and enjoy what the White Eagle House has to offer.

In conclusion, we cannot ignore the fact that our Polish background membership is aging. When the White Eagle House was officially opened in 1981, most of our members were between 40 and 50 years of age. Today, 40 years later, most are now between 70 and 90 years of age – if they are still with us. For various reasons we are not attracting our children and grandchildren to join the Association to take an active role in running the Club. This problem is not unique to the Polish community other ethnic groups in the Geelong region are having the same problems. For this reason, the PCA Committee is looking at options it will put to members regarding the future of the PCA and the White Eagle House. Members will be consulted extensively and will play an important part in deciding our future.

Henry Szkuta

Secretary

Polish Community Association Inc. in Geelong

March, 2021



YEAR	PRESIDENT	SECRETARY	TREASURER
1980 - 82	E. PEDZINSKI	W. GAŁĄSKA	K. PIEKUT
1982 - 83	Z. JORDAN	W. GAŁĄSKA	K. PIEKUT
1982 - 83	K. MNICH	W. GAŁĄSKA	T. FIC
1982 - 83	A. SZALINSKI	W. GAŁĄSKA	T. FIC
1983 - 84	A. SZALINSKI	W. GAŁĄSKA	S. GWIZDEK
1984 - 86	A. POSADOWSKI	A. SZALINSKI	S. GWIZDEK
1986 - 87	S. OKIS	A. SZALINSKI	Z. SZALINSKI
1987 - 88	A. POSADOWSKI	J. TAPERK	K. KARDEL
1988 - 89	A. POSADOWSKI	A. SZALINSKI	K. KARDEL
1989 - 90	T. FIC	J. TAPERK	K. KARDEL
1990 - 93	S. JAKUBOWSKI	Z. KRYWULT	K. KARDEL
1993 - 94	Z. KRYWULT	H. SZKUTA	K. KUBINA
1994 - 95	Z. KRYWULT	T. KOVAC	K. KUBINA
1995 - 97	S. JAKUBOWSKI	M. FILIPOWICZ	R. MATCZAK
1997 - 99	S. JAKUBOWSKI	H. SZKUTA	R. MATCZAK
1999 - 01	J. PAWLAK	H. SZKUTA	R. MATCZAK
2001 - 03	J. PAWLAK	H. SZKUTA	W. ŁATA
2003 - 05	J. JAKUBOWSKI	J. JABŁOŃSKA	R. MATCZAK
2005 - 09	J. JAKUBOWSKI	W. KWIATKOWSKI	W. ŁATA
2009 - 13	S. JAKUBOWSKI	P. KRYWULT	W. ŁATA
2013	M. NADOLSKI	B. PAWLAK	R. MATCZAK
2013 - 14	J. JAKUBOWSKI	A. KARPICZ	P. KRYWULT
2014 - 15	J. JAKUBOWSKI	J. SKUZA	H. TRUSIAK
2015 - 18	G. BRZOSTOWSKI	H. SZKUTA	R. MATCZAK
2018 - 20	G. BRZOSTOWSKI	H. SZKUTA	J. KARPINSKI
2020 -	K. MATCZAK	H. SZKUTA	J. KARPINSKI

A Perspective on Post WW II Polish Migrants in Geelong

<i>Kto ty jesteś?</i>	Who are you?
<i>Polak mały.</i>	A Polish Youth.
<i>Jaki znak twój?</i>	What is your emblem?
<i>Orzeł Biały!</i>	The White Eagle!



DPs being transported to various Refugee Camps in Germany. 1945-46

Back in the 1950s, we, as children stood on stage in front of the appreciative audience of our parents and, with fervor encouragement, recited the above verse. For them, it was an emphatic, necessary, affirmation of identity. For many years they had been deprived of one.

As young people, ranging in ages from teenagers to thirties, they had been uprooted from their homes, separated from their families, from the futures they had dreamed of, to work as forced laborers in the farms and factories of Germany, or interned as prisoners of war or inmates of concentration camps. They had somehow managed to survive in an alien environment, addressed in an alien language, under the dominance of enemy forces, and to retain their sense of self: **“Jaki znak twój? Orzeł Biały!”** This had become their bulwark against loneliness, fear, confusion and despair.

Then, at war’s end, there still was not that imagined, longed for, return “home”.

As a result of the political pragmatism of the Yalta agreement, the borders of Eastern Europe had been redrawn and a number of those countries did not have political sovereignty reinstated. This was so for Poland. Thus, there was no “free” country to which to return. “Home” remained an elusive notion.



Station Pier, South Melbourne. Migrants arriving and most were transferred to Bonegilla



The late Rev. Mon. Lucjan Jaroszka, served the Geelong Polish community for 21 years

Consequently while they had initially found themselves under the auspices of UNRRA, whose primary objective was Repatriation of as many as possible of the 7million or so DPs (displaced persons) in Germany, by rejecting submission to Soviet occupation they were eventually accorded refugee classification and eligibility for relocation through the IRO - International Refugee Organisation - program.

In the 5 years of being “processed” for emigration, shunted from rudimentary camp to camp with at most a suitcase of possessions, they managed to form relationships, to marry and begin families.

Ten years on from the invasion of Poland, after enduring ten years of the chaotic turmoil the war had brought, they at last began their journey to new horizons.

Embarking on converted troop carriers, along with all their positive hopes for this new life and their primary goal to establish for themselves a home, *“mieć swój dom”*, within them they carried a burning resolve that although their homeland had been pawned and betrayed they would bear testimony, cherish and preserve that of which they had been deprived, that which they held dear, that which would one day overcome the oppression of their homeland.



Saturday Polish School at St Mary's Parish Hall, Myers St

Disembarking at Station Pier, transported to Bonegilla and then onwards to wherever their two-year work contracts decreed, they basically just got on with it. There were ten lost years to make up for. In Geelong the nucleus was Bell Park but with a significant cluster emanating from Ocean Grove towards Newcomb and a sprinkling throughout the city. The focus was St Mary's Church where Sunday gatherings fulfilled more than religious observance, they affirmed that necessary sense of identity, that sentiment contained in the next line of the previously quoted verse:

***Gdzie ty mieszkasz?
Między Swymi.***

*Where do you live?
Among my own.*



Geelong Polish Dance Group in the 1950s

To live among “my own,” was a social and cultural need regardless of geography. Thus, very quickly, in addition to the work of the Polish priest and the church committee, the Geelong Polish Association was formed and through the two-pronged endeavors a solid base was established true to that resolve to “cherish and preserve”. Language classes, dancing classes, concerts to celebrate religious and patriotic events and to provide a forum in which to present that learnt, all reinforced that sense of “living among my own.”

We children of course were essential to this. We were the conduit through which could be expressed all that “Polishness”. We were the integral part of the concerts. We learnt and performed the dances, we recited the nostalgic poems, we knew the carols and hymns, and we girls loved our sequined *Krakowskie* costumes!



Combined Polish Dance Group in Geelong

Very soon land was purchased with a view to build a home for orphaned or children in need, and not long after a building in Malop Street was purchased in which to congregate, hold meetings and celebrate Polish National Days.

As we grew older, we looked forward to the dances with the bands that played wonderful

music and people who dressed up, and where there were opportunities to mix with young people from other ethnic groups - the “sophisticated” alternative to the Palais. This social blossoming was significantly enabled by the development of the Syrena Sports Club which, looking back, was really a male preserve - it was the men who played sport - but in the sixties that was not even noticed. We all went to the Volleyball and the Soccer games and the subsequent celebrations and socials and then the equivalent functions from other clubs.



Our Geelong Polish Church Choir with Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, future Pope John Paul II, and our Polish Chaplain, Monsignor L. Jaroszka in Essendon - 1973

The sixties and seventies saw the second, although much smaller, wave of Polish migration to Geelong. This was predominantly in the category of “sponsored migration”, part of the Australian Government Family Reunion program. These new arrivals were a very positive and enriching update to our post war entity.



Polish Women's Association in Geelong 1983

Twenty years later we welcomed a third wave of migrants, this time sadly again political refugees as a consequence of the declaration of martial law in Poland as a response to attempted social and economic changes within the country.

In describing the very successful development of “living among my own” within the Polish community of the time,

it must not be seen as an enclave. It was additional to the daily life of work, school, participation in broader social activities, interaction with neighbors and the pursuit of broader interests, but it was the pebble in the pond from which emanated ever widening ripples.

The early 1960s also saw the formation of the Geelong branch of the Polish Ex-servicemen's Association, the SPK. Soon after its formation the Geelong Polish community agreed to sell the land which was purchased in Bell Park some time ago and to use these funds to purchase the old Temperance Hall in Ryrie Street to make that the SPK Headquarters.

The next milestone was the Australian community's recognition of the SPK's role as allied soldiers by their inclusion in the Anzac Day marches and commemorations.



SPK Members in the ANZAC Day Parade

In similar vein came an expansion initiative from the Polish Community Association to purchase and develop what we now know as White Eagle House. This project of course required - and continues to require - very significant and ongoing dedication and commitment. Its success lies very much in the interface its facilities provide, not only to the Polish community but to the entire Geelong region.

Last year as we celebrated 70 years since our arrival as "Reffos" at Station Pier, Melbourne. We, the "young ones," as we forever are in the eyes of the remaining handful of adults of that 1950s migration, find it imperative to document as many of those individual experiences before all memories are dimmed and all voices are stilled.

Krystyna Stawicki
March, 2021



White Eagle House (*Dom Orła Białego*) today, in Breakwater
"A central meeting place for Poles in Geelong"

A Brief History of the Polish Ex-Servicemen's Association



The Polish soldiers, of course, played an important role in defending Poland and its citizens.

This is why Poles have always had a great admiration and respect for the Polish Army and this remains part of Poles patriotism.

Seventy years have passed since the end of last war but this very strong respect for the Polish soldier remains in the hearts of the Polish people. The fact that so many of us have continued to commemorate important occasions in the many conflicts through Polish history together with the Polish Ex-Servicemen's Association, is an indication of our ongoing respect for what these men and women of this Branch fought for, decades ago, and what they have been able to achieve here in the Geelong community.



First SPK Committee - 1964

First Organising Committee of the Polish Ex-servicemen's Association was formed on August 2, 1964 in Geelong. The composition of the Committee was:



SPK in the Annual ANZAC Day Parade

- **Captain Antoni Lipkowski**
- **Jan Okulicz**
- **Stanisław Gonczarek**
- **Józef Zajac**

The Committee requested the National Committee of SPK to approve the establishment of the No.12 Branch of SPK in Geelong. On 12th November 1964, the first General Meeting of the 30 founding Members took place, electing Captain Antoni Lipkowski the first President of the Association.

A very short time after, the Branch established contacts with the local Australian RSL groups in Geelong and SPK members were invited to take part in the Geelong ANZAC Day Ceremonies each year.

On August 1, 1965, a second Extraordinary General Meeting of the SPK Branch awarded Honorary Membership to Monsignor Lucjan Jaroszka and to Mr. C.D. Barton, former Vice

President of the Geelong RSL, who facilitated SPK's long relationship with the local R.S.L. Groups.

November 27, 1965, General Juliusz Klegerg, from the UK, paid a visit to the Geelong SPK Branch. Around that time there were already 55 members.

In its first term, the Geelong SPK Branch celebrated the "Polish Soldiers' Day" for the first time, with Holy Mass at St Mary's of the Angles Church in Geelong. After the Mass, wreaths were laid at the RSL Monument in Geelong.



Mayor McGregor-Dowsett Officially Opens the Polish Ex-Servicemen's (SPK) Centre

In the 1960s, Monsignor Lucjan Jaroszka initiated plans to set up a Children's Centre and invited the Sisters of the Ascension, a religious order of nuns, to Geelong to manage the Centre. He organized a number of fundraising events. Having raised enough funds, five blocks of land were purchased in Bell Park. For unknown reasons, the sisters did not come to Geelong and Mon. Jaroszka's plans did not eventuate.



SPK Premises in Ryrie St Geelong

In December 1967, Polish community, who were involved in the fundraising activities for the Children's Centre, called a meeting which took place at the former GAMA Theatre, in Ryrie St. Approximately 100 people attended. A Melbourne social worker, Mr. Jabłoński, chaired the meeting. The meeting decided to hand over the land in Bell Park to SPK Association.

Immediately the SPK Committee took over the administration of the land. At that time, the membership of the SPK Branch in Geelong had grown to 80 members.



National Day Dinner at the SPK Hall

In November 1969, SPK Branch No. 12 sold the land for \$ 12,500 and in October 1970, purchased a brick building, "Temperance Hall", located at 35 Ryrie Street, for \$ 15,500.

The Mayor of Geelong, Mr. McGregor Dowset, conducted the official opening on September 4, 1971.

SPK received a 2-year interest-free loan from a Polish Ex-servicemen's Fund in London to develop their newly purchased property.

April 15, 1968, the Geelong SPK Memorial Book was established. Twelve prominent guests have signed this Book including Cardinal Karol Wojtyła and Bishop Władysław Rubin.



Cardinal Karol Wojtyła with Mr Max Nadolski

On February 24, 1973, SPK was privileged to host a very distinguished guest, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, the Metropolitan Bishop of Cracow, who in 1978 was to become the first Polish Pope.

On November 24, 1973, Polish SPK members were invited by the Geelong RSL to celebrate Remembrance Day with at Johnston Park.

On January 11, 1976, a decision was made by the SPK Committee to invite all Polish organisations in Geelong to establish the "SPK Banner Committee". Ms. Ericksen (ERE Craft Melbourne) was commissioned to make the Banner, which was officially blessed by Bishop Władysław Rubin at St. Mary's Church.

The Geelong SPK was registered in the "Golden Book of Emigration" for supporting the Polish National Treasury, an institute located in the UK by the Polish Government in Exile.

Independence Day November 11, 1985 was celebrated by the SPK Branch beginning with Holy Mass, celebrated by the late Fr. Zenon Broniarczyk at St Mary's. After Mass, everyone was invited to the "Akademia" organised together with the Polish Community Association in Geelong. Ms. Wanda Pilsudzka, granddaughter of the famous Polish General, Józef Pilsudski, was the special guest at this function. Mr. Kornacki, the then President of the SPK Branch, delivered the welcoming speech.

On November 28, 1986, SPK members took part in the welcoming ceremony for Pope John Paul II at the MCG in Melbourne.

On November 12, 1989, SPK Branch No. 12 celebrated its 25th anniversary. After Mass, a dinner was held at the SPK Centre in Ryrie



After Church Services at St Mary's

St, at which Fr. Tomasz Zaremba, Mr. J. Misia, the President of the National SPK Committee, the Presidents of the Australian RSL groups, Presidents and CEOs of a number of Geelong community associations attended.

As the years went by, the members of the Geelong SPK aged accordingly, and slowly the membership number began falling as members passed away. Hence, in 1997, the SPK Branch decided to sign over the property at Ryrie St Geelong to the Polish Community Association in Geelong (PCA). The remaining Geelong SPK members continued to use their Centre as they did in the past without the worry of trying to maintain and cover the running costs of the building.

November, 2004, SPK Branch No. 12 celebrated another anniversary. This time they celebrated its 40th Anniversary, also at the SPK Centre in Ryrie St, Geelong.



Blessing of the SPK Plaque 2017

Mr Max Nadolski (President of SPK), Rev. Fr Jerzy Stowinski and the late Mrs Grazyna Brzostowski (President of the PCA)

In 2014, the remaining handful of the original SPK Members of the Geelong Branch No. 12, celebrated their 50th Anniversary together with the whole Polish community at the White Eagle House.

Two years later, in 2016, the PCA members voted to sell the Ryrie St property and use the funds at the White Eagle House.

In August 2017, a plaque was unveiled on the grounds of the White Eagle House, honoring the contributions the SPK Branch No. 12 members had made to the Polish community in Geelong during the last 52 years and especially **Mr Mieczysław (Max) Nadolski** for his lifelong commitment to the Branch and for his service, being the longest serving President of that organisation.



Presidents of the Polish Ex-Servicemen's Association in
Geelong Branch No. 12

Presidents	Period as President	Years of Service
Antoni LIPKOWSKI	1964-1965	2
Michał PIETRZAK	1966-1969	4
Mieczysław KORNACKI	1970-1976	7
Jan ŁAWYSZ	1977-1980	4
Zygmunt BOROWSKI	1981-1983	3
Józef DRZEWUICKI	1984-1985	1
Julian KALBARCZYK	1985-1986	1
Paweł BUSKO	1986-1989	4
Joachim ZIENKIEWICZ	1990-1999	10
Mieczysław NADOLSKI	2000-2018	19

Part of this short history was read by Henry Szkuta at the 60th Anniversary of the Establishment of the SPK in Geelong. The remaining text was added after the blessing and unveiling of the Memorial Plaque on 20th August, 2017

Henry Szkuta
Secretary
Polish Community Association in Geelong Inc.
March, 2021

Krótką Historia SPK Nr 12 Geelong

Przez wieki Polska przechodziła wiele konfliktów z sąsiadującymi krajami. Przez tyle wieków, Polski żołnierz, naturalnie, odegrał ważną rolę w obronie granic Polskich i Polaków przeciwko inwazji kraju.

Doprowadziło to, że Polacy przez te wieki zbudowali w sobie ogromną podziw i szacunek dla polskiego wojska i to pozostało synonimem patriotyzmu Polaków.

Dziś, mimo że Polacy nie doświadczyli krwawego konfliktu przez 60 lat, nadal mamy bardzo



Pierwszy Zarząd SPK - 1964

silny szacunek dla tych, którzy służyli w obronie Polski. Faktem tego szacunku jest, że tyle nas jest tu dzisiaj, aby uczcić 50tą rocznicę powstania SPK, Koła Nr. 12 w Geelong.

Drugiego sierpnia, 1964 w Geelong, powstał pierwszy Zarząd Organizacyjny w Geelong:

- Kapitan **Antoni Lipkowski**
- **Jan Okulicz**
- **Stanisław Gonczarek**
- **Józef Zajęc**

Pierwszym Prezesem tego Koła został **Kapitan Antoni Lipkowski**.

Zarząd zwrócił się do Zarządu Krajowego S.P.K. o zatwierdzenie powstałego Koła, które otrzymało Nr.12. Dwunastego Listopada 1964 roku, odbyło się pierwsze Walne Zebranie członków SPK. Członków w tedy było tylko 30.

W krótkce Koło nawiązało kontakty z miejscową organizacją *R.S.L.* (Australijskie koło Kombatantów). Dostali pozwolenie do brania udziału w marszu na ANZAC Day.

Pierwszego sierpnia 1965, drugie Nadzwyczajne Walne Zebranie nadało Honorowe Członkostwo Kołu Księdzu Kanonikowi Lucjana Jaroszce, oraz dla Pana C.D. Barton, byłemu Wice Prezesowi *R.S.L.* który ułatwił SPK współpracy z Geelong *R.S.L.*

27ego listopada 1965, odwiedził Koło Nr. 12, Gen. Juliusz Klegerg. Koło wtedy miało już 55 członków.



SPK na defiladzie ANZAC Day

Już w pierwszej kadencji, Koło Nr. 12 obchodziło Święto Żołnierza Polskiego. Msza Święta była odprawiona w St. Mary's oraz złożenie wieniec w miejscowym R.S.L.

W latach 60tych, Ksiądz Lucjan Jaroszka zamierzał sprowadzić do Geelongu siostry zakonne. Zorganizował zbiórki pieniędzy na ośrodek dla sióstr i zakupu ziemi na budowę ochronki dla dzieci.

Zakupiono pięć placów budowlanych na Bell Parku. Z nieznanych powodów, siostry nie przybyły do Geelongu.

W grudniu 1967 roku odbyło się zebranie społeczeństwa polskiego w byłym GAMA Theatre, przy Ryrie Street. Obecnych było około 100 osób. Zebranie prowadził działacz społeczny z Melbourne, p. Jabłoński.



Dom Kombatanta przy Ryrie St Geelong

Zebranie zdecydowało przekazać te place Kołu SPK Nr 12, które od niedawna zaczęło się rozwijać. Koło miało wówczas ok. 80 członków. Członkowie Koła natychmiast zaopiekowali się tymi placami, pokrywając podatki itp.

W listopadzie 1969 r. Koło Nr 12 otrzymało tytuł własności tych placów i wkrótce je sprzedali za \$12,500.

W październiku 1970 r. Koło Nr 12 zakupiło budynek murowany pod nazwa "Temperance Hall" przy 35 Ryrie Street, około 100 metrów od poczty głównej, za \$15,500.

Oficjalne uroczyste otwarcie Domu Kombatanta odbyło się 4ego września 1971 roku. Ceremonie otworzył Burmistrz Geelongu, Pan McGregor Dowsett.

Na zagospodarowanie Domu Kombatanta, Koło Nr 12 otrzymało 2-letnią pożyczkę z funduszu Londyńskiego. Dzisiaj, ponieważ pozostało bardzo mało członków SPK, opiekują się teraz Domem Kombatanta Związek Polaków w Geelongu.



Mayor McGregor-Dowsett Oficjalnie otwiera Dom SPK przy Ryrie St Geelong



Po Mszy Świętej w 1990r

15ego kwietnia 1968, założona została Księgę Pamiątkowa Kola Nr. 12 dla wybitnych gości. Pierwszy w pisany gość został Ks. Biskup Rubin.

Luty 24, 1973, do Książki Pamiątkowej wpisał się nasz dostojny gość Metropolita Krakowski, Ks. Kardynał Karol Wojtyła.

24ego listopada 1973, polscy żołnierze SPK byli zaproszeni przez RSL na uroczystość złożenia wieńców w *Memorial Foyer w Johnston Park* z okazji *Remembrance Day*.



Ks. Kardynał Karol Wojtyła i pan Mieczysław Nadolski

11ego stycznia 1976, zapadła decyzja na zebraniu Zarządu Koła zęby zwrócić się do wszystkich organizacji społecznych na terenie Geelongu o utworzenia Komitetu Sztandarowego. Standard był wykonany przez panią N.M. Ericksen (E.R.E. Embroidery - Melbourne). Poświęcił sztandar Ks. Biskup Władysław Rubin w Kościele Saint Mary's.

Koło SPK w Geelong zostało zapisane do Złotej Księgi Emigracji, za popieranie Skarbu Narodowego w Anglii.

Święto Niepodległości 11ego listopada 1985 roku rozpoczęto Msza Święta w Kościele Saint Mary's. Msza została odprawiona przez Ks. Zenona Brończyka. Po Mszy Świętej, wszyscy byli zaproszeni na Akademię wspólna w Domu Orła Białego. Na Akademii zaszczyciła swoją obecnością pani Wanda Piłsudska. Prezes Koła SPK, pan Kornacki, wygłosił przemówienie okolicznościowe.

28ego listopada 1986, Koło SPK wzięło udział ze Sztandarem na Boisku MCG w Melbourne na spotkaniu z Ojcem Świętym Janem Pawłem II.

12ego listopada 1989, Koło obchodziło 25-Lecie swego istnienia. Po Mszy Świętej, obiad odbył się na Sali Domu SPK i na którym przybyli Ks. Kapelan Tomasz Zaremba i Prezes Zarządu Krajowego, J. Misia z Adelaide.



Obiad na Sali SPK przy Ryrie St

Jak również Prezesi Australijskich Stowarzyszeń Kombatanczkich, Prezesi i Prezeski organizacji społecznych w Geelong.

