

THE CERTAINTY OF DESTINY

Acknowledgements
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THE CERTAINTY OF DESTINY

MAX NAMESTNIK

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Namestnik', written in a cursive style.

16/02/2007

Perth, Western Australia
1997

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This book is dedicated to the
migrants of the world
and travellers.

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1. Sydney Opera House.
2. Sydney Harbour Bridge.
3. View across the Drava River Valley, Maribor, near my home of birth.

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My thanks for his encouragement go to my son Andrew.

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Foreword

The lives of my eldest brother and mine had been intertwined from the very beginning.

In my greatest need for vitamins in my growing-up years, I longed for oranges he introduced to me. I had to get to them in the quickest possible way.

I was the last to say goodbye to him when he left our family, never to return. I felt the need to follow him half way around the globe to be with him, because no one else from our family could be with him when he departed this world.

My family was not particularly religious, but our respect for Something Godly was deep in us.

Therefore, I believe, my fate had been decided with my free will as an accessory to it.

My life has been greatly enhanced by young ladies, wives, and lovers. As we are all individuals, the traits of my ladies have affected me in the way which is so aptly expressed in the beautiful lyrics of the song “Thank Heaven for Little Girls”, in the movie “GIGI”.

THANK HEAVEN FOR LITTLE GIRLS

**Each time I see a little girl
of five or six or seven,
I can't resist a joyous urge,
to smile and say : Thank heavens
for little girls ! little girls
get bigger ev'ry day, Thank heavens
for little girls ! They grow up,
in the most delightful way.**

**Those little eyes so helpless
and appealing, one day will flash
and send you crashing
through the ceiling. Thank heavens
for little girls, Thank heavens
for them all, No matter where,
No matter who, Without them
what would little boys do ?**

**Thank heaven, Thank heaven
Thank heaven for little girls.**

.NEW WORLD

The world opened up to me when my mother carried me home after christening. I felt so comfortable in her arms as we neared the homestead at the end of a short, gently sloping valley. It was early autumn as I was born in September, the world appeared to me beautiful in its glory.

I remember some other occasions in the first year of my life but riding on a tricycle with the aid of my sisters and brothers stands out clearly.

FAMILY HOME

I have no recollection of this but was told much later that I fell down a flight of wooden stairs which lead up to the living quarters of our home. Below was the wine cellar and the washing room. There was no apparent injury, but memory comes back to me of a hot summers day, when I was about two years old. My Mother and my Brother Mirko were working in the garden. They built a shade cubby out of chestnut branches with cool green leaves and laid me in there, because I had an excruciating headache and was crying. When the cool of the evening came, the pain eased, but to this day I still suffer with serious headaches. This makes me believe it is due to that unfortunate fall down the stairs.

That house is not now my family home any more but it still stands. It is in a most wonderful position with a view unsurpassed to me

anywhere in the world. It overlooks a river valley some two kilometres wide and on the other side the Pohorje Mountain rises to a height of twelve hundred metres extending eighty kilometres in length from east to west. I have returned several times to admire that wonderful view from the house of my birth. I tried to acquire it for my family again but it was not for sale.

MOST MEMORABLE SUMMER AND AUTUMN EVENINGS

My fondest memories are of my first experiencing the seasons of the year. Spring brought the lush, green grasses in the fields, with flowers of beautiful scents, growing everywhere. My father tended the small vineyard on the sunny slopes, preparing a special mixture, which was then sprayed on the lush new leaves of the grapevines, to keep them free of diseases. When my brothers and sisters came from school, they helped our mother and father with the chores around the house. In high summer, a serene peace reigned over the land, when after the Sunday lunch, we took some rest.. Autumn brought the sweet grapes, plums, apples on the trees, all around and close to our home. When all the fruits were harvested, from the land, that families had so carefully tended from spring to autumn, we awaited the serenity, which the thick snow brought at the time, when we celebrated Christmas. Life was good to us, I felt content and secure in my family circle.

MY FIRST LITTLE MATE

I began to notice a small boy at the neighbours house. His name was Martin, with whom I became a close friend, and spent a lot of time together, right through the World War II years. We played together in the fields in summer and winter, in the green grasses and in the snow. Skiing, skating on the frozen creeks took a lot of our energy, enjoying every thing immensely.

His family experienced a lot of sadness. Martin's father died in an accident on a building site, and his little brother also died early. Without a father, the family had to make a lot of sacrifices to keep going. His older sister was our great companion, who was really our guide in games and activities.

During summer rains, we used to construct dams over a particular creek near our homes, but each time the storm waters broke through the dam walls. Then Martin reinforced the dam walls with tree branches and posts in the creek bed in a way, that no storm waters breached our dam again. That was the dam I learned to swim in. Martin had a very practical mind, and could probably become an exceptional structural engineer. I was extremely saddened to hear some years later, that he was drowned in the swollen river Drava, flowing through the city of Maribor.

Another close friend in my locality was Stan Jarz, with whom I played chess a lot. His family came to our area from Croatia during the war years. He showed at an early age a great talent for writing stories, with impressive illustrations. He became a well known reporter in the national media, and prepared a major work, a

beautifully illustrated book on plants and butterflies, between many other illustrations.

RECOGNISING NATURE

I have wonderful memories of times, when I began to recognise my place in the family, but vaguely in the world. The seasons of the year had a great impact on me, when in winter the soft snow covered all the land around us, then the warm summer evenings came, we children of the neighbourhood used up our energy running and catching the fireflies. There were many fruit trees all around our home. My favourites were new seasons sweet pears and apples. My father spread soft hay under the pear tree, shook the tree and the pears would fall to the ground without getting damaged.

One afternoon I was standing on the verandah, I saw my eldest brother Frank coming from school, bringing for me two lovely red oranges. I admired that deep red colour of the orange, and that overpowering, pleasant smell, and for the first time tasted the sharp sweetness of this tropical fruit, which was unknown to me until that day.

SAD HAPPENINGS

One evening I went with my sister Sonja to the cellar, to bring a pot of fresh lard for mother. The lard was kept in a barrel, to keep it cool there. I insisted to carry the pot, until Sonja finally agreed. On the way up I fell and cut my chin on the sharp edge of the stair. The cut was right to the bone, so terribly painful and it would not heal for a long time.

On another day I saw my father leading our puppy dog on a chain, away from our house. I was told, that it caught some serious disease and had to be put down. I was quite disturbed by losing our pet. My family did not acquire another dog for a long time, although I was asking for one.

On another occasion, I vividly remember, the local butcher led a calf past our place. It was playfully jumping up and down an embankment. I was shocked to hear that this calf would be killed and the meat sold in the butchers shop. For a long time I could not be convinced, that to grow, I should eat meat. All I agreed to was, to have the nice beef soup with noodles, prepared by mum, but no meat.

TIMES OF DEPRESSION

One evening I sat with my father outside our home, looking across the valley from our favoured position, after he came from the neighbours place. He was helping to prune the grape vines in their huge vineyard. He handed me a piece of bread and asked me to taste it. I did so and said that I quite liked it. The taste was new and different to what I was used to. My father explained to me, this bread and water was the only food the workers had all day, and for little payment.

Our neighbour was a nobleman of some standing in the community. He lived in a castle, and rode a Harley Davidson motorbike. His land extended right down to the riverbank, his servants worked the rich fields, growing all sorts of produce, including the exclusive

asparagus for the markets. The slopes reaching to the border of our land were his vineyards, producing wines of the best varieties. The castle was set between tall fir trees, where the peacocks walked and their call could be heard for miles around.

In between those trees was a crossing of local paths and a wooden cross stood over a mound. This mound was a grave of a dozen Turkish soldiers, who had strayed into our area over two hundred years ago and were shot by the Austrian army, which at that time was stalking the retreating Turks. The wind blowing through the tops of those trees and the grave gave that crossing an eerie feeling.

AMERICA AMERICA

My father and mother formed a close friendship with a family, which regularly came from America, to spend their holidays in their villa near us. This nice, friendly family were urging my father to come to America, they would help him all the way. Our father was not prepared to make such a big step with our family as he appeared reasonably confident to be able to take care of us right where we were.

My brothers and sisters considered this an unfortunate decision, because bad times were looming for Europe. So many of our people had gone to America in those times, but it appears, destiny had moved to keep us there.

RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION

Like most of the people around us, my family followed the teaching of our church, which was the social leader, as well as showing us the way to God.

There were memorable celebrations at Christmas time, when we prepared the freshly cut Christmas tree and most times in deep snow, with temperatures dropping to minus 15 degrees, we walked to the midnight mass.

The time of Easter was always very special, when in the processions young men and school children carried pine tree branches tied together into beautiful wreath forms.

The religious festivals for the year ended in mid-June, when the white stemmed, velvet-leaved birch tree was the symbol of the times. The depth of peoples spiritual belief endowed everyone taking part in the festivals with a closeness and appreciation of goodwill towards fellow beings, which would not degenerate in an aware person.

TEMPORARY ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

The years 1937 to 1939 became very hard for most people around us. Money was hard to come by, there were many families, who could not buy essential food, like vegetables and fruit for their children. Lacking vitamins, the children came to school with contagious skin diseases and infected others in the class. My brother Stan was

infected, it took a lot of some white lotion, until he was completely cured.

SUDDEN IMPROVEMENT IN CONDITIONS

Life became better, people out of work had jobs again, prosperity was visible everywhere and young and old took advantage of it. On Sundays gramophones could be heard blaring out popular songs of the times. Housewives started using washing powders to assist in their hand washing. There were now state festivals, civic gatherings and various open air shows and displays. On one Sunday I watched for hours an air show at the local airfield, where the planes were raising into the air, then diving towards the ground at a terrific speed.

From the city swimming pool complex on a lush island in the river came the voices of hundreds of bathers enjoying themselves. On the river across from my home, splashing could be seen in the water, as young boys and men raced each other to reach the opposite riverbank. Those were really happy times.

I was attending primary school and was proud of myself for reaching that age. But I still needed help from my mother to brush up on my reading.

UNUSUAL WEATHER ACTIVITIES

As if the skies predicted difficult years looming for my city Maribor, Europe and the world, there were storms unleashed such as I had never experienced before. The gales were howling over the ridges of our home, it was particularly scary at night. The wind was accompanied with heavy downpours of driving rain and the lightning flashes, which for some seconds caused the night to become like daylight were followed by tremendous, window rattling thunder. The whole family huddled together, until finally the thunder could just be heard in a safe distance from us.

On many occasions I sat alone in our lookout spot gazing into the distance, westward to the setting sun. Admiring the varied cloud formations, I wondered, where they rolled to. Moving over our imposing mountain Pohorje in a south -westerly direction, I was told, but could not apprehend the clouds moving towards Italy and Rome. That was the direction my destiny would take me when I left my homeland.

APPROACHING WAR YEARS

On a clear morning in the lookout position I heard unusual sounds of powerful engines approaching, then suddenly four planes in formation appeared. They were flying along our river valley, towards the city, maybe 100 metres above my eye level, and around 300 metres from where I stood. I could clearly see the pilots and I guess they could see me. I can still picture in my mind their heads behind the perspex cockpits. They flew probably at about 200 kilometres

per hour, their German airforce sign showing on the side of the plane and on the tail. They disappeared out of my sight. These war planes were an indication to me of the approaching war.

At about that time we heard that Warsaw was bombed. Looking in a north-easterly direction from our home, I imagined I could hear the bombs falling, but the distance of at least 1000 kilometres would make this impossible.

My eldest brother Frank was already in the army, being trained in artillery units. The fear for safety of our members of the family had begun.

PERCEPTION OF NORMALITY

Whilst there was a perception for unknown changes to come, school for my sister Lizika and myself continued normally. I had a wonderful lady teacher of French origin, Ms La Payne. I was very popular with her and also my fellow students respected me for my natural abilities for learning and grasping the subjects quickly. I was chosen to recite a poem to the whole school at the end of the 1940 school year, then presented a quest of honour from the Schools Commission with a bouquet of flowers. After the ceremony I saw the father of my friend, who came second to me in my class give a shiny silver coin to him for his effort. My family was happy with me also.

I hoped that conditions which existed around us at that time would continue forever. It appeared that people around the world were anxious in the same way, because life was good and there still existed goodwill and hope that the war would not spread.

WAS IT MEANT TO HAPPEN ?

Times began to move very fast, winter came, good snow fell for idyllic skiing conditions around Christmas and New Year. There was still snow covering the shady northern slopes of the countryside, when on the day of April 6 1941, walking home from Mass, I heard the roar of heavy aeroplanes flying overhead. They were flying in formations, I had never seen such numbers of planes in my life. These planes flew right over Maribor in a south-easterly direction, until this fearsome noise could not be heard any more. By the time I reached home, it was known, that Belgrade had been bombed. That day meant the beginning of the Second World War in my part of Europe.

ANNEXATION OF MARIBOR PROVINCE TO AUSTRIA AND GERMANY REPLACES THE SERBIAN MONARCHY

With the event of April 6, a complete breakdown of control over civilian population lasted a number of days. All government institutions ceased to operate, schools were closed, the opportunity to celebrate the end of school year and the distribution of certificates was lost.

The population had no idea, where to turn in the upheaval. That there was a war on, became very clear to us, when a number of artillery shells exploded on a road just 200 metres from our home.

Luckily there was no-one on that section of the road at that time, but the craters reminded us of the existing danger. To our surprise, those shells were fired by the Yugoslav army from the opposite side of the river Drava, when they thought, the German army was advancing from the direction where we lived. Instead the German armoured divisions rolled in along the main roads. Most of the towns in our area were taken without a shot being fired, but the withdrawing Yugoslav army destroyed the main city bridge, before pulling out. The massive steel girders sadly heaved into the river with the blast.

In the year before the beginning of hostilities, hundreds of reinforced concrete bunkers were built along all major roads. In the lull, when the Yugoslav army retreated and when the Germans came, these bunkers were left unoccupied. People found great quantities of special dry bread stored in them. And just as well, because no bakeries were operating, all the shops closed, we had some bread to go on with. Once the German rule started taking hold, we were introduced to a new system of providing food for the masses - by tinned food. In the first distribution, my father brought for our family 5 large tins of German beef, vegetables and soup.

A sort of helplessness reigned for a short time, then the German propaganda machine took a firm hold, placing our lives on their track.

Our family was informed, that Frank was taken prisoner in Serbia, then with thousands of other members of the Yugoslav Army sent to the prisoner of war camps in northern Germany.

HITLER'S SURPRISE VISIT TO MARIBOR

Slovenia, sometimes referred to as The Lucky Country on the sunny side of the Alps, was divided between Germany, taking the Maribor region, and Italy, taking over the capital Ljubljana region. It was not long after this, Hitler himself came to Maribor and in a great fanfare proclaimed it a German city again. According to this proclamation, Slovenian language ceased to exist as an official communication medium. The population was actually pressed to speak German only, even in the home. This was not a difficulty, as most people, including my family, spoke German as the second language. Our area had been under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian empire in the past.

I cannot recall that any member of my family saw Hitler in person, when he came to address the rally in the Central Square. Neither do I remember, if Mussolini came to claim Ljubljana.

BEGINNING OF GREAT INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMATION

Our area became a hive of activity. Factories were built, food production had to increase and for the first time, I witnessed the construction of a bitumen highway. New to me was the use of road construction machinery, such as graders, rollers, compactors, and bitumen pavers. All materials were transported by trucks, on which us school children sometimes got rides on the way home from school. Something around these activities happened, which might have been pointing to my destiny. Australian prisoners of war were being used to do the manual tasks in the construction of the Western

Highway, leading past our homes. These Australians were brought from Crete in Greece, where they were taken prisoner by the German paratroops. In their slouch hats, they stood out taller than any people that we had met before. Walking around the fenced-in barracks, where they were being held, I could see that the Australian Red Cross really tried to help their people. In the rubbish dump inside the compound, there were heaps of empty sardine and other small tins, all with fancy designs and inscriptions. But even the empty tins were out of reach of us children, hanging around the barbed wire fences.

THE NEW ORDER

All school age children were back at school now. Everything was taught in German, which was the official and the only language strictly to be spoken. Sport became the prominent part of education. After the normal school hours, there was military training twice a week, and dressed in our brown shirts and black shorts of the Hitler Youth, we marched through the streets with the flag of our district. We had an early taste of the German iron discipline. With the mellow, warm and clear summer days over the land again, the general feelings of the population was good. To us school children, the new order brought the first cartoon shows.