W listopadzie, 2004, ponownie, Koło SPK obchodziło Rocznice Istnienia. Tym razem obchodzili 40to Lecie w Domu Kombatanta przy Ryrie St Geelong.

Mamy nadzieję że dzisiejsza celebrowana 50ta Rocznicą Koła SPK Nr 12 będzie wpisana do historii społeczeństwa polskiego w Geelong i dalsza historia Koła będzie dalej otrzymana na uroczystości 60tej Rocznicą Koła Nr. 12 SPK.

Z roku na rok, liczba członków Koła SPK Nr.12 się zmniejsza, związku z czym, w 1992r, Koło postanowiło oddać majątek dla Związku Polaków w Geelong (ZPG). Członkowie tego Koła nadal korzystali z Domu Kombatanta przy Ryrie St, tak jak dawniej, bez obawy finansowego utrzymania i pokrywania kosztów operacyjnych ośrodka.



Poświęcenie Pamiątkowej Tablicy, 2017

W 2014r, spotkała się cała wspólnota Polonijna w Geelong, w Domu Orła Białego, razem z pozostałą garstką członków SPK aby uczestniczyć 50-lecia SPK Nr 12.

Dwa lata później, w 2016r, członkowie ZPG zagłosowali aby sprzedać nieruchomości przy Ryrie Street i przeznaczyć uzyskane fundusze ze sprzedaży na spłacenie długów Domu Orła Białego.

W sierpniu 2017 r. na terenie Domu Orła Białego została wzniesiona tablica na pamięć wszystkim członkom Koła SPK Nr 12, za ich pracę dedykowaną w Geelong przez ostatnie 52 lat. Tablica pamiątkowa była poświęcona przez Ks. Jerzego

Słowinskiego i oficjalnie odsłonięta przez prezesa Koła SPK, p. Mieczysława Nadolskiego, który przez 20 lat wspianale prowadził tą organizację.



Lista Prezesów w Stowarzyszenia Polskich Kombatantów
Geelong Koło Nr. 12

		Stanowisku
Antoni LIPKOWSKI	1964-1965	2
Michał PIETRZAK	1966-1969	4
Mieczysław KORNACKI	1970-1976	7
Jan ŁAWYSZ	1977-1980	4
Zygmunt BOROWSKI	1981-1983	3
Józef DRZEWUCKI	1984-1985	1
Julian KALBARCZYK	1985-1986	1
Paweł BUSKO	1986-1989	4
Joachim ZIENKIEWICZ	1990-1999	10
Mieczysław NADOLSKI	2000-2018	19

Część tej krótkiej historii została odczytana przez Henryka Szkutę, w 2014r, z okazji 60tej Rocznicy Założenia Koła SPK w Geelong. Resztę tekstu w artykule było dodane po odsłonięciu Tablicy Pamiątkowej w dniu 20 sierpnia 2017 r.

Henryk Szkuta

Sekretarz, Związku Polaków w Geelong

Marzec, 2021

Historia Zespołu Tanecznego „Krakowiak”

Napływ polskiej imigracji do Australii w latach 1949-1950 był bardzo duży. Polacy bardzo szybko zaczęli zakładać polskie organizacje, polskie szkoły jak również folklorystyczne grupy taneczne.



„Polonez” 1965

W latach 60-tych pani Kątna formalnie założyła i nadała nazwę swojej grupie. Był to Zespół taneczny „Krakowiak”. Próby odbywały się salach kościelnych – Św. Marii i Św. Piotra i Pawła, później w sali szkoły podstawowej im. Św. Rodziny (Holy Family) i w Sali SPK na Ryrie St.

Zespół zdobywał popularność wśród dzieci i młodzieży, ale czasami trzeba było je zachęcić cukierkiem czy ciastkiem, które pani Kątna zawsze miła dla nich.



Kiedy byliśmy młodzi

Pani Buśko, pani Wanda Leszczyńska, pani Walentyna Hau, pani Jadwiga Szkuta, pani Kluczyńska, pani Baumgart to osoby, które prowadziły małe grupy taneczne. Do grupy wymienianych wcześniej pań dołączyła w roku 1958 pani Alfreda Kątna, która przyptęła statkiem z Anglii. Była to osoba pełna energii, zapału i entuzjazmu do pracy z polskimi dziećmi. Rozpoczęła Ona naukę tańców, sama zaczęła szyć kostiumy i własnym samochodem zwoziła dzieci na próby.



Zespół w 1989r

Zespół nabierał uroku pod każdym względem. Występował nie tylko na polskich uroczystościach ,ale również był zapraszany na australijskie imprezy .

W 1970 roku Zespół ‘Krakowiak’ występował w Hamer Hall w Melbourne, aw 1973 roku występował dla Kardynała Karola Wojtyły, który przyjechał z wizytą do Geelongu. Lata 80 –te to występy zorganizowane dla Solidarności w Polsce i oczywiście bardzo ważne dla całej Polonii w Australii festiwal Polar.



w Domu Orła Białego 1984

kostiumy, czasami sprowadzała oryginalne kostiumy z Polski, za które trzeba było zapłacić.

Wszystkie kostiumy trzymała na swojej posesji w specjalnie zrobionym tylko na kostiumy pomieszczeniu.

Pracowała bardzo ciężko sprząając ludziom domy organizując zabawy, żeby móc pokryć koszty utrzymania zespołu.

Pani Alfreda Kątna zostanie w sercach Polaków na długie lata a szczególnie w sercach tych, którzy byli członkami zespołu. Mieli oni przecież możliwość poznania polskiej kultury ,tradycji, muzyki i tańca. Mieli możliwość spędzenia czasu wśród swoich rówieśników, nawiązując kontakty koleżeńskie jak również bardziej bliskie- trzy pary, które poznały się w zespole zawarły związki małżeńskie.

A to jedna z przygód jaką pani Kątna miła jadąc na Pol Art do Brisbane.

W 1988 roku zespół jechał do Brisbane na PolArt. Pani Kątna zapakowała całą przyczepkę

Rok 1980 PolArt w Adelaide, 1984 rok PolArt w Melbourne i 1988 PolArt w Brisbane. We wszystkich tych festiwalach „Krakowiak” brał udział. Ale to nie tylko przygotowanie i nauka tańców to cały rozdział pracy - szycie kostiumów, transport , zakwaterowanie dla członków zespołu itp. Pomagali nie tylko rodzice członków zespołu dla także ludzie nie związani z zespołem. Pani Kątna bardzo przeżywała każdy koncert nawet ten najmniejszy. Całym sercem, duszą i ciałem pracowała nad tym by zespół prosperował jak najlepiej i jak najdłużej. Sama szyła



PolArt 1984

kostiumami i przyczepiła do swego auta. Mąż pani Kątnej był kierowcą ich auta. Nie obyło się oczywiście bez przygód. Jak powiedziała nam pani Kątna w czasie podróży odczepiła im się przyczepka z kostiumami. Zauważyli to dopiero po jakimś czasie. Musieli się więc wracać. Mieli pełno szczęścia ,bo znaleźli przyczepkę z kostiumami stojącą w polu. Wszystko skończyło się szczęśliwie ! A ostatni występ pani Kątniej z zespołem jako przebiegający Lajkonik przez scenę zostanie na długo w naszej pamięci.



1991



1994

Po występach w Brisbane w 1988 roku pani Alfreda Kątna zakończyła swoją działalność z zespołem „Krakowiak”.

Cała polonia geelongowska wraz ze wszystkimi członkami Zespołu ‘Krakowiak’ składa wielkie podziękowania i chyli czoła za to wszystko co pani Kątna zrobiła dla naszej społeczności.

W 2003 roku za swoją pracę na rzecz polskiej młodzieży pani Alfreda Kątna otrzymała od Multicultural Affairs in Victoria. Nominację tę wysłała w imieniu całego zespołu Jolanta Jabłońska. A Sofie Kovac napisała piękny wiersz pod tytułem: „Alfreda”.

Tylko po 4 miesięcznej przerwie z inicjatywy długoletniego członka zespołu Jacka Tomaszewskiego i Grażyny Brzostowskiej na nowo powstał zespół “Krakowiak”.

Utworzyły się trzy grupy wiekowe:

- grupa najmłodsza dzieci od 5 -12 lat. 25 członków
- grupa średnia 12-16 lat. 30 członków
- grupa najstarsza 16- 25 lat i więcej. 12 członków

Razem zespół liczył 67 osób, to coś wspaniałego. Z taką liczbą członków naprawdę można było zrobić wiele.



1994



1995

Były trzy grupy a instruktorów tylko dwoje. Jacek wziął grupę najstarszą ,Grażyna najmłodszą i średnią.

Utworzył się również komitet, który pomagał w prosperowaniu zespołu:-

Przewodniczący: Henryk Szkuta

Skarbnik: Roman Brzostowski

Członkowie: Irena Łata, Gienia Szaliński, Emil Tomaszewski.

3 kwietnia rozpoczęły się pierwsze próby na akademię z okazji 3 Maja. W programie były tańce wielkopolskie, żywieckie i oczywiście polka dla dzieci najmłodszych.

Brak nam było odpowiednich kostiumów. Ale nie trzeba było długo czekać. Kupiliśmy materiał i zaczęto szycie. Niektóre materiały zostały podarowane przez państwa Karpińskich. Pan Tomaszewski uszył wspaniałe kostiumy wielkopolskie dla chłopców a panie Marysia Filipowicz, Halina Błaszczuk dla dziewcząt.



1997

1 Maja 1988 roku podczas akademii z okazji 3 Maja, zespół 'Krakowiak' wystąpił po raz pierwszy prowadzony przez nowych instruktorów w nowym składzie.



Bal Debiutantek - 1992

Występ udał się wspaniale. Wszyscy byli bardzo zadowoleni, tancerze jak również publiczność.

Brakowało nam butów dla chłopców i dziewcząt i oryginalnych kostiumów krakowskich. Ale dobrze się złożyło, bo w tym czasie wiele osób jechało do Polski. Między innymi pan Emil Tomaszewski, który jeździł po Polsce i kupował to co nam było potrzebne. Osoby powracające do Australii przywoziły nam zakupione przez

pana Tomaszewskiego rzeczy. Mieliśmy piękne kostiumy krakowskie i zaczęliśmy przygotowywać się do następnego koncertu. Pan Stanisław Karpiński przygotował piosenki a instruktorzy - Jacek Tomaszewski i Grażyna Brzostowski zaczęli naukę tańców.

Rok 1989

Pierwszy duży koncert „Krakowiaka” zatytułowany „Na Krakowskim Rynku”, odbył się podczas zabawy. Dochód z zabawy był przeznaczony na potrzeby zespołu. Koncert rozpoczęto pięknym wejściem całego zespołu „Albośmy to jacy tacy”. Podczas występu tańczono Krakowiaki, tańce cieszyńskie i dolnośląskie. Nie brakowało również oberka i pięknego Mazura. Zespół pożegnał publiczność finałem w rytmie Krakowiaka.



Pierwszy występ pod dyktando p. Brzostowskiej

Rok 1990

"Dożynki"- to następny koncert przygotowany przez zespół Krakowiak. Instruktorami nauki tańca byli w dalszym ciągu Grażyna Brzostowski i Jacek Tomaszewski. Ilość grup- 3 najmłodsza , średnia i najstarsza. Sala była pięknie udekorowana, przypominająca polską wieś. Nie było brak snopów ze słomy, które wspaniale pasowały do całości wystroju sali . Na wstępie mała inscenizacja pracy na roli. Słychać było piosenkę „Zachodzi słończeczko” chłopcy z kosami przedstawiali koszenie na polu a dziewczęta zbieranie snopów i podawanie wody zmęczonym kosiarzom.



PAKO Festa - 1990

Następnie wszyscy członkowie zespołu wyszli na salę śpiewając „Plon niesiemy plon”. Tania i Jacek nieśli 2 bochenki chleba, które zostały wręczone prezesowi Związku Polaków w Geelong panu Stanisławowi Jakubowskiemu i Pani Marii Dynowskiej Prezesce Koła Pań w Geelong. Nie brak było kolorowych wieńców niesionych ,przez chłopców z zespołu. Po oficjalnym otwarciu dożynek następują śpiewy i tańce-wielkopolskie , śląskie, oberki , Kujawiaki. Atmosfera na sali była wspaniała.



W Domu Orła Białego - 1992

następnego koncertu. Grażyna Brzostowski i Jacek Tomaszewski kontynuują swoją pracę instruktorów tańca.

„Jadą Goście Jadą” to tytuł następnego koncertu. Grażyna opracowuje choreografię i scenografię całego koncertu. Oprócz tancerzy, solistów byli także aktorzy-pani Maria Filipowicz i Gienek Gawroński. Gienek namalował na tylnej ścianie sceny obraz chaty wiejskiej, ponieważ akcja naszego koncertu odbywała się na polskiej wsi, do której zjeżdżali się goście z różnych stron Polski. W akcję na scenie wplecione były tańce; kaszubskie, z Zagłębia Śląskiego, tańce mazurskie, warmińskie, lubelskie, opoczyńskie i góralskie. Te ostatnie wykonali nasi najmłodsi tancerze. Było miło patrzeć, jak podskakiwali wysoko w rytm góralskiej muzyki, wywijając ciupagami i popisując się w partiach solowych.

W tym samym roku zorganizowano zabawę pod tytułem, „Dwa Serduszka”. Dochód z zabawy był przeznaczony na cele zespołu.

Rok 1991-1992

W szeregach instruktorów wkracza pani Roma Saper, była członkini zespołu „Mazowsze” .Zostaje ona instruktorem grupy średniej oraz nauczycielem śpiewu. Wspaniale przygotowała dziewczęta do



Jadą Goście Jadą - 1991

Oczywiście nie zabrakło pięknych piosenek przygotowanych przez panią Romę „Jadą goście jadą”, „Filon i Laura”, „Dwa Serduszka”, „Kawaliry”. Do wspólnego śpiewu przy akompaniamencie akordeonisty Leszka Romaniuka była również zaproszona publiczność. Jedną z najciekawszych scen koncertu było wejście kuczka z dziećmi na grzbiecie. Każdy z nas trzymał kciuki by kucyk nie narobił bałaganu. Ale wszystko obyło się bez problemu. Cały koncert udał się wyśmienicie. Na zakończenie należy dodać, że

dzieci wystąpiły w nowych kierpcach przywiezionych z Polski, mogły wywijać nowymi ciupagami oraz zatańczyć w nowych kostiumach góralskich, kaszubskich i opoczyńskich.

Lata 1993-1995

Instruktorami nauki tańca są pani Irena Łata, Grażyna Brzostowski. Pani Łata prowadzi grupę średnią a pani Grażyna grupę najmłodszą. Zespół występował na naszych polskich imprezach zorganizowanych w Domu Orła Białego w Geelong. Były to akademie z okazji 3 Maja, Dnia Matki, Dnia Ojca, czy z okazji Niepodległości Polski 11 Listopada 1918 roku. Instruktorzy zapoznają dzieci i młodzież z tańcami z różnych stron Polski jak i z tańcami narodowymi. Pani Irena Łata opracowała i przygotowała ze swoją średnią grupą pięknego Mazura. Młodzież wystąpiła w strojach ułańskich uszytych przez rodziców.



Nasza przyszłość -1993

Rok 1996 -1997

Instruktorem nauki tańca była tylko Grażyna Brzostowski. Ale nie była sama, miała ze sobą ludzi, którzy pomagali. Była tylko jedna grupa młodzieży, plus kilka par, były to mamy niektórych z dziewcząt, jak również jeden ojciec. Ogólnie było nas 44 osoby. Żeby bardziej zainteresować młodzież muzyką i tańcami polskimi nie tylko ludowymi Grażyna wprowadziła naukę tańców warszawskich.

Zostaje zorganizowana zabawa, na której wystąpił Krakowiak z tańcami warszawskimi - polką „Usia Siusia” „Pojedziemy na Bielany oraz z bardzo znanym tangiem andrusowskim. Było dużo zabawy, humoru i niespodzianek.

„Ukochany kraj”- to następny wspaniały występ Zespołu, gdzie przez taniec, piosenkę zostało ukazane piękno Polski. W czasie koncertu gościnnie wystąpiła Joanna Olechnowicz , która grała polskie piosenki na skrzypcach.

Rok 1996 był rokiem , kiedy to Zespół „Krakowiak” zaczynał przygotowywać się do Festiwalu PolArt 1997, który miał się odbyć w Melbourne. Wspólnie z członkami zespołu został opracowany program tańców. Był to, Krakowiak, Polonez, Kujawiak, Mazur, Tańce Mieszczan Żywieckich, Polki, Oberek.

Czasu na przygotowanie, opracowanie było wystarczająco. Uszyto nowe kostiumy Żywieckie i Łowickie. W Domu Polskim Biały Orzeł rozpoczęły się regularne próby tańców.



Taniec Góralski - 1991

Grudniu 1997

22 pary Zespołu „Krakowiak” wystąpiło ze swoim programem w Melbourne w Concert Hall Victorian Art Centre oraz w teatrze na St.Kilda. Zespół zaprezentował się wspaniale, od widzów otrzymał wielkie brawa nie brakowało również też radości. Przeżyć było wiele szczególnie w ostatni dzień koncertu , kiedy to na finał wyszło na scenę ponad 200 tancerzy.



2002

Po koncercie Pol Art 1997 wszystkim należała się przerwa, był to przecież czas wakacji.

Lata 2000-2005

Po kilkuletniej przerwie, w 2000 roku zespół wznowiał swoją działalność. Instruktorami tańca były Kaylie Hayes i Grażyna Brzostowski.

Kaylie uczyła dzieci najmłodsze. Nie była to łatwa praca .Najmłodsza dziewczynka miała zaledwie 3 latka. Kaylie była instruktorem tylko jeden rok.

Rok2001

„Polskie wesele” - to tytuł następnego koncertu, połączonego z zabawą taneczną. Była prawdziwa para młoda , która za parę miesięcy w życiu prywatnym wzięła ślub. Byli rodzice ,którzy witali młodą parę chlebem, sola , wódka i wodą, były tańce z różnych stron Polski ,przyśpiewki weselne. Nie zabrakło również wodzireja, który rozbawiał całą publiczność. Najmłodszy tancerze i ci starsi ,których było około 30 osób potrafili rozbawić publiczność do łez. Na koncert ten została zaproszona pani Joy Leggo ,dyrektor Multicultural Aged Care. Ten wielokulturowy ośrodek jest przeznaczony dla osób starszych , którzy wymagają 24 godzinnej

opieki. W ośrodku tym znajdują się również Polacy. Było nam wszystkim bardzo miło, kiedy najmłodszy członek zespołu wręczył na ręce pani Joy Leggo czek na sumę 1000 dolarów. W ośrodku tym Zespół "Krakowiak" jest umieszczony na tablicy pamiątkowej.

Rok 2002

Członkowie zespołu zaprosili polonię na „**Bal Królewski**”. 16 par, w pięknych staropolskich kostiumach zaprezentowały się pięknie tańcząc polonezy i mazury. Gościnnie wystąpił kwartet muzyczny i pary z Ballroom Dancing Club.

W Roku 2003



Na Występie "Spirit of the World" - 2003

The Diversitat w Geelong z organizował piękny koncert w Geelong Performing Art Center. "Spirit of the World" ("Źródło Życia Świata"). Do koncertu zostały zaproszone osoby indywidualne jak również grupy etniczne w Geelong.

Ponieważ do koncertu zgłosiło się wiele grup. Organizator koncertu połączył razem po dwie grupy etniczne. Grupy te musiały opracować

scenografię i choreografię tematycznie dostosowaną do tematyki koncertu. Polska grupa współpracowała z grupą włoską. Próby odbywały się w Domu Polskim i w Clonard College i przed koncertem wieczorami w GPAC. Współpraca układała nam się wspaniale. Tematem naszego koncertu były zbiory plonów w Polsce, we Włoszech jak również pokazanie polskich i włoskich obrzędów i tradycji. Pokazana była również historia młodej polskiej dziewczyny i młodego włoskiego chłopca, którzy poznali się podczas prac polowych. Były sceny koszenia zboża na polu, ustawianie snopków oraz sceny winobrania. Nie obeszło się bez bardzo ważnej sceny dożynek, wesela młodej pary i przedstawienia polskiej tradycji witania młodej pary chlebem solą. Wszystko było połączone tańcami polskimi i włoskimi. Jedną z ciekawych rzeczy było to, że polska grupa musiała nauczyć się włoskich tańców a włoska polskich. Obie grupy przez taniec, śpiew i pokazanie swoich obrzędów wspaniale przedstawiły tematykę czym jest źródło życia świata.

Rok 2004

W 2004 roku instruktorem tańca jest tylko pani Just. Pani Just przygotowała małą grupę dzieci na jedną z naszych akademii w Domu Polskim. Była to wiązanka tańców lubelskich.

Rok2005

Do pozycji instruktora tańca wraca pani Grażyna Brzostowski.

Przygotowuje on z dwoma grupami tancerzy, w wieku od 4 do 30 lat i więcej dwuczęściowy koncert pod tytułem: "Polskie tradycje w czterech porach roku" i

„Z pamiętnika tamtych lat”. Do koncertu został zaproszony chór im. St. Moniuszki pod dyrekcją pana Stanisława Karpińskiego. Bardzo ważną osobą zaproszoną na ten koncert była pani Alfreda Kątna, która przez wiele lat prowadziła Zespół „Krakowiak”, Na zakończenie koncertu pani Alfreda otrzymała dyplom uznania i piękny wiersz napisany na Jej cześć przez Zosię Kovac.



Przed Werribee Mansion - 2005



PAKO Festa - 2016

odtańczyła „Kujawiaka”.

Po lecie jest jesień publiczność zapoznaje się z tradycjami i obrzędami jesieni, grupa młodsza odtańczyła tańce lubelskie a grupa starsza wesołą polkę.

Następnie jest zima i jak poprzednio zapoznano publiczność z obrzędami i tradycjami zimy. Nie zabrakło Krakowiaka , tańców kaszubskich i warmińskich oraz góralskich. Chór odegrał wspianą rolę. Śpiewał piosenki do odpowiednich pór roku oraz do wspólnego śpiewu.

Pierwszym aktem koncertu była wiosna. Pani Grażyna odczytała kilka słów na temat tradycji wiosennych i został pokazany krótki film. Następnie młodsze dzieci zaprezentowały taniec wiosenny „Gaiczek”.

Po wiosnie następuje lato i tak jak poprzednio zapoznano publiczność z tradycjami i obrzędami lata, a grupa starsza



Młoda grupa - 1994



Ks. Jerzy Stowiński i Brett Archer w dniu obchodzenia 100-lecia Niepodległości Polski

Druą część koncertu nosiła tytuł **”Z pamiętnika tamtych lat”**. I tak jak poprzednio wykorzystano obrazy filmowe związane z tematyką tamtych lat. Dzieci młodsze w strojach ułańskich odtańczyły pięknego Poloneza i Mazura i tańce mieszczan żywieckich. Grupa starsza zatańczyła skoczą polkę a całość zakończono wspólnym Polonezem. Należy zaznaczyć ,że w zespole tańczyły 3 pokolenia babcie ,córki i wnuczki.

Na zakończenie padły piękne słowa podziękowania od prezesa Związku Polaków Józka Jakubowskiego i rodziców. Ale czy to wystarczyło, żeby utrzymać zespół? Chyba nie! Na koncert przyszli tylko rodzice, a gdzie reszta polonii? Taka mała ilość ludzi, brak zainteresowania to zniechęca. Tak więc pani Grażyna Brzostowski postanowiła zostawić zespół. Po paru miesiącach pani Jolanta Jabłońska podjęła się prowadzenia jednej

młodszej grupy. Z przykrością muszę powiedzieć, że nie trwało to długo. A szkoda!