NEW HORIZONS

Besides cinemas in the city, the new authorities arranged film shows in local halls and in the evenings in suitable open areas. These shows brought mainly propaganda films, but the News magazines brought

to us the reality of the times. After June 1941 we could follow the war of destruction in the invasion of Russia. The reasons for building the "Stuka" dive bomber engines and other factories for the war industry in Maribor became clear to everybody. The weekly Magazine shows were actually an indication, what lay ahead for the whole of Europe. People began to fear for the peace, which was then still with us.

Our teachers in schools were mainly German, with a few Austrians. I missed my favoured teacher Ms La Payne, from my first year of Primary. We discovered that most of the local teachers were sent to Serbia to do just anything, except teaching. Other highly educated professionals have also been deported, but if they belonged to any party considered dangerous to the German Reich, they were immediately in great peril for their life. On the other hand, members of the German Culture Bond, which under previous government was illegal, now became the new social and civic leaders.

My new teacher was a young lady from Bavaria and very popular with my fellow students. I was doing well in the new situation again reaching top of the class, with distinctions in all subjects.

EDUCATION INDICATORS

I guess I was lucky to be doing well at school, it is a pleasure to receive praise from fellow school mates and also from the family. When I was showing my end of year certificate to my brother Mirko at the end of a school year, a bucket of water somehow got in the way, my certificate fell in. Mirko quickly retrieved it and it hardly got wet at all. It was my Third Year certificate. It so happened that

in my every third year stages in my future education, there was an upheaval. From the day, when I was so terribly disappointed at what had occurred, I have been asking myself, was it a hint for the future?

The German system of education at the time quickly took hold of most students. The study was enlightening, with emphasis on sport and military training, but all in the strictest discipline.

There were sporting competitions in athletics, swimming and a lot of personal contact sport, such as wrestling and boxing, pointing to the war mentality. This was especially manifested in the war games, which were frequently played out in the local fields, to the disappointment of the land owners.

Music and singing were held in high esteem, especially with the Austrian teachers. I had a good voice and was often chosen to sing a duet with a nice young girl. We sang in front of the whole class, to the great appreciation of the students and teachers alike.

It was in those days, that I felt my first love developing towards a girl. This happened towards a beautiful girl, Renate, from my class. She had golden blond hair, the daughter of a German army officer. Expressions of feelings between the sexes, from an early age was actually encouraged, especially between two blond people, pointing to an Arian race.

REALISATION OF WAR

The war raged in Russia and in North Africa. All men from the age of 18 to 35 were called up, trained in the various categories of war, then sent to the fronts, but mainly to Russia. Some young men were

encouraged to volunteer, and were placed into the special SS units. The Germans at that stage appeared confident that they would defeat the Soviet Union, and also win in Africa.

Living conditions were good all round, the shops were well stocked, it was even possible to buy chocolates, tasty Bavarian cheeses, and in bars and hotels, there was the best Bavarian beer on tap.

Instead of sending my brother Mirko to war, as he was that age, he was taken to Stuttgart to be trained as a technician in production of the aircraft engines. My brother Stan was bundled off to the Russian front as soon as he turned 18. My cousin Max, who was enlisted soon after he began his carrier as a chemist, was already at Stalingrad.

When Stan was departing, together with our neighbour's son, his name was also Stan, this young man was so terribly sad and cried loudly. My brother tried to console him, but we were all most upset. They both were off to the Russian front, but he never returned. After some months, his family received a letter from his comrades in the trenches, that he was killed by a Russian hand grenade. My cousin Max also never returned from Stalingrad, he never even enjoyed a much revered holiday from the front, that meant so much to those young people. No information ever was forthcoming of his death.

BEGINNINGS OF RESISTANCE, AND RETRIBUTION

Thus came the difficult times, when families began to feel the loss of their loved ones. We heard of resistance movement in all by now occupied lands, by Nazi Germany. It became common knowledge,

that German army advances were stopped in Africa and in Russia. There were daily executions of resistance fighters, and transports of people leading to the concentration camps. The names of those shot in the central city jail were posted on the news boards. My brother Mirko was accused of sabotage in the local aircraft factory, but was spared in the last hour, while others accused were led out into the jail's courtyard and shot.

CASE IN POINT

Volley ball was played a lot, as part of the physical education program, or at any time between the lesson breaks. On one occasion during a game, I accidentally knocked the son of a local district official on the nose. As I was excusing myself, this boy came over and hit me across my face, badly hurting my left eye. It hurt a number of days, so I asked my father to talk to the boy who hurt me. Father was sympathetic with my problem, but did not wish to get involved. One of this boys brothers was one of the first people shot by the Germans. Their family had since been marked as hostile to the German rule. Even though they might have been intelligent people, they would not be allowed into institutions of high education, but could only perform physical duties. One of these duties was physical protection of higher officials of the German administration, and as such be always closely watched. This young man was already acquainted with his position for his own survival, and acted accordingly in my situation, even though I had no intention to hurt anyone in our game. The injury to my eye was a reason, that I had to start wearing glasses much earlier, than would normally be necessary.

AWARENESS AND EFFECT ON POPULATION THAT GERMANY WAS NOT INVINCIBLE

Rommel and the Italian army were defeated in Africa, and the Russians had started with counter offensives, after they had been pushed for months and years, up to the outskirts of Moscow. It was terribly demoralising on the German army, for their marching song was predicting the breaking the Russian front, it has now happened to them.

There was so much envy for peace in the world, the news that the Allies have landed in Southern Italy came as nothing less than God-sent. The Allies have firmly established themselves south of Naples and Salerno, and Mussolini's Italy had capitulated. Soon after this gigantic event, thousands of Italian soldiers, taken prisoner by the German army, at the time of capitulation were brought to work on building a new local hydro-electric power station and other projects in the Maribor area. The Italians took over from the Russian prisoners of war, who were transported to somewhere in northern Germany, and most if not all, some 10,000 of them reportedly died there of hunger.

THE STUNNING FEAR BROUGHT BY ALLIED BOMBING

The Allies in southern Italy built huge airfields, the city of Bary base having been the biggest. They could then load their B-29 bombers in England, send them flying all over Europe's mainland, dropping their

deadly cargo, then landing in Bary. That was how the pay-back occurred, for the new industries established in our Maribor. They came day and night, week after week, bombing the industrial targets and it seemed there would be no end to the destruction. That was the most fearful experience, when I was afraid to venture out of the house. We slept in cellars, where one could feel some safety, but it was impossible to shut out the fearful noise of the Allied bombers approaching, the anti-aircraft batteries opening up against them, then the bombs screaming towards their targets. Although we knew they were on our side, we hated the bombs that the Allies rained on our city. Factories, railway yards and bridges were their main targets, but we were aware that a bomber hit by anti-aircraft fire, dropped bombs just anywhere. In night raids, the sky was lit up with what looked like Christmas trees. Instilled by constant fear for one's life, I could not sleep at night, or by day, although hungry, I could not eat, could not swallow. It was hell on earth, which seemed to have no end.

I was supposed to start high school, but was too afraid to be caught on an open road during a bombing raid, so I was delaying and waiting...., and so were other students.

EVER PRESENT DANGERS

The presence of partisans in the mountains could be increasingly felt. Attacks, killing and murder became a routine right through Europe. When we heard of the mass killings in the concentration camps, and added to that the local daily executions from both sides, the feeling and the smell of death was everywhere. People were taken to the concentration camps on suspicion, and German police patrols were regularly ambushed and wiped out. My cousin Vilma was taken to

Aushwitz and her husband to Dachau. Five of our immediate neighbours sent to Dachau were never heard of again.

On the other hand, local men, who were recruited into the German police and had to serve as informers on the local population were grabbed at night from their homes by partisans and executed. One close neighbour, of Ukrainian origin, forced into the German police became an informer. The partisans took him from his home into a nearby valley, where by a creek bed he had to dig his own grave.

My father worked in the records office of the local power station. Taking files and plans to and from the various sections on the site, so there was also a hand gun in his briefcase. The partisans needed weapons of all kinds and they knew that father brought his briefcase home sometimes. In broad daylight one day, they came to get that gun. On the way on his afternoon shift, my brother Mirko warned father not to come home that evening, because the two partisans were waiting for him in the nearby woods. My father, having reached the rank of corporal in the Austro- Hungarian army in World war I, would not have parted with his gun for anybody. Had he come home, our whole family could be in great danger.

My brother Stan was lucky enough to get a two weeks leave pass from the Russian front. That was after he recovered reasonably well from a shrapnel wound in his leg. Wondering how he could avoid returning to the war, he decided to place a poisonous plant on his still unhealed wound, which caused a big infection. He could not join the partisans with his injury and so delayed the return to his army unit. In one week, he was picked up by the German military police, sent to northern Germany and put in jail with solitary confinement, his wound still infected. After one month, he was paraded in front of a company of soldiers, who were told that he tried to avoid returning to the front. Some of these soldiers proposed that he be shot. Luck was

again on his side, he escaped with his life, because a greater number of the soldiers of this company suggested to send him back to the Russian front in a punishment group.

PREPARING LOCAL DEFENCES

All able bodied males and females, not having been conscripted yet, were now called to dig huge trenches parallel to the highways and main roads. These were the anti-tank and battle defences, at which the German forces in our areas would stop the enemy. This was paid work, but the Deutsch Mark was at that time already nearly worthless.

On Sundays, the local trusted men came to every home to sell little plastic toy-planes. This was the general population's assistance to the war effort. Plastic material was hailed then as yet another German invention, but sending these "salesmen" through all homes was also a check on the population at large. School children were made to contribute to the war effort. Our lesson work had been considerably reduced, on many days, instead of going into the classes, we assembled in the courtyard, then moved into the fields to collect along creek beds medicinal plants, for the production of herbal medicine. With the millions of wounded and sick soldiers and civilians increasing every day, medicines were virtually unobtainable.

Rationing of food had been introduced at the very beginning of the war. That system was also collapsing, because there simply was almost nothing available to buy. Bread was black and contained some sort of grit. Potatoes disintegrated while being boiled, there was no flour of any kind available. My whole family was entitled to

one quarter litre of milk per day, and that only for myself being of school age.

FRANK CAME HOME

My eldest brother Frank had been released from his prisoner of war camp in northern Germany, after three years of dreadful conditions and starvation. He gave us accounts of the starving camp inmates fighting over potato peels, eating grass to survive. Severe punishment of prisoners followed, arising on such occasions.

Frank was then released to work on a large farm in Neubrandenburg. There he met Lotti, a German girl. They both came to visit us for a short while, but soon returned to Germany. It was perilous travelling by train then, and I wondered how they could ever reach northern Germany. Trains especially were constant target for the Allied airforce, or they could be mined on the way. But they arrived safely.

RUMOURS OF A NEW FRONT OPENING BY THE ALLIES

The horrible war dragged on and on. In the beginning, rumours were quietly floating around, that the Allies were going to open a new front on northern Germany, but they were finally admitted even in the Press. This was done mainly in a derogatory way, implying that the German war machine would devastatingly deal with any sort of invasion attempt. All people in the occupied lands could not wish for the invasion to come soon enough, to end the suffering. And it did happen. There were huge headlines in the papers, of the enormous

tonnages of Allied shipping destroyed. The weeks passed, and from then on, boys of 16 and men over 45 were put into the uniforms, and sent to the theatres of war on the Western front. Many were glad, they were not going East.

WAR FRONTS SQUEEZING FROM ALL SIDES

The intense bombings of our areas had subsided, but action on the battlefields intensified. The German airforce had all but crumbled, now the black-grey Russian attack planes flew over Maribor, but their's were apparently not bombing missions, only support to their army on the ground. The Eastern front was then only some 120 kilometres away over in Hungary.

The German armies were retreating from the Russians and in doing so, they settled in our valleys and in our homes. There were motorised units, horse drawn carriages, motor bikes and cavalry. As these units moved about along the highways, out of camouflage, they were attacked by Tito's partisan planes, screaming down the hillsides, to keep them aware, that they were now on the defensive, and running.

I developed a terribly sore tooth and was taken to a German army doctor. He pulled my tooth and seemed happy enough, when my mother gave him two fresh eggs for his effort. All I could eat for a few days after that was the army ration soup, which the officers, living in our house kindly gave me.

WAR IN THE AIR

Since the establishment of the Bary airforce base, the Allies were carrying out daylight air raids on Germany. After releasing their loads over their designated targets, they were returning to the base in Bary some kilometres west of Maribor, just out of reach of the anti-aircraft batteries, that were ringing the city. Waves of these bombers could be seen, shimmering silvery objects in the sun, disappearing in the clouds, beyond the Pohorje mountain. It seemed our city did not interest them anymore, and just as well, they had brought us more than enough fear in recent past. We children in our play areas on the river watched, when sometimes a bomber, damaged over Austria or Germany could not steer clear from the waiting guns, was hit again. When it started to veer to one side, we could see some airmen bail out. If they were lucky to float far enough up the mountain Pohorje, they were snatched by the partisans and to safety, but if caught by the Germans, they were publicly maltreated and individually blamed for bombing Germany.

EXPECTATION OF A SUPERWEAPON

The population was largely becoming aware, that the end of this war was coming, finally. What was making us unsure, were the claims of a German Super-weapon, on which the press heavily relied, and quietly hoped for. It was claimed, this weapon would ensure German victory at " five minutes to twelve".

The army was still stationed in our homes and in camouflaged tents around us. We realised how close the war front had approached. Of

the five officers in our house, one of them was a war correspondent, a very tall young man. One morning he left on his trip to the front on the Hungarian border, only some 60km away. In the evening we were told that he was killed in the trenches there. The Russian guns could now be heard from that direction.

There was little open war activity in our immediate vicinity, other than an occasional German, or an Allied surveillance plane flying over Maribor, or the strafing of an army truck in the convoy of German army retreating towards Austria.

When one soldier died in one such incident, the Germans expressed disbelief, that anyone would still want to attack them. We wondered, did they not know, that thousands of people in concentration camps were still dying daily.

IN THE NET OF ARMY INTELIIGENCE

With the Allies and the Russians closing in from all sides, Tito's partisans were increasingly making their presence felt. One day a German officer invited myself and three of my friends to go fishing with him. We were going to use the peculiar, long handle hand grenades to get the fish. We stuck these grenades behind our trouser belts and walked to a larger creek, quite some distance from our homes. It was common knowledge, that partisans operated in those areas. Hardly any fish could be found in the waters, from over-catches in these hungry years. We used a couple of the grenades and the echo of the explosions reverberated through the length and breadth of the valley. While it was a most exciting experience, this expedition of ours, it was only realised later, that this German soldier

was an intelligence officer, gathering information on the extent of enemy territory. We boys, with grenades around our belts, were his protection in case of an attack.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Suddenly one morning, the German army units started moving out of our area, towards the West, where the British Army Divisions were closing in. These German units were comprised of war weary soldiers, but still in good physical condition, since they did have good rest lately, having been removed from war operations. They had no intention to get into the Russian hands, so they moved West, to be taken prisoner by the British armies.

Behind the retreating German army units followed countless columns of Ukrainian Cossacks and Hungarian police, and thousands of civilians, attached to these nationalities. They travelled in horse and oxen drawn carriages, riding horses, and walked for many days along the highway, past our homes. The Hungarian police uniforms were most colourful, with shiny cock feathers on their hats, making it an interesting, but sad procession to watch, going by.

None of these groups of the moving human chain were dangerous, if they were let to proceed. They all had one aim in common, to run from the Russians, hoping that in the hands of the British, they would have a better chance to survive. These were people, that in a way assisted in the German occupation of their lands. They really did not have much choice from the beginning.

EXIT OF LAST BATALLIONS

A short interval followed in the movement West of police units and civilians on our highways. Then came the last battalions of German army, retreating from positions on the near Eastern front lines. They moved in tanks, trucks, cars and on motor bikes. When a vehicle ran out of petrol, they abandoned it and pushed it into the nearest ditch or into the river. Any unnecessary load, such as howitzers, masses of heavy cannon shells, small arms and ammunition all ended in the river, for a quicker getaway. This war material was strewn also all along the highways everywhere. People were warned to stay indoors and to not provoke the withdrawing armoured units. It happened, that someone in the city thoroughfare hung out of a window a Tito's partisan flag. It did not hang there for long, when a passing tank shot it down and damaged the building as well. When the last soldiers of these motorised German units had disappeared into the distance, we could finally come out, and started wondering, what would happen next.

The danger of all the ammunition laying around soon became apparent, when children started handling the shells, grenades and guns, when a number of them were killed, or were maimed.

IN A VACUUM

With neither the Russians nor the Partisans directly chasing the retreating German army, there were no armed forces to be seen about anywhere. It was a time of apprehension, a vacuum existed for a day

or two, until the knowledge sank into our veins, that the end of the years of fear and suffering was finally with us.

MAY 9 1945 - THE END OF WORLD WAR II

A new day dawned on the official End of War. It seemed that the war had lasted an eternity, but peace was with us. A horrendous experience and so much suffering, especially in Europe, left us numb in the feelings between humans one and the other. So many did not survive, but for us who did, and had nothing to fear with the coming of peace, it was a tremendous relief. It was such a pleasure to look at nature again - the mountains, the hills, our river, all at peace, and such pleasure to walk in peace.

SAD RETRIBUTION

It became known that the masses of people, except the regular German soldiers, who were fleeing towards the Western Allies, searching for mercy and understanding, were caught up in the web of decisions made for their fate, at the meeting of U.S. President Roosevelt, Mr. Churchill and Stalin in Yalta, and a later meeting of these world leaders in Crimea. They became prisoners of the Allies in the fields of Southern Austria. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian Cossacks and Slovenian Home-guard members were placed into trains, sent to their countries, and certain death. Thousands of Croatian nationals were sent on a death march to their country.

More than ten thousand of the Slovenian men and boys met their end

on a mountain and their bodies fell into its subterranean caves. It was not until forty years later, when a lady -minister in the new government of the newly independent country Slovenia put it to the nation, that these men were also the sons of Slovenian mothers, and in their death deserved all respect. At a magnificent ceremony, attended by thousands of people from all over Slovenia, and from overseas, the Archbishop of Ljubljana dedicated a solemn Mass to their memory. The President of the republic himself spoke to the people gathered in a clearing in the forest, near the caves. The ceremony proceedings were beamed by Television to all corners of the country.

RULE AFTER A LONG UNDERCOVER OPERATION

Tens of thousands of partisans began to fill the vacuum, created by the withdrawal of the foreign occupiers from our lands. People stared in amazement at the huge numbers of these young soldiers, who came from the liberated areas in the forests around our occupied settlements. They made way for the establishment of Civilian order, which was soon put in place. As all over the now free world, we celebrated the freedom in city squares and in local halls. People could now again follow speeches and listen to exhilarating songs and music in our own language. The warm sun made our lives so much more worth living again, in the most memorable spring of our time.

THE INVENTORY OF OUR LIVES

Many families counted the loss in human lives of the grim period just

overcome. My family could consider ourselves extremely lucky, for we all survived. Although not all together, we were all accounted for. Brother Frank was alive in Germany, Stan was taken prisoner of war by the British near Frankfurt on the river Oder. Mirko spent the last three months of the war in partisan units in the forests close to Maribor, and my father continuing in the job at the local power station. My sisters Sonja, Lizika, and myself remained most of the time near our mother.

A NEW BEGINNING

As soon as the schools had been made ready, all children began attending classes again. It felt strange to be taught in our language, but it felt good. After only a few weeks orientation, some school mates and I entered High School. It was an exhilarating experience, but I found that after a long period of very closed mind, just striving to survive, my brain seemed very inflexible and difficult to absorb knowledge. I experienced the truth personally that brain has to be active, to remain at the peak of performance. People of my age were growing up in a period of great shortages, so our physical and mental development was greatly affected. I guess the school authorities were aware of this, so the study material was prepared accordingly.

Lectures were organised into three months courses, in order that students could overcome lost time, until we reached the stage, according to our age. I enjoyed every minute of the high school studies, but as my mind had far from recovered from the idle period, my scholastic achievements were only average.

DESTINY IN CONTROL

I successfully completed the course of study in order to begin the regular Year III of high school. The curriculum was suddenly changed, and I had to do the regular Year 2. I was not the only student so affected, but it was a terrible blow for me, I was devastated. My study capacities were much improved by then, my subject marks were becoming very good, even in mathematics. But there was no way around the Education department's decision. To my dismay I discovered, that jealousy was already evident in humans at that early age, when boys who were supposed to be my friends seemed glad for the predicament I was in. This must have been due to the fact, that I was out of competition in their year of study, them being one year older than myself. This made me aware of the sad but very real, poor human quality.

There was nothing for me to do, but to press on regardless, completing that Year and planning for my future vocation, which was most important, to concentrate on. But first came the Year's end holidays. With my friends of the district, we now had time to swim and sail on our ever great river Drava, and go for long hikes to the peak of our mountain Pohorje. In the evenings we played volley ball, games of chess and listened to the Hawaiian music on short wave radio, coming directly from Honolulu on my friends family receiver. We were three or four young men, spending the good times of leisure together.

My Year 3 was most successful so far in high school, but I was still feeling somewhat sore with the lost full school year. Why did it happen? One whole year at that age seemed an eternity. Was

Destiny in control? I say it was, because the people who I came in contact with from then on, were a completely different bunch, who they would otherwise be. My life was therefore affected in a completely different way.

HEARTBREAK HIGH

The high school years affect many people in a variety of ways. A whole new era began in my experience of life, when I entered Year 4 High. I must say, our school building was one of the nicest of all in Maribor, and I was happy to be one of the students there. It was a school for girls and boys, some 700 in all.

The girls, who I would previously only look at in passing, now could not be overlooked. In the short few months from the previous year, they turned into beautiful young ladies, with breath taking bodies, causing any boy's awakening. Some of these girls I knew, some came from other high schools.

ONE PARTICULAR GIRL

I had to get used to the awareness, that a group of young people involves mixing with the opposite sex, and that means contact with strange personalities not just the girl next door. This does not always come naturally, or successfully for every boy.

It was in almost every student's mind, or it should be, that we all came together to study, and the study program was heavy, to settle

down and concentrate on learning the stuff. The year ahead was definitely challenging and fateful.

Physics and chemistry were new subjects and interesting to follow. Mathematics more advanced just required more time and practice in each stage. I badly wished to have English as a foreign language, but the political establishment as it was, pushed Russian as the first requirement.

In physical education, there was gymnastics, volleyball and soccer. For the gymnastics class, all students gathered in the sports hall, which was very popular with the boys, as we could be more closely acquainted with the girls.

After school in winter, it was nice to go swimming in the city's indoor heated pool. The height of our group get -together were the visits to the Opera house, where students could see the afternoon performances of all the famous works of Opera, plays and ballet. Four girls and four boys from our class had been lucky to receive, for a minimal fee, the seasons seats in the best cubicle of the house, where we together watched the artists performing for us the famous shows.

In that little group of ours was Nada, the girl that I began to admire, when she first entered my class. She was not only delightful to talk to, but she soon became top of the class. She was popular with all of us, really.

For myself, I realised I loved this girl. I could talk to her about school work, at one stage she began preparation for a play, that our class should present to the whole school. She allocated the lead role of a very prominent general to me, but still I could not express my

deep feelings towards her. Why could I not open up to her, what was stopping me ?

We went on excursions, the whole class, to the Adriatic Sea, or just some of our group into the mountain. There I even danced with Nada, this girl that I adored so much. Because I did not tell her so, she gradually lost, or showed no interest in me.

AN UNUSUAL LECTURE

Our Social Studies teacher one day, between the normal material, presented a curious lecture, which seemed quite out of character. He may have been assigned, to give the necessary guidelines to us adolescents. He warned, it was most important for young boys and girls of our age to remain aware of the human necessity for sexual relationships for a healthy mental and physical development. He emphasised, once sexual interest in the opposite sex had been aroused, it should never be abandoned. He advised, it was necessary to study, but also not to neglect sexual health.

By that time I had already decided, to leave girls out of my life for a while at least, since I lost close friendship of one, that I worshiped so deeply. I should have listened and followed the most vital advice we received in that Social Studies class, which applies equally to both boys and girls.

I now see that fateful decision of mine as the direction according to my Destiny. Again, the path of my life had been re-directed. There is no mistake about *THE CERTAINTY OF DESTINY*.

I suggest, whatever in life occurs to us, is for a reason. No matter how beautiful was Nada, I was not meant to form a close relationship with her. I could not be too successful in my native land, or I would not go from there. That wide open land across the Ocean was my destination, where I was to contribute with my family's human values.

I say, everything that happens to us, is for a reason. We are guided into everything we do, into every situation, be it called what may, by Nature, by Destiny, or God's Will.

JOB ORIENTATION

The school year was coming to a close, which for our level of study required the most important decision, whether we complete the high school, or move to professional vocation institutions. My mother wanted me to continue in high school from where I would later have a wider choice of studies, such as Economics, Law, Medicine and other professions. There was a great shortage of highly educated people in all these fields.

Many young men clamoured towards Mechanical Engineering, and to a lesser extent to the other branches of engineering. With the advent of the mechanical and automotive age, it was fashionable to follow this stream. The gleaming American automobiles in front of hotels and foreign embassies made many of us potential engineers just for this reason. I decided to follow this trend as well.

Nada came top of the class, and I came second, to the best of my knowledge. After the distribution of the Certificates, we all went our

different ways. Until this day, I had not met more than maybe five people from that Class of 1948, but I made sure that I met Nada again.

From that fateful year, I continued to move in a direction of my future, for which I am almost convinced, I have not been in charge of my decisions.

INTO ENGINEERING PRACTICE

My mind was made up to study Mechanical Engineering, in the capital Ljubljana, as there was no such institution in Maribor. I was wondering, what would it be like living in a student home, because that was where I had to stay in Ljubljana. Had I carried on in high School, I could live at home, which was my mother's wish.

In preparation for my professional direction, my father secured a place for me for work experience where he worked, at the hydro-electric power station.

It was most interesting work, assisting electrical and mechanical engineers and technicians in their duties. I met there a professor from the Ljubljana University, as it interested me, how those high professionals operated. It made me wonder, would I measure up, could I myself ever reach such a position of knowledge and prestige.

As accidents can always occur in a work place, I discovered this myself, when an unwinding winch hit me on the head. I was helping a technician wiring a huge electric rotor, when it happened. I was taken to the First Aid station, where a nurse placed a cold compress

on my head. Another time, my eyes were affected, causing a most severe pain, when I was doing some electrical welding.

I became very listless, my reflexes were not as they should be. On a very special day of commissioning of a last generator, thousands of people converged for the Open day at the power station. I was again developing terrible headaches, such , that on this special occasion, having worked at the place over the school holidays, I could not attend the ceremony. I felt in a really bad way. The headaches prevented me from getting any good, deep sleep, although I so badly wanted a good restful sleep. In the mornings that made me feeling tired and disoriented, and hard to get up.

DETERMINATION TO WISE UP

It was a nice summer of better weather than normally in our parts. Because I was tormented by growing -up unpleasanties, I must say, that was the only most revered season in Europe, which went by, without my really enjoying it. I knew I had to pull myself together, and come out of my nightmare, and back into the mainstream of normality. I am sure that every man or woman, who comes to that sad abyss of indifference about people around them, especially concerning the relationship with the opposite sex, can come away maybe slightly scathed, but with strong will and determination can without doubt be a successful new person again.

I might say, if it does happen, that getting into the mainstream of living does cause problems, one must never keep this to themselves. There are medical institutions, which will definitely help. But self administering drugs must remain a taboo.

The statements just made are in reference to the proliferation of drug use in the 1990's. It cannot be anything else than the many people, especially the young are not shown the way, which with perseverance does exist, to normal interaction between men and women. There really is no need to achieve human ecstasy with anything else, than through a healthy sexual relationship between man and woman.

My personal experience, as anybody else's, was a temporary diversion in the path of my Destiny, and it must be recognised as just that. The interaction in human relationships must continue in a nice, pleasant and a respectful manner.

I permitted myself to go into a sort of personal seclusion to a point, when I doubted in God, in as much that I did not pray before going to sleep at night. As long as a person can meditate before rest he, she is on the right path of life.

I was emerging out of temporary nonsensical type of existence I was leading, once and for all. There was a nice, big, interesting world out there to join.

If the circumstances described are not the major reason, then who of the 90's society in such proportions are turning to drugs, and why?

STUDYING IN LJUBLJANA

The Technical High School in Ljubljana was a large establishment, with hundreds of students in its various departments. The city was much different than Maribor. Moving about Maribor, one can see fruit trees, grape vine pergolas and vegetables growing in backyards. Ljubljana had little of this, at least it was not noticeable, yet the two cities are only 150 km apart.

On enrolment at the school, it was suggested to us to study Civil Engineering, Forestry, Agronomy, where the shortage of qualified people was the greatest. With the machine age looming over the world, hundreds of us hopefuls insisted on our preconceived future in Mechanical and Automotive engineering. My father badly wanted for me to take up Forestry.

Living in the Student home was not, what I hoped it to be. It meant the loss of privacy, and at least six boys from all the regions of the country in one room, we each had many varied customs and habits. Our dialects were different too.

We had to adjust to the study of specialised subjects, but also to a greater intensity of study. The lack of good Lecturers was evident also in this institution. One of the mathematics teachers had difficulty getting away from explaining the value of the absolute zero, a good part of a whole lecture.

My achievements in my first year at this institution were much to be desired. My grasp of mathematics was never special, now I had structures to contend with. I realised Forestry might have been more suitable to my engineering capabilities.

ENCROACHING TEMPTATIONS OF SOCIAL LIFE

Living in a Student home had advantages and disadvantages at the same time. For the purpose of study, it was helpful to have mates around, who one could turn, to solve a particular problem. The danger was the reliance on others, which does not exist, when studying alone. There were a lot of Drawing and Design assignments to be submitted, which took up much time to complete. There were other subjects that required an equal amount of attention.

It is an accepted fact, some students are more successful than others in absorbing, and presenting the subject matter, regardless of distractions. However, study requires a lot of concentration even for the most gifted.

Reasonably satisfied with our efforts, a group of friends formed quite naturally. Generally on Saturday evenings, we went to dance halls, where students had congregated. I felt happy within myself, the shyness I experienced earlier, had all but disappeared. I could talk to the girls freely, and had no difficulty in forming a close relationship. At one of the dance evenings, I met Mimi, a very attractive young lady, studying Forestry. She lived with her family in Ljubljana and we spent a lot of free time together. For her work experience, she was sent to work in a saw mill office. She invited me to come spend a weekend with her, which was in a forestry town in the countryside. For some reason I could not go, and maybe just as well, because I might have had to start a family. Clearly, I was not meant to join my Mimi in the forest.

At home in the mid-year holiday break, my mother noticed a note between the pages of one of my books from Mimi, which she wrote

to me with a tied-up pencil at the Ljubljana central Post office. Mother found that expression funny but added, Mimi was not the name of a young lady, whom I recently introduced to her.

MY BROTHER FRANK MIGRATES TO AUSTRALIA

While I went to study in Ljubljana, Frank with his wife Lotti sailed from Bremen in Germany, to settle in Perth in Western Australia. Our whole family were happy for them, but of course had no idea, how they came to the decision to move so far from Europe, as little was known of Australia up to that time.

Only months later, back at my studies, a package arrived all the way from Perth, for me. I must have asked my brother for an engineering Slide rule, and there it was in the packet, together with a beautiful white trench coat and a special pair of shiny shoes, made of snake leather. Also included was a packet of exquisite biscuits, which in my mind only Australia could produce. In that fine overcoat and shoes, I must have stood out from the rest of the student population like a sore toe. Life in Europe, and the clothes people were wearing at that time were very basic, and the things I just received were an eye opener.

GENERAL STUDENT LIFE AND CONDITIONS

Lectures began at 7 o'clock in the morning. After some liquid, which was supposed to be coffee, and a slice of bread, and still dark outside in winter, huddling figures moved from our quarters towards the school some 1.5km away. It could get very cold in the class, with

the radiators giving out hardly any heat. That was all forgotten, once the Spring sun returned to our parts.

In between lectures I used to look out our class window, towards the imposing ruins which once must have been a prominent castle, just above the old Ljubljana center. Under the ruins long grass moved in the wind, which gave an impression of Ocean waves appearing and disappearing, in an unlikely place.

It was time for another lecture and more learning. There were few text books available, so almost everything had to be written in our files. The lectures ended at 1 o'clock in the afternoon, leaving us a fairly long period of time for study, and recreation. The Student home was situated close to the city centre and the Central railway station. It consisted of four buildings, one of which housed some order of Nuns. These mainly middle aged ladies made sure, that our linen was regularly changed and washed, which they dutifully performed for the students.

The existing regime neither openly discouraged Religion, or encouraged it. But I cannot remember ever seeing a priest or a nun in their habits in the streets of Ljubljana. There was a chapel attached to the Nun's building, where some of the students went to Mass on Sundays. I admit that I myself never entered that little chapel, but I made sure not to miss a prayer before going to sleep at night.