Pod patronatem Zespołu ‘Krakowiak’ zostały zorganizowane 3 Bale Debiutantek jeden w roku 1990, drugi w 1992 ,2004 roku.

Zorganizowano zabawę harcerską, Bal Kapitański, zabawę „2 serduszka”. Dochód z tych zabaw przeznaczony był na potrzeby Zespołu. Zespół wystąpił również podczas pikniku zorganizowanego na rzecz



Parada na PAKO Festa



kościół w Keysborough, w Domu Polskim w Albion oraz na festiwalu w Warrnambool.

Zespół miał zorganizowane wycieczki do parku w Werribee ,na przejażdżkę konną i do Wilson Promontory. I jak tradycja każe, co roku zespół brał udział w wielokulturowym festiwalu PAKO FESTA w Geelong. Jest to coroczny festiwal zorganizowany przez Diversitat w Geelong. Nastąpiła długa przerwa bo aż 10 lat kiedy to „Krakowiak” powstał na nowo.



Frank Definski & Jack Tomaszewski,
members of the "Krakowiak" Ensemble

Poles dine out for celebration

THE Polish Community Association in Geelong has celebrated the 100th anniversary of Poland gaining its independence.

The anniversary luncheon, held at its White Eagle House base on Sunday, was attended by about 100 members and a host of special guests.

These included Geelong MP Christine Couzens, Deputy Mayor Peter Murrighy and Cr Eddy Kontelj.

Pictures: DAVID SMITH



Sekretarz ZPG, H. Szkuta, i Prezes
ZPG, Grażyna Brzostowski - 2018

Photos on either side were taken by the
Geelong Advertiser Reporter on the day of
the celebrations in 2018

A stało się to za przyczyną Jacka Tomaszewskiego, który w 2015 roku na PAKO FESTA podszedł do Grażyny Brzostowskiej z propozycją ponownego rozpoczęcia prób tańca. Jacek i jego żona, Tania włożyli dużo pracy, żeby utworzyć zespół. I tu muszę przyznać, że był to zespół wielokulturowy. Były to osoby pochodzenia niemieckiego, węgierskiego, australijskiego, ze Sri Lanki i oczywiście Polacy. Byli to ludzie, którzy chcieli uczyć się polskich tańców i poznawać polską kulturę. Nie byli to ludzie bardzo młodzi. Najmłodsza osoba była po trzydziestce a najstarsza blisko siedemdziesiątki. I tak jak widać choreografię tańców trzeba było dostosowywać do wieku i możliwości tancerzy. Było nas 5 par. Najpierw zaczęliśmy uczyć się Krakowiaka, Kujawiaka, i polkę. Wszystko poszło dobrze. Najpierw zatańczyliśmy na obiedzie z okazji Dnia Ojca, później na naszych akademiach w Domu Polskim Orzeł Biały. Następnie zespół uczył się tańców lubelskich, śląskich. Występował na obiadach z okazji Dnia Matki i oczywiście na PAKO FESTA. Została również zorganizowana zabawa taneczna pod tytułem: "Let's Dance", panie z zespołu odtańczyły „Can”, panowie wystąpili we własnym programie tanecznym a Tania i Jacek zatańczyli wspaniałe tango. Atmosfera zabawy była miła i pełna humor.

Następnym osiągnięciem zespołu było zorganizowanie „Balu debutantek po pięćdziesiątce”. Oh! Co to był za bal” - Panie wystąpiły w pięknych długich sukniach, panowie w garniturach i pod muszkami. Panie schodziły po schodach z pięknie wybudowanego balkonu. Prezentację pań poprowadził pan Henryk Szkuta. Pary rozpoczęły swój występ pięknym polonezem a następnie odtańczyły Tango, ChaCha, Walc i Foxtrot. Grupa nasza pomału zaczęła się zmniejszać z powodów



Przy Stoisku ZPG na PAKO Festa

osobistych i zdrowotnych. Ci co zostali nie poddawali się. Zaczęliśmy uczyć się tańców kaszubskich.

Pod koniec 2018 roku na akademii listopadowej zespół „Krakowiak” zatańczył wiązanek tańców kaszubskich, Była przygotowana ciekawa scenografia do tańca. Był szum morza, były rybacy i kobiety naprawiające sieci itp.

I tak zespół ‘Krakowiak’ zakończył swoją działalność. Nikt nie chciał podjąć się powadzenia zespołu. Zostały tylko kostiumy. Zostały te oryginalne zakupione w Polsce i te które były uszyte tu w Australii. Aż serce boli co z tym zrobić. Na razie będziemy o nie dbać bo będą potrzebne na PAKO FESTA ,żeby reprezentować nas Polaków, w parady ulicznej. Może będą potrzebne na akademie , lub często dzieci wypożyczają je na szkolne wielokulturowe dni organizowane w szkołach. Oko cieszy człowieka gdy widzi dzieci w polskim kostiumie, ale to jest tylko jeden dzień. W tej chwili, to jest w lipcu 2020 roku nie ma żadnego zainteresowania. Może za parę lat coś obudzi się w sercach i duszy Polaków ,że powstanie chociaż mały zespół taneczny. Może na nowo usłyszymy na polskiej imprezie polskiego Poloneza czy Mazura.

Kończąc historię Zespołu ‘Krakowiak’ założonego w latach 60-tych w Geelongu przez Panią Alfredę Kątną pragnę podziękować wszystkim członkom zespołu, tym co tańczyli krótko i tym co tańczyli długie lata za to, że zawsze pięknie reprezentowali Polonię, Jej kulturę , tradycje i piękne polskie stroje. Duże podziękowania należą wszystkim instruktorom tańca za ich wkład pracy. Bo to właśnie dzięki tancerzom i instruktorom zespół przetrwał aż do roku 2020.



Grazyna Brzostowski
September, 2020

History of the “Syrena” Sports Club in Geelong

Modest Beginnings of a Proud Club



When the first post War Polish migrants came to Australia, their main focus was to provide their families with suitable living conditions, their children with a good education and to ensure they maintain their Polish traditions and their strong religious faith.

As the children of these migrants reached their late teenage years and early adulthood, a large majority continued to participate in religious celebrations and Polish cultural activities such folk dancing and singing but many also began to develop broader interests. Their new focus was sporting activities.

In 1960, under the leadership of the then Polish Chaplain in Geelong, Fr Jaroszka, the Polish community purchased five blocks of land in the Bell Park area to set up a Children’s Centre. This was the first piece of real estate that the Poles could proudly call their own. The vision of having a Children’s Centre did not eventuate and the land was left unutilized.

Thanks to the resilience of a number of young men in the community, they proposed that this land be used for sporting activities, and at that time the easiest and the least expensive sport to introduce was Volleyball.

It didn’t take long for group of these young men to set about clearing and leveling out a large section of the Polish community property to set up a volleyball court, fitted out with poles and a volleyball net.



Early Syrena Club matches on the “Polish Land” in Bell Park 1961

During the first year, teams consisting of boys and young men from all around the Geelong area were organised and friendly matches were played on most weekends. This new activity grew quickly in popularity, soon these friendly weekend matches attracted many spectators – parents, siblings and girlfriends of the players were there to barrack for their particular team.



The original Syrena Volleyball team playing at the Geelong Palais Hall in Moorabool St. 1963

Because there was no place to store the equipment, especially the nets, on the property, I was so proud then to be appointed the “caretaker” of the equipment as I lived close to where that area and it would not be a problem for me to store the equipment in my parents’ garage.

During the school holidays, I would set up the Volleyball net on the court and all the kids –

of all ethnic backgrounds from around Bell Park - would spend each day of the holidays developing our volleyball skills.

As interest and participation in volleyball grew, it was decided to formally establish a *Syrena* Volleyball team. The seeds for this initiative were planted in 1961 by Peter Wołosewicz and strongly supported by Eugene Pedziński and Leszek Kuźma. Further support came from Joe Stopinski, Joe Parks and Frank Filipowicz.

These six “founding fathers” became the first Polish Volleyball team in Geelong and the first members of the *Syrena* Volleyball Club. They played their first practice match on their proudly constructed Volleyball Court on the Polish community owned property in Bell Park.



Syrena Premiership Team with two fans. Helcia and Jadzia. 1963



Syrena and *Lechia* Volleyball Teams after the Gaławska Cup 1966

By the end of 1961, there were 15 members. This number eventually grew to 100 members over the years and the Club was able to field a number of teams in Geelong volleyball competitions.

Very soon, most of our *Syrena* teams became very successful in the local Geelong Volleyball Competitions. The Senior Team, in 1962, were the Premiers in Division 2 and were promoted to Division 1 the following year. The Senior Team continued to enjoy successes throughout the 1970s, 1980s 1990s and the early 2000s

The highlights of *Syrena*'s early history in this sport were:

- Representing Victoria Country Region in the Australian Volleyball Championships in Melbourne in 1965
- In 1984, *Syrena* had a total of 12 teams, Men's Women's and Juniors, in a Victorian competition

In 1963, *Syrena* Volleyball Club established an annual competition between themselves and *Lechia*, a Polish Volleyball Club from Melbourne. This Competition was called *The Gaławska Cup*, named after a Geelong Polish



Syrena's Senior Team with their future Volleyball players. 1973

businessman, Mr Wojciech Gałąska, who was the Club's main sponsor and the sole sponsor of the *Gałąska Cup*.

This Competition was the highlight in the Polish calendar each year and attracted many local and Melbourne spectators. The success of these competitions, which ran for two decades was mainly due to the commitment and efforts of Frank Filipowicz (*Syrena*) and Michał Szymanski (*Lechia*).

The Club was formally constituted as the *Syrena* Volleyball Club in 1965. Its first President was Zbigniew Niewinski. From 1964-1983 the President was Mr Wojciech Gałąska. Then Joe Parks held the position for one year, from 1984-1985. Frank Filipowicz took over as President of the Club in 1986 and has remained in the position till the present time. Mr Zbigniew Zembrzuski was the Club's first secretary.

When the Club also became involved with soccer, **Mr Stan Okis**, who was a Polish Community Association Committee (PCA) member for a number of years became a major sponsor of the soccer section. It was due to his efforts and financial support that the PCA was able to set up soccer pitch lighting, making it possible for teams to train in the evening during winter-time. Although the *Syrena* Sports Club did manage to receive sponsorship support from a number of other individuals and Geelong business, it was not enough to pay for all the expenses involved in running such a large Club. To supplement sponsorship income, *Syrena* run regular dances at the *Railway Institute Hall* in LaTrobe Tce. These dances were very popular, not only with the Polish youth but also with their parents. They were the Club's main fundraising activity.



Proud Captain of winning Team, Frank Filipowicz receiving the Cup from Mr W. Gałąska 1964



Syrena's Junior Volleyball Team with Coaches

In 1969, the *Syrena* SC was proud to have its first women's team compete in competitions in Geelong. The Team started in Division 2 in its first year and were Runners-up that year. They enjoyed many successes from 1972 through to 1986.

In 1982, the Club began coaching its first junior teams – the Club's future players. Over the years, due to the focus it had on encouraging and developing younger members of the Club, many of the Club's players went onto represent Geelong and Victoria in various State and inter-State competitions.

Some of remarkable achievements include players like:

- Henry Gumienik. Australian Under 17 Assistant Coach
- Mark Filipowicz. Two Gold and one Silver Medals at the Australian National Championships (Victorian Under 19 and 21)
- Robert Pundj, John Kozulin and Greg Kozulin. Victorian Under 19 Australian Championships
- Many others have also represented, captained or coached Geelong teams on a number of occasions. They included: David Witecki, Richard Siwicki, Mark Pundj, David Pundj, Tom Skotnica Tony Filipowicz and Richard Skorjanec.



Participants at the Lara Polish Sports Festival

The *Syrena* Sports Club took part each year in the Victorian Polish Sports Festival, originally held at Werribee Park and later on at the Lara Sporting Grounds. Not only did competitors participate in Volleyball and Soccer but also in field and track events held on that day. It proved to be a very popular and a well-attended event on the Polish Calendar of events in Victoria. In the last years of the Festival's existence, it was held on the grounds of the White Eagle House in Breakwater.

In the 1970s, when the Polish Community Association (PCA) established the *Millennium* House in Malop St, Geelong, the PCA also became very much involved in and financially sponsored the *Polonia* Soccer Club, which played in local soccer competitions for a number of years. Unfortunately, the *Polonia* SC disbanded in 1967. Late in 1967, the *Syrena* Volleyball Club filled this void by expanding its sporting activities to soccer as

was mentioned above. This resulted in a change of the Club's name to *Syrena* Sports Club.

As a soccer team, *Syrena* had humble beginnings. It began training and playing its matches at the Birmids Auto Casting's O.C.D. Cricket Club grounds, which the *Syrena* SC converted to a soccer pitch. This was mainly due to the hard work of Peter Wołosewicz, Adam



First training session of the newly established Soccer team. 1966



Syrena S.C. on the Birmid Auto Casting Pitch 1972

Zychla, Zbigniew Stawicki, Stefan Tabisz and Frank Filipowicz. The Club was not able to enjoy this new facility for too long. When the Ford Motor Company took over the Birmid Auto Casting operations, they needed the land the Club was using to expand its newly acquired auto casting operations. Fortunately, the then Shire of Corio



Playing as Bell Post Hill S.C. on the Birmid Auto Casting Oval
1975

Council came to the rescue and allocated the North Geelong High School oval, which the Club used from 1974 to 1981.

One of the highlights of its soccer history was the match against the well-established *Polonia* Adelaide Soccer Club. The *Syrena* Team lost 2:4, which was a good result considering *Syrena* was new at this sport. Some of the *Syrena* players that stood out on the day were Adolf Posadowski, Marian Baranski and John Kubina.

At that time, soccer teams were not permitted to use names of ethnic origins. Hence, the *Syrena* Sports Club team played under the name of Belmont Soccer Club.

When it moved to north of Geelong, it changed its name to Bell Post Hill United. Again, the Team changed its name to Pyramid P.B.S. Soccer Club when it received large sponsorship from the Pyramid Building Society.

It took some time for the soccer arm of the Club to achieve notable successes in this area of sport. It wasn't until the mid-1970's and early 1980's that the soccer team began to enjoy success.

In 1980, the Polish Community Association (PCA) in Geelong sold its Malop St property and purchased a large property in Breakwater. The building, which once was a ball-bearing factory, was renovated and, with the help of *Syrena* SC members, the surrounding grounds were developed to incorporate soccer pitches. The new Polish Centre was called, *The White Eagle House*.



Syrena Team in 1964

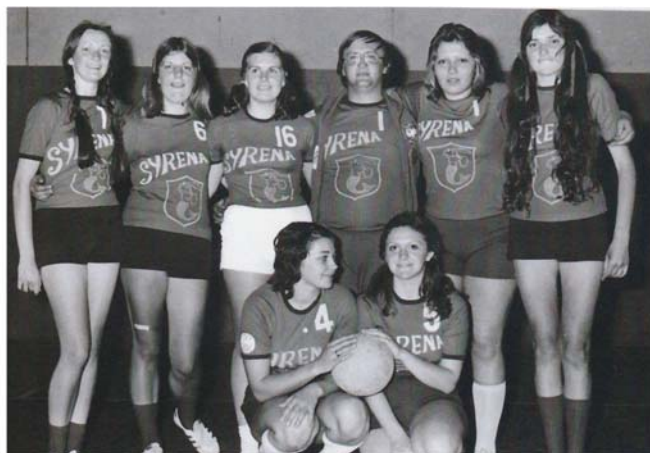


Galaska Cup 2003 – Mixed Volleyball Team

The PCA invited the *Syrena* Sports Club to move its soccer team to Breakwater, which it did, and to change the team's name to *Breakwater Eagles Soccer Club* (BESC). The name remains to this day. Although there are no players of Polish origin playing in any of the nine soccer teams the BESC now fields and it is no longer associated with the *Syrena* Sports Club, the PCA has continues to sponsor the BESC to this very day. The Club was however managed for several

years by Mr Joe Jakubowski, who also served on the PCA Committee as a member and later as President of the PCA for a number of years.

Although the *Syrena* Sports Club still exists today, it does not enjoy the prominence it had enjoyed for more than five decades. It no longer is involved in volleyball or soccer. Age-wise, many of the remaining members are “knocking onto the door of 70 and many have already entered that door” a few years ago. They now meet regularly only for a game of golf and a beer or two after their game.



1984 Women's Volleyball Team with Coach, Henry Gumienik

No organisation can continue to run so successfully and for so long as the *Syrena* Sports Club was able to do, without some members willing to contribute more of their time and effort than is expected of them. According to Frank, during the latter part of the Club's existence, two people need to be given a lot of credit for their contribution to the ongoing success and continued existence of the *Syrena* SC. **Mark Filipowicz** and especially **David Pundj** are two members who have done just that.

In concluding the History of the *Syrena* Sports Club, I personally must single out one other very special person, who has been an integral part of the Club. That person is **Frank Filipowicz**, who must receive most of the accolades for ensuring that the *Syrena* Sports Club lasted for six decades. I was secretary of the *Syrena* Sports Club for several years and was able to witness firsthand Frank's commitment to and his affection for the Club. His enduring commitment was and still is unequalled. No one could have done more than what Frank did, from the Club's inception in 1961 to the present day. I am sure there are now many men and women, who belonged to the Club decades ago and competed in either volleyball or soccer, will now look back at the past with deep nostalgia and immense pride to have had the honour of being members of such the *Syrena* Sports Club and to have been able to share in its past successes. So, thank you, Frank!

Written by **Henry Szkuta**

Based on information given by Frank Filipowicz and others involved with the Club.

April 2021



A Reunion of some of the original players, in 1980



Recent Christmas breakup Party of the Syrena Golf Club

Memories



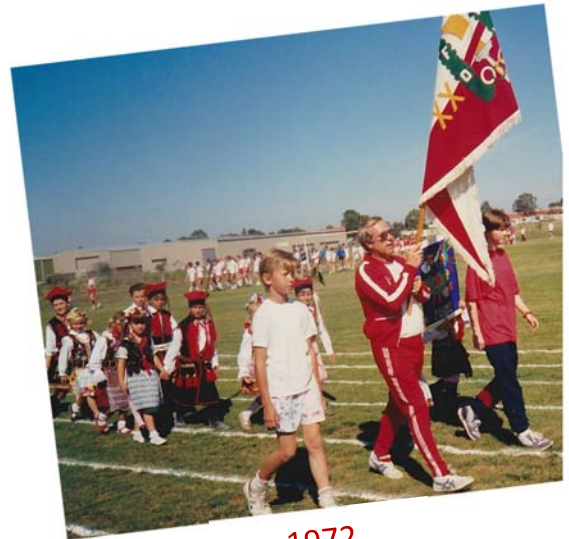
1964



1968



1984



1972



1986



2011



1988



1995



2011



1976



1999



Andrew and Stan Stopinski, Anton Skotnica
 Józef Stopinski and Roman Galaska



Frank Filipowicz, Tom Skotnica, Andrew
 Makohon, Tony & Mark Filipowicz

*Syrena Sports
 Club's
 50th
 Anniversary
 2011*



Henry Gumienik, Anton Skotnica, Józef
 Stopinski, Eugene Pędzinski, Peter
 Wotosewicz, Frank Filipowicz & Joe Parks



Syrena Soccer Team on their North Geelong Ground

Krótką Historia Chóru Kościelnego

Początki rozwinięcia Chóru Kościelnego



Chór im. Stanisława Moniuszki w Geelong został założony przez Ks. Lucjana Jaroszkę w roku 1964. Pierwszym dyrygentem i organistą był Tadeusz Hau, który prowadził chór przez pierwszych kilka lat.

Pierwszy występ Chóru był na 25ciu lecie kapłaństwa Ks. Lucjana Jaroszki w lipcu 1964 r. Chór śpiewał regularnie na polskich nabożeństwach w kościele St. Mary's. oraz na różnych świeckich uroczystościach narodowych.

W roku 1966 do chóru przyszedł p. Stanisław Karpiński z małżonką Marią. Stanisław miał skończoną szkołę muzyczną z głównym instrumentem puzonem, podjął się jednak prowadzenia chóru. Opracowywał pieśni i dyrygował chórem. Pan Tadeusz Hau dalej grał na organach w kościele albo na fortepianie na występach poza Kościołem.



W roku 1966, Polonia po całym świecie

obchodziła Tysiąclecie Chrześcijaństwa w Polsce, czyli Millenium. W Geelong też wszystkie

organizacje brały udział w wielu tych uroczystościach. Chór też śpiewał, pierwszy raz oficjalnie pod dyktando p. Stanisława Karpińskiego a p. Tadeusz Hau akompaniował na organach lub na pianinie.



Chór Im. *Stanisława Moniuszki* i Ks. Lucjan Jaroszka z Ks. Kardynałem Karolem Wojtyłą na święceniu Kościoła Polskiego w Essendon

Pan Hau po pewnym czasie zrezygnował z Chóru. Chór nadal śpiewał regularnie w kościele i na inne okazje. W kościele grali nam na organach Mr Domenico de Rosso (organista z parafii St Mary's), albo jego syn Frank De Rosso i później Chris Kelly, późniejszy dyrygent chóru w parafii St Mary's.

W latach 70 tych, przez kilka lat była przerwa w działalności chóru. Chór wznowił działalność na początku lat 1980tych. Na inne okazje grali dla chóru różni młodzi Polacy z Geelong ale każdy tylko na krótki okres czasu.



W roku 1988 zaczęła akompaniować dla chóru, na organach w Kościele, Jenny Krasny. Przychodziła na wszystkie próby i grała na wszystkie okazje: w kościele, akademie, spotkania, koncerty i inne okazje. Była bardzo zdolna, pilna, obowiązkowa i zorganizowana. Akompaniowała dla chóru nawet na swym pożegnaniu 06. 02. 2000 r. kiedy wyjeżdżała na

dalsze studia do Brisbane. Jenny ukończyła Masters Degree in Organizational Psychology. Po wyjściu za mąż, nazywa się Jenny Merrett. Zasłużyła się bardzo dla Poloni w Geelong.



Chór Im. Stanisława Moniuszki występuje na jednym z wielu spotkań w Domu Orła Białego, pod dyrekcją p. Stasia Karpinskiego

Od tamtego czasu nie mieliśmy nikogo kto by grał dla nas na stałe. Na akademiach grała nam Elżunia Strzelecka. Od czasu do czasu gra nam na gitarze Janusz Gil. Szczególnie pieśni o nowszym charakterze, do których gitara „pasuje”.

W dawnych latach (60 tych, 70 tych i 80 tych) nasz Chór był liczny, od 20-30 członków. Później stopniowo się zmniejszał i w obecnym czasie jest nas tylko kilku i śpiewamy tylko w kościele jako grupka prowadząca wspólny śpiew.