The kitchen and the dining room were situated under the Recreation hall, representing little consequence to students, because I myself can state, that I had not enjoyed one single meal prepared there. The cooks must have had an easy task just dumping some vegetables and maybe a little meat into those huge pots, and never produced a tasty meal.

In one end of the year recess, all students of the school were organised into Work brigades for voluntary work, extending the main school building, and building new living blocks for the Civil Engineering students. Other educational institutions had to assist in building roads and railway lines, mainly in Bosnia. In the six weeks of this effort, the foundations had been dug, columns built and the first walls began to raise from the floor slabs. Between these activities were organised sporting events and competitions, where for the first time we were acquainted with proper sporting equipment. All the work and sporting activities were done in a good team spirit. In the evenings dances were held in the hall, with the novelty, that we could listen to American music and songs. Tito's Yugoslavia, in which Slovenia was then still one of the republics, had just broken away from the Soviet Union fold.

THE KITCHEN SCRAMBLE

I am not sure why, but I was appointed Sports Master, responsible for all the sporting activities of the Brigades. As such I did not do any physical work, during the weeks on building projects. Also, my duty was general supervision of students, after their return from the building sites. When checking the queues of students moving towards the food distribution counters, the students seemed to have all been served, and there were no more students waiting. With still some stew in one pot, some students asked for more. After some hesitation I gave the permission to distribute the remainder. About one hour later, a Company of eight people turned up for dinner. Since there was no food left for them, and I was not informed, that there was a group working late, they were each given a loaf of bread with jam as an emergency ration.

For my "poor judgement", I was called to the Work's Managers office for a half hour's lecture. All I could do was to say, sorry, Comrade. In all, the experience of work in the Brigades was something worth remembering for all students, who took part in them.

MOUNTAIN TRECKING

After the completion of next school year, we were not required to do any more voluntary work. Each student was allocated a work place in the various industries close to their family home around Slovenia. Arranged by the various school departments, it was paid work experience. For many of us, this was the first pay we ever received for our work.

Following these weeks came the real holiday time. Our usual group together, we filled our backpacks with goodies our mothers could provide, and went off on about two weeks walk and climbing the Slovenian Alps. Reaching the 2863 metres high peak of Triglav was a feat to remember. There were a number of established paths to follow, the one we took meant continuous climbing for seven hours. On the way down, we walked along the Seven Lakes, where from each the ice cold water flows from one to another, in a picturesque valley, with cliffs on each side. We climbed these rocks to pick the mountain flower - Edelweis, growing only between the rocks of the Alpine ranges. After a few days in the high country, we gradually descended into the beautiful lowlands around the Lake Bohinj. Between hundreds of other holidaying people, we picked up the tread, left behind on the northern side of the Triglav peaks. After a

few days of enjoyment of mixed company, we returned home, to prepare for another year's study ahead.

LOSING A CLOSE FRIEND

On my return to Maribor, reading the local daily newspaper, I came across a notice of death. I soon recognised the name of a good friend of mine, from my class of studies. Apparently, while diving into a river near his home, he hit a rock and died from the injury. It was a sad realisation, when soon we were to meet again at the beginning of studies, he would not be with the rest of us. Another friend, living close to him told me, his parents having a communist background, had him buried without any ceremony. This was most unusual for our customs, and his loss saddened me even more.

PREPARATION FOR JOINING THE WORKFORCE

Following the holiday in the mountains, there was still some time remaining, to spend at home. The months of August and September are usually the warmest, with at least two weeks of completely clear skies, when a special kind of peace can be felt over the whole countryside. The only sound filling the peaceful scene comes from a wind driven giant rattle, with which the vineyards are tried to be protected from hungry birds. But it is a battle, to keep these away from the ripening, sweet grapes.

It is a an extraordinary experience, after a refreshing swim to the opposite bank and back, over the dammed river Drava, close to our

homes, to sit in the warm sun, with the now beautifully tanned local young ladies. Also students, they studied at the local institutions, and lived at home.

For me came time to return to Ljubljana. The trains were packed, making one think, that everybody now wanted to get to the capital. There was standing room only, and a few stations before the end of my journey, a smoker standing behind me pushed a cigarette, maybe unknowingly, into the shoulder area of my new suit. I smelt something burning, but only saw the burn mark, when I took off my coat, on arrival back at the hostel. I thought, that was not a nice thing to happen to me, and was looking forward to joining the work force, when I could easily buy new clothes myself.

With a lot of study and examinations to sit for, and endless assignments to submit, there was little time for anything else. At that stage, I had no idea, where I would end up with a job, but my father had the opportunity to talk to a senior engineer, previously employed at the power station, and was now the Chief Engineer in a large steel construction factory in Maribor.

At the end of my studies, that was where I headed and was lucky to land the job with that exciting Company. Before settling into the junior engineering position, once more our usual troop of school mates ventured into the magnificent Alpine region, where in good company enjoyment was always ensured. The highlights of these trips were the hikes over the mountain ranges from the northern side, then descending into the sunny Slovenian side of the Alps, towards the green valleys below. I do wish to experience this for the third time.

MY FIRST REAL JOB

I was happy with having obtained work with the engineering company in my own city. It was a large construction firm, with job contracts locally and overseas, mainly in Africa. It built bridges, tunnels, refineries and factories. I was happy to come into an organisation with expertise in such a variety of engineering activity. Allocated a position in a design section, I became part of a team of people with wide experience in the design and construction of various engineering components.

The office was most impressive, quite large, with shiny polished floor and excellent lighting, which is most important in preparation and drawing of plans.

The soft rubber soles of my shoes, sent to me from Australia, although very attractive, left awful dust marks on the polished floor, wherever I walked, which embarrassed me. I could not go and clean the floor after myself, but no-one complained.

The Company had many sections, there were many people employed in the offices and in the large construction halls. As normally in large factories, there were many nice young ladies in the Accounts section, and typists. The Social club from time to time organised trips, dances, but there were regular progress meetings, when opportunities arose to get to know the nice young ladies around the place.

Many of these people already had families, but enough of them were free like myself. Being in a working situation brought a new

dimension to relationships. We lived in the city rooms and flats, so in any free time we came together for any kind of celebration. I was in a position, to live life to the full.

ARMY SERVICE, WHAT ARMY?

Time was vanishing, as a flash, which happens when one can enjoy good times. Soon I would be called up for Army service. By this time, my brother Frank and his wife were well settled in Perth, Western Australia. I was somewhat bothered, why had they settled in Perth. When I came together with my old high school mates, sitting on the banks of the river, we decided then and there, that if any of us had a chance to live in Australia, we would settle in Sydney, with Melbourne being the second choice. So why Perth ?

A lot of the nations with communist regimes were unhappy with their situation, and so it was with Yugoslavia. We knew, that life in America, Canada and in Australia had improved a lot after the war. The change in our countries for the better was not half fast enough.

The only person driving a car in our Company in Maribor was the Technical Director, and even that car belonged to the Company. To own a car was just a dream for the workers then. The only hope to get behind the wheel of one, was to reach one of those countries. But no migration existed officially, between Slovenia-Yugoslavia and those countries. And I had no wish to enter into any army.

SEARCHING FOR A WAY OUT

I got talking to a friend of mine, employed in another section of the Company. He had some distant relatives living near the Italian border with Slovenia. We decided to cross into Italy, prepared ourselves and set out to do just that. The journey involved travelling by train, and by bus. Entering the bus, to take us the last few kilometres closer to the border, a plain clothes detective walked up to me in the bus, and asked me to come along with him. I was taken to a police station and interrogated for about an hour, then allowed to go. I must have sounded convincing enough, saying that I wanted to visit a friend in the area.

Again catching a bus to get to the pre-arranged meeting place with my friend, he was nowhere to be found. He suspected, the police would have got out of me, that there was someone else with me, he went on, and crossed the border into Italy by himself. I returned to Maribor, as I did not know where the border was, and went to work the next day.

I also returned to a relationship I had with beautiful Branka, a girl from the Accounts section. We spent some memorable nights together in the city, and also on the top of our mountain Pohorje. Those chalets in between tall fir trees can be always most inviting. Branka was the last young lady from my home town, and I valued every moment with her greatly.

My mind was made up, I had to find a way out of the country. Another friend, working in the Electrical section also had relatives close to the Italian border. Before he decided to help me to cross to Italy, he had already successfully shown two of our senior engineers

from my section, over to the Italian side. When the day of our move came, we travelled completely separately on the trains and on the bus.

He was a good guide and we successfully reached the border area. There he hid me in a hay shed, and gave me the direction to follow along a creek, flowing down the high mountain, into Italy. I think it was lucky, that it had been raining heavily for days, which reduced the number of border patrols. I was told to wait in the hay until morning, then to make my move.

It was quite a distance to walk to where I was directed, I only hoped not to be spotted by the patrols. Ahead of my trail I saw a civilian with a rucksack, who was obviously a smuggler, and not interested in me. Then towards me came two Italian border policemen, who actually had not even tried to stop me. I knew then, I was well and truly into the country of Italy, and out of danger.

Walking on, I came to a small village. The first house I entered to ask for directions to proceed, was a police station. When I told the Italian police officers about my friend helping three people to enter Italy at this spot before me, they were satisfied, I genuinely wanted to ask for entry to Italy also.

Our friend himself crossed into Italy, shortly after he assisted the four of us getting into Italy safely. Suspicions have mounted against him, and he could have been arrested at any time. He took a tremendous risk, for very small rewards.

IN THE NEW DIRECTIONS

I had just overcome a dangerous feat, but as it was successful, it gave a lot of satisfaction and relief.

I did not have a hot meal for a couple of days, so it felt good when in the police station I was given a nice plate of the traditional Italian pasta, that only the Italians can best prepare. I was properly interrogated, why I left my country, where I hoped to go, but with a brother in Australia, this was helpful in my situation. Since I did not speak Italian, my answers were translated.

The next morning a police officer escorted me down the mountain towards the Italian town of Chividalis. Going up the mountain range on the Slovenian side did not seem half as demanding, as was the four hour trek down the slopes in Italy. We finally arrived, where in the town I could smell the inviting aroma of freshly percolated coffee brewing in the cafes. From this town I was escorted on the train to the city of Udine. To my surprise, there I was stuck into prison.

Luckily, it was only for one night, as there I spent one of the coldest nights of my life, trying to get some sleep on an elevated platform, without a mattress nor blanket, and in wet clothes from the continuous rain over the past days. This was a typical month of November, as far as the weather was concerned.

In Udine jail I was further interrogated, in some special office of the place. The interrogators seemed of Serbian origin, but I was not about to question them. They were interested, when I was telling them about the plans for atomic bomb-proof shelters under the

factory, where I worked in Maribor, and indicated they would be happy to get their hands on them. They thought, I should have brought copies of these plans with me.

I was helpful as I could be, after all, these chaps were now my protectors.....or were they?

TO FLORENCE, ROME AND ON...

Finally, I was on the way again, this time with a plain clothes police escort, by train. Because I could not talk to him, he did not bother to explain to me, where he was taking me. It was a long journey, the policeman always close to me, but without a word being spoken. We travelled through the flat-lands of north-eastern Italy, stopping in Bologna, Venice, then down through Florence and into the Eternal city of Rome. The fact that I was escorted by a policeman did not bother me. Actually I was delighted with myself, in succeeding in a short time, to reach the city as famous as Rome.

I was most impressed with the semicircular shape of the central railway station. The thousands of people of this great city, milling and hurrying about their business were different in the more colourful clothes, than I was used to.

In Rome we changed trains and travelled inland in the easterly direction to Frosinone. This is a different Italy, on the slopes of the Apenins, rugged but still nice and interesting. There we changed to a bus, bound for the Refugee Camp of Fraschetti, and behind the barb-wire fence. As I was guided to the receiving office, I saw many men of all shades and colours moving about inside the fences, with armed

Italian police guards high up in the watch towers. The camp was situated between high, steep hills, on top of which were stony villages, surrounded by high walls. I was told later, even if people from the camp obtain permission to go out, they were not allowed to walk to these villages, because the inhabitants are not at all friendly towards strangers.

I was placed into a long barrack, with some 35 other men. When the next day dawned, I started to meet the people around me. The three engineers have already been moved on to another holding camp near Naples, I was told. But they did pass through this camp before me. My friend Carlo, who was afraid to wait for me for my first attempted crossing into Italy was still in the camp. He had French citizenship, and due to that, he had difficulty in proceeding with his migration. In the meantime, he had a job in the camp's photographic laboratory.

There were men of many nationalities placed together into this security net. Many were from Croatia, Spain, Egypt, France and there was a sprinkling of American Negroes and Indians, from India.

An Indian obviously wanted to keep up his training, he could be seen every morning doing his hundred metres sprint between the barracks. Health and safety was a high priority in the camp, with so many men thrown together in the long barracks. Consequently the barracks were kept in good order, and the toilets every day stacked with powder chlorine, that permeated the building unmistakably, when one came from the fresh air outside.

Fraschetti was a very cold place, the time there passed very slowly.

VISIT BY A SLOVENIAN PRIEST OF THE SALESIAN ORDER

I met a few Slovenians in the camp as well, when one of our priests came to the camp. He came from Rome, where he was the Director of the Catacombs of San Calisto. He remained in touch with us Slovenians from then on.

It could never have been soon enough, when I was taken out of that cold place and with some other young men moved to a place called Bagnoli, near Naples. What a huge camp was that, actually, it resembled a district of a city in it's own right, and that's what it was. Thousands of people were in this unique establishment, including complete families with children. I discovered, this was a camp, where thousands of Allied servicemen were stationed immediately after the end of World War II. The buildings were multi-storey blocks, each housing hundreds of people. I found the food magnificent, after being quite hungry, while in the cold air of the Central Italy. There was the luxury of piping hot water, to wash our dishes after our meals. We were given warm overcoats for the brisk mornings, but the influence on the weather near Naples was clearly the blue Mediterranean, which I had only seen so far glistening in the distance. Without barbed wire around the camp, I could feel the multi-dimensional freedom.

We had heard, that people have actually departed from Bonegilla to overseas destinations, which lifted our hopes immensely. People departed for the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela. With thousands of displaced persons to process, it took

time for each of these countries to screen their intending migrants.

MOVING SOUTH PAST NAPLES

Many of us were again transferred to another camp, south of Naples and past the city of Salerno, to San Antonio. I found a prominent Slovenian family there, a family with 6 daughters. They were a very pleasant family, with pretty young ladies, unfortunately all already spoken for, because from then on, our available young ladies would be few and far between.

I spent a wonderful Christmas in San Antonio, which reminded me of the pre-war Christmases at home. That deep religious feeling in the people was still found here in a foreign land, while at that time it was not noticeable in my own country. Our priest from Rome read the Christmas mass for all in the camp.

THOSE INVITING RED ORANGES AGAIN

I had never seen an orange tree, full of beautiful red oranges in my life before. One day I decided to walk to the beaches, some distance from the San Antonio camp. Reaching the beach after a nice walk, I noticed parts of artillery pieces sticking out of the sand. There were also parts of trucks and tanks still visible in the dunes. I realised, the beach I was standing on was , where the Allies landed in 1943! Most interesting all this was for me. On my way back to the town, I saw the beautiful red oranges of southern Italy being harvested by the field workers. It was my wish, to pick an orange from a tree myself,

but was shy to ask the busy workers. There was another plantation closer to the camp. I could not resist it any longer, with no-one watching, I pulled a lovely red orange off a branch. It tasted wonderful, just like the ones, when I tasted them for the first time at two years of age.

INTERVIEWS FOR MIGRATION

In the San Antonio camp, the Migration Authorities began with interviews of potential migrants for the various overseas countries. I had no wish to consider Canada, because of its cold climatic conditions. I did wish to migrate to the U.S.A., because I knew a lot about America from books, which I had read over many years. Some of the books were the German writer's Karl May stories, which so enlightened many young people all over Europe for decades. The descriptions of the various areas of America were so vivid, one got the feeling to really know the country purely from these books. Another book, about a young man of Slovenian origin described his exploits in the United States, eventually winning the famous motor race, the Indianapolis 500.

Of course I considered Australia for its warm climate, and also, my brother already living there. One day in San Antonio I received sad news, that Frank's wife Lotti died suddenly in a Perth hospital. It appeared, that the great climatic change from the cool, northern German regions, to the hot Western Australian conditions did not suit her at all. Lotti's death swayed me to the extent, that I decided to choose Australia as my new country. Besides, it was not easy to migrate to the United States, without one's close relatives already living there. Had I known, that after 5 years in Canada I could move

on to the States, my decision to join Frank in Australia would have been made more difficult.