Na próbie Chóru w domu p. Karpinskich – 1997



Występ Chóru na okazji Święta Niepodległości Polski - 11/11/2018

Ważniejsze występy Chóru w przeciągu przeszłych lat:

1966	Obchody Millenium - Tysiąclecie Chrześcijaństwa w Polsce
1968	Kwiecień wizyta J. E. Ks. Biskupa Rubina
1970	18 stycznia Ks. Biskup Rubin w Essendon „odrzuć” pierwszą skibę ziemi pod budowę kościoła, chór śpiewał kolędy w czasie Mszy Świętej.
1971	20 grudzień Wieczór Kolęd w TPI Hall, Geelong. W następnych latach było tych wieczorów dużo więcej.
1973	24 lutego poświęcenie kościoła w Essendon przez Kardynała Karola Wojtyłę
1973	26 lutego uroczysta Msza św w kościele St Mary's w Geelong z udziałem J. E. Ks. Kardynała Karola Wojtyły, J. E. Ks. Szczepana Wesolego i innych księży.
1980	5 grudnia Chór śpiewa kolędy w Y.W.C.A. w Geelongu
1980	20 grudnia Chór śpiewa kolędy na Wigilii w Domu Polskim w Geelongu.
1980	21 grudnia Chór śpiewa kolędy w Holy Cross Hospital w Geelongu.
1981	15 lutego, uroczyste poświęcenie Domu Orła Białego w Geelong.
1981	28 lutego, uroczyste otwarcie Domu Orła Białego w Geelong
1981	26 września Wieczór Pieśni i Piosenki w Domu Orła Białego. Takie spotkania odbywały się raz w roku przez kilka lat.
1981	4 listopada Chór brał udział w koncercie w Geelong Theatre „Music from around the world”. Ford Theatre Geelong
1982	19 września Chór urządza 2gi “Wieczór Pieśni i Piosenki”
1983	20 sierpnia Chór urządza 3ci “Wieczór Pieśni i Piosenki.”
1983	Pani Ulka Kamburowska zaczęła uczyć śpiewu w Chórze 10.9.1982 – skończyła 21.9.1983r.
1983	28 września Chór śpiewa z okazji wizyty ks biskupa Szczepana Wesolego.
1983	Lipiec Chór bierze udział w koncercie-widowisku urządzonym przez byłych członków N.S.Z.Z. Solidarność w Melbourne.
1983	10 grudnia Chór śpiewa kolędy na Wigilii w Domu Polskim.
1984	16 maja Chór śpiewa na 10ciolecie Kapłaństwa ks. Stanisława Rakieja
1984	16 grudnia Chór bierze udział w “International Carols by Candlelight” w North Geelong High School.
1984	30 grudnia, POL ART, Festiwal Polskiej Kultury i Sztuki w National Theatre w St Kilda Melbourne
1985	15 września Chór urządza 4-ty Wieczór Pieśni i Piosenki. Powtórzony został w Rowville w Domu Polskim Syrena 24.11.85r.
1985	29 grudzień Chór brał udział w Wieczorze Kolęd w kościele w Essendon- śpiewał 8 kolęd. Akompaniowała Jolanta Karpinska. W tych latach Chór śpiewa w czasie Mszy Św. polskich w kościele St. Mary's, na ślubach i różnych innych okazjach, akademiach z okazji 3ciego Maja i 11tego listopada.

1986	07 maja Chór im. S. Moniuszki zakupił pianino "Ronisch" od Deakin University za \$1700.00. Koło artystyczne "Tęcza" dało na ten cel \$479. Pianino jest w Domu Orla Białego – używane na wszystkie okazje.
1986	28 września Godzina z Papieżem (w oczekiwaniu na spotkanie 28.11.1986 Polskie Sanktuarium Maryjne w \ Essendon – Chór śpiewał 5 pieśni religijnych i 3 świeckie.
1986	16 września Chór ofiaruje \$500.00 dla Komitetu Org. Spotkania z Papieżem
1986	09 listopada Chór śpiewa na akademii z okazji 11 tego listopada.
1986	28 listopada Spotkanie z Papieżem w M.C.G. Chór śpiewał w czasie oczekiwania na Papieża i razem z Chórem Syrena z Melb. w czasie spotkania.
1986	20 grudnia Chór śpiewa na Wieczery Wigilijnej w Domu Polskim
1987	08 marzec Chór śpiewa w czasie Mszy Św. w Domu Polskim – Piknik Sportowy.
1987	19 kwiecień Chór śpiewa nowe pieśni w czasie Mszy Św. wielkanocnej w kościele St. Mary's.
1987	03 maja Akademia Majowa – Chór śpiewa pieśni o charakterze narodowym i pieśni ludowe.
1987	21 czerwca Boże Ciało – Kościół St. Mary's – Chór śpiewa na procesji i w czasie Mszy Św.
1987	11 Listopad Chór śpiewa na 2ch akademiach: w Domu Polskim 8.11 ,w sali S.P.K. 15.11.
1987	19 grudnia Wieczera Wigilijna w Domu Polskim – Chór śpiewa kolędy.
1988	04 marca Spotkanie całej parafii z Generałem Stowarzyszenia Chrystusowców ks. Szymankiem w Domu Polskim – Chór śpiewa kilka pieśni.
1988	20 marca Chór śpiewa podczas Mszy Św. w Domu Polskim (Piknik Sportowy)
1988	03 kwietnia Wielkanoc '88 – Chór śpiewa pieśni wielkanocne w kościele St. Mary's na polskiej Mszy Św.
1988	20 czerwca 15sto lecie Kapłaństwa ks. Zenona Broniarczyka
1988	03 lipca Pożegnanie ks. Zenona i powitanie ks. Tomasza Zaręby w Domu Polskim
1988	13 listopada Wizyta Prymasa Polski ks. Józefa Glempa w kościele St. Mary's – Geelong Chór śpiewa Acce Sacerdos i inne pieśni. W tym samym dniu wieczorem, Chór bierze udział w koncercie z okazji siedemdziesiątej Roczniczy odzyskania niepodległości, z udziałem Prymasa Polski Kardynała Józefa Glempa, w Dallas Brooks Hall w Melbourne.
1988	10 grudnia Chór śpiewa kolędy na Wigilii w Domu Polskim.
1988	24 grudnia Na pasterce polskiej w kościele St. Mary's
1989	07 maja Akademia 3ciego Maja – Z.P. – Dom Polski
1989	14 maja Akademia 3ciego Maja - sala S.P.K.
1989	28 maja Boże Ciało – kościół St. Mary's
1989	09 lipca Z okazji 25ciolecia istnienia Chóru S. Moniuszki został urządzony "Wieczór Pieśni i Piosenki". Konferansjerka, p. Basia Grzybowska, prowadziła. Bardzo udany wieczór w sali Domu Orla Białego
1989	02 września Chór brał udział w akademii w Domu Polskim z okazji 50tej rocznicy wybuchu 2giej Wojny Światowej.
1989	22 września Z okazji urodzin ks. Tomasza Zaręby Chór śpiewa na Mszy Św. i potem na herbatce w Domu

	Polskim z tej okazji.
1989	16 grudnia "Carols by Candlelight" w Centenary Hall, zorganizowane przez Shire of Corio. Boże Narodzenie – Chór śpiewa kolędy przed Pasterką, w czasie Mszy Św., w święta i wszystkie Niedziele.
1990	11 marca Święto Sportowe w Domu Polskim – Chór śpiewa w czasie Mszy Św.
1990	06 maja Akademia z okazji 3ciego Maja
1990	08 lipca Rewia pod tytułem "No i jeszcze coś" urządzona przez wszystkie grupy artystyczne w Geelong. Dochód przesłany do Polski na poparcie Rządu Mazowieckiego.
1999	4 lipca 40lecie Kapłaństwa ks. Zbigniewa Pajdaka – Chór śpiewa w kościele i na sali w Domu Polskim na tej uroczystości.
2000	23 lipca Chór bierze udział w 50cioleciu Kapłaństwa Monsiniora Murray w kościele St. Mary's
2000	12 listopada 40-lecie parafii Bell Park. Chór śpiewa w czasie Mszy Św. na Bell Parku oraz w czasie występów po południu.
2001	21 stycznia Pożegnanie ks. Pajdaka połączone ze śpiewem kolęd.
2001	21 marca Chór bierze udział we Mszy Św. na pożegnanie Monsiniora Murray w kościele St. Mary's.
2001	21 marca Chór śpiewa pieśni ludowe w West Town Hall na koncercie zorganizowanym przez Migrant Resource Centre. z okazji Tygodnia Seniora. 20 min. program. 10 pieśni ludowych. Akompaniuje Agon Guzilian na skrzypcach i Janusz Gil na gitarze. Wszystko wyszło bardzo dobrze.



Chór na Przywitaniu Ks Biskupa Rubina w Centenary Hall Corio 1968



Chór śpiewa na Mszy Świętej w Kościele St Marv's - 1986



Występ Chóru w Domu Orła Białego -1994



Chór występuje na Pako Festa w 1995r w West Geelong



Chór uczestniczy na uroczystości Święta Niepodległości w Domu Orła Białego, 11 listopada, 2012



Ks Tomasz Zaremba dziękuje Chórowi za uczestnictwo w obchodach Dnia Ojca w Domu Orła Białego



Stanisław Karpinski, Dyrektor Chóru, na obiedzie z Kard. Wojtyłą u Państwa Wójcik West Geelong, 1973

Stanisław Karpinski
Marzec, 2021

History of the Polish Children Choir 'Promyki'

The Early Years

The Choir was formed in September 1984 by Father Zenon Broniarczyk together with newly arrived, from Poland, Mrs Urszula Kamburowski, a graduate of the Academy of Music in Wroclaw. We decided to call the Choir, *Promyki*, Polish for "Rays of Light".

The Choir comprised of the children from the Polish families who migrated to Australia in the early 1980's as well as children from Polish families who arrived in the 1950s and 1960s. The weekly rehearsals at the presbytery commenced with the small number of the girls, but very soon their number grew up to almost 30. The main goal of the formation of the choir was to prepare the group for singing during the Sunday Holy Mass.



After the regular lessons, the children gained quite a pleasant sound and confidence to participate in the Feast of Christ the King at the end of November of the same year.

From that memorable Sunday, the choir was singing at every Sunday Mass.

The choir was accompanied by guitar players, who significantly enhanced the harmonies of all songs. For a short time, the choir was accompanied by Mr Andrzej Rogacki, but very soon after, we were joined by a very talented guitarist and singer Mr Janusz Gil, who stayed with the group to the very end. The other guitar players were Tony Filipowicz and Justin Parks.



During 1985, the choir broadened its repertoire and made significant improvement in their sound. At that time Father Zenon encouraged us all to present our songs in concerts.

We went to Ballarat to perform at their Polish Club and shared our music with their community.

In 1986, *Promyki* were singing on many occasions in Melbourne in

various Polish Clubs and churches while still continuing to participate in the weekly celebrations of the Holy Mass in Geelong.

The highlight of the year was the performance in October at the MCG Stadium in Melbourne during the concert organized by the Polish Communities Council in Victoria for the Polish Pope, John Paul II, who visited Australia that spring. It was a very special and moving moment for all members of *Promyki* Choir.



All the parents who supported the choir were very proud of the achievements of their children. They encouraged them to participate in the group; made two different sets of costumes for them; and accompanied them on every occasion the Choir performed.

The following years were filled with more performances, but we never forgot that our main goal was to sing in the Geelong church at the weekly Sunday Polish Mass.

1988 brought two major events to the lives of the members of *Promyki*.

The choir was invited to participate at Dallas Brooks Hall in a concert in May to celebrate, with many other singing and dancing groups from Melbourne, the anniversary of the 3rd of May Polish Constitution Day, a significant day in the history of Poland.

The concert in November 1988 was organized by Father Wiesław Słowik, from Essendon, to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of Poland regaining its Independence and to acknowledge the sacrifice of many Polish patriots who lost their lives in that struggle.

On both occasions, *Promyki* performed professionally and with great confidence and were very appreciated by the audience.



The following year, the Choir was preparing its repertoire of songs to be recorded on tape. The impressive recordings were made at the professional music studio in Geelong during a couple of the cold winter days.

Meantime, the Choir took part in further concerts in Melbourne. One of them was the concert at a Polish Centre in Prahran with the special choreography by Mr Maciej Staniewicz,

a successful film director and an actor from Poland. We called that concert 'Always with You'. Apart from *Promyki*, Polish actors recited a number of patriotic Polish poems.

There was also a very memorable Christmas Concert at the Church of Saint Mary of the Angels in Geelong in 1989.

1990 brought many changes to the life of this Polish Children Choir.

A departure of Father Zenon to another diocese was only one of them. We had to change the place of the weekly rehearsals, which created completely different and less friendly atmosphere. The oldest girls who turned 20 years of age had left the choir and moved on with their lives.



My own professional life became very busy with the work at The Geelong Grammar School and my involvement in musical groups, like quartets, orchestras, etc. put a lot of pressure on my time.

One day, in 1990, I had to sadly make the decision to leave my position as the conductor of *Promyki* Choir.

When I look back to those five interesting and eventful years of my life, I am very grateful to Father Zenon for inviting me to work with Polish children, so far from my motherland.

I thank God for Father Zenon's spiritual guidance and direction, without which the Choir would not achieve so much.

My special thanks also must go to all parents for their great support and the members of the choir, all girl plus one boy, for their perseverance and a strong desire to achieve something special.

That something special was the quality of the sound they had developed over those years, singing their religious and patriotic songs in Polish.

Urszula Kamburowski

Former Director of the *Promyki* Choir

March, 2021

Later Years



Promyki performing in Rowville

After a short break, when Mrs Urszula Kamburowska retired from her position as Director of *Promyki*, I made the difficult decision to take up the work she had commenced with the children's choir. Difficult, because I was very aware of the great successes Mrs Kamburowska had had with *Promyki* and I was concerned whether I could do them justice. However, when I approached our new Polish Chaplain, Fr Tomasz Zaremba, and some organising members of the *Promyki*

'family', their unreserved enthusiasm and encouragement to take up the role left me in no doubt that, together, we/*Promyki* could continue to bring joy to our Polish community and Church services with the beautiful harmonious songs of praise they already knew.

Thus, thanks to the strong commitment of the young people of the group who were most willing for *Promyki* to remain, and the support I received from their parents, the Choir was able to continue performing successfully. Furthermore we were able to maintain the momentum set by Mrs Kamburowska coupled with the support we all received from Fr Tomasz.

The *Promyki* Choir regularly sang during Polish Masses on Sundays, accompanied by Mr Janusz Gil on guitar. Choir rehearsals were held once a week at the then Migrant Resource Centre in Separation Street, Bell Park. Additional short rehearsals took place before each performance.



Fr. Tomasz awarding Regina a Certificate of Appreciation



Singing during Mass at St. Mary's Basilica

The first official *Promyki* concert under my direction took place on September 23, 1990 at the White Eagle House in Breakwater. Further performances took place in Rowville Melbourne, Canberra, and Ashfield Sydney as well as a PolArt Festival in Sydney.

Trips to these various concerts were possible thanks to the involvement of the parents of the Choir members and, specifically, to Mrs Halina Zychla who with her professional approach and hard work took care of all the logistical details, including fundraisers, to ensure *Promyki's* smooth yet vibrant operation.

Promyki also sang at a special Mass at St Mary's Church when Archbishop Szczepan Wesoły visited Geelong from Poland.

The last time *Promyki* performed was at our traditional Polish Christmas Eve Dinner, Wigilja, at the White Eagle House, on December 9, 1995.

Unfortunately, the significant dwindling yet again of the number of members made it increasingly difficult to maintain the choir, and by the end of 1995 I felt it was time for me to retire.

I extend my humble thanks to the young members of the Choir for their enthusiasm, dedication and their willingness to attend weekly rehearsals, and performances which usually took place on weekends, their free time! Also, I extend my gratitude to Mr Janusz Gil for his commitment and patience during my years at the helm, and finally, yet again, to the parents and friends, for their encouragement and unfailing support of whatever was asked of them in the interests of *Promyki*.

Still, Jenny Krasny, a *Promyki* choir member since its inception, took over for one more year before her own marriage and move to Brisbane finally brought this beautiful children's choir to a close.

Regina Parks

Former Director of the *Promyki* Choir, 1989 – 1995

April 2021





Performing at the White Eagle House in Geelong

Historia Chóru Dziecięcego 'Promyki'

Wczesne Lata

Chór *Promyki* został założony przez świętej pamięci księdza Zenona Broniarczyka we wrześniu 1984 roku z udziałem Urszuli Kamburowskiej, nowo przybyłej z Polski absolwentki Wyższej Szkoły Muzycznej we Wrocławiu.

Do chóru należały dzieci z polskich rodzin, przybyłych do Australii na początku lat 80-tych, jak i



dzieci urodzone w Australii. Wkrótce na plebanii księdza Broniarczyka odbyła się pierwsza próba chóru z udziałem dziewcząt w wieku od 6 do 16 lat oraz jednego chłopca. Głównym celem powstania tego zespołu było przygotowanie dzieci do uczestnictwa w uroczystej Mszy Świętej na Dzień Chrystusa Króla w ostatnia niedzielę listopada. Śpiew w czasie tej uroczystości okazał się dużym sukcesem i odtąd 'Promyki' brały udział w niemal każdej niedzielnej polskiej Mszy Świętej.

Śpiewom dzieci towarzyszył akompaniament gitarowy, wzbogacając je o piękne harmonie i różnorodność rytmiczną. Podczas pierwszych tygodni akompaniował nam pan Andrzej Rogacki wraz z dwoma chłopcami, których imion niestety nie pamiętam. Wkrótce dołączył do nas utalentowany gitarzysta i piosenkarz, pan Janusz Gil, który towarzyszył chórowi do końca jego istnienia. Doskonały podkład rytmiczny dostarczali nam również dwaj gitarzyści, Tony Filipowicz i Justin Parks.

Kiedy zespół osiągnął liczbę ponad dwudziestu członków, ksiądz Zenon zaproponował wyjazd z koncertem do Domu Polskiego w Ballarat. Był to pierwszy publiczny występ *Promyków* poza Geelong przed świętami Bożego Narodzenia w 1985 roku. Byliśmy przyjęci w Ballarat bardzo serdecznie i życzliwie. Zachęciło to wszystkich do zwiększonego wysiłku w nauce nowych pieśni, doskonalenia jakości brzmienia głosu i wymowy polskich tekstów.



W 1986 roku *Promyki* były często goszczone w różnych polskich parafiach i ośrodkach polonijnych w Melbourne.

Najważniejszym wydarzeniem tego roku było uczestnictwo 'Promyków' w koncercie na stadionie MCG zorganizowanym z okazji wizyty Papieża Jana Pawła II w Australii. Był to niewątpliwie najbardziej wzniosły moment w historii naszego Chóru.

Rok 1987 był szczególnie intensywnym i produktywnym dla dziewcząt i chłopców z chóru *Promyki*. Po bardzo szczegółowym przygotowaniu nagraliśmy z dużym sukcesem najładniejsze pieśni w profesjonalnym studio muzycznym.



W 1988 roku chór *Promyki* był zaproszony do wzięcia udziału w dwóch wielkich koncertach w Dallas Brooks Hall w Melbourne.

Pierwszy koncert odbył się 8 maja i był zatytułowany 'Królowej w Hołdzie'. Był on zorganizowany przez organizacje polonijne w Wiktorii, a zwłaszcza z Melbourne, w

kolejną rocznicę Konstytucji 3-Maja. Wzięły w nim udział najlepsze polonijne zespoły muzyczne.

W listopadzie tego samego roku, również w Dallas Brooks Hall, odbył się drugi uroczysty koncert, tym razem z okazji rocznicy Święta Niepodległości Polski, na który przybyli: Prymas Polski, Kardynał Józef Glemp oraz towarzyszący mu Biskupi J. Szczepan Wesoły i J.E. Jerzy Dąbrowski. Koncert ten był zorganizowany przez księdza Wiesława Słowika z polskiego kościoła w Essendon.

Promyki wystąpiły z trzema pieśniami z tekstami polskich poetów, Juliusza Słowackiego i Juliana Tuwima. Był to kolejny sukces, chociaż przygotowanie do tego występu zajęło nam dużo czasu i wysiłku.

1989 był również intensywny i obfity w wydarzenia, którymi były kolejne koncerty. Ciągłe jednak najważniejsze było uczestniczenie we Mszy Świętej w kościele Matki Boskiej od Aniołów w Geelong.



Jednym z koncertów, który dobrze pamiętam, był poetycki wieczór zatytułowany 'Zawsze z Tobą' w ośrodku polonijnym w Prahran, dzielnicy Melbourne. Po raz pierwszy nasz chór pracował nad nowym ustawieniem choreograficznym, którym kierował pan Maciej Staniewicz, polski reżyser i aktor filmowy. Pod koniec tego roku zorganizowaliśmy również koncert z okazji Bożego Narodzenia, który odbył się w kościele w Geelong.



Rok 1990 przyniósł wiele zmian w życiu naszego zespołu. Ksiądz Zenon Broniarczyk wyjechał z Geelong, a wraz z nim straciliśmy naszego patrona. Trzeba było zmienić miejsce naszych cotygodniowych prób, co wpłynęło na atmosferę i wyniki naszej pracy. Nasze najstarsze dziewczęta, które osiągnęły już ponad 20 lat, zaczęły stopniowo odchodzić z chóru.

W tym samym czasie moja praca jako nauczycielki muzyki w szkołach, a zwłaszcza

w Geelong Grammar School, jak i przynależność do różnych zespołów muzycznych pochłaniała coraz więcej mojego czasu i energii. Ze smutkiem musiałam podjąć decyzję opuszczenia *Promyków* w maju 1990.

Kiedy wracam pamięcią do tamtych pięciu lat pracy z dziećmi posługującym się moim ojczystym językiem polskim, jestem niezmiernie wdzięczna Panu Bogu i księdzu Zenonowi Brońarczykowi za uformowanie Chóru Dziecięcego *Promyki*.

Szczególne podziękowania chce przekazać wszystkim rodzicom dzieci za ich nieustające wsparcie, pomoc w zakupieniu i uszyciu kostiumów, towarzyszenie nam w każdej uroczystości i cotygodniowych próbach chóru.

Równie gorące podziękowanie przesyłam wszystkim byłym członkom *Promyków*, zarówno dzieciom, które z dużym zaangażowaniem przygotowywały pieśni, jak i towarzyszącym nam gitarzystom, którzy przyczynili się do udoskonalenia brzmienia tego zespołu.

Urszula Kamburowska

Była Dyrektorka Chóru 1984-1990

Marzec, 2021

Późniejsze Lata

Po krótkiej przerwie, kiedy pani Urszula Kamburowska musiała zrezygnować z prowadzenia *Promyków*, podjęłam wielką decyzję kontynuowania działalności w prowadzeniu chóru



Promyki śpiewają w Kościele w Rowville

Janusz Gil. Próby Chóru odbywały się raz w tygodniu w Migrant Resource Centre, na Separation St Bell Park. Dodatkowe krótkie próby odbywały się przed każdym występem.

Pierwszy oficjalny koncert Chóru *Promyki* pod moją dyrekcją odbył się 23 września, 1990r w Domu Orła Białego w Breakwater. Następne występy miały miejsce w Rowville (Melbourne), Canberra i Ashfield (Sydney).

Wyjazdy na te różne koncerty były możliwe dzięki dużemu zaangażowaniu rodziców dzieci, a przede wszystkim, Pani Haliny Zychla za wspaniałą



Singing during Mass at St. Mary's Church

młodzieży. Wiedziałam że pani Kamburowska potrafiła stworzyć tak wspaniały chór i obawiałam się czy będę mogła kontynuować tą pracę na tym poziomie.