Migration for the many families in the camp, which came from Albania, Croatia, Hungary, Spain and the Julian Region of Italy appeared difficult, some having to wait for years in the camps. A fairly young Ukrainian couple had been rejected, because the husband was an officer in the German army in World War II.

THE LAST CAMP

Most of us single people moved to the Aversa Migrant camp, about 15 km north of Naples. We "lost " our names there, and became known by numbers only. When called for an interview, or for a telephone call, just our number was called out on the microphone, to come to the office. Our movements were restricted, but we could go out of the camp anytime between 9am and 9pm, having had to leave our metal number tag behind.

The mixture of nationalities was great and most interesting. It was a pleasure to meet and form friendship and relationships. Two very nice Albanian ladies were happy to have some fun with myself and a friend of mine. I got to know a tall, blond Russian lady, who was very concerned about my future, wherever I was going. She also had a Russian doctor of medicine friend, who appeared to have access to drugs, and was using morphine. It was so unusual to me, I was shocked, that a man in his position resorted to finding pleasure in drugs, when there were beautiful women around for the picking. Of course it was an offence, in what he was doing.

BEFORE THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR

Aversa camp was sort of a departure point, for people already accepted for the various countries. The days, when yet another group departed, to board the Ocean liners, taking them to their new country, left some sadness with the rest of us still being unsure of our immediate future. Some people went to the Naples harbour, to see them off. The nice white ships took them to Australia, South Africa, Canada, Argentina.

Those of us left behind, had to wait for the final interview before the respective Ambassadors of the migrant receiving countries of our destinations.

The day came, when my number was called for my interview with the Australian Ambassador. A lady asked the questions, where I came from, about my education and qualifications, and why I wanted to migrate to Australia. She translated my answers to the gentleman sitting in his ambassadorial chair. I felt a little uneasy, he hardly looked at me, while he was making some notes, in what was obviously my personal file. The Ambassador then spoke a few words, which the lady then translated to me, in a very nice manner.

The Ambassador pointed out, that considering my technical education, I would have to wait at least 2 years, until my command of English reached a level of competency, to work in an engineering office. In the meantime, I should be prepared to accept any job, offered to me on arrival in Australia. I thanked the Ambassador for being accepted into Australia.

I heard a lot about English gentlemen, especially of those in foreign service. I had now personally met an Australian diplomat, who completely fitted my perceived personality of a gentleman. He was tall, with grey-reddish hair, very serious, yet understanding. His face showed signs of strict discipline, but his nose made me believe, that he knew how to enjoy life, after important duties and the responsibility of his position. I was immensely impressed.

All I had then to do, was to wait for my lovely white ship, to take me away.....

EXPLORING ITALY

Our Salesian priest, Dr. Franc in Rome formed a friendship with four of us Slovenians in the Aversa camp. He made many friends also with the rest of our community, some now already in their new countries, who sent him gifts in dollars, with which in turn he helped us, still in transit.

With him coming along, we visited Pompei, the volcano Vesuvius, and the beautiful resorts of Sorrento, and the Island of Capri. When he had time, Dr. Franc took us on two day tours of the Environs of Naples, when we stayed in hotels. That was a real treat, because in the camp we lived in barracks with 30 or so other men.

Each of the four of our little group had some assistance from relatives overseas. My brother sent me some dollars, two were receiving some aid, and the fourth young man found relatives in America, who helped him substantially.

We all were grateful to our benefactor Dr. Franc, who gave us the opportunity to get to know some of the beautiful areas of Italy. I went on short trips of Italy on my own. I visited Rome and Naples several times and travelled to Venice, and from there all along the Italian side of the Adriatic Sea through Padova, to the resort of Rimini and on to Ancona. From there the train took me through the Apenin Mountains, back to the Naples province.

MONTE CASINO

While waiting for the boat to take me to Australia, I also travelled inland, from Naples to the famous Monte Casino mountain. I heard the stories of terrible battles fought for this mountain, after the Allies landed in southern Italy. The tourist bus took us to the lookout posts around the ruins of this significant place in the recent and past history.

CASERTA AND IT'S RIVER

Close to the Aversa camp was the city of Caserta, which I also remembered hearing about during the war, for the battles which took place there.

For us young men from the camp, this area was of interest, because a river with clear mountain waters was running through, and out to the Mediteranean, not far away. We swam in that refreshing water a

couple of times. The next time travelling there for a swim, we were shocked to find a muddy yellowish torrent flowing, where there was before that inviting, clear stream of water. We returned to the camp disappointed, at what the recent rains had caused.

The large population of Italy could especially be sensed, from the teeming thousands of people going on with their business in their small and large centres. One thing remains common with people, and which I strongly feel, is the effect of a healthy river flowing through a city. The memories of pleasant times along the river banks anywhere, always remain unique.

OFFER TO CALL BRANKA

Since Dr. Franc had connections as well to bring people out of Slovenia, he offered to bring my girlfriend Branka to join me in Italy, then we could together migrate to Australia. This was a very nice gesture by our friend Dr. Franc, but I had no idea, whether she would be prepared to come. The proposal was not proceeded with, and in any case, it was common knowledge, that Australian girls were some of the prettiest in the world, but were they willing, was yet to be found out.

VISITING MAGNIFICENT ROME

On one special trip to Rome, I took part in a great celebration in Saint Peter's Square. Pope Pius XI lead the Mass in front of some 100.000 strong congregation of worshipers from all over the world.

I remembered a family back in Maribor, whose two sons were good friends of mine, and I was sure, they would have liked to participate in celebration in the Vatican. We used to play chess in their pleasantly heated business premises in winter, went skiing on the nearest slopes, and we swam together in our river in summertime.

For the occasion of the mass conducted by the Holy Father in the Vatican, I sent the family a special card, commemorating this grand event, which was much appreciated.

THE GREAT WHITE SHIP WAS WAITING

Until the last week or thereabouts, no-one knew our departure date. When we had to be immunised, we sensed the departure time was coming close. On the Big Day, about one hundred of us in the Aversa camp were taken to the Naples Harbour. There were long queues of young men and women waiting at the entrance to the Naples port building. We joined these people, who were brought from all over Italy and Europe, to board our ship, which could not yet be seen. When after hours of waiting and boarding procedures we finally came through the gates, there was the beautiful white boat, not very large in front of us.

It was the Norwegian ship Skaubryn, which apparently was a hospital ship during the World War II. It took some more hours to get on board, as each person was given a ticket and the documents going with it. After finding our cabins, we could see from the decks of our ship, over the Port buildings the magnificent Vesuvius volcano, and the settlements straddling the mountain. Naples was a city, with

which I became quite familiar over the past months, and was happy to get to know it so well.

It was late in the afternoon, when we sailed into the open Mediterranean, and towards North Africa.

FIRST PORT OF CALL

Our first port of call, Malta, came up early the next morning. A British colony, it was the biggest Naval Base in the Mediterranean. The British marines and sailors were busy in their duties with the many Navy ships, and the huge guns on shore actually appeared quite threatening. Passengers from our ship could go ashore for a short time. So I had a little walkabout on the wharf.

A large number of families had joined us in Malta. The ship must have been filled to the last bunk, because there were so many children with their mothers everywhere. Few men came aboard, which indicated to me, that they probably migrated to Australia ahead of their families.

THE BLUE MEDITERANEAN

It was a beautiful, high summer we were enjoying. I considered myself extremely lucky, to have reached and achieved this point in my life. Many of the passengers on the ship were pretty, young ladies from Norway, Poland, Croatia, and some from Slovenia too. Sitting comfortably on the decks, we could sometimes listen to the sounds of a guitar, or a piano accordion, played by a budding young

musician. Members of the all-Italian kitchen crew sang some nostalgic Neapolitan songs, over-powering the subdued noise, coming through the funnel, from the Diesel engines deep down in the ship's body. We watched the white foam and trail, produced by the rapidly turning propeller, disappearing into the distance in the Blue Mediterranean. All these happenings were like the unfolding of a story, with the big difference, that I was actually living it myself.

IN THE LAND OF ANCIENT EGYPT

Two days on the sea and we reached Port Said, the Egyptian city on the northern approach to the Suez Canal. The world began to open to me, this was the African continent, with a history and life I only knew from history books.

I found the Port Said climate very different, which it had to be, as it was not far inland, the sandy deserts baked in the tropical sun. I went to the city for a short time, and saw the true Egyptians milling about, men wearing their long cloaks, in their traditional head cover of white cotton shawl, and ladies covering their faces with silk garment.

Back on board the ship, we watched young boys diving after coins, thrown into the water by passengers on our ship. On the decks of the ship were many Egyptian traders, with their wares laid out and were selling the handy-crafts made of leather, cotton and the Nile river grasses, made into colourful carrying bags and sun hats.

For the first time I talked to a young lady, whom I already saw and admired back in the Aversa camp. She bought a pretty hat and some other things from the traders, and I was happy that she was travelling to Australia too. She was pleasant to talk to, I hoped to get to know

her better.

THE SUEZ CANAL

Departing from Port Said, we entered the great engineering marvel that is the Suez Canal. Memories returned to me, when for one of the Geography projects, students had to produce a complete map to scale of a continent, or part of one, with an important engineering feature. I had chosen Africa, featuring the Suez Canal. Here I was now, sailing through it, and in a way I felt, I knew quite a lot about it. When this canal was built, two seas were for the first time in human history joined by man's ingenuity.

Sailing along the canal, a lot of activity on the banks was occurring most of the way. A particular human chain caught my eye. There were men, all dressed in brown-grey cloaks in queue walking up the slopes, with a pack, what looked like bean stalks, carrying on their heads, then returning to a barge, moored on the side of the canal. At the sides of the queue were guards with rifles, and whips in their hands. I could not believe my eyes, what was unfolding in front of me, but here in the 1950's A.D., I was witness to action, which in these parts had not changed in two millennia. It was unforgettable, I felt truly sorry for the poor fellows down on the Canal, even though they must have been some sort of prisoners.

My interest in this area was always great and was heightened due to the map that I had prepared as the history project, and now I knew, that the great Egyptian Pyramids were just out there somewhere. As we sailed on, I imagined I could detect their peaks beyond the Canal, however, they were definitely out of my sight, as they were near to

the city of Cairo, which was probably 100km from the Suez Canal.

THE RED SEA

The Red Sea had some magical meaning for me, it was arousing deep inner thoughts. I realise now, this was the effect of teaching from the Holy Bible, which I experienced in my earliest year of education. And here we were, sailing into the Red Sea, the area, where Jesus walked and taught the people humility and love for one another, two Millenniums ago.

The reality of the area of this day was a hot, harsh climate, yet as important, as it ever was. We on board the white Liner tried to have a cool shower, to find escape from the intense heat, but the water pumped directly from the sea was also uncomfortably warm, and very salty. All these unpleasantries were overcome with only the thought of the many extreme conditions experienced in the depths of cold European winters.

LIFE ON BOARD

Our ship was not airconditioned, to cool off, we all waited for the lovely breezes of the nights. We crammed the decks, and almost had to walk over one another, looking for a place to spend a good part of the night. There were bodies everywhere, couples in the life boats, in every nook, life was overflowing with natural pleasures.

The most pleasantly warm, moonlit nights could not, but make young

and old enjoy life to the full. Such idyllic conditions would never be repeated for most of us.

One night, a friend and I arranged with two pretty young ladies to spend the evening in a secluded spot on the deck. Just as we got to the heights of our togetherness, a drunken Norwegian sailor came up and spoiled our night. The ladies were terrified by the drunkard, but all our damnation of the maniac could not improve the situation. The man was out of his mind.

We realised, how lucky were the ships officers, from the Captain down. We had seen girls coming out of the officers cabins, offering sweet Cream de Menthe to their companions of the day.

In retrospect, I think Skaubryn and many other Liners sailing the tropical waters were naughty ships, but life is to enjoy, given half the chance.

ENTERING THE FIRST OCEAN

After departing from Aden, our ship sailed into the great Indian Ocean. The waters were calm, allowing us to enjoy more pleasant nights on the decks, the cabins being much too hot to sleep in. With my friend Irena, we spent many hours in the shade of a life boat, until we were warned, to move inside the rails, by the Norwegian safety officer. Skaubryn was manned by a Norwegian ships crew. In a Safety Drill, all passengers were made aware, what could happen if a person fell overboard. As part of the instructions, the ship made the tightest circle possible. In doing that, the diameter of the circle was at least 2 km. In such a distance travelled, it would be hard to find

the person in the ocean, especially in rough seas.

The weather was good for a considerable distance into the Indian Ocean. Irena and I spent many more hours near that life boat, and our spot, but inside the safety railing of our ship. She was one of the young ladies sponsored by her friend to join him, a young doctor in Adelaide, but she did not actually know him very well, and did not know, what to expect on her arrival in Australia. We exchanged addresses, in case things did not work out for her.

On board was also a lovely, fresh looking Norwegian young lady I hoped to befriend, but she proved somewhat elusive.

CITY OF COLOMBO ON CEYLON

Following a pleasant voyage, we sailed into the waters of Colombo. The ship anchored some distance out from Port-proper, so we boarded rowing boats, to take us for a look of the city. We were in for new surprises, so different to our European knowledge of the world.

In a park, near where we came ashore we found the local people of Indian race strolling about, dressed in beautiful silk robes. The unusual for us were very nice ladies, young and older, with their breasts uncovered. There were some cars and trucks in the streets, but elephants were also used to carry people about. The cultural differences of this world had really begun to show.

My outlook on our world would never be the same again, with each passing day of travelling into the wide world. My horizons had been

considerably extended.

OVER AND SOUTH OF THE EQUATOR

We left Ceylon, entering the open Indian Ocean. Crossing the Equator meant a lot to all seafaring people, and we on our ship celebrated the occasion passionately. The hot climatic conditions still agreeable to spend nights out of the cabins, except maybe the early hours now, we used up the opportunities.

The change had to come, we started feeling them in more ways than one, the beginning of autumn, and the increasing force of the wind over the waves of the open Ocean.

The peaceful and flat calm seas had grown into threatening, mountainous waves, which now regularly swept the decks, so every kind of furniture had to be stored or tied down, not to be hurled into the boiling sea, with the next wave coming over. We now sought refuge in our cabins, or anywhere inside our ship.

When meals were served, hardly anybody but the best of sailors, could take any food. The plates and the trays were sliding from one end of the service counters to another. There were many very sick people everywhere. All these experiences were a dramatic change from much enjoyment of the early days of our voyage.

LAND AHOY

I assumed we would land in Western Australia, instead we sailed right on and past, catching only a glimpse of the South -west of the state. It must have been the area around Augusta at Cape Leeuwin.

Moving into the Australian Bight and the Southern Ocean, sailing conditions became even worse when one could not dare to step out onto the decks. For a comparably small passenger Liner, Skaubryn in my humble opinion, behaved admirably.

With the voyage now not being pleasant, I could reflect on the nice times on the ship, and count the days, when we would be tying up, at our point of destination - Melbourne!

MELBOURNE - OUR DESTINATION

After three days of sailing along the southern coast of Australia, our good ship entered Port Philip Bay and tied up at Portsea. God only knows, if I put the right foot forward, but that was what I tried to do, when stepping on the Australian soil. All passengers were directed into quarantine, disinfecting us and our belongings.

Boarding the ship again, we sailed up the Bay and into Melbourne Harbour. It was a Sunday morning, in September 1952. I was grateful that the Master of the ship steered Skaubryn safely over the

great distances of the Oceans, to our destination, according to Destiny.

Many people on the wharf waited for their friends and relatives. Irena was welcomed by her friend, and we said Good-bye, but if it were destined, we would meet again.

The Norwegian young lady left the boat with her family, and we quietly parted also.

Most of the passengers were to travel to Bonegilla, near Albury on the New South Wales border with Victoria the next day. Having plenty of time, I walked with friends to South Melbourne, and explored the surroundings, but we did not venture into the centre of Melbourne, as we did not know, how far away it was. Being a cold, now Southern hemisphere Spring morning, there were no people in the streets, except us, and we marvelled at the peace and quiet, which the City of Melbourne was well known for, even to us new arrivals.

Also we were previously informed, that although Australia was a warm continent, winters in Melbourne were more severe, than in any other Australian city. Experiencing it, we walked back to the ship, where we spent one more night, before boarding the train.

MOVING INTO THE AUSTRALIAN HEARTLAND

The next morning, a train was brought right along our ship. We boarded it, and said Good-bye to our ship, as the train slowly moved out of the harbour area, through the city on our way into the Australian heartland. I lost my bearings, thinking the train was taking us in a westerly direction, but we actually travelled North towards Sydney, and towards New South Wales.

All these English names, absolutely new to my eyes and ears, were most interesting and exciting to me. The scenery and topography were so different to Europe, I sat by the window of the train in complete amazement. I felt happy in a way, but also somewhat apprehensive, a feeling that possibly everybody gets, when moving into a new land and surroundings.

HEADING FOR BONEGILLA

The train slowed down and stopped at a station, after we had travelled for some time. That was not yet our destination, just a stop for a stroll on the platform, and to buy a piece of cake or a sandwich. When I was about to pay for my piece of cake, the shop assistant pointed to my English coins as not being the right tender, I needed Australian money!

When learning about Australia being a British Dominion, I did not realise, and I could not remember being told about it, the Australian Pound was not the same as the Pound Sterling, and that Australia had its own currency. I had to wait to taste the first piece of the Australian cake later sometime.

The train then took us on further, and into this large town-like compound, our last staging point. This was Bonegilla, where the barracks stood in clusters, on little hill tops, over a huge area. These clusters in various configurations were about 200 metres apart, each with their separate bathroom block, but with one kitchen and dining hall for some 3 clusters. The individual barracks housed single men, single women, with twelve persons in each, and then the families

with children. In the middle of all this was like a town square, with administration buildings, a recreation hall and a store. In all, there could have been five thousand people in Bonegilla at any one time. From there, families, single women and single men were placed in jobs all over Victoria and New South Wales, and farther.

SETTLING INTO OUR QUARTERS

From our contingent, we were placed according to our status. I took my place in the single men's quarters, with 9 young men. The meals were wholesome, with a taste all of its own, and it was not difficult to quickly become used to it. After all, this was a different continent, everything planted grew in Australian soil and climate, so it had to be slightly different. To our surprise, Australia being known for its warm climate, in this area we experienced extremely cold nights, and the blankets could not keep us warm. In the month of September, frost on the land greeted us in the mornings. Bonegilla situated not far from the Snowy Mountains, or better known to me as the Australian Alps, was rightfully known as a cool place.

Not far from our new camp was a lake. On weekends, a lot of activity took place on the lake, with people from the surrounding towns coming with speed boats and sailing craft of all shapes and sizes. On Sundays especially, the area around the lake was crowded with spectators.

A number of young men in the camp discovered, they could earn some pocket money, catching rabbits in the furrows of the surrounding hills. The venture did not seem extra successful, but was worth trying out.

An interesting phenomenon we discovered, when walking between trees on the camp site, birds known as magpies aggressively swooped down on us, and there were cases of injury to people. It was explained, the birds were protecting their nests up in the trees.

A BEAUTIFUL RELATIONSHIP

In Bonegilla I started a most wonderful relationship with my tall young lady, whom I got to know in Naples. We became very close, I spent hardly any time in the single quarters. In a short time I would be departing for Perth in Western Australia, to join my brother Frank. As much as I was looking forward to our reunion, I became saddened to think of the day, when I would be saying Good-bye to my lovely lady.

She was most wonderful, understanding woman I had ever been close to, and would surely make the best partner for me. My papers to travel to Perth were getting ready. We spent all the days happily together, enjoying each other as only possible, when two people want each other.

When I was leaving, her little daughter followed me some distance, crying and as if trying to say, "please don't go". She was just one year old, and I loved her too.

TRAVELLING TO PERTH

Taking the train to Melbourne, I left Bonegilla with some extraordinary experiences of life in my new country. I felt then already, that in as much it was my part, I must contribute to fit my Destiny, if that is possible. I had a brother close, soon now, but he had his life to lead also.

As the train proceeded through the countryside, I wondered, was Western Australia similar to Victoria? 3500km of land in between could produce a variety of vegetation, I thought, and what about the climate?

I changed trains in Melbourne, for one night's journey to Adelaide. To me a new way to travel long distances, the carriages were long, with the seats arranged like in a bus, at least 60 passengers sitting on wooden bench seats, all in one compartment.

It was not a comfortable journey, and travelling all night, getting some sleep, we pulled into the Adelaide railway station at 8am. Soon after leaving Melbourne, we went through a station called Sunshine. This name remained in my thoughts, it seemed very appropriate in a country like Australia, with long days of sunshine across the wide open spaces. Also, sunshine meant a lot to us arriving from Europe, with dreary long winters, and little sunshine coming through the usually cloudy skies.

Most of the passengers on the Adelaide train were probably local commuters, who all dispersed into Adelaide City. I waited for the connection to Perth, wondering what that part of the trip might be like. What could be seen on the journey from Melbourne, was mostly flat land. To the south was the Southern Ocean, only short distances away, but to the north, up as far Darwin were long distances, which represent the vastness of the Australian continent.

CONTINUING THE TRIP WEST

I had a look at the city of Adelaide area around the central railway station. It is difficult to form an opinion about the rest of the city, especially just travelling through by train. Like Melbourne, I noticed a sort of one family homes extending a long distance out of from the centres. Passing through two capitals of the Australian states so far, I felt the urge at some future opportunity, to return for a better look at them.

Back at the station came time for the "All aboard!" signal. We started moving out, along the market gardens of Adelaide, many plots under glass cover , and the train rushing on towards Port Pirie. On our right were slopes leading up to the Flinders Ranges, to the left and leaving them behind us were the undulating green fields. Ahead of us was the dry expanse of the Nullarbor Desert, which the train had to cross, to reach Perth, another 2800km to the West. A steam locomotive was pulling our train, and since the country on the South Australian side was rugged, our progress could by no means be fast. To that time, I had only read about experiences of long distance travel, now I was on such a journey myself. To have a chance to travel through a desert area, made this trip so much more exciting. Since I did not notice the sea anywhere near Adelaide, I hoped that the City of Perth was situated on the Ocean.

Reaching the flats of the desert, the train rolled through, night and day. In this area is the longest completely straight part of any railway line in the world, about 450km long.

The sandy soil was red, with low bushes growing here and there, and rocks of various sizes strewn about. Rain seldom penetrates into these parts, so the surface of the land is really just loose red sand. There is at most times wind blowing, which lifts the fine sand, and as could be observed, deposited it through the window fittings on everything inside the train.

In some spots, small groups of trees could be seen, forming a sort of an oasis, but surely without water. From these trees, the large Australian wedge tail eagle swoops down on it's prey of a lizard, or a snake moving in the sand.

The fine desert sand, blown inside the carriages settled on clothes, in our hair, leaving an uncomfortable, musty feeling, when I woke one morning, somewhere in the middle of the desert. After freshening up and some breakfast, it felt better, and we were ready for some more hundreds of kilometres of travelling on.

Two days after leaving Adelaide, we pulled into the Kalgoorlie station. Reaching this world famous place for gold, Perth could not be too far away. A stroll in the station grounds indicated, Kalgoorlie was still under the influence of the Nullarbor Desert, for it was very dry and dusty. I knew, the Kalgoorlie area was one of the richest gold producing finds in the world, and realised then the importance of the land, such as it was. It was under that unique type of land, where the gold veins were discovered 100 years ago.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA, HERE I COME

Departing Kalgoorlie, there were still 660km to travel to reach my destined Perth City. Although there was room and I could lay down on the wooden bench seats on the train, or either due to the many hours, days on the train, I felt uneasy about my landing in this far away place from anywhere in the world. I was excited about meeting my brother, after 20 years.

Morning came, following the journey through Western Australian wheat and cattle country all night. We were now approaching Perth, descending the eastern hills of the Darling Ranges, and moving into the flat land around the city. This approach reminded me of my first sighting of Naples in Italy, similar feelings of expectation of the unknown ahead for me.

The train came gradually to a halt. I arrived in the city, which I heard and already knew quite a lot about, but was still apprehensive about it. I was full of expectations, wondering, was this the place, where I should make my new life and future?

Recalling those days now, I was much too inflexible in my decisions. I should not have taken such a rigid position for any one place, to live in. After all, I alone could do with my life, what I wanted, or could I?

Had I landed in Sydney, I might have left my options open about where in Australia to settle. Melbourne and Nada were dear to me, maybe I needed just one more choice, like knowing Sydney, which I came to admire, once I visited it. And was it not Sydney, or Melbourne, that we 4 students, sitting on the banks of river Drava in Slovenia one summer day many years ago decided to move to, if we ever got half the chance?

Here I was, in the Western Australian City of Perth, and soon I was going to meet my brother Frank again.

DESTINATION REACHED

Stepping onto the Perth station platform, I could not see a familiar face in the crowd. No matter how I searched for Frank, I could not find him. He worked in a hospital some distance from Perth, and could not come to meet me. He sent a friend instead, who obviously could not recognise me. I called a Taxi, and was taken to the address of my brother's place. Frank had started building a house, and there I waited to meet him.

REUNION

Frank came from Wooroloo Hospital, where he worked, in the evening of the day of my arrival. It was one of the happiest reunions for both of us. I attended primary school, when we last saw each other, and so much happened to us since that time. Sadness encroached on us, when we talked about his late wife Lotti. When they arrived in Perth, they both began working and had planned for a happy life together in this new country. They chose this block of land to build a home for themselves, Lotti was excited about nice green lawns around their house. She was happy in her new adopted land, but even before the lawns could take hold, she became ill. She died just two years after arriving in Perth, and Frank was left alone.

We talked for hours, into the next morning. There was so much I could tell him, about the times during the war, how lucky was our

family, for all to survive, when so many of our friends, relatives, and our neighbours lost their lives, who could not enjoy the peace, which came in 1945. Lotti apparently loved chocolates and the tropical fruit, which in Europe was not available since the times, when Frank bought the two oranges for me, just before the outbreak of World War II. This was all available for us, who survived those dangerous years.

Frank worked in the Wooroloo tuberculosis hospital as a nursing orderly, in shifts of three weeks on, then one week's holiday, so he had to return there. I stayed in Perth, and soon started learning English by correspondence. The lessons were sent from a department at the University of Western Australia, to which I then returned the completed work. Through these lessons I came to know a lady, Ms Paton, but only by messages between the lesson work. Then she introduced me to the Regional Supervisor of migrant education, a wonderful person, Mr. David Miller, who was actually a professor of English and Music at the University previously. In his new position he travelled in Europe as an official of the Australian Government, and spoke several languages.

MY FIRST CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH AUSTRALIANS IN HOME ENVIRONMENT

Professor Miller took me to his home, in an established area of Perth, Victoria Park, close to the city centre. He introduced me to his mother, a wonderful older lady, who also used to be a teacher. Mr. Miller's father was also in the teaching profession, but had died some years ago.

I was waiting for a job, but since I moved from my original group of arrivals in Melbourne, I was not quite on the Government's track for an allocated job. While waiting, I helped Mr. Miller work in their garden. Behind their home was once a grass tennis court, now overgrown with long grass and weeds. I was happy to put it in order, and was paid for it. A couple of mighty palm trees stood on the property, which offered nice shade.

It was in those days, that I started feeling the intensity of the Australian sun. I could well put up with the heat, but I thought little about the dangers of skin cancer. In Europe, everyone hopes to get a nice sun tan, but in Australia, I was told extreme caution is necessary.

There were tree stumps on Frank's block of land, which needed digging out. I promptly set myself to that job, I needed some physical exercise, to keep fit. When it became obvious, that the best place to be on a very hot day was the ocean, I took the bus to North Cottesloe, which became my favoured beach. There in the pleasantly cool water, I spent many days of my first Australian summer.

Mr. Miller asked me to come along with him on his inspections of English Migrant classes in the Metropolitan area, and sometimes to the small towns close to Perth. My most memorable was a week spent on his sister's farm near the town of Harvey. The family had a beach cottage on the coast, about 15 km from their farm, where we stayed, and did some fishing. Mr. Miller played piano beautifully. His mother and I sat in the lounge room of their home on some evenings, while he played for us the pieces of Chopin, or anything we wished to suggest for him to play.

I could not have been introduced to a finer Australian family. They

were the kindest people I have ever met.

DUTY CALLS

Frank helped me to start working in the Wooroloo Sanatorium also. That was a place about 70km from Perth, set in the fresh, thick eucalypt forest. There I heard that magical sound of the wind, blowing through the trees, with the lovely smell of eucalyptus tingling in my nostrils. The peace and quiet, which reigns in these locations is just overwhelming, and it has to be experienced to be believed.

The hospital buildings were set out on the northern slopes of one of the gently rolling hills. It took a while to become used to walking on this sloping ground, one could slip too, as the surface was fine gravel.

The rest were the administration building, plant and mechanical housing, recreation hall, kitchen and dining rooms. Right on top of the hill were nursing and maintenance personnel quarters and houses.

The female and male hospital blocks stood separately, with the significant feature, that there was no northern wall. The patients were completely exposed to the fresh air, day and night, winter and summer.

BETWEEN THE NURSING PROFESSION

Wooroloo was a tuberculosis treatment hospital. Between the hundreds of patients, a few were Aborigines, whom I could meet and observe for the first time. I have never been in contact with the black race before, I found this experience most interesting. Some of the Aboriginal men and women were very tall, which I somehow did not expect. There were some migrants in the hospital, who were diagnosed to be suffering from tuberculosis.

Most of the nursing orderlies and maintenance staff were migrants, while nursing sisters, doctors and administrative staff were the experienced members of hospital work force. The hospital had been operating in this area for many years.

I myself had to fit into this environment. The Australian Ambassador told me back in Europe, to be prepared to work in any position needed on my arrival in Australia. Wooroloo hospital was the place for me for the time being, I had no complaints.

My visits to Mr Miller were more rare. One of his sisters had a very nice daughter, about my age. I must say, I got a bit upset, when I found out, that she became engaged to a Norwegian fellow. The often mentioned Vikings by her father, made sense to me then.

I was in new circumstances, it always takes some time to fit in. In the hospital were many nice young nurses, there was also a young girl growing up in a family of my own nationality, whom I had hopes for. Before anything else, I wanted to secure my economic standing, now that I had a job, and I made this the first priority. My brother introduced me to many of his friends and their families. Since the

Australian climate greatly enhances thirst after a hot day's work, beer has been the beverage for all occasions. We had drinks on many evenings at the Hospital Club, the local hotel, and at friends places. There were occasions and opportunities for full enjoyment of life.

After quite a break of leisure and free time in Europe, getting up to duty in the early mornings was an effort. Just the thought, there was no sleet or snow to wade through, always prompted me to go to work cheerfully. After a short training period, I became one of the team, nursing in the women's wards. Mainly older, but some not so old ladies were affected with this awful disease. The medicine Streptomycin was a new discovery administered to the patients at that time, and proving very successful. Patients were given injections of streptomycin twice a week, equally for men and women. Following a period in the women's wards, I was allocated to the men's wards. There were two of each in Wooroloo.

THE INSIDE STORY OF NURSING

Giving injections to patients is a challenging and exacting procedure, especially in the beginning. Up to then I was always on the receiving end, but now some 70 men had to be given this treatment in the space of a couple of hours. When a nursing sister gave me an actual demonstration, I nearly fainted, thinking, my nursing career might end there and then. In reality, I became quite good at it. Problems arose with some older men, whose buttocks skin was very hard, and it occurred, that the needle broke, remaining stuck. An experienced nurse then had to take over. The patients were almost always most co-operative and rarely complained.

Penicillin and sleeping tablets also were given to many patients, which had to be swallowed in presence of the nurse. Special care had to be taken in giving pain-killing drugs to the patients. It happened, some patient accumulated these dangerous drugs, then took a number of them at once, due to some problem she or he might have had. Unfortunately it happened to me on night duty.

Coming on duty the next day, I was told, a patient, a former racing bookmaker had to have his stomach pumped out, to save his life. Apparently no patient at this hospital had been lost so far, due to this problem.

I became accustomed to the hospital work. Twenty one days of continuous duty dragged on sometimes, but it was a pleasure to have a break of seven days. Not far from the hospital lies the Lake Leschenaultia. In summer it was so nice to drive there with friends for a swim, or a barbecue by the lake, lasting well into the night. On other free days I travelled to Perth, to see the latest movie releases. On hot days, I went swimming still to my favoured North Cottesloe Beach.

The white sandy beaches are the pride of all the Perth population, but it took a good while for me to become used to the sand sticking to my feet. Having mainly pebbly beaches on the European Rivas, it was there possible to reach the change rooms or the car with clean feet.

ROTTNEST ISLAND

18 kilometres from Fremantle lies an island, a real natural gem,

discovered by the Dutch explorers in 1696. I discovered this pleasant holiday place, soon after my arrival in Perth. The many little bays, with sandy beaches and crystal clear water, make this island a must to visit at any time of the year. Luckily for us locals, we can keep on returning there.