Dzięki dużemu zaangażowaniu dzieci i ich rodziców Chór *Promyki* był w stanie dalej działać. Dużą pomoc i poparcie otrzymaliśmy od nowego Księdza Tomasza Zaremby.

Promyki uświetniały swoim śpiewem polskie nabożeństwa na których akompaniował im Pan



Ks. Tomasz wręcza Reginie Dyplom Uznania

organizację i duży wkład pracy w przygotowaniu tych koncertów.

Chór *Promyki* również śpiewał na Mszach Świętych w St Mary's na wizycie Arcybiskupa Szczepana Wesołego.

Po raz ostatni, *Promyki* wystąpiły z kolędami na Wigilii w Domu Orła Białego, 9 grudnia, 1995.

Składam duże podziękowanie dla młodzieży, która tak chętnie przychodziła na próby i występy, także

panu Januszowi Gil za jego zaangażowanie i cierpliwość przez te pięć lat i rodzicom, że z taką dedykacją zachęcali i przywozili młodzież na próby i występy. Dzięki tym, *Promyki* mogły jeszcze istnieć aż do mojego odejścia w 1995 r. Niestety z powodu, że liczba członków powoli się zmniejszała, Chór *Promyki* został rozwiązany w 1995 r.

Regina Parks

Były Dyrektor Chóru *Promyków*, 1990 -1995

Kwiecień, 2021



Promyki występują w Domu Orła Białego



Historia

Duszpasterstwa Polskiego

w Geelong

“Życie Społeczne Polaków w Geelong”



This project is supported by the City of Greater Geelong

‘Healthy and Connected Communities Grants Program’

Polacy i ich Wiara Katolicka

Od czasu kiedy Księżę Mieszko I ożenił się z czeską księżniczką Dobrową, przyjął jej wiarę chrześcijańską i nawrócił Polskę z pogaństwa na chrześcijaństwo w roku 966, Polacy zawsze akceptowali chrześcijaństwo jako integralną część ich codziennego życia. Przywiązanie do nauk tej religii stało się fundamentem na którym Polska była rządzona przez wieki. Ich wiara katolicka stała się jeszcze silniejsza w czasach kryzysów, czego niektórzy z nas byli świadkami podczas dwóch Wielkich Wojen, a ostatnio w czasie przewrotów w Polsce w latach 1970tych.

Ten silny związek z wiarą jeszcze mocniej zademonstrowali ci Polacy, którzy zdecydowali nie powrócić do Polski po Drugiej Wojnie Światowej, a także ci, którzy zdecydowali opuścić Polskę w czasie kryzysu, politycznych



Księża którzy pracowali w parafiach w Australii między 1950 i 1960

rozruchów i powstania Związku Solidarności latach 1970tych. Polacy, którzy wyemigrowali do Australii, znaleźli swój komfort społeczny i duchowy w polskich misjach katolickich, które działały w całej Australii. Te polskie misje/parafie odegrały zasadniczą rolę, nie tylko w wspieraniu i utrzymaniu ich wiarę katolicką, ale także w utrzymaniu ich bogatej polskiej kultury, języka i tradycję.

Wszyscy jesteśmy wdzięczni naszym duchowym przywódcom, którzy pracowali z nami od 1950 roku do dzisiejszego dnia.

Początki Pracy Duszpasterstwa w Geelong

Rodacy którzy zamieszkali w Geelong, przybyli tam po Drugiej Wojnie Światowej; większość przybyła z obozów Niemieckich. Wielu z nich spędziło długie miesiące w obozie przejściowym w Bonegilla, zanim odpracowali swój dwuletni kontrakt pracy. Kontrakty te były wyznaczane w różnych miejscach stanu Victoria. Po odpracowaniu kontraktów, wiele Polaków osiedlili się w Geelong i tam znaleźli pracę w miejscowych fabrykach, Ford, International Harvester i w innych mniejszych zakładach. Już w 1950 roku polscy księża założyli ośrodek duszpasterski w Geelong.

Mszy Święte były odprawiane w pierwszych latach, w parafialnym Kościele, St Mary's of the Angels, przy Yarra Street Geelong. Potem przez krótki czas w Kościele Saint Peter and Saint Paul, przy Mercer Street, Geelong.

Kiedy archidiecezja Melbourne utworzyła parafię Holy Family na Bell Park, gdzie wielu imigrantów osiedliło się na początku lat 50tych, niedzielne msze polskie były odprawiane w parafii Holy Family w baraku. Kiedy budynek szkolny został ukończony w 1956 roku, służył nie tylko na klasy szkolne a także jako kościół w niedziele aż do końca 1960 roku.

Kiedy rząd uzupełnił transport miejscowy między North Geelong i centrum miasta Geelong, Mszy Święte dla Polaków tylko się odbywali w Kościele St Mary's aż do terażniejszych czas.



Ks. Jaroszka i Ks. Joe Kelly na zdjęciu z dziećmi sobotniej Polskiej Szkole w Holy Family Bell Park

Historia kapłanów, którzy opiekowali się sprawą duchową Polaków w Geelong

Księża Józef Krasocki i Stanisław Skudrzyk 1950-1954

W 1950 roku polscy księża założyli ośrodek duszpasterski w Geelong. Księża Józef Krasocki i Stanisław Skudrzyk dojeżdżali z Melbourne z usługą duszpasterską. Osobiście, wiele nie pamiętam o Ks. Skudrzyku, a w ogóle nie pamiętam nic o Ks. Krasockim. Pamiętam że Ks. Skudrzyk chrzczył mojego brata, Edwarda, w Kościele St Mary's w 1953.

Ksiądz Lucjan Jaroszka 1954-1975

W 1954 r. Ks. Lucjan Jaroszka rozpoczął stałą pracę duszpasterską, którą kontynuował w Geelong 21 lat, aż do jego powrotu na stałe do Polski w 1975 roku.

Młode Lata Ks. Lucjana Jaroszki



Lucjan był synem Florentyny i Brunona Jaroszków, wychowywał się w zamożnej rodzinie, o silnych korzeniach patriotycznych i religijnych. Ukończył Szkołę Podstawową i Gimnazjum Męskie im. J. Śniadeckiego w Pabianicach. W 1933 r. podjął studia na Wydziale Prawa Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu. Wkrótce jednak przerwał je i przeniósł do Łodzi, gdzie wstąpił do Wyższego Seminarium Duchownego. Tu rozpoczęła się jego dożywotnia, przyjaźń z ks. Stanisławem Świerczkiem. Święcenia kapłańskie przyjął 2 lipca 1939. Wraz z początkiem nowego roku decyzją władz kościelnych został skierowany na dalsze studia do Rzymu. Wybuch wojny uniemożliwił jednak realizację tego planu.

Okres wojny

W kampanii wrześniowej zginęli dwaj bracia Ks. Lucjana – Leonard i Witold. Ksiądz Lucjan pozostał w Pabianicach, od 6 grudnia 1939 pracując jako wikariusz w parafii św. Mateusza i kapelan szpitala przy ulicy Żeromskiego. Zaangażował się też w działalność konspiracyjną. Prowadził tajne nauczanie w domu rodzinnym. Udzielał sakramentów i odprawiał msze św. w prywatnych mieszkaniach. Został kapelanem Szarych Szeregów i Armii Krajowej. Redagował podziemną gazetkę „Na Zachodnim Szańcu”. Za tę działalność, 6 lutego 1943 został wraz z pozostałymi członkami rodziny Jaroszków aresztowany. W wyniku tego siostra zginęła w obozie w Auschwitz. Matka została zakatowana w więzieniu przy ul. Sterlinga. Ojciec, osadzony w Mauthausen-Gusen (niemiecki nazistowski obozów koncentracyjnych), przeżył wprawdzie obóz, ale zmarł wkrótce po powrocie z niego. Ks. Lucjan z całej rodziny został przy życiu sam. Początkowo uwięziony przy ulicy Sterlinga w Łodzi, po pięciu miesiącach trafił do obozu w Mauthausen, oznaczony numerem 31760, gdzie pracował w kamieniołomach. W sierpniu 1943 r. został przewieziony do pracy w fabryce samolotów Wiener-Neudorf w Austrii. 1 grudnia 1944 r. znalazł się w obozie koncentracyjnym Dachau, w bloku 28 (bloku polskich księży – tam też spotkał się ze swoim największym przyjacielem ks. Stanisławem Świerczkiem). Otrzymał numer obozowy 134376. Był to najcięższy okres w jego życiu. Wolność odzyskał 29 kwietnia 1945 r.



Obóz Mauthausen-Gusen i kopalnia

Okres powojennej emigracji



Ks Jaroszka i Chór Kościelny a przywitaniu
Ks Kard. Rubin w Geelong 1968

Z uwagi na uzasadnione ryzyko represji ze strony władz komunistycznych za konspiracyjną działalność w latach 1939–1943 zdecydował się nie wracać do Polski. Osiadł w Bawarii, gdzie podjął studia prawnicze na Uniwersytecie w Dillingen i w 1947 r. uzyskał tytuł magistra prawa kanonicznego. W 1950 na polecenie biskupa polowego Wojska Polskiego Józefa Gawliny wyjechał do Australii. Tam podjął pracę duszpasterską wśród Polonii w Gippsland, a od 1954 w Geelong w stanie Victoria. Był kapelanem polskich emigrantów. Tworzył struktury organizacji polonijnych, wspierał rozżalonych brakiem możliwości powrotu do kraju – podobnie jak on sam – rodaków (został pozbawiony polskiego obywatelstwa i otrzymał zakaz wjazdu do kraju). Koordynował peregrynację obrazu Matki Bożej Częstochowskiej w całej Australii. Systematycznie wspierał Kościół Łódzki przesyłając prasę, książki i filmy o tematyce katolickiej, niedostępne wówczas w Polsce. Głosił rekolekcje nie tylko w Australii, ale i w Nowej Zelandii oraz Papui-Nowej Gwinei. W 1973 r. zorganizował wizytę kard. Karola Wojtyły na Międzynarodowym Kongresie Eucharystycznym w Melbourne.



Okres ponownego pobytu w Pabianicach

W 1975 r, po wielu wysiłkach, ks. Lucjan Jaroszka powrócił do Polski. Zamieszkał przy parafii św. Mateusza w Pabianicach, której proboszczem był w tym czasie ks. Stanisław Świerczek. Pozostając w stanie częściowego spoczynku, czynnie służył swoją wiedzą i zaangażowaniem na rzecz kościoła i miasta. Jego płomienne kazania patriotyczne gromadziły tłumy wiernych.

Dzięki niemu powstało wiele cennych inicjatyw:

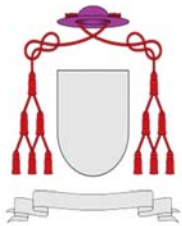
- wiele lat poświęcił na spisanie 4-tomowej kroniki parafii św. Mateusza w Pabianicach (w tym celu zmuszenie zbierał informacje w archiwach kościelnych Krakowa, Włocławka i Gniezna);
- w 1980 r. rodzinne grunty w Pabianicach przy ul. Karolewskiej 48 przekazał nowo erygowanej parafii św. Maksymiliana pod budowę kościoła;
- w 1988 r. ufundował jeden z 24 dzwonów zawieszonych na wieży kościoła św. Mateusza dla uczczenia 400-lecia obchodów tej parafii;
- w 1989 r. wszedł w skład Komitetu Honorowego Odbudowy Pomnika Niepodległości w Pabianicach;
- w 1991 r. był pomysłodawcą i głównym sponsorem pierwszego w Polsce pomnika św. Maksymiliana, który stanął na placu przy kościele św. Mateusza w Pabianicach;



Pomnik św. Maksymiliana Marii Kolbego

- w 1992 r. ufundował Epitafium poświęcone ks. Stanisławowi Świerczkowi w kościele św. Mateusza w Pabianicach i tablicę w kościele NMP Różańcowej w Pabianicach upamiętniającą ks. Leopolda Petrzyka, współwięźnia z Dachau, który został zamordowany;
- w 1993 r. przekazał środki pieniężne z odszkodowania za swój pobyt w obozach koncentracyjnych na ufundowanie płaskorzeźby Jana Pawła II umieszczonej na frontonie kościoła św. Mateusza – co stanowiło wotum wdzięczności za ocalenie życia;
- również w 1993 r. przekazał Muzeum Archidiecezji Łódzkiej cenną kolekcję srebrnych monet oraz znaczków Poczty Państwa Watykańskiego.

Za swoje wybitne zasługi otrzymał następujące wyróżnienia:



Tarcza herbowa
protonotariusza
apostolskiego

- tytuł kapelana Jego Świątobliwości papieża Pawła VI czyli prałata (19 kwietnia 1968 r. – na wniosek kard. Stefana Wyszyńskiego);
- tytuł prałata honorowego Jego Świątobliwości papieża Jana Pawła II (23 maja 1989 r.);
- tytuł kanonika Archikatedralnej Kapituły Łódzkiej (19 października 1991)
- tytuł protonotariusza Apostolskiego *De Numero* (1993)
- tytuł Honorowego Obywatela Miasta Pabianic (3 listopada 1993 r. jako pierwsza w ten sposób uhonorowana osoba w historii Pabianic);



Strój chórowy
protonotariusza

Infuly (Mitry) nigdy nie założył. Po półtorarocznej walce z chorobą, dotknięty całkowitą utratą zdolności do mowy przykuty do wózka inwalidzkiego, zmarł w wieku 82 lat, 4 lipca 1995 r. W uroczystościach pogrzebowych wzięli udział wszyscy biskupi łódzcy: Władysław Ziółek, Bohdan Bejze i Adam Lepa, licznie zgromadzone duchowieństwo, władze miasta Pabianice, przedstawiciele Armii Krajowej i tysiące pabianiczian.

Kondukt pogrzebowy pieszo przebył ulice miasta. Trumnę złożono w rodzinnym grobowcu rodziny Jaroszków na pabianickim cmentarzu katolickim.



Ks Jaroszka, Dyrygent Chóru witają Ks Kard. Karola Wojtyłę.
1974



Ks Jaroszka, Kard. Karol Wojtyła i Mon. Murray
- Geelong 1974

Choć służył dla społeczności polskiej w Geelong przez 21 lat, jestem zasmucony, że tylko teraz kiedy piszę historię pracy duszpasterstwa w Geelong, dowiedziałem się o czynach i osiągnięciach tego wielkiego, ale pokornego człowieka, dopiero teraz, 28 lat po jego śmierci. Ks. Lucjan nigdy nie chwalił się o jego osiągnięciem w życiu.

Mówiąc szczerze, jak byłem młodym, nieczęsto kazanie miały na mnie duży wpływ. Ale jeszcze pamiętam Ks. Lucjana płomienne kazania z ambony w Kościele St Mary's. Jego parafialni byli często wzruszeni jego namiętnymi kazaniem, zwłaszcza jego kazaniem o matkach, które ogłaszał na Dzień

Matki. Ks. Lucjan naprawdę był intelektualistą i wybitnym oratorem. Jestem teraz jeszcze bardziej zaszczycony, że Ks. Lucjan Jaroszk był celebrazem na naszym ślubie w 1970 roku.

Ks. Jaroszka pozostawił trwały ślad na społeczności polskiej w Geelong.

W latach 60tych, Ksiądz Jaroszka zamierzał sprowadzić do Geelong siostry zakonne z Polski. Zorganizował zbiórki funduszków na ośrodek dla sióstr i na zakupienia ziemi na budowę ochronki dla dzieci. Zakupiono pięć placów budowlanych na Bell Park, Geelong. Z nieznanych powodów, siostry nie przybyły do Geelong.

W grudniu 1967 roku, na zebraniu społeczeństwa polskiego w Geelong, zdecydowano przekazać te place dla Koła SPK Nr 12, które od niedawna zaczęło się rozwijać. SPK Koło 12 miało wówczas ok. 80 członków. Członkowie Koła po jakimś czasie sprzedali te place i, dzięki inicjatywy Ks. Jaroszki, mogli zakupić budynek przy Ryrie Street, który został centrum SPK w Geelong przez następne 50 lat.

Pamiętam, że w latach 50tych, Ks Jaroszka poprosił moich rodziców, żeby zgodzili się na prowadzenie Polskiej biblioteki w naszym domu na Bell Park, z którego społeczność polska mogłaby wypożyczać książki. Ks. Jaroszka uważał, że gdyby dorośli poświęcali swój czas na czytaniu polskich książek, te zainteresowanie polską literaturą wpłynęłoby na młodsze pokolenie. Nie byłaby to trudna sprawa bo w tamtych czasach, telewizory nie były powszechne w domach i rzeczywiście nie było żadnych elektronicznych gadżetów dla dzieci, więc rodzice mieli zniewolonych odbiorców do czytania.



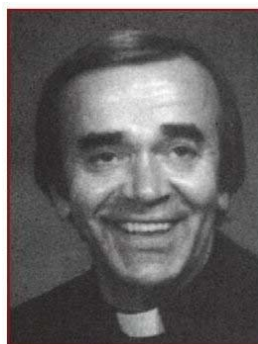
Papież Paweł VI błogosławi obraz Matki Bożej Częstochowskiej w Watykanie przed przybyciem do Geelong, 1960

W 1960 r. Ks. Jaroszka odegrał główną rolę w zorganizowaniu sprowadzenia obrazu, Matki Boskiej Częstochowskiej, z Polski do Geelong. Ochotnicy z wspólnoty polskiej w Geelong zbudowali ołtarz w bocznej nawie kościoła St Mary's, gdzie Obraz został ulokowany. Pamiętam tą niedzielę, kiedy procesja księży odwiedzających, ministranci i ludzie w Polskich strojach narodowych, wnieśli Obraz do Kościoła i został wstawiony na tym specjalnym Ołtarzu. Obraz następnie został poświęcony przez Ks Jaroszkę podczas tej specjalnej ceremonii. Kilka lat później, Ksiądz Lucjan zorganizował sprowadzenie z Polski kolejny obraz Matki Boskiej, tym razem Matki Bożej Nieustającej Pomocy. Został umieszczony na Ołtarzu w nawie obok obrazu Matki Boskiej Częstochowskiej.

Okres Księża Zastępczych Którzy Pracowali w Geelong

Ksiądz Andrzej Grzela – 1974r

Przez okres dwóch lat Geelong nie miał stałych polskich księży parafialnych. Mimo to zostaliśmy pobłogosławieni posiadaniem wielu wybitnych kapłanów odwiedzających, aby służyć duchowym potrzebom wspólnoty polskiej w Geelong. Ks. Andrzej Grzela, który przez trzy lata był kapłanem misyjnym w Nowej Gwinei. Po zarażeniu się malarią podczas pobytu w Nowej Gwinei, jego przełożeni wysłali Księdza do Australii, aby się zregenerował. W wielu polskich parafiach pełnił funkcję tymczasowego księdza zastępczego. Kiedy został wysłany do Geelong w 1974 roku, powitaliśmy go z otwartymi ramionami.



Ksiądz Andrzej Grzela różnił się od Księdza Lucjana, miał bardzo nowoczesne podejście do liturgii. Ku radości młodszych członków społeczności, Ks. Andrzej wprowadził gitarę do niedzielnych nabożeństw, z których starsi członkowie szybko się ucieszyli. Po zaledwie jednym roku,



Ks. Grzela powrócił do domu w Polsce. Wkrótce potem został wysłany do Stanów Zjednoczonych, aby służyć społeczności polskiej w Chicago. Ksiądz Grzela zmarł w 1997 r. z powodu powikłań związanych z jego wczesnymi problemami z malarią.

Ksiądz Warzecha, 1974-1975r



W tym okresie mieliśmy kilka księży dochodzących. Jeden z tych księży był Ojciec Warzecha, który spędził kilka lat jako misjonarz w Chinach. Kiedy Mao Tse Tung zaczął oczyszczać Chiny z wszelkich praktyk religijnych w 1949r, Australijski Rząd przyjął Ks Warzechę i wielu misjonarzy do Australii, w tym byli, Werbista, Ks. Gracjan Kołodziejczyk, Franciszkanin i Ks. Aleksander Eysymont. W 1974/75 roku Ks. Warzecha został wysłany do Geelong, aby zastąpić Ks Jaroszkę, który na krótki okres wyjechał do Polski. W tym samym czasie też przyjechał do Geelong Ks Grzela. Po krótkim czasie Ks. Warzecha wyjechał na stałe do Polski. Służył Polakom w Geelong bardzo krótko ale dał się bardzo polubić. Chociaż był bardzo mały w zroście, szybko odzyskał wielkie poważanie od Polaków w Geelong. Pamiętam, młodzież przezwali Ks. Warzechę „Colonel Sanders” (z KFC) bo miał białe (może siwe!) włosy i białą brodkę, tak jak widzimy *Colonel Sanders* ma na reklamach KFC.

Niestety, dużo nie wiemy o Ks. Warzesze po jego odjeździe na stałe do Polski i nic nie wiemy o jego misjonarską pracę w Chinach – mam tylko jedną, bardzo nie wyraźną, zdjęcie z Ks. Warzechy.

Parafia w Geelong Zostaje Przekazana do Księży z Towarzystwa Chrystusowców

Ks. Ignacy Smaga, 1975 – 1982



Ks Smaga - 1976

Przy końcu 1975 roku, Arcybiskup Melbourne Francis Little przekazał ośrodek duszpasterski w Geelong dla Księży z zakonu Towarzystwa Chrystusowców. Pierwszym naszym duszpasterzem został ks. Ignacy Smaga. Kilka lat później w 1980 r. z inicjatywy ks. Ignacego, Prowincja Chrystusowców zakupiła dom zakonny dla duszpasterza na Milton St., Bell Park. Wcześniej tradycyjnie Polskie księża mieszkali na plebanii w parafii, Sts Peter's and Paul's, przy Mercer St Geelong. Plebania na Bell Park była pierwszą placówką Towarzystwa Chrystusowców w archidiecezji Melbourne i drugą, po Gippsland, w Wiktorii.

Ks. Ignacy wprowadził duże zmiany w parafii polskiej w Geelong. Tak jak Ks Grzela, Ks Ignacy także wprowadził nowoczesne zmiany liturgiczne. Więcej polskiej młodzieży zaczęło uczestniczyć w liturgii. Młodzież akompaniowali gitarami i śpiewali kościele pieśni w czasie Mszy Świętej co niedziele. Aby zachęcić wszystkich wiernych do śpiewu w czasie Mszy Świętej, Ks. Ignacy, co niedziele, wydawał kartki ze słowami nowych pieśni i przed Mszą Świętą z ambony uczył wiernych nowe pieśni liturgiczne.

Aby więcej młodzieży przyciągnąć do kościoła, Ks Ignacy zapisał się do Klubu Siatkówki „Syrena”. Był wybitny gracz siatkówki i grał z „Syreną” w kilku meczach mistrzowskich w Geelong i poza naszym miastem.

Ks. Ignacy Smaga urodził się 2 kwietnia 1945 roku w miejscowości Trzetrzewina, pow. Nowy Sącz, woj. Krakowskie - w rodzinie rolniczej. Józefa i Marii z domu Stypuła. Posiadał



Księdza Smagi Urodziny
Geelong 1979



Ks Ignacy Smaga (w pierwszym rzędzie po prawej stronie) w drużynie Siatkówki „Syrena” – Geelong 1977

uczęszczał na lekcje religii do parafii pw. św. Małgorzaty w Nowym Sączu, uzyskując stopień bardzo dobry.

Będąc w klasie maturalnej, na początku stycznia 1963 roku, napisał pismo Towarzystwa Chrystusowego w Poznaniu, prosząc o warunki przyjęcia. Po maturze skierował 24 czerwca 1963 roku podanie do Rektora Seminarium Zagranicznego Towarzystwa Chrystusowego w Poznaniu, z prośbą o przyjęcie.

Niezależnie od pism Ignacego, świadectwo moralności wystawił proboszcz parafii w Trzetrzewinie ks. Stanisław Pieprznik, który napisał m.in.: „ ...pochodzi z dobrej katolickiej rodziny. Jako długoletni proboszcz parafii chrzciliśmy go i przez siedem lat uczyłem w szkole podstawowej. Od sześciu lat służył jako ministrant, najpierw na nieszporach i innych nabożeństwach, a od pierwszej klasy szkoły podstawowej służył do Mszy św. Później jako prezes ministrantów nauczył wielu chłopców ministrantury i służenia do Mszy świętej ...”.

Do Towarzystwa Chrystusowego został przyjęty 14 sierpnia 1963 roku. Po krótkim aspirancie, 7 września 1963 roku rozpoczął w Ziębicach kanoniczny nowicjat zakonny. Pierwszą profesję zakonną złożył 8 września 1964 roku w Ziębicach.

Po profesji zakonnej, 18 września 1964 roku, rozpoczął dwuletnie studia filozoficzne w Wyższym Seminarium Duchownym Towarzystwa Chrystusowego w Poznaniu. Niestety nie mógł dokończyć studiów filozoficznych, gdyż dostał wezwanie do odbycia zasadniczej służby wojskowej.

Przez kolejne dwa lata, od 1965 do 1967 roku, był w jednostce wojskowej w Bartoszycach, w tej samej jednostce kleryckiej, w której służbę odbywał ówczesny kleryk, a późniejszy kapelan „Solidarności”, wyniesiony na ołtarze błogosławiony ks. Jerzy Popiełuszko.

Po ukończeniu służby wojskowej powrócił do seminarium Towarzystwa Chrystusowego w Poznaniu, gdzie kontynuował studia filozoficzne. Następnie kontynuował w tymże seminarium studia teologiczne.

Podczas studiów filozoficznych, służby wojskowej i studiów teologicznych ponawiał profesję zakonną. Profesję dozgonną złożył 13 września 1970 roku, wszystkie śluby zakonne składał w Poznaniu. Po prymicjach w rodzinnej parafii w Trzetrzewinie i okresie zastępstw, jak prawie każdy chrystusowiec, został skierowany do pracy duszpasterskiej na Pomorze Zachodnie.

liczne rodzeństwo: cztery siostry i trzech braci. Ochrzczony został 22 kwietnia 1945 roku w rodzinnej parafii pw. św. Matki Boskiej Pocieszenia w Trzetrzewinie.

Od szóstego roku życia był ministrantem w miejscowym kościele. Mając 7 lat, w 1952 roku rozpoczął naukę w Szkole Podstawowej w Trzetrzewinie. Kończąc drugą klasę przyjął w rodzinnej parafii w 1954 roku sakrament spowiedzi i I Komunii Świętej.

Po ukończeniu szkoły podstawowej w 1959 roku, dalszą naukę kontynuował w I Liceum Ogólnokształcącym im. Jana Długosza w Nowym Sączu. Liceum to ukończył 6 maja 1963 roku maturalnym egzaminem dojrzałości. W czasie nauki w liceum



Ks Smaga i Ks. Zaremba w Sydney gośćmi z Geelong

14 czerwca 1971 rok na wniosek przełożonego generalnego ks. Wojciecha Kani, otrzymał pierwszą nominację na wikariusza-współpracownika w parafii pw. św. Józefa w Stargardzie Szczecińskim.

W 1974 roku otrzymał pismo od przełożonego generalnego, że został wytypowany do zagranicznej pracy duszpasterskiej w Australii i rozpoczął starania o otrzymanie paszportu i potrzebnych wiz. 12 września 1974 roku otrzymał pismo od bpa szczecińsko-kamieńskiego Jerzego Stroby zwalniające go od 20 września 1974 roku z obowiązków wikariusza w parafii NSP Jezusa oraz podziękowanie za pracę duszpasterską w diecezji.



Plebania Towarzystwa Chrystusowców na Bell Park
1981 - 2020

Po pozytywnym załatwieniu wszystkich formalności paszportowo-wizowych, 19 listopada podczas Mszy Świętej w kaplicy seminaryjnej w Domu Głównym w Poznaniu miało miejsce pożegnanie ks. Ignacego udającego się do pracy polonijnej w Australii. Na koniec Eucharystii pożegnał go w imieniu przełożonych Towarzystwa ks. Ignacy Posadzy, który wręczył mu krzyż misyjny oraz obraz M.B. Częstochowskiej.

Krótko po pożegnaniu, 24 listopada 1974 roku wyleciał samolotem do Australii. Poprzednicy ks. Ignacego płynęli do Australii statkiem, teraz rozpoczęły się już wyloty samolotami.

Prowincjał ks Zbigniew Pajdak napisał w liście do Poznaniu, że: „... wielka radość, że ks. Smaga jest już wśród nas. Doleciał bez specjalnych przygód. Nawet w komorze celnej poznaliśmy go bez trudności, gdyż o głowę przewyższał wszystkich pasażerów...”.



Byli członkowie zespołu Siatkówki Klubu Syrena:
J. Stopinski, A Zychla, A. Skotnica F. Filipowicz,
Ks. I. Smaga, S. Tabisz and P. Wotosewicz. Roku 1996

Po przylocie do Australii, został pomocnikiem duszpasterskim w Bankstown oraz rozpoczął kurs języka angielskiego. Szybko poczynił postępy w języku angielskim i już w lutym 1975 roku pojechał na zastępstwo do Brisbane, a później na Tasmanię, gdzie zastępował ks. Franciszka Ferugę.

25 maja 1975 roku Towarzystwa Chrystusowe przejęło po księżach Werbistach placówkę duszpasterską w Geelong, a jej pierwszym duszpasterzem został ks. Ignacy. 8 lipca 1975 roku napisał do przełożonych w Poznaniu: „... po przylocie do Australii pomagałem naszym duszpasterzom w Sydney, Newcastle, Canberra Brisbane i Geelong. Ośrodki bardzo zróżnicowane, każdy o specyficznych uwarunkowaniach, pozwoliły mi na objęcie samodzielnej placówki... Mimo wielu trudności czuje się bardzo szczęśliwy, gdyż widzę, że tu jestem potrzebny. Na obrazku prymitywnym napisałem: Radością moją jest pełnić wolę Bożą, pragnę to przyrzeczenie do końca zrealizować...”.

W Geelong pracował do 1983 roku, przyczyniając się do rozwoju tej polonijnej placówki duszpasterskiej. W 1982 roku prowincja zakupiła domek rodzinny w Bell Park, który został odremontowany na mieszkanie dla duszpasterza ośrodka Geelong- Ballarat.

W 1983 roku został przeniesiony przez prowincjała na stanowisko proboszcza w Bowen Hill (QLD). Po trzech latach pracy duszpasterskiej w Australii, został przeniesiony do Nowej Zelandii.



Tony Filipowicz wita Ks. Smagę z kwiatami w Geelong - 1974

11 lipca 1985 roku, objął swoją nową placówkę duszpasterską: Berhampore - Wellington na Nowej Zelandii. Do przełożonego generalnego ks. Edwarda Szymanka napisał wtedy: „... *Dzięki Bogu wszystko układa się dobrze, trochę czasu zajęło mi poznanie nowego terenu pracy i przestawienie klimatyczne, rozumiem się z miejscową Polonią...*”.

Na Nowej Zelandii pracował do 1994 roku, odwiedzając w domach i szpitalach, scalając naszych Rodaków, oraz służąc im pomocą duszpasterską.

W 1994 roku powrócił do Australii i w ostatnią niedzielę stycznia 1995 roku został rektorem polskiego sanktuarium Maryjnego w Marayong (NSW). Sanktuarium to zostało wzniesione w Marayong staraniem chrystusowców i Polonii australijskiej, jako Pomnik Wdzięczności za łaskę tysiąclecia chrześcijaństwa w naszej Ojczyźnie oraz pomnik poległych w obronie Ojczyzny. Kościół został poświęcony w 1966 roku przez abpa Sydney, kard. N. T. Gilroy, jako kaplica miejscowej parafii. Kościół ten stał się wkrótce centrum życia religijnego wspólnoty polskiej.

Od 1991 roku, kościół ten stał się mocą dekretu miejscowego biskupa, kościołem rektorskim z prawem i obowiązkiem prowadzenia ksiąg parafialnych. Przy tym kościele rektorskim koncentruje się duszpasterstwo polskie oraz organizowane są wszystkie uroczystości polonijne. Istnieje Dom Polski, hospicjum, szpital oraz inne instytucje służące Polakom w Australii. Powstał on na terenie należącym do Sióstr Nazaretanek, które również gorliwie opiekują się tym ośrodkiem.

Staraniem nowego rektora w 1997 roku na placu przed kościołem powstały stacje Drogi Krzyżowej. Zostały one poświęcone 16 marca 1997 roku. Ks Ignacy gorliwie pracował w tym ośrodku do końca 2000 roku. Parafianie tak napisali do przełożonego generalnego w Poznaniu „...*Ks. Ignacy rozmodlił naszą wspólnotę, umacnia nasza wiarę i wzmacnia miłość do Boga i Jego Świątych..., będzie nam go brakowało w naszym ośrodku...*”.

Od 2001 został duszpasterzem w Keysborough – Melbourne. Na prośbę miejscowego ordynariusza Melbourne abpa Francisca Little, chrystusowcy przejęli tam polskie duszpasterstwo. Staraniem chrystusowców wybudowano tam nowy kościół i powstał centralny ośrodek duszpasterski. Kościół konsekrował w 2006 roku abp Denis Hart, nadając mu tytuł Sanktuarium Bożego Miłosierdzia. Ks. Ignacy był tam pomocnikiem duszpasterskim i pomagał w rozbudowie tego ośrodka oraz tego Sanktuarium.

18 października w czwartek w Sanktuarium Bożego Miłosierdzia w Keysborough miała miejsce nadzwyczajna uroczystość. W obecności Konsula Generalnego w Melbourne, Prezesa Federacji Polskich organizacji w Wiktorii, Stowarzyszenia Polskich Kombatantów, kilku polskich duszpasterzy oraz licznej grupy wiernych, delegat Polskiej Obrony Narodowej płk. Leszek Słomka wręczył ks Ignacemu Smadze oraz ks. Wiesławowi Słowikowi SJ, którzy w latach studiów kleryckich zmuszeni byli do odbycia zasadniczej służby wojskowej, Patenty Oficerskie promujące ich na pierwszy stopień oficerski, podporuczników Wojska Polskiego.

Wyczerpany pracą na Antypodach ks. Ignacy zachorował na chorobę nowotworową i w związku z pogarszającym się stanem zdrowia, wymagającego stałej opieki został 9 czerwca 2019 roku przeniesiony do polskiego ośrodka w Marayong, w którym przed laty pracował. Tam, w domu opieki został otoczony serdeczną opieką przez Siostry Nazaretanki oraz współbraci.



Ks Ignacy Smaga 2017

W nocy z 17/18 czerwca został przewieziony do szpitala w Blacktown, gdzie w ostatnich chwilach życia trwały przy nim Siostry Nazaretanki oraz ks. Antoni Dudek. Tam też został odwołany do wieczności.

Ks. Ignacy Smaga SChr zmarł we wtorek 18 czerwca 2019 roku w szpitalu w Backtown, NSW, Australia. Przeżył 74 lata życia, w tym 56 lat życia zakonnego i 48 lat życia kapłańskiego.

W dniach 19-21 czerwca w Sanktuarium Miłosierdzia Bożego w Keysborough, gdzie przez ostatnie lata służył swoją pracą duszpasterską śp. ks. Ignacy, odbywały się wieczorne nabożeństwa różańcowe oraz odprawiano Msze Święte w intencji zmarłego.

Uroczystości pogrzebowe rozpoczęły się w poniedziałek 24 czerwca w kościele M.B. Częstochowskiej, Królowej Polski (War Memorial Chapel) w Marayong. Zgromadziły one współbraci chrystusowców, siostry zakonne Nazaretanki i Misjonarki Chrystusa Króla, wiernych z parafii w Marayong, ośrodków duszpasterskich w Sydney, a samolotami i autokarem przybyli wierni z ostatniej placówki z Keysborough. Wśród obecnych byli nie tylko Polacy, ale i Australijczycy różnego, narodowego pochodzenia.



Ks Smaga - 2018

Mszy świętej koncelebrewanej przez 18 kapłanów z Australii i Nowej Zelandii przewodniczył wiceprowincjał ks. Kamil Żyłczyński, a homilię żałobną wygłosił ks. Antoni Dudek, przełożony wspólnoty w Miller. Na zakończenie Eucharystii odczytano list kondolencyjny przełożonego generalnego Towarzystwa, ks. Ryszarda Głowackiego. Również tegoż dnia 24 czerwca, w Sanktuarium Bożego Miłosierdzia w Keysborough została odprawiona Eucharystia dla tych, którzy nie mogli pojechać na pogrzeb do Marayong. Zgromadziła ona licznych parafian wielu narodowości, którzy dziękowali Bogu za wieloletnią posługę duszpasterską ks. Ignacego, był on bowiem dla nich prawdziwym przyjacielem oraz pasterzem dusz, pełnym entuzjazmu i dobroci.

29 czerwca 2019 roku, w sobotę w uroczystość św. Piotra i Pawła w rodzinnej parafii pw. M.B. Pocieszenia ks. Ignacego w Trzetrzewinie, o godz. 11.00 została odprawiona Mszę Świętą żałobną za dar życia i powołania kapłańskiego w intencji zmarłego naszego współbrata. Na Mszy świętej odczytał list kondolencyjny przełożonego generalnego ks. Ryszarda Głowackiego, który napisał m.in. „... przez 45 lat pracy duszpasterskiej na Antypodach był wyznawcą Chrystusa i Jego gorliwym sługą, z oddaniem postępującym Ludowi Bożemu. Postawa wiernych, którym służył staje się świadectwem, że był dobrym pasterzem, zaś my chrystusowcy zapamiętamy go, jako kochającego nasze Zgromadzenie Zakonne...”.

Ks. Ignacy Smaga SChr spoczął w kwaterze chrystusowców na cmentarzu Pinegrove Memorial Park, Kingston Street, Minchinbury, (Sydney) NSW, nr grobu A4, gdzie razem ze współbraćmi oczekuje zmartwychwstania.

Ks. Zenon Broniarczyk 1982-1988



Ks Zenon Broniarczyk

Dnia 10 czerwca 2017 r. w Sydney odszedł śp. ks. Zenon BRONIARCZYK SChr, wieloletni duszpasterz Polaków w Australii i Nowej Zelandii. Ks. Zenon Sylwester Broniarczyk SChr, urodzony 19 grudnia 1947r w Tłukawach. Do Towarzystwa Chrystusowego wstąpił 8 listopada 1966r. Pierwszą profesję zakonną złożył 8 września 1967r w Ziębicach, zaś dozgonną 9 kwietnia 1972r w Poznaniu. Święcenia kapłańskie



Ks Zenon razem Marysią Filipowicz i śp. Romanem Brzostowskim - Geelong

otrzymał 19 czerwca 1973r w z rąk ks. abpa Antoniego Baraniaka w Poznaniu. Po przyjęciu święceń kapłańskich pracował jako wikariusz w parafii pw. Wniebowzięcia Najświętszej Maryi Panny w Gryficach (1973-1974); socjusz magistra nowicjatu w Kiekrzu (1974-1976); wikariusz parafii pw. Matki Boskiej Nieustającej Pomocy w Suchaniu (1976-1978). Od 1978r był duszpasterzem w Australii i Nowej Zelandii: Ashfield, Bowen Hills, Geelong, Wellington, Canberra, Adelaide. W latach 1999-2005 był wice prowincjałem Prowincji pw. Świętej Rodziny. Od 2012 r. był duszpasterzem w Bowen Hills.

Pogrzeb śp. ks. Zenona odbył się 29 czerwca 2017 r. (czwartek) w kościele Matki Bożej Częstochowskiej Królowej Polski (War Memorial Chapel) w Marayong. Został pochowany w kwaterze Society of Christ na cmentarzu Pinegrove Memorial Park.



Ks Zenon odprawia Mszę Świętą

Uroczystości pogrzebowe śp. ks. Zenona odbyły się 29 czerwca 2017r w kościele Matki Bożej Częstochowskiej Królowej Polski (War Memorial Chapel) w Marayong Marayong NSW). Msza Święta celebrowana pod przewodnictwem ks. Przemysława S. Karasiuka SChr. Homilię wygłosił przyjaciel śp. ks. Zenona, ks. Józef Migacz SChr. Po Eucharystii obrzędy pogrzebowe miały miejsce na cmentarzu Pinegrove Memorial Park, gdzie ciało złożono w kwaterze chrystusowców.

Liczne grono kapłanów, także i rzesze wiernych z różnych regionów Australii: m.in z Adelaide, Geelong, Canberra, Newcastle, Melbourne oraz Brisbane, gdzie ostatnio pełnił posługę duszpasterską ks. Zenon, dziękowało w modlitwie za Jego duszpasterską pracę pośród Polonii i wypraszało dla Niego radość nieba



Ks Zenon założył chór dziewcząt „Promyki” w Geelong

We Mszy św. uczestniczyła siostrzenica ks. Zenona - p. Renata Broniarczyk, jak i również jego rodzina w Polsce. Duchową i modlitewną łączność ze zgromadzonymi wyrazili ks. Ryszard Głowacki SChr, przełożony generalny Towarzystwa Chrystusowego.

Śp. Ks. Zenon Broniarczyk został pośmiertnie uhonorowany przez Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, p. Andrzeja Dudę, Krzyżem Kawalerskim Orderu Zasługi Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej.

Również w dniu pogrzebu w Domu Głównym Towarzystwa Chrystusowego w Poznaniu odbyła się Msza św. w intencji ks. Zenona w której uczestniczyła jego rodzina i przyjaciele.



Pogrzeb Ks Zenona Broniarczyka w Marayong, Sydney - 17 czerwca 2017

Ks. Tomasz Zaremba 1988 – 1994



Ks Tomasz Zaremba

Ksiądz Tomasz Zaremba został przeznaczony na parafialną placówkę w Geelong w roku 1988 z regionu Gippsland w Victorii gdzie służył Polakom para lat po przyjeździe do Australii. Obecnie Ks. Tomasz pracuje na ośrodku polskim w Maitland, Newcastle.

Ks. Tomasz Zaremba urodził się 22 września 1948r w Dąbrowie Wielkiej w powiecie Wysokie Mazowieckie. Rodzice potem się przenieśli do Elku, na Mazurach. Tam skończył Liceum Ogólnokształcące. Rozpoczął prace jako inwentaryzator w Przedsiębiorstwie Upowszechniania Pracy i Książki "Ruch".



Po lewej, Ks. Zaremba z Ks Smagą i gośćmi z Geelong w Sydney

W 1970r wstąpił do Towarzystwa Chrystusowego dla Polonii Zagranicznej w Poznaniu. W 1977r, Ks Tomasz ukończył Studia teologiczne ze stopniem Magistra. W tym samym roku 9 maja, przyjął święcenia kapłańskie. Został skierowany do Pырzyc, jako wikariusz i w 1979 został przyniesionym do Stargardu Szczecińskiego a za rok został skierowany do Australii.



Ks Tomasz na „Jasełkach” w Domu Orła Białego. Geelong

Jak zwykle, Polacy w Geelong bardzo polubili nowego Księdza Tomasza. Udzielał się społecznie w różnych imprezach w Domu Orła Białego i w Domu SPK w Geelong. Bardzo było nam żal kiedy musiał odejść od nas.



Ks Tomasz z „młodymi” na wycieczce

Ks. Zbigniew Pajdak 1994 – 2001



Ks Zbigniew Pajdak

Ksiądz Zbigniew Pajdak przyjechał do Bankstown, NSW w 1966r kiedy Ksiądz Prałat Dziecioł pełnił funkcję rektora Chrystusowców w Australii. W roku 1975, Ksiądz Pajdak przejął rolę prowincjała Chrystusowców.

Ksiądz Pajdak rozpoczął duszpasterstwo w Geelong w 1994. W tym czasie już parafianie z pierwszej fali imigracyjnej z 1950tych lat starzeli się i powoli odchodzili z tego świata.



Księża którzy celebrowali Msze Św Pożegnalną z Ks Pajdakiem

Po sześciu latach w służbie duchownym w Geelong, Ks Pajdak został przyniesiony do Bankstown, NSW. 25 maja, 2013, na uroczystościach Maki Bożej, Królowej Polski w Marayong na którym głównym celebransem był ks. Zbigniew Pajdak, a w asyście aż 12 Kapłanów. Także, równocześnie była Ks Pajdaka pożegnalna Msza Św. Za parę dni Ks. Zbigniew wyjechał na stało do Polski. Jego ostatnie słowa pożegnalne, „...*Wracam do mojego domu*”, wielokrotnie podkreślał ten



Na pożegnalnym Przyjęciu - 2013

niezwykły Kapłan. „*Zadanie swoje wykonałem. Moja delegacja, na którą zostałem posłany do Australii, już się zakończyła*”. Jego Dom w Polsce został Dom Emeryta Księża Chrystusowców.



Ks. Pajdak odprawie uroczystą, pożegnalną Mszę Św w Marayong -2013

Pamiętam że Ks. Pajdak odprawił Mszę Świętą pogrzebową dla mojej Mamy w 1999r w St Mary's Geelong.

Ks. Józef Migacz 2001 – 2007



Ks Józef Migacz

Józef Migacz się urodził 25 lutego, 1952 w Starym Sączu. Po zakończeniu szkołę średnią w Liceum Ogólnokształcącym Starym Sączu, skierował powołanie do Seminarium Zagranicznego w Poznaniu. Nowicjat ukończył w Kiekrzu, koło Poznania a po tym kończył studia filozoficzno-teologiczne w Seminarium Towarzystwa Chrystusowego dla Polonii Zagranicznej też w Poznaniu.



Procesja Bożego Ciała St Mary's Geelong

Ks Józef złożył Wieczystą profesję 17 kwietnia, 1977, a przyjął święcenia kapłański w katedrze Poznańskiej z rąk Biskupa Mariana Prykuckiego 31 maja 1978. W roku 1983 został skierowany przez



Ks. Józef spędza czas w parafianami w Domu Orła Białego, Geelong

Przełożonego Generalnego do pracy emigracyjnej do Australii. Tu pracował Ośrodkach polskiego duszpasterstwa w Brisbane, Dandenong, Marayong, Adelaide, **Geelong**, Ardeer a obecnie w Hobart.



Ks. Migacz kibicuje z parafianami za Polską drużynę w World Cup

Do naszego Geelong przyjechał 2001 roku. Społeczność Polska w Geelong bardzo polubiła Księdza Józefa. Był bardzo towarzyski i kazania niedzielne Księdza były bardzo nauczające.

Ks. Jerzy Słowinski 2007 – 2019



Ks Jerzy Słowinski

Ks. Jerzy urodził się 1 lutego, 1954 w Koninie. Po ukończeniu matury odczuł powołanie do kapłaństwa. Skierował się do Towarzystwa Chrystusowe w Poznaniu na prace dla Polonii Zagranicznej. Nowicjat ukończył w Kiekrzu koło Poznania and potem studia w Poznaniu.