REALISING DIFFERENCES

In the Woorloo hospital, the predominant migrant staff had little contact with the Australian born people, once we left our work stations. Because of the language difference, each group felt more comfortable with members of their own, similar background. That did not mean, that they did not wish each others company. The Social Club served for this purpose.

The nursing assistants and orderlies came from a multitude of European nationalities, ranging from the Baltics, to the southern tip of Europe. As such we conversed in a type of basic English, everybody hoping to quickly master our new tongue. English always was my favoured foreign language to learn, I was glad, that finally my opportunity arrived.

There were few Australian families directly connected with the work at the hospital. The patients were mainly Western Australians, but there was little scope for us nursing staff to get to know, how the ordinary Australian families functioned. Professor Miller and his immediate family could not be classed as average Australians, as they were highly educated, and widely travelled.

One family lived in the hospital grounds, whose father was an Australian returned soldier. He lost his arm in the last war, and was employed in the engineering maintenance section. There were a number of children in the family, and one of his daughters could not go unnoticed, as she was very pretty. She had lovely, shiny long black hair, turning many heads, as she walked through the hospital grounds. But most often, she was accompanied by her father. Wondering why that was so, I one day asked someone.

A short time before my arrival, a young man, a nursing assistant from one of the Baltic states, mistakenly believing he could start a relationship with this girl, was jailed. He did not recognise the different customs of his new country. I myself discovered in this new country of ours, especially migrant young men had to become very close to an Australian family for a long time, before they could even hope, to take a local girl to a dance. This was not necessarily so, if a young man from England befriended an Australian girl.

It generally appeared, as if all growing-up girls here already had a local boy, waiting for them. The disproportion of too many men to women in Australia, became painfully clear to migrant men, wishing to form relationships with the pretty, but very elusive Australian girls.

UNCERTAIN TIMES

I completed the correspondence course in English, and was happy to have received the award certificate. My learning in this country had just began. To return to the engineering field I had to get accreditation of my previous education levels. That meant, I had to

do some more subjects towards the Australian engineering qualifications. In Wooroloo I started to study by correspondence.

A Slovenian family lived in the hospital grounds, which I came to know, after a while working there. It was a family of four, the parents with a son and a daughter. The father worked at the hospital, and both the son and daughter were attending high school in Northam. I was surprised, when I saw this young man, dressed in army uniform, a rifle on his shoulder, and a schoolbag, walking to the bus stop, on certain days of the week. He was with the cadets, and that was the Australian method of training people for war.

The end of my second year in Australia was coming up. I was not happy with my study progress, because of my shift work in the hospital. I decided to move to the city, where I was reasonably confident to find a job, although probably still not in an engineering position. I was sorry to leave, but my mind was made up. The Slovenian mother of the young lady predicted, once I left Wooroloo, I would not be coming back. I claimed, how surely I was coming to visit them regularly. I was probably wrong, but I did not believe in buying things on credit, not being used to such transactions, I did not yet own a car.

In fact, I never returned to Wooroloo. Many times I hoped to but something came in the way each time. How did this nice lady, whom I respected a lot, know? This was the only family of my nationality, where I had a chance in Australia to make my own, and maybe marry their daughter. Was this beautiful young lady not included in the path of my Destiny?

In Perth I stayed with my brother for some time. He found a lady-friend, and they moved to a place under the Darling Ranges, a small

farmlet. I lived in a number of lodging houses in the city, until I joined a friend, who was staying with another of our families in the metropolitan area.

BACK INTO ENGINEERING WORK EXPERIENCE

Following two years of very interesting work diversion as a nursing assistant in a hospital, I ventured into the practical part of engineering endeavour. Since I had some experience working on various machines in engineering factories, I landed a job in one of these in the industrial area of Osborne Park. A very messy and oily job, it was well paid, and with a lot of overtime too.

Those were the hottest conditions I ever worked in, the temperature in the hall reaching 38 degrees Celsius in summertime. At the same time, this was also the happiest, carefree time of my life. Scarborough beach was close by, and with a lot of friends, we spent many summer evenings by the sea. Getting home, where we lived, if it was too hot in the rooms, we slept outside on the nice soft lawns, especially on weekends.

THE TENNIS EXPERIENCE

It is a pleasure playing tennis at night, under strong lights. The courts were right next door, where we lived, and we played tennis regularly in the beautiful summer evenings, and also at day time on weekends. Usually an older lady was the cashier at the courts, but occasionally we paid the fee to two young ladies, who came to replace her. Many years later I discovered, following a colossus of things that happened to me, I would get to know one of those two young ladies at the tennis courts.

We were usually four young men, playing tennis together, and astoundingly, these two girls were so pre-occupied with their work and themselves, that they seemingly did not notice us at all. We thought it strange, that girls of our age would completely ignore a group of well behaved young men. This was a class of Australians, of English origin, who would not have anything to do with migrants, who in great numbers arriving in their country, were perhaps seen as forcing themselves into their presence.

To get close to these people was almost an impossibility. But who did manage to break through the barrier of the Scottish, English and Irish determination would find, that these people really are human, and can at times be very nice.

THE VARIETY IN AUSTRALIANS

After a lot of thought and consideration, three types of Australian-born people emerged. Firstly, there are the ordinary Australians, who in their trades and occupations mostly come in contact with the migrant workforce. These can easily mix, and have an occasional beer with migrants at the local pub.

The second category of Australians display a reservation, and conservative views. They are foremost proud Anglo-saxons, who made some money in one way or another, and know how to live better than the ordinary working people. They travelled to England, and are proud of their British background.

The third category are those Australians, who are sure of their Anglo-Saxon ancestry, and had been shown all the respects for their position in appointed Government service, approved by the British connection. Only members, who became wealthy in the first two categories could hope to mingle in their circles, by maybe buying houses in the most expensive districts of the capital cities.

THE MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

Then there is the Greek community. Although the Greek migrants came from a similar background as the rest of the nationalities, they were the first to establish successful clubs for their own nationality only. No other group could feel comfortable, or could have any chance to socialise with them. Apparently not even Australian girls would be welcome to enter into the Greek family circles.

The Italian community was most successful in establishing their community life. This is probably due to the sheer numbers, in which they are settling in Australia. And their interaction with other nationalities, including Australian is more relaxed.

MEETING PLACES FOR THE YOUNG

The Embassy ballroom was the venue for young people to dance to the modern and the old style music. Dances were held there mainly on Friday and Saturday evenings. It takes learning the Barn dance from an early age, to be able to appreciate this form. There were so many pretty local girls frequenting the Embassy ballroom, but any daughters of the migrant families just did not seem to exist for single migrant boys. So many migrant young men put on their best clothes, and in their best behaviour had little chance in finding dancing partners. Few Australian girls were prepared to take home to their families anyone but their local boys, or maybe a British sailor. These venues were sometimes a little disappointing, but there was nothing one could do.

GETTING CLOSER TO AN ENGINEERING POSITION

I kept on looking for an engineering position in the local newspapers. In a Saturday morning paper, I noticed an advertisement for a Survey Assistant in a Government office, The Department of Main Roads. I applied for the position, and was successful. By then I had made considerable progress towards engineering qualifications, by correspondence studies, and with some accreditations from my previous studies. Following the job in a hospital, and on the factory floor, I was back on track, toward a profession.

IN LONG TERM EMPLOYMENT

I became a member of a State Road Authority. Attached to a roads survey team, we were setting out on the ground survey lines for the new freeway, for arterial roads, some works just starting or already under construction, or some to be built in the future in the Perth metropolitan region. Doing this, I got to know the Perth area very well, from Yanchep in the North, to Mandurah in the South, and East to Mundaring, beyond the Darling Ranges.

The work was most interesting, learning to use the surveying instruments, driving a Land Rover, a four wheel drive vehicle, which could pass through the brush and low scrub with ease. In order that the Surveyor could take his sights through his telescope, a wooden pole called a vody had to be placed in position every 100 metres, for a forward sight. The vody was cut from a young jarrah sapling in the bush, sharpened on one end to hammer it into the ground. Placed in the proposed alignment of the future highway, a small red/white paper marker was the point on the vody, to which the telescope sight was directed.

For morning tea break and lunch we boiled the "billy", and had our sandwiches right out there, anywhere in the open, fresh air. So I got to know the bush flies, which take years to get used to, but always remain a menace. In the bush around Mandurah and Yanchep, the mosquitos were a problem.

The Surveyor and the second assistant were a couple of very nice Australian fellows. I was amazed, they automatically assumed that I came from Holland, and had asked me, which city in Holland I came from. Intending to play a little fun, I told them I came from Rotterdam, and there was no more mention of this. Eventually they came to the conclusion that I was no Dutchman, but it was

interesting, while the mistaken identity lasted. I found that the Australian people had a better opinion about the Dutch, they were better known, because during World War II, many were brought together in Indonesia.

In surveying, setting out a line, it was necessary to hold the vody very steady, while the Surveyor was taking the measurements. One day, some insect was disturbing me, and it took the surveyor longer than normally to obtain his reading. He called out to me: "Are you ready?" I called back over the distance of about 100 metres: "I am always ready!" From then on, "Are you ready" became a standard greeting between the three of us for the rest of the time that we worked together.

The freeway and the ring roads system in Perth was then in planning stages only. The Narrows to South Perth had still not been bridged at that time. Our team surveyed the original centre line across the water to South Perth, using a Rowing boat. Before the filling-in of Mounts Bay could begin, we hammered into the mud dozens of measuring posts, to establish levels, for millions of tonnes of sand to be dumped.

The two of us survey assistants roved the dinghy and hammered the stakes in position, while the Surveyor took the measurements.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

At that stage, a tunnel was considered to be dug under Kings Park, to provide traffic connection to Leederville and West Perth. The planners and the Government of the day decided to build The

Narrows and The Hamilton Interchanges, to channel the traffic from south, to the northern districts.

It took many months to fill the bay of Swan River under Kings Park, for constructing the Narrows Interchange. The sand settlement had to be continually monitored, for which a number of Survey teams became involved.

The Mounts Bay of Swan River just under the War Memorial and to the base of Mill Street was a popular promenade, with beautiful shady trees lining the foreshore. It was walking distance from the City centre, where the visitors, and families flocked on weekends, to spend a few hours in beautiful surroundings. The filling-in of the Bay did not go without a protest. A prominent Perth lady formed a protest group, but the future for that part of Perth was decided. Maybe a tunnel under Kings Park would have been a better answer after all.

LOOMING LIFETIME DECISIONS

I began thinking, it was time for me to settle down to a family life. I met a young lady in the Greek community hall, of all places. She was not a Greek girl, but of French-Italian origin, born in Egypt. There were a couple of girls of my nationality in town, but it appeared to me, they had both been spoken for, before I could get to know them.

My Employer gave me a chance to work in a design office, but in the country town of Geraldton. This was a very big decision for me to make. I went there, as I was still studying by correspondence an

Institution of Engineers syllabus in Sydney. I had not been to a country town before, Geraldton town laying on the coast north of Perth, about 500 km away. It meant leaving all my friends behind, and starting anew in unfamiliar surroundings.

Australian winter was just setting in, and in Perth it was becoming cool, when the day came for my appointment in Geraldton. Only one highway connected the wheatbelt towns, leading to Geraldton. Driving through, I found some of the names of towns very interesting, all new to me, like Bindoon, Moora, Carnamah, Mingenev. I was then still thinking in my native Slovenian language, and the names Moora and Carnamah actually had a meaning and sounded familiar. Mura was a river and a tributary to the Drava flowing through Maribor, and Carnamah means “just at once” in my language. Because of the distance apart, from where I hailed, to Australia, it was pure coincidence, that they meant something to me.

Arriving in Grenough, the land opened up, and started sloping towards the West. I was then on the edge of the town of Geraldton, lying on the placid bay in the Indian Ocean. There was such peace in the air, the calm and the flat sea struck me as something completely out of the ordinary. I felt my presence clearly in these surroundings, as if there were not another single human being in the world. There were no cars on the road. I did not see another person anywhere, and I was then already passing houses on side of the highway.

The Divisional Engineer was there at the meeting point of the Department. A serious young man, he took me to a Lodge, which was right on the sea. I could hear the small waves splashing on the beach, just below the building.

IN A COUNTRY TOWN

It was a different world up there, I found the people far removed in their outlook and behaviour, even in comparison with Perth, from life I have known anywhere else. But they went about their work in a way, that was not different to the normal. I settled into my room for a good night's rest, following the long trip from Perth.

In the morning I walked to my new workplace, a fine Victorian building, just a couple hundred metres down the street. There I met the staff, who were running this Highways Department's Divisional office. The Divisional Engineer had an Italian surname, and because of an European background, I felt at ease with him. He was born in Perth, and was a graduate of University of Western Australia, in Civil Engineering. Although fairly young, he commanded full respect of his team. The Accountant was an Australian, and one of the three clerks was an Englishman. I had my own office, and was quickly introduced to my duties. I could now put my surveying computations and mathematics knowledge to good use. It struck me as unusual, when calculating land resumption areas for highways, a simple triangle area approximation was used, rather than the Simpson Rule method, which I was trained to use in studies. But we were now in the practice of building roads, away from pure theories, and in the country with land in abundance to move, I understood and followed the practical instructions.

I made a table of all the machinery in the Division out on construction, and in the Depot. The Engineer knew at all times, where each item was used at any given time, as there were a number

of gangs operating out on the various projects in the Divisional road system. The leader was impressed with this practical system, but it was his original idea anyhow.

To give me a break from the office, I went with the accountant sometimes, when he took pays to the road workers and the truck drivers on paydays, on the various construction sites. When we stayed at the camps overnight, the breakfast of lamb chops and eggs never tasted better. The Accountant carried thousands of Pounds in his bag, and there was always a pistol in the bag as well, just in case of a hold-up. A lot of commotion erupted one day when two lots of pay were placed into one pay envelope for a truck driver. When he finally owed up, that there was too much money in his envelope, things returned to normal.

I moved from the Lodge, mainly because I did not enjoy the food there, to a room above a small Cafe. A nice lady came to tend to her little plot of flowers in the garden. I could start a relationship with the lady, but there was my girl waiting in Perth for me. Geraldton offered little recreation, but I frequented a good Public library, where I could be in touch with the rest of the world through the newspapers and publications.

I went fishing with the young clerk from the office, who also introduced me to his nice family. His father was cray (lobster) fishing at the time, but was originally in some business in town. My friend's sister was married to the son of the Mayor of Geraldton.

CRAYFISH AND GREEN PEAS

I made the weekends more interesting for myself, working in the crayfish processing factory, where the tails were separated from the crustacean and packed, for export to the U.S.A. and Japan. At the peak of season, and in the heat of summer, this was hard work. Handling the lobster with thick rubber gloves, the hands became hot with perspiration. At the end of an extremely hot weekend, I found the skin of my fingers was just rubbed away, which was one of my most painful experiences. There was nothing to stop the pain, the skin just had to regrow.

My friend had his own plot of land beyond the town, about 1 acre planted with ripening green peas. He needed help to pick this great lot of peas, which I agreed to do with some other workers as well. It was necessary bending over and moving on the ground on the knees most of the day, to strip the pea plants of their load. We were paid for the bucket volume collected. Not a well paid job, but I did it for my friend. I also prepared drawings for house extensions and alterations, to earn extra dollars. There was no quick way to save or make money, or at least I failed to see it.

FLYING TO PERTH ON WEEKENDS

Over some long weekends I flew to Perth in the Dakotas 6, which serviced the North West towns, but they caused me terrible earaches on landing. It only took an hour's flying, and it was nice to see the lights of the city, when we neared the airport. Sometimes we drove down, when special football games were played, according to the Australian rules. In Perth I stayed with my girlfriend, those nice

times passing all too quickly, and I had to return to the job.

On one occasion, my brother and his lady-friend decided to visit me. They brought my girlfriend along. I waited for them into the early hours of a morning, when finally the peculiar yellow lights of a Peugeot car showed up in the main street of Geraldton. Once we rode to Perth in a rally of vintage cars. The Austin 6 tourer I was in developed fatal overheating and was out of the race. The rest of the trip was in an accompanying utility wagon, quite an experience.

TAKING THAT BIG STEP

Living alone in a country town could not be half enough exciting for anyone. I had been going out with my girl for a while, so we decided to marry during one of my annual holidays, at the end of the year.

On a hot January day, we came together in a Carlisle church. I, and everybody else must have been most uncomfortable in suits and ties, not to mention how the bride must have felt under the bride's veil. We had a fine supper on the lawns of my sister in-laws house. My brother much wanted to prepare a roast on the spit, but I talked him out of that, since it was the wrong time of the year. The Sandringham Hotel staff excelled themselves with catering for the wedding.