Ks. Jerzy Słowinski przyjął święcenie kapłańskie 25 maja 1982 z rąk arcybiskupa Clarizo.



Ks Jerzy Słowinski na imprezie w Domu Orła Białego, Geelong



Ks. Jerzy poświęca Tablicę Pamiętkowo dla SPK w Domu Orła Białego

Zaczął swoją pracę jako wikariusz na wielu parafiach w Polsce. W roku 1987, został skierowany na prace duszpasterską do Australii. W Australii pracował w wielu Polskich Ośrodkach Duszpasterskich, w tym: Adelaide, Brisbane Hobart, **Geelong** i obecnie w Wollongong, NSW.

U nas w Geelong, zaczął prace w 2008r a skończył w 2019r – dwie kadencje!

Ks Jerzy był znany i bardzo szanowany za jego głęboką troskę o swoich starszych polskich parafian.

Osobiście byłem świadkiem, jak ks. Jerzy zabierał starszego pana na cotygodniowe zakupy spożywcze. Znany był również z tego, że wychodził na śniadanie ze starszymi parafianami, którzy mieszkali sami.

Ks Jerzy kochał polską muzykę ludową. Kiedy tylko mógł, to przynosił jego akordeon na polskie imprezy w Domu Orła Białego w Geelong i zabawiał doceniającą publiczność.

W ciągu 11 lat w służeniu swoim parafianom, wielu polskich migrantów, z 1950 latami, powoli odchodzili z tego świata. W związku z tym, liczba osób



Członkowie ZPG i SPK na poświęceniu Pamiętkowej Tablicy dla SPK

uczestniczących na polskiej Mszy Świętej w niedziele i na innych uroczystościach religijnych zaczęła drastycznie spadać. Nie było to wyjątkowo związane z kościelnym uczestnictwem, bo liczby Polaków uczestniczących w naszych polskich imprezach w Domu Orła Białego też upadają z tego samego powodu.

Wielu członków społeczności polskiej Geelong widziało "napis na ścianie", w tym, że stracimy naszego pełnoetatowego księdza – coś, co społeczność Geelong zawsze tym się cieszyła przez 70 lat



Tablica Pamiątkowa poświęcona przez Ks Jerzego i umieszczona na terenie Domu Orła Białego



Ks Marian Szeptak 2019 –



Ks Marian Szeptak

Tak to się stało jak społeczność w Geelong przewidziało. Kiedy Ks. Jerzy został przeniesiony z Geelong do Wollongong, zostaliśmy poinformowani, że Geelong będzie dzielić się z księdzem z parafianami z Ardeer i St. Albans. Nowy ksiądz, Marian Szeptak, będzie celebrować Mszę Świętą w każdą niedzielę w Geelong i będzie uczestniczył na ślubach, chrzcinach i pogrzebach, zgodnie z wymaganiami, ale, niestety, nie będzie mieszkał w Geelong. Prowincjał Towarzystwa Chrystusowców też podjął decyzję aby Plebanie na Bell Park sprzedać.

Ks. Marian Szeptak urodził się 6 grudnia, 1960r, na wiosce Frycowa, nie daleko Nowego Sącza. Kiedy skończył średnią szkołę w Nowym Sączu, w sierpniu 1985, wstąpił to Towarzystwa Chrystusowego dla Polonii Zagranicznej. Po rocznej nowicjacie w Markowie i po złożeniu pierwszych ślubów kapłańskich w wrześniu, 1986, rozpoczął sześcioletni okres studiów filozofii i teologii. W roku 1991, złożył wieczyste śluby zakonne i święcenia diakonatu. Pracował w parafiach Matki Bożej Bolesnej w Pырzyce i Radziszewo. W 1995 został skierowany do pracy duszpasterskiej pośród Polonii w Australii i Nowej Zelandii. Służył w Sanktuarium Miłosierdzia Bożego w Keysborough. Po sześciu lat został przyniesiony do Ośrodków St Albans/Ardeer i w tym samym czasie służyć w Ośrodku Geelong.

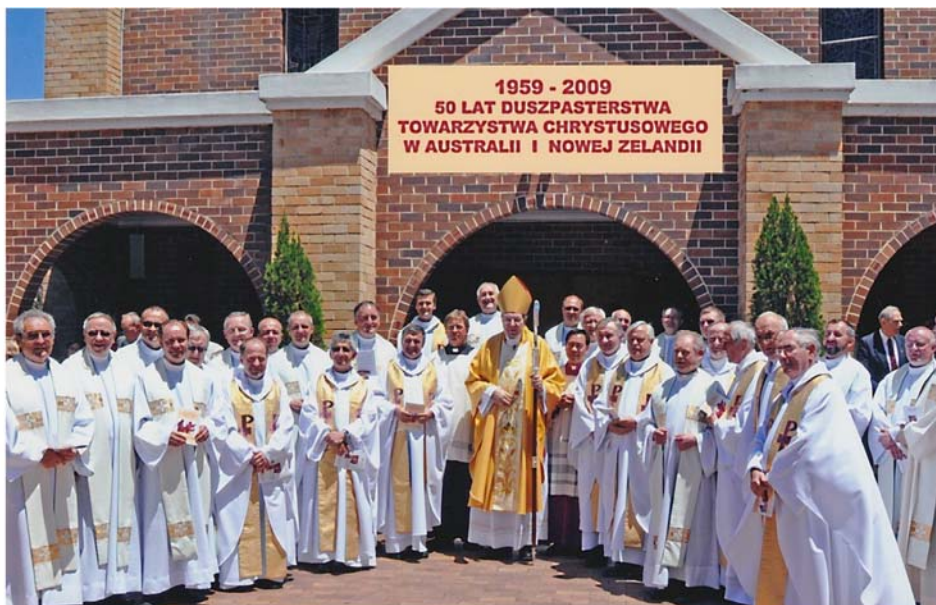
Zakończenie

Społeczność Polska w Geelong przeszła przez pełny cykl historii duszpasterstwa, z którego cieszyli się i cenili przez nieco ponad 70 lat. Duchowne potrzeby pierwszych polskich imigrantów do Geelong, na początku lat 1950, zaczęły się kiedy ks. Krasocki, a następnie Ks. Skudrzyk przyjeżdżali z Melbourne, tylko w niedziele, odwiedzać naszą społeczność. Zapotrzebowanie na tę opiekę duchowną rosnę szybko wraz ze wzrostem ilości Polaków w Geelong i szybko społeczność otrzymała pełnoetatowych usług 12tu różnych kapłanów przez okres ostatnich tych 70 lat.

Teraz odwróciliśmy cały cykl i znowu znajdujemy się w sytuacji, w której dzielimy się jednym księdzem z innymi polskimi ośrodkami, tak jak dzieliliśmy się w 1950 roku. Jedno się nie zmieniło – nadal Polacy używają Bazylikę St. Mary's of the Angels, jako centrum modlitwy w każdą niedzielę.



Kiedyś był Kościołem St Mary's of the Angels, teraz został Bazyliką St Mary's of the



Kapłani Zakonu Towarzystwa Chrystusowego świętują 50-lecie pracy z Polakami w Australii i Nowej Zelandii.

Napisał **Henryk Szkuta**

Marzec 2021 r.

Informacje zebrano z wielu źródeł, w tym z polskiej Wikipedii z internetu, wielu różnych innych stron internetowych, które odnosiły się do pracy wykonanej przez polskich księży w Australii od 1949 roku. Zyskałem też informację z stron internetowych zawierających o kapłanach z Zakonu Towarzystwa Chrystusowego. Korzystałem również z informacji i zdjęć z publikacji Towarzystwa Chrystusowego "60-lecie pracy Chrystusowców w Australii i Nowej Zelandii" i artykuły publikowane na Internecie pod nazwą „Puls Polonii”.

Przytaczałem też wspomnienia z wydarzeń, które ja pamiętam. Żyłem w społeczności polskiej w Geelong od ponad 68 lat i byłem zaangażowany w życie społeczności od najmłodszych lat.



**Priests Who Served
The Polish Community in Geelong
From 1950**

**“The Community life of Poles
in Geelong”**



This project is supported by the City of Greater Geelong
'Healthy and Connected Communities Grants Program'

Poles and their Catholic Faith

Ever since Prince Mieszko I of Poland married the Czech Princess Dobrowa, accepted her Christian faith and converted Poland from Paganism to Christianity in the year 966, the people of Poland have always accepted Christianity, as an integral part of their daily lives. The adherence to the teachings of this religion became the foundation on which Poland was governed for centuries. The deep faith in the Catholic teachings and the comfort Poles felt in belonging to the Church became even stronger in times of crises, especially the turmoil lived through by many during the two Great Wars and, then again, during the upheaval in the 1970s and 1980s when the beginning of the demise of the Soviet backed government in Poland began.

This strong connection to the faith was demonstrated even more strongly by those Poles who chose not to return to Poland after World War II and also by those who decided to escape from Poland during the turmoil of the 1980s Solidarity Uprising. Poles who migrated to Australia found their social and spiritual



Some of the Priests who served parishes around Australia between 1950 and 1960.

comfort in the Polish Catholic parishes that were set up across Australia. These Polish parishes were instrumental not only in assisting Poles in maintaining and strengthening their Catholic faith but also ensuring their rich Polish culture, language and traditions were not lost.

For this we are all thankful to our Polish priests who worked with us from 1950 to the present day.

Origins of the Spiritual Pastoral Work in Geelong

Polish migrants living in Geelong in the 1950s were mostly those who arrived in Australia straight from refugee camps in Germany. After arriving, the majority spent some months in migrant camps, in places like Bonegilla and Mildura in Victoria as well as regional towns in NSW. It was from these places they completed their two-year Government work contracts. Once contracts were completed, a large number of Poles settled around larger cities. Many settled in Geelong, where they found jobs at the local Ford Plant, the International Harvester and other smaller workplaces. Polish priests in Australia quickly established Polish centres all over Australia, including Geelong.

Holy Masses were celebrated by Polish priests in the early years at number of parishes in Geelong: St Mary's of the Angels, in Yarra Street, then for a short time at St Peter and St. Saint Paul's Church on Mercer Street, Geelong and at Holy Family Parish in Bell Park.

Many of the migrants settled in the Bell Park area in the early 1950s. So, when the Archdiocese of Melbourne established the Holy Family Parish in Bell Park, our Polish priest, at that time it was Fr Jaroszka, celebrated Sunday Masses at Holy Family, in a corrugated barrack for about two years, as did the then Parish priest Fr. Joe Kelly and priests from other ethnic groups. When the school building was completed in 1956, it served not only as a school but also as a church on Sundays, until the late 1970s, when the Church was built.

When public transport became available, linking North Geelong to the Geelong City Centre, Masses for Poles took place only at St Mary's Church and for a short time only at St Peter and St. Saint Paul's.

History of the Polish Priests who worked in the Geelong Area

Fathers Józef Krasocki and Stanisław Skudrzyk 1950-1954

In 1950, Polish priests set up a Parish Centre in Geelong. Fathers Józef Krasocki and Stanisław Skudrzyk commuted from Melbourne to serve the spiritual needs of Poles in Geelong. I remember nothing about Fr. Krasocki and vaguely remember that Fr. Skudrzyk baptized my brother, Edward, at St. Mary's Church in 1953. Apart from that, I only recall their names. I could not find any detailed history of either of these two priests in my research.

Father Lucjan Jaroszka 1954-1975

Fr. Lucjan Jaroszka began his very long pastoral work in the Geelong area in 1954. His work with Poles in Geelong continued for 21 years, after which he returned to Poland in 1975.

Fr. Lucjan Jaroszka's Early Years



Lucjan was the son of Florentina and Bruno Jaroszka. He grew up in a well-to-do family with strong patriotic and religious roots. He graduated from the local High School in Pabianice. In 1933 he studied Law at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. However, he interrupted his studies and moved to Łódź, where he joined the Seminary. This is where his lifelong friendship with Fr. Stanisław Świerczek began. He was ordained a priest on July 2, 1939. At the beginning of the new year, he was to be sent to Rome by the Ecclesiastical Authorities in Rome for further studies. However, the outbreak of war prevented this plan from being realised.

Fr. Jaroszka during World War II

In the September campaign organised against the German invaders, two of Fr. Lucjan's brothers, Leonard and Witold, were killed. Fr. Lucjan remained in Pabianice. From 6 December 1939, he worked as a vicar in the Parish of St. Matthew, as well as the Chaplain of a hospital on Żeromski Street. He was also involved in conspiratorial activities against the Nazi invaders. He ran secret classes in his family home. He provided Sacraments and celebrated Mass in private apartments. He became a chaplain to the underground Polish National Army (*Armia Krajowa*). He edited an underground newspaper "*Na Zachodnim Szańcu*" (*In the Western Barricade*). For this activity, on February 6, 1943, he and other members of the Jaroszka family were arrested. As a result, his sister died in a camp in Auschwitz. The mother was taken to Sterling Street prison, where she died. His father was imprisoned in the Mauthausen-Gusen (German Nazi concentration camp).

Although he survived the camp, he died shortly after being released. Fr. Lucjan was the only member left from the family of six. He was also initially confined at the Sterling Street Prison in Łódź and, after five months, he was sent to the Mauthausen camp. Tattooed with the number 31760 and was sent to work in the Mauthausen-Gusen quarry. In August 1943, he was transported to work at the Wiener-Neudorf aircraft factory in Austria. On December 1, 1944, he was sent to another concentration camp in Dachau, in block 28 (block for Polish priests – there he also met up with his best friend Fr. Stanisław Świerczek).



Camp Mauthausen-Gusen and mine

He received another number, 134376, tattooed to on his arm. That period of his life was the most difficult, according to Fr. Lucjan. He eventually regained his freedom on 29 April 1945.

Fr. Jaroszka during the Post World War II Period



Fr. Jaroszka and the Church Choir at the welcoming ceremony Cardinal Rubin Geelong 1968

Due to the risk of repression by the communist authorities for conspiratorial activities between 1939 and 1943, when the Soviets were still allies of Hitler's Germany, Fr. Lucjan decided not to return to Poland. This decision caused him stress and disappointment, especially when he learned that his Polish citizenship was also revoked and that he was banned from entering his beloved Poland. He settled in Bavaria, where he studied law at the University of Dillingen and in 1947 obtained his Master's Degree in Canon Law. In 1950, on the orders of the Field Bishop of the Polish Army, Józef Gawlina, he moved to Australia. Here, he took up pastoral work among the Polish community in Gippsland and, from 1954, as a chaplain for Polish migrants in Geelong.



Very early photo of Fr Jaroszka with Bishop Gawlina in Australia

He found time to coordinate the pilgrimage of the Icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa (The Black Madonna) across Polish parish centres in Australia. He supported the Church of Lodź by sending Western newspapers, books and films on Catholic topics, which at that time were not available in Poland. He preached at retreats not only in Australia, but also in New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. In 1973, he organized Cardinal Karol Wojtyła to visit Australia for the International Eucharistic Congress in Melbourne.

Fr Jaroszka on his return to Pabianice, Poland

In 1975, after many years of work with Polish communities in Victoria, Fr. Lucjan Jaroszka retired and returned to Poland. He lived in the parish of St. Matthew in Pabianice, whose Parish Priest at that time was his dear friend, Fr. Stanisław Świerczek. While partially retired, he used his wide experience and knowledge to work actively with the local church and the City of Pabianice on various projects and special events. His fiery patriotic sermons brought crowds of believers from all over the region.



Thanks to Fr. Lucjan initiatives, many worthwhile projects were set up in Pabianice

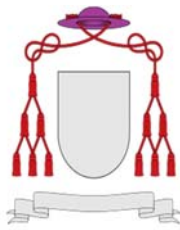
- He devoted many years to writing a 4-tome chronicle about the parish of St. Matthew in Pabianice (to do this, he patiently collected information from the archives of churches in Krakow, Włocławek and Gniezno);

- in 1980, his family land in Pabianice at 48 Karolewski Street was transferred to the new Parish of St. Maximilian to finance the construction of their church;
- in 1988, he donated his savings towards the cost of one of the 24 bells which hung in the tower of St. Matthew's Church to commemorate the 400th anniversary of this parish;
- in 1989, he joined the Committee for the Reconstruction of the Monument to Poland's Independence in Pabianice;
- in 1991, at his initiative and as the main sponsor, the first monument to St. Maximilian was constructed in Poland. It now stands in the square next to the church of St. Matthew in Pabianice;
- in 1992, he funded the Epitaph dedicated to his friend, Fr. Stanislaus Świerczek, in the church of St. Matthew in Pabianice as well as a plaque in the Church of the Virgin Mary of the Rosary in Pabianice commemorating the life and work of Fr. Leopold Petrzyk, a fellow prisoner, who was murdered in the Dachau Concentration Camp;
- in 1993, he donated money, which he received in compensation for his internment in concentration camps, to fund a bust of John Paul II, which today still stands in the front of St. Matthew's Church – that was his symbol of gratitude for surviving his ordeals in concentration camps, during the War;
- also in 1993, he donated a valuable collection of silver coins and Post Office stamps of the Vatican City to the Museum of Archdiocese of Łódź.



Monument to Saint Maximilian
Maria Kolbe

For his outstanding services, he received the following distinctions:



Apostolic
Protonotary's
Heraldary Shield

1. Received the title of chaplain from His Holiness Pope Paul VI . In other words, he was titled Prelate (19 April 1968). This honour was due to the request of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Primate of Poland);
2. Received the title of Honorary Prelate from His Holiness Pope John Paul II (23 May 1989);
3. Received the title of Canon of the Archcathedral Chapter of Łódź (October 19, 1991)
4. Received the title of Apostolic Protonotary *De Numero* (1993)
5. Received the title of Honorary Citizen of the City of



Protonotary choir attire

Pabianice (3 November 1993. He was the first in the history of Pabianice to be honored in this way);



Fr. Jaroszka and Choir Director, Stanisław Karpinski welcoming
Cardinal Karol Wojtyła. 1974

He never wore the Mitre, which came with the Title of Protonotary. After 18 months of his battle with his illness; afflicted with a complete loss of speech; and confined to a wheelchair, he died at the age of 82, on July 4, 1995. The funeral was attended by all the Bishops of Łódź: Władysław Ziółtek, Bohdan Bejze and Adam Lepa, numerous clergy, thousands of Pabianice residents, the City's dignitaries and representatives of the National Army (*Armia Krajowa*)

The funeral procession took place in the streets of the City. The coffin was placed in the family tomb of the Jaroszka Family in the Pabianice Catholic cemetery.

Although he served the Polish community in Geelong for 21 years, I am saddened that only now, when I write the history of his pastoral work in Geelong, it is 28 years after his death that I learn of the deeds of this great, but humble man. He never spoke about his great achievements.

It is not often that sermons have had any great impact on me. However, I do remember, when I was still a teenager at high school, the many fiery sermons Fr. Jaroszka gave from the pulpit at St. Mary's Church. His parishioners were often moved by his passionate sermons, especially those about mothers, which he gave on Mother's Days. Fr. Jaroszka was truly an intellectual and an outstanding orator. I am now even more honored that Fr. Lucjan Jaroszka was the celebrant at our wedding in 1970.

Fr Jaroszka did leave a lasting mark on the Polish community in Geelong.

In the 1960s, Fr Jaroszka planned to sponsor a Religious Order Nuns from Poland to come to Geelong to work with the Polish youth. He organised fundraising events to purchase land and to establish a children's centre, which the Sisters would run. The land was purchased in Bell Park. However, for unknown reasons, the Sisters did not come to Geelong and the project was shelved.

In December 1967, at a meeting of the Polish community in Geelong, it was decided to donate the land to the Polish Ex-Servicemen's Association Branch No. 12 (SPK), which had just recently been established. The Branch had about 80 members at the time. The members of the Branch then sold the land, and thanks to the original initiative of Fr Jaroszka, they were able to purchase a building on Ryrie Street, which became the SPK Centre in Geelong for the next 40 years.

I also remember in the early 1950s, Fr. Jaroszka asked my parents if they would agree to house a Polish library in our house in Bell Park, from which the Polish community could borrow books. My parents happily agreed. Fr. Jaroszka was of the view that if adults spent their time reading Polish literature, that interest would flow onto the younger generation. It was a great initiative, especially in the 1950s when televisions were not very common in homes and, indeed, there were no electronic gadgets for children to spend time on during the evenings, so parents had a captive audience to whom they could read stories set in Poland.

In 1960, Fr. Jaroszka also played a central role in bringing to Geelong an Icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa (The Black Madonna), from Poland. Volunteers from the Geelong Polish community built an altar at the side nave of St Mary's Church, where it was located. I remember the Sunday, when visiting priests, altar boys and many of the congregation, dressed in Polish national costumes, walked in procession behind the large Icon of the Virgin Mary as it was carried into the Church. The Icon was blessed by Fr. Jaroszka during this special



Fr. Jaroszka, Cardinal. Karol Wojtyła and Mon. Murray - Geelong 1974



Pope Paul VI blessing the Icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa in the Vatican before arrival in Geelong

ceremony. A few years later, Fr Jaroszka organized another Icon to be sent to Geelong from Poland. This time it was the Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. It was placed on an Altar in the side nave, opposite to where the icon of Our Lady of Częstochowa was located.

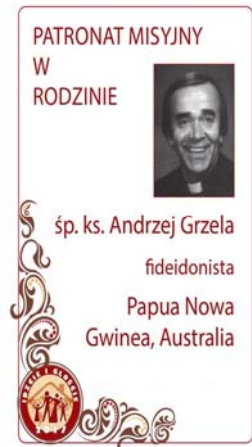
The period of visiting replacement priests worked in Geelong

Father Andrzej Grzela – 1974



Geelong did not have permanent Polish parish priests for two years. Nevertheless, we were blessed in having many outstanding visiting priests to serve the spiritual needs of the Polish community in Geelong. Father Andrzej Grzela was a missionary priest from Papua New Guinea where he worked for three years. After being infected with malaria while in Papua New Guinea, his superiors sent him to Australia to recuperate. He served as a temporary substitute priest in a number of Polish parishes in Australia. When he was sent to Geelong in 1974, we welcomed him with open arms.

Father Andrzej Grzela was different from Father Jaroszka, he had a very modern approach to the liturgy. To the delight of the younger members of the community, Fr. Grzela introduced the guitar into Sunday services, something the older congregation quickly learned to enjoy. After only a year, Fr. Grzela returned home to Poland. Soon after that, he was sent to the United States to serve the Polish community in Chicago. Father Grzela died in 1997 from complications related to his early malaria afflictions.



Father Karol Warzecha, 1974-1975



Another visiting priest was Father Warzecha, who spent several years as a missionary in China. When Mao Tse Tung purged China of religious missionaries in 1949, the Australia Government welcomed these missionaries into our country, including, Fr. Gracjan Kolodziejczyk, a Franciscan, Father Alexander Eysymont, a Dominican, **Fr. Karol Warzecha**. In 1974-75, Fr Warzecha was sent to Geelong to replace Fr Jaroszka, who briefly left to visit Poland. Around the same time when Fr Grzela was about to leave Geelong. Fr. Warzecha did not stay long and soon left to live permanently in Poland. Although he served the Poles in Geelong very briefly, he was very much appreciated. He was of small stature, but he quickly gained great respect from the Poles in Geelong. I remember the young members of the community referring to Fr. Warzecha as

"Colonel Sanders" because he had white (maybe gray!) hair and a white goatee, just as we see *Colonel Sanders* in KFC advertisements.

Unfortunately, we do not know much about Fr. Warzecha after his permanent departure to Poland, and we know nothing about his missionary work in China – I have only one, very unclear, photo from Fr. Warzecha.



Priests of the Order of the Society of Christ celebrating 50th Anniversary of their work with Poles in Australia and New Zealand

Fr. Ignatius Smaga, 1975 – 1982



Fr Smaga - 1976

At the end of 1975, Archbishop of Melbourne, Francis Little, gave permission for the Priests of the Order of the Society of Christ to set up Polish Catholic Centres around Victoria, including one in Geelong. The first priest from that Order to be appointed to Geelong was Fr. Ignatius Smaga. A few years later, in 1980, on the initiative of Fr. Ignatius, the Provincial of his Order purchased the presbytery in Milton St. Bell Park. Previously, the Polish priests traditionally lived in Sts. Peter and Paul's, Presbytery in Mercer St Geelong. Geelong was the first presbytery in the Archdiocese of Melbourne that the Order of the Society of Christ had purchased and the second after the one in Gippsland, Victoria. This signaled to the Polish Geelong community that we will have our own priest for a long time into the future

Fr. Ignatius made major changes in our Polish parish in Geelong. Like Fr Grzela, Fr. Ignatius also introduced modern liturgical changes. More Polish youth began to participate in the liturgy. The young people played guitars and sang modern hymns during the Mass every Sunday. In order to encourage all the faithful to join in the singing during the Holy Mass, Fr. Ignatius handed out a list of hymn to the congregation every Sunday with the words of any new songs and, before the beginning of Holy Mass, he would rehearse the hymns with the congregation from the pulpit.

In order to attract more young people to the church, Fr. Ignatius, joined the *Syrena* Volleyball Club. Because of his height, he was an outstanding volleyball player and played with the *Syrena* Club in several championship matches in Geelong as well as outside our city.

Fr. Ignatius Smaga was born on April 2, 1945 in the village of Trzetrzewina, Nowy Sącz in the Kraków Province. He came from a farming family. His parents were Joseph and Mary (nee Stypuła). He had many siblings: four sisters and three brothers. He was baptized on April 22, 1945 in the family parish of St. Our Lady of Consolation in Trzetrzewina.

From the age of six, he was an altar boy in his local church. At the age of 7, in 1952, he started his Primary School education in Trzetrzewina. At the end of the second grade, he accepted the sacrament of Confession and Holy Communion in his home parish in 1954.

He continued his studies at Jan Długosz High School in Nowy Sącz. He matriculated from high school on June 24, 1963. While studying in high school, he attended religious classes in the parish of St. Margaret in Nowy Sącz, obtaining a very good report from his local Parish priest.

While in his final year of High School, in early January 1963, he wrote a letter to the Society of Christ in Poznań, asking for the application criteria to be admitted to the Society's seminary. After graduating, he submitted an application to the Rector of the Seminary of the Society of Christ in Poznań, to be enrolled to work in overseas missions with Polish migrants.



Father Smaga's Birthday
Geelong 1979

Included in Ignatius' application for seminary studies, was a personal reference from the parish priest in Trzetrzewno, Fr. Stanislaw Pieprznik, who wrote the following: "*...he comes from a good Catholic family. As a longtime parish priest, I baptized him and taught him in elementary school for seven years. For six years he served as an altar boy, first at vespers and then other services, and from the first grade of primary school he served Holy Mass. Later, he was president of the Altar Boy Group and he taught many of the younger boys to serve at Mass ...*".

He was admitted to the Society of Christ on August 14, 1963. After a short time, on September 7, 1963, he began his studies as a canonical religious novice in Ziębicy. He made his first religious profession on September 8, 1964 in Ziębicy.



Fr Ignatius Smaga (first row on the right) with the „Syrena” Volleyball Championship Team – Geelong 1977

After his religious profession, on September 18, 1964, he began two years of his studies in philosophy at the Higher Seminary of the Society of Christ in Poznań. Unfortunately, he could not complete his philosophical studies, as he was conscripted to military service. For the next two years, from 1965 to 1967, he served in a military unit in Bartoszyce, the same clerical unit where the then seminarian and later chaplain to the "Solidarity" movement served, the now Blessed Father Jerzy Popiełuszko, who was tortured and murdered by the then Polish Secret Police.

After completing his military service, he returned to the Seminary of the Society of Christ in Poznań, where he continued his studies in philosophy. He continued his theological studies in the seminary. He was ordained a priest on September 13, 1970, in Poznań.

After working for a short time in his childhood parish of Trzetrzewina, like almost every member of the Society of Christ did, he was sent to do pastoral work in Polish region of Western Pomerania.

On June 14, 1971, at the request of superior General Wojciech Kani, he received the first nomination as vicar-collaborator in the parish of St. Joseph in Stargard Szczeciński.

In 1974, he received a letter from his superior general that he had been selected for foreign pastoral work in Australia. On September 12, 1974, he received a letter from Bishop Jerzy Stroba exempting him from his duties as vicar in the parish in which he was working at the time, thanking him for his pastoral work in that diocese.

On November 19, during the Mass in the seminary chapel in Poznań, Fr. Ignatius was farewelled and on behalf of the superiors of the Society of Christ, Father Ignatius Posadza handed Fr Smaga the Missionary Cross and the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa for him to take with him to Australia.



Fr Smaga and Fr Zaremba in Sydney with guests from Geelong

Shortly after saying goodbye, he flew to Australia on 24 November 1974. Father Ignatius' predecessors sailed to Australia by ship, he had the comfort of travelling to Australia by plane.

The Society's Provincial for Australia, Zbigniew Pajdak, wrote in a letter to Poznań: *"...it is with great joy that Fr. Smaga is already with us. He arrived without any problems on the way. Even in the customs area, we recognised him without any difficulty, as he was so much taller than the rest of the passengers..."*.

After arriving in Australia, he became a pastoral assistant at Bankstown and immediately began an English course. He made rapid progress in English and in February, 1975 went to Brisbane and later to Tasmania, where he replaced Fr Francis Ferug.



The Presbytery of the Order of Society of Christ in Bell Park
1981 - 2020

On May 25, 1975, the Society of Christ took over the Geelong Polish centre from the Werbist Order of Priests. Fr. Ignatius became the first priest from the Society of Christ to serve the Geelong area. On July 8, 1975, he wrote to his superiors in Poznań: *"... after arriving in Australia, I helped our colleague priests in Sydney, Newcastle, Canberra, Brisbane and now Geelong. Very diverse centres, each with specific needs. Despite many difficulties, I feel very happy because I see that I am needed here. He also wrote: My joy is to do God's will and I wish to fulfill this commitment to the end. ..."*.



Senior members of the Syrena Volleyball Team
J. Stopinski, A Zychla, Anton Skotnica F. Filipowicz,
Fr I. Smaga, S. Tabisz and P. Wołosewicz. 1996

He worked in Geelong until 1983, contributing to the centre's development and looking after the spiritual needs of Poles in this area. As mentioned above, in 1982, the Provincial of the Society of Christ in Australia purchased a house in Bell Park, which was renovated into a residence for Fr. Smaga and for priest that would follow in the future.

In 1983, Fr. Smaga was transferred to Bowen Hill (QLD). Then on July 11, 1985, he was

transferred to Berhampore - Wellington, New Zealand. Fr. Smaga wrote at the time: *"... Thank God everything is going well, it took me a while to get to know the new area and climate, I got to know the local Poles very well"*.

He remained in New Zealand until 1994, visiting homes and hospitals, meeting regularly with the local parishioners and attending to their spiritual needs.

At the end of 1994, he returned to Australia and on the last Sunday of January 1995 became rector of the Polish Marian Shrine in Marayong (NSW). This shrine was erected in Marayong by Poles living in Australia, as a Monument to mark the Millennial Year, 1966, of



Tony Filipowicz welcoming
Fr. Smaga. Geelong - 1974

Christianity in Poland, also as a monument to the fallen heroes in the defense of the Polish nation. The church was consecrated in 1966 by the Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal N. T. Gilroy. This church soon became the center of religious life of the Australian Polish community.

Due to the efforts of the new Rector, the Stations of the Cross were constructed in 1997 as part of the Marian Shrine. They were blessed on March 16, 1997. Father Ignatius worked zealously in this center until the end of 2000. When parishioners learnt that he would be leaving the parish, they wrote to the superior general in Poznań: "... *Father Ignatius revitalised our community, strengthened our faith and our love for God and His Saints..., we will miss him in our Centre...*".

In 2001, he was transferred to Keysborough – Melbourne. Father Ignatius assisted in the expansion of this Centre. With the efforts of the priests of the Society of Christ, a new church was built there, and a central pastoral centre was established. The Church was consecrated in 2006 by Archbishop Denis Hart, who gave it the name, Sanctuary of Divine Mercy.



Fr. Ignatius Smaga 2017

Another important ceremony took place at the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Keysborough on Thursday 18 October. In the presence of the Polish Consul General in Melbourne, the President of the Federation of Polish Organizations in Victoria, the Association of Polish Veterans, several Polish priests and members of the Polish communities from around Victoria, witnessed the delegate of the Polish National Defense, Col. Leszek Słomka promoting Fr. Ignatius Smaga and Fr. Wiesław Słowik, to Lieutenants of the Polish Army. This was in compensation for having been forced to do military conscription and disrupting three years of their seminary studies.

Exhausted by work over the years in various Polish centres around Australia and New Zealand, Fr. Ignatius developed cancer and due to his deteriorating health, required constant care. He was transferred on June 9, 2019 to the Polish centre in Marayong, where he worked in the past. There, in a nursing home, he was surrounded by caring Sisters of Nazareth.

On the night of June 17-18, he was taken to Blacktown Hospital, where sisters Nazareth and Father Antoni Dudek stood with him in the final moments of his life.

Father Ignatius Smaga SChr. died on Tuesday, June 18, 2019, in the Backtown Hospital, NSW. He was 74 years of age, 48 years as a priest.

On 19-21 June, evening rosary services and Masses were held for the late Father Ignatius at the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Keysborough, where he had served for a number of years.

The funeral procession began on Monday, June 24, at the Church of M.B. Częstochowa (War Memorial Chapel) in Marayong. Participants in the funeral included priests from his Order, religious Sisters of Nazareth, who looked after him during his illness, Missionaries of Christ the King, the faithful from pastoral centres of Marayong, Sydney, his former parishioners from around Australia, New Zealand as well as people from other ethnic groups, who became good friends of Fr. Smaga over the years.



Fr Ignatius Smaga - 2018

The Mass, which was celebrated by 18 priests from Australia and New

Zealand and presided over by Deputy Provincial Fr. Kamil Żyłczyński. The homily was delivered by Father Antoni Dudek. At the end of Mass, a letter of condolence was read from the General Superior of the Order of Society of Christ, Fr. Ryszard Głowacki. A further Mass was celebrated on 24 June, at the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Keysborough for those who could not attend the funeral in Marayong. It brought together numerous parishioners of many nationalities who thanked God for Fr. Ignatius' long pastoral ministry. He was for them a true friend and shepherd of souls, full of enthusiasm and kindness.

On June 29, 2019, on Saturday morning in Fr. Ignatius' family parish of St. Peter and Paul in Trzetrzewina, Poland, Mass was celebrated for Fr. Ignatius. At that Mass, the Superior General of the Society of Christ, Fr. Ryszard Głowacki, read the following statement *"... for 45 years of pastoral work in the in Australia and New Zealand, Ignatius was a follower of Christ and his zealous servant, with dedication he served the People of God. The attitude of the faithful whom he served is a witness to the fact that he was a good shepherd, and we, as members of the Society of Christ, will remember him as loving member of our Religious Congregation..."*.

Father Ignatius Smaga SChr was laid to rest in the Society of Christ section of the Pinegrove Memorial Park Cemetery, Kingston Street, Minchinbury, (Sydney) NSW.

Fr. Zenon Broniarczyk 1982-1988



Father Zenon founded the girls' choir "Promyki" in Geelong

On June 10, 2017, Father Zenon Broniarczyk SChr, a long-time priest who served Poles in Australia and New Zealand, passed away in Sydney. Fr. Zenon Sylwester Broniarczyk was born on December 19, 1947 in Tłukawach. He joined the Society of Christ on November 8, 1966. He made his first religious profession on 8 September 1967 in Ziębicy. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 19, 1973 by Archbishop Antoni Baraniek in Poznań. After his ordination, he worked as a vicar in the parish of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Gryfica (1973-74); He then obtained his Master's degree in Novitiate in Kiekrz (1974-76); He was then appointed Vicar in the Parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help (1976-1978). From 1978 he worked in Polish centres in Australia and New Zealand: Including Ashfield, Bowen Hills,

Geelong, Wellington, Canberra, and Adelaide. From 1999 to 2005 he was deputy provincial at the Province of the Holy Family. Since 2012, he had served as the priest for the Polish community in Bowen Hills.

The funeral of Father Zenon took place on June 29, 2017 at the Church of Our Lady of Częstochowa (War Memorial Chapel) in Marayong. He was buried in the Society of Christ section of the Pinegrove Memorial Park Cemetery.

The Requiem Mass was celebrated by Fr. Przemysław S. Karasiuk SChr. Homily was delivered by Fr. Zenon's friend, Fr. Józef Migacz SChr. After the Mass, the burial rites took place in Pinegrove Memorial Park Cemetery.



Fr. Zenon celebrating Mass

A large number of priests attended the funeral. Many of his past parishioners from different Polish centres around Australia, including those from Adelaide, Geelong, Canberra, Newcastle, Melbourne and Brisbane,

attended in large numbers. In the prayers the congregation thanked Fr. Zenon for his pastoral work in the many Polish centres he served at.

Fr. Zenon's niece, Renata Broniarczyk, from Poland attend the Requiem Mass.

Fr Zenon's family gathered together in Poland in spirit and in prayer to celebrate Fr. Zenon's life and to mourn his passing. At this family gathering in Poland, the homily to Fr. Zenon was delivered by Fr. Ryszard Głowacki SChr, superior general of the Society of Christ in Poland.



Father Zenon with Mr. & Mrs Zychla and Mr & Mrs Filipowicz in Geelong



The funeral of Father Zenon Broniarczyk in Marayong, Sydney - June 17, 2017

The late Fr. Zenon Broniarczyk was posthumously honored by the President of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Duda, by awarding him with The Order of Merit of the Knight's Cross of the Republic of Poland.

Also, on the day of his funeral at the Main Residence of the Society of Christ in Poznań, a Mass was held for Father Zenon. It was attended by his family and friends.

Fr. Thomas Zaremba 1988 – 1994



Father Tomasz Zaremba

Father Thomas Zaremba was assigned to the parish in Geelong in 1988 from the Gippsland region of Victoria where he served the Polish community for a couple years after arriving in Australia. Currently, Fr. Tomasz works at a Polish centre in Maitland, Newcastle.

Fr. Thomas Zaremba was born on September 22, 1948 in Dąbrowa Wielka in the Mazowieckie district. His parents then moved to Elk, in the Masurian region. There he graduated from High School. He began working as an accountant in a printing Company.



In 1970 he joined the Society of Christ in Poznań. In 1977, Fr. Thomas graduated with a Masters degree. In the same year, on May 9, he was ordained a priest. He was sent to Pyrzyc, as vicar, and in 1979 he was transferred to Stargard Szczeciński. Twelve months later, he was sent to Australia.

As usual, Poles in Geelong warmly welcomed this young priest who had a lot to offer the Geelong Polish community.



Father Thomas at the White Eagle House during the staging of the Nativity Play. Geelong



Father Thomas with his Geelong parishioners on one of many day trips in which he participated

Their affection for Fr. Thomas grew when his congregation saw him getting truly involved in their community. He always attended and actively participated in the various events that were held at the White Eagle House and the Polish Centre in Geelong. The Geelong Polish Community was very sorry when he had to leave us in 1994.

Fr. Zbigniew Pajdak 1994 – 2001

Father Zbigniew Pajdak came to Bankstown, NSW in 1966 when Fr. Dzięcioł who was serving as Rector of the Society of Christ in Australia. In 1975, Father Pajdak took over the role as Provincial of that Religious Order.



Fr. Zbigniew Pajdak

Fr. Pajdak began his ministry in Geelong in 1994. By this time, the parishioners of the first migration wave of the 1950s were getting older and slowly departing this world.

After six years of serving Geelong Polish community, Fr Pajdak was transferred to Bankstown, NSW. On May 25, 2013, celebrations were held in the honour of Our Lady Mother of

God in Marayong, the main celebrant was Fr. Zbigniew Pajdak, with 12 other priests. On the same day after the celebration of the Eucharist, the congregation farewelled Fr. Pajdak and expressed their gratitude for his many years of service to Polish communities around Australia.



Fr. Pajdak with colleague priests with whom he celebrated his farewell Mass



At the Farewell Dinner for F. Pajdak - 2013

A few days later Fr. Zbigniew returned to Poland. His last goodbye words were, "... I return to my home; I did my work. The work, for which I was sent to do in Australia, has been completed. For me, all has now come to an end." His Home, which he mentioned above, is the Home for the Retired priest of the Society of Christ in Poland.

I will always remember Fr. Pajdak celebrating a very moving Requiem Mass for my mother when she died in November, 1999.

Ks. Józef Migacz 2001 – 2007



Fr. Józef Migacz

Józef Migacz was born on February 25, 1952 in Stary Sącz, Poland. After graduating from high school in Stary Sącz, he decided to enter the priesthood. He did his studies for the priesthood at the Seminary in Poznań. He graduated from the Novitiate in Kiekrz, near Poznań, and after that he completed his philosophical and theological studies at the Seminary of the Society of Christ for Foreign Polish missions, also in Poznań.



St Mary's Geelong Corpus Christi Procession

Fr. Joseph took his perpetual vows on April 17, 1977 and was ordained a priest in the Cathedral of Poznań by Bishop Marian Prikucki on May 31, 1978. In 1983, he was sent by his Superior General to work with Polish communities in Australia. Here he worked in Brisbane, Dandenong, Marayong, Adelaide, **Geelong**, Ardeer and now Hobart.



Fr. Migacz with his parishers barracking for the Polish Soccer in the World Cup

He came to our Geelong in 2001. The Polish community in Geelong liked Father Joseph very much. He was very sociable and his Sunday sermons were always very inspiring.



Father Józef Migacz spends time with parishioners at the White Eagle House, Geelong

Fr. Jerzy Słowinski 2007 – 2019



Ks. Jerzy Słowinski

Fr. George was born on February 1, 1954 in Konin. After graduating from High School, he decided to join the priesthood. He went to the Society of Christ Seminary in Poznań with the aim to work in Polish communities abroad. He graduated from Kiekrz near Poznań and later studied philosophy and theology in Poznań.

Fr. Jerzy Słowinski was ordained a priest on May 25, 1982 by Archbishop Clarizo. He began his work as a vicar in a number of parishes in Poland.



Fr. Jerzy Słowinski at a Christmas function at the White Eagle House, Geelong

In 1987, he was sent to Australia for pastoral work in Polish centres. During his years in Australia, he worked in a number of Polish Pastoral Centres, including: Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart, **Geelong** and now in Wollongong, NSW.

He began his work in Geelong in 2008 and finished in 2019 – two six-year terms!



Fr. George dedicates Memorial Plaques to the SPK at the White Eagle House

Fr. Jerzy was known and highly respected for his deep concern for his older Polish parishioners, of which there were now many.



I Personally witnessed Fr. Jerzy regularly take an elderly gentleman on weekly grocery shopping trips. He was also known to go out for breakfast with elderly parishioners, who lived alone.

Fr. Jerzy loved Polish folk music. Whenever he could, he brought his accordion to Polish events at the White Eagle House in Geelong and entertained an appreciative audience.

During the 11 years in the service of his parishioners in Geelong, many Polish migrants, from the 1950s, departed this world. As a result, the number of people attending Polish Mass on Sundays and other religious ceremonies began to drop dramatically. A similar trend was occurring in the participation of Poles in events and functions at the White Eagle House.



Members of the PCA and SPK on the dedication of the Commemorative Plaque for SPK – Geelong 2017



Many members in the Geelong Polish community saw the "writing on the wall", that it would not be long before we would lose our full-time priest – something that the Geelong community has always enjoyed for 70 years.

Memorial Plaque dedicated to SPK (Ex-Servicemen's Association in Geelong) and blessed by Fr. Słowinski. It is located on the premises of the House of the White Eagle

Fr. Marian Szeptak 2019 –

Just as the Geelong community predicted, it lost its full-time priest, the era during which we enjoyed having our own priors for 70 years came to an abrupt end. When Fr Słowinski was transferred from Geelong to Wollongong, we were informed that Geelong would share a priest with parishioners from Ardeer and St Albans. The new priest, Fr. Marian Szeptak, would continue to celebrate Mass every Sunday in Geelong and will attend weddings, baptisms and funerals as required, but, unfortunately, he will not be living in Geelong. The Provincial of the Society of Christ also made decisions to sell the Polish Parish Presbytery in Bell Park.



Ks Marian Szeptak

Fr. Marian Szeptak was born on December 6, 1960, in the village of Frycowa, not far from Nowy Sącz. When he graduated from high school in Nowy Sącz, in August 1985, he joined the Society of Christ to prepare to work with Polish communities overseas. After a year of novitiate in Markowie and soon after taking his first priestly vows in September, 1986, he began a six-

year period of study of philosophy and theology. In 1991, he made his perpetual religious vows and was ordained a priest. He worked in the parishes of Our Lady of Sorrows in Pyrzyce and Radziszewo. In 1995, he was sent to work among the Polish communities in Australia and New Zealand. He served the parishioners in the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy in Keysborough. After six years, he was transferred to St Albans/Ardeer Centres and from there also to serve the Polish Geelong community at the same time.

Conclusion

The Geelong Polish community went through a full cycle in their history of spiritual pastoral care they enjoyed for just over 70 years. The spiritual needs of the early Polish migrants to Geelong, in the very early 1950s, began with Fr Krasocki and then Fr Skudrzyk who looked after these needs when they visited our community from Melbourne on Sundays only. The demand for this spiritual care had increased quickly as the population grew and for seven decades our community enjoyed the full-time services of 12 different priests for various durations during this period.

We have now turned the full cycle and are again in a situation where we are sharing one priest with other Polish centres just as we did in 1950. One thing that has not changed – we are still using St Mary’s Basilica, as our centre of worship each Sunday.



Previously known as St Mary’s of the Angels Church, now it is the only Basilica in Geelong

Written by **Henry Szkuta**

March, 2021

Information was collected from a number of sources, including the Polish Wikipedia site; a number of various websites which referred to the work done by Polish priests in Australia from 1949, including many Websites containing information about the priests from the Order of the Society of Christ. I also used information and photos from the Society of Christ publication, “60-lecie pracy Księży Chrystusowców w Australii i Nowej Zelandii” (“**Sixty years of work by Priests from the Society of Christ in Australia and New Zealand**”). Information was also sourced from relevant articles published on the internet under name “Puls Polonii”.

I also included some of my personal recollections of events, which I remember from my teenage and early adult years having lived in the Geelong Polish community for over 67 years and being involved in the life of that community from my early age.



Priests from the Order of the Society of Christ celebrating the 50th Anniversary of their work with Polish communities in Australia and New Zealand.