My wife's family were all born in Egypt, near the Suez Canal area of Ismalia.. Her father was a navigation pilot for the Suez Canal Company, of Italian origin and her mother was French. When her parents died, the whole family left Ismalia, sister in-law with her husband migrated to Australia, taking along my wife, while the other

members of the family went to the Belgian Congo, and Italy.

After two weeks in Perth, my wife and I both travelled to Geraldton. We rented a room with an Irish family in the town. These were the first Irish people I ever met, a wonderful family involved with The Salvation Army.

A Scottish lady tenant in the house had a dog called Whisky. So by then I came to know much more of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and I could form a better opinion of these people.

My wife found a job in one of the main street shops and we settled down enjoying the simple life. When she began to miss her sister, she went to Perth for a while. I must confess, I never felt that lonely before, and was happy, when she returned to me.

Two years in that Western Australian frontier town prompted me to start a move back to the city, and to work in the Department's Head Office. It did not take too long, and we were on the way.

IN MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT HEAD OFFICE

I was placed into the Traffic Engineering Section, with two young engineers, where I worked on plans for the first traffic light controlled intersections in Perth.

I can still sense the nice smell of freshly percolated coffee, which I now had to prepare for my seniors, for the morning and afternoon coffee breaks. I felt good to be back in the city. For a long time, the humming of constant traffic in the streets really bothered me, particularly at night, when only then the noise level decreased for a

short while. I was in a new crowd of professionals from around the world, engaged to begin the design and construction of highways and freeways at a pace not seen in Perth before.

The American De Leuw Cather & Company design experts were engaged to introduce us to Freeway and Interchange design. The Department organised 30 persons into a specialist team, and the American contractors started a three months course, where we were trained in the skills of computations and designing modern freeway and interchange systems.

We were introduced to our first computer for our application in computing the various road alignments, which would evolve. It was a Bendix 15, using a puncture tape system, which was the mode of the time. This was a great advance, from the tedious triangulation computations, which were applied up to that time.

SATIFYING WORK PERIOD

I was really happy to be a member of a team, led by the American Engineering contractors, who had vast experience in freeway design, but was completely new to us in Perth. At that time the Danish Bridge builders, Nielsen and Partners had also just won the contract to build the new bridge over the Narrows. The French bridge designers were awarded the contract to construct the caissons, in which would be located the columns of the interchange bridges, also to be built by the French company. The caissons restrict the movement of columns out of their design limits, which was a critical consideration for the underlaying mud of Mounts Bay. This area had been all filled by then with sand, covering the formerly tree-lined river foreshore. Had the Government listened to the wishes of the

prominent Perth lady, Mrs. Rishbieth, not to fill the Bay, this loss would have been avoided.

SEEING THE RESULTS

In time, the plans we had prepared from knowledge gained, the new Perth in that area began to emerge. The freehand sketching of design proposals by the prominent leader of the American team were becoming a reality in bridges and roadways of the establishing Narrows Interchange.

The grand opening of the enormous freeway enterprise took place on a clear, hot late spring day. It was an occasion of completing a grand design and construction, but also bowing to the increasing influence of transport mode, the car, on a population, even in Perth. Although we in Western Australia were in step with the rest of the advanced world in Traffic Engineering, only a short time later, widening of the Freeway became necessary. Car ownership in the world is an unsatisfiable quest.

FINAL PROCESS OF STUDY

Like many of my friends, I now had the opportunity to attend lectures at the city institutions. This helped me to obtain the Australian qualifications in Civil Engineering, and move into permanent employment situation. The working conditions were excellent and did not leave much more to be desired. But human nature being what it is, regular increases on the professional ladder were always

expected and appreciated. I was happy in my position. Apart from good pay conditions, there were annual holidays to look forward to. After the first eight and a half years, then after every seven years of employment, we were due for three months Long Service Leave. In all, it was fine in the Government Service then.

WRONG BEGINNING

When my wife once went to visit her sister from Geraldton, they placed a deposit on a block of land in the vicinity of her sisters place. I thought that was unusual, normally a couple together choose an area, where they would build a home. But if it was supposed to be an investment, I let it pass.

We lived a period of carefree enjoyment of life. We participated in social functions, arranged through my work, attending shows in the theatre by the visiting eastern states and overseas performers and groups, going to movie shows, and just getting together with friends for various reasons, or without special reasons. Since the climate lends itself for outdoor living, with workmates we often got together at evening poolside parties. Although Western Australia is far in distance from the rest of the country, I did not feel cut-off.

I kept in touch with my family in Slovenia by mail, and was receiving newspapers and various publications from them. I felt the need to know how my family there was getting along. My parents were getting old, and it worried me that one day I might receive some unwelcome news about their health.

Politically, they lived in a dictatorship, although it was a professed

democracy. While we were economically comfortable here in Australia, the changes for the better there were very slow. I sent some dollars or a present occasionally to my family for a birthday, or some celebration, especially for my parents, and sometimes to the families with children of our new generation.

OUR SON WAS BORN

One midwinter's day, our son was born at Saint Ives hospital in Hubert Street, Victoria Park. I heard his first cry over the telephone, then I rushed to see him and his mother. His arrival put me in a closer touch with reality, and gave me a sense of duty that I would now have to care for our child. This is a responsibility all parents have to take up for a number of years and cannot be viewed lightly. But the happiness a baby brings is an experience, like nothing else in the world.

With Robert Roger with us a few months, we had to begin thinking about a home of our own. We had a certain amount of cash, but still needed a loan to build a house. I accepted the fact then that most people borrow money to buy things which cost more than an amount, that can be saved in a few years. But where were we going to build?

The insistence that we build on the land we already owned, near the sister-in law's place went against my wishes, which was, to build our home on the picturesque Swan River. I would not easily be diverted from my plan to create the best possible environment for our family.

All my pleading and persuasion was to no avail. There was no agreement. In the end I gave in, for the sake of peace and the well

being of our child. We built the house in Belmont, an undeveloped area, with no view, opposite a chicken farm, and two houses from an animal hospital.

SAD DEVELOPMENTS

Our home stood on land, which was lower than the chicken farm, an unpleasant smell hung over the area each morning. The sick, barking dogs in the animal hospital made many nights sleeping impossible. I was in power, financially, to move to a better area, but in no way would my wife agree to move away from her sister. To live in one of the better districts of a city meant a whole lot to me. I was accustomed to have a view from my family home, such as I yet have to find anywhere. There was nothing I could do at that stage.

A WOMAN'S MISTAKEN PERCEPTIONS

I had been confronted with a phenomenon where some women insist on placing her family values, that is, her father's and mother's, ahead of her new family, that she herself took part in establishing. She follows her father's, her family's as the only model and being blind to the need, to consider her own man in deciding, what should be the best for the family. In the future, I will have been involved in almost exactly the same situation. But why was it happening to me ?
Destiny ?

I have no doubt, there are men, who have perceptions , that only their family's path is the one to follow. Lucky in life are those couples, who mutually agree, what is the best for their very own families.

UNCERTAIN FUTURE AHEAD

I was unhappy with my situation, but decided, to make do in the circumstances, I knew though, that sooner or later I would break away. We had our little boy who needed all the care and attention, which parents can give. I took Robert to a playground, close by for swings and slides. On many weekends we drove to Yanchep, or Rockingham Park for barbecues by the sea, and to Mundaring in the serenity of the forests. We went to see many interesting films at the Drive-in theatres, until the arrival of television made the impact on populations around the globe. Shows could from then on be watched in comfort at home. Even though it was a black and white transmission, it was all new entertainment to us, for adults and children alike.

On hot summer days, we used to go to Cottesloe beach, which was made safer, when a large groyne was built out into the sea, creating a small bay with protected swimming shallows. Playing in the sand and wading in the water made Robert so peacefully exhausted, he soon fell asleep on our way home. It was a pleasure to see him so relaxed, after so much activity on the beach.

The enjoyment of summertime on the beaches is luckily available to most families, as most of the Australian large cities are located by the Oceans.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF PERTH'S LOCATION BY THE SEA

Perth's location on the Indian Ocean offers ideal opportunities for water sports. With a friend from work, who had a yacht, we sailed on the Swan River, between Fremantle and Perth waters, joining hundreds of others on the river. When a south-westerly wind blows, which as a pleasant light force is also known as the Fremantle Doctor, it is an enjoyable sailing experience. This wind can suddenly turn into a brute force. On one occasion it was nice, plain sailing up the river, then the wind blew up, we could not return towards Fremantle, so the yacht had to be towed from the Narrows bridge by road, back to its mooring in Freshwater Bay, near Fremantle.

Some other friends had fishing boats, with whom we went fishing in Rockingham Bay, and out in the open sea. Rockingham about 50km from Perth, is a popular fishing location. It was worth travelling there, where we usually caught herring, whiting and skipjack, enough for each member of the crew to have a good supply of fresh fish for a while. In calm weather conditions, we ventured to Garden Island, Carnac Island and as far north as Rottnest. On long weekends, we stayed on the sea all night. In high summer, the weather in Perth waters is usually predictable. One night, we fished just off Carnac Island. We were surprised by the appearance of considerable number of seals, some large males between them. They moved around large rocks, stretching onto the beach where they eventually settled. Laying there, they observed our activities on the boat, but always looked somewhat menacing if we came too close to them on the beach.

That night we caught few fish because a strong wind blew up. Our boat tossed and turned, and to get some sleep, we decided to go ashore. It became very cold on the beach, where we huddled under

the blankets. We could not get protection from the bushes in the sand hills, as Carnac Island is used for the breeding of snakes, for research and to obtain the venom from the deadly reptiles. We spent a sleepless night in the coolness of this inhospitable island.

When the sun rose over the mainland to the East, early in the morning, it warmed our chilled bones and muscles, making us flexible again. We sailed back to Rockingham, and the boat ramps. After a rough night spent on the sea, the calm waters of Rockingham Bay were much appreciated.

The unimpeded exchange of fresh water, between the open ocean and Rockingham Bay used to make Rockingham beaches the cleanest, with beautiful white sand and crystal clear waters, the most exciting swimming beaches in the Metropolitan area. This natural attraction of Rockingham was then spoilt by building the complex of the Kwinana Refinery and other industries in this once revered family enjoyment location. These projects are all necessary, but Perth people rightly questioned, why could not another location be found, to avoid polluting the Rockingham Bay recreation playground, so close to the large population centres of Fremantle and Perth. The restriction of currents between Point Peron and Garden Island, by the building of a Causeway has produced the build-up of algae in Rockingham Bay.

Regrettably, Rockingham today is no more as it was known by so many people of Perth and Fremantle, who each summer rode horse-drawn carriages in the beginning, then buses, and drove their vehicles to spend an exhilarating day in the gem of nature, that was Rockingham.

EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES

Back on solid ground, we divided our catch, had some breakfast and drove home for some well deserved sleep which we missed whilst out on the sea.

Talking of solid ground, I remember the day that an earthquake hit Perth. Robert and I were putting up some shelving in our workshop. We heard a strange noise approaching, then the ground shook and swayed so much, it gave a sick feeling in our stomach. This lasted some eight seconds, and we realised, that we just experienced an earthquake. Later in the News reports, we heard that the town of Meckering was almost destroyed. The epicentre of this frightening earthquake was 100km from Perth.

Another incident Robert and I experienced, was also an extremity of nature. We had been keeping some white ducks, especially for Robert to have an appreciation of living things close by. When those lovely little ducklings hatched, he could touch and feel the soft fluff on their bodies. Usually two or three broke through the shells and began to grow and thrive in their backyard enclosure. We placed a full size bath tub in there, so they could swim and splash in their playful mood. Somehow, one of the ducklings once hatched about 2 weeks after the first two. To our amazement, as the duckling grew, but was of course lagging in size from the first two hatched, the mother duck could not stand the little one in the family. We did not realise the seriousness of the situation, but eventually had to separate the little one from it's mother. When we let them all out together on the lawns, the mother each time set upon the little one, chasing it. But obviously he wanted company badly, and tried to join them all again. A number of times we managed to protect this lovely little creature. One day we were called away, when the duckling family

were out on the lawns. When we returned, the poor little thing lay there, pecked to the death by it's own mother. We wondered, what could be the meaning of such an extraordinary behaviour, but we could see, how cruel nature can be. Because the duckling hatched too late, as far as it's mother was concerned, it could not live.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Robert got on well with the children in the neighbourhood. He spent considerable amount of time each day, playing with them. When I came home from work, his mother had dinner ready, we ate together, then watched the children's television, until his bedtime. If an evening were hot, in summertime, we drove to the river to cool off, and sometimes even tried some fishing down from the Applecross jetty. That was just below the Majestic Hotel, which had an excellent position on the Swan River.

No preschool existed yet at that time, so Robert went straight into Year 1 at the local Primary school, when he turned 5 years of age. It was a big occasion, as is the case with all children, on their Day 1 of schooling. His mother took him there, it was lovely to see him, carrying his small school case. He appeared to be taking things very seriously, not being sure, what lay ahead. He fitted in well, enjoying the activities, and the company of so many children of his own age.

In a family, their child starting school has a lot of meaning also for the parents. Thirty years passed, when we were that age, yet it seemed so long ago. Now we were creating a new generation ourselves. In the role of parents, we were responsible to help our child on a path, which we hoped would be happy and satisfying for

us, and our son. Robert remained a serious young boy, did well at school, was popular and had good friends.

Schools at that time were also not without problems. Discipline was strict, the teachers had the right to physically punish children for misbehaviour. The student was sent to the headmaster's office and could receive cane blows to the palm of the hand. There was also bullying between children. A boy of another migrant family bullied Robert repeatedly in his fourth year. By Robert's seventh school year I occasionally took Robert and his friend Eddy to Ju-Jitsu training in Hay Street, Perth. This allowed Robert to develop more self confidence and provide him with self-defence skills.

There were cases of teachers molesting children at the primary school. When this became known, the particular teachers were promptly dismissed or moved.

ON FRANK'S HOBBY FARM

We visited Frank fairly regularly. He lived only a few kilometres from us, under the Kalamunda hills in Maida Vale. He had a small hobby farm, where he experimented with growing lupins, mushrooms eggplants and strawberries. In the huge sheds he reared up to eighty turkeys at a time. He put a lot of money into this hobby of his, but there was not enough land to make it financially successful, only 2 acres. He appeared to enjoy his enterprises immensely.

Ever since he was a prisoner of war in Germany, and then during the occupation by Allied forces of Germany, he hoped to one day own or drive a jeep, such as the Allied forces were using. When the jeep

moves along the bitumen or concrete pavement of a highway, the rubber wheels produce a specific sound. Frank found this action so interesting, that he now possessed the Austin Champ, which the NATO forces used in Europe, and were as used vehicles sold locally by a dealer, Archie Marshalls. This was a four wheel drive vehicle, with a Rolls Royce engine under the bonnet. Besides the jeep, he drove a Peugeot wagon, and the smallest of all wagons, the Fiat 500. He also had a 350cc Honda and later a handy 50cc Honda motorcycle.

Robert and his friend Eddy loved to drive the little Fiat, and the motor scooter, in the nearby Maida Vale open gravel pits. They built humps in the pathways of the pit, so they could launch themselves into the air, as they sped along on the tiny motorcycle. The two boys also experimented with photography, so they took photos of each other, as they flew through the air. I was always near them, for their safety and they wore helmets. These activities were a lot of fun for the youngsters, so that besides study, they had ample physical recreation. The computer was then still far from reaching school children, but it was steadily moving into industry, and most work areas.

Frank himself rebuilt a small fishing boat. With that we sometimes fished on the Swan River, but occasionally drove to Rockingham, to fish and sail in our favourite waters.

GOING ON A VISIT TO MY FAMILY

My Long Service Leave had come. Although it could be deferred, and accumulated to be taken with the next in seven year's time, I

decided that a three month break from work, and my problems not being able to budge from the location I was forced in, would prove beneficial to my health and feelings generally. I had to get away from the place, which I thought unworthy.

My parents also were getting close to their eighties, this could be my last opportunity to see them. I was looking forward to meet my brothers and sisters again. I felt sad though, that I was leaving Robert and his mother behind, but we were not in a position to all travel together at that time.

I travelled in the very comfortable Lloyd Triestino liner Galileo Galilei, leaving Fremantle for Genoa in Italy. It was nice to relax, away from the pressures of work, and the everyday life in the suburbia, especially as it was not the suburbia that could mean so much more to me and my own family.

The Italian liner was taking all sorts of people to Europe, but it was a pleasure ship, and passengers were travelling singly, and some families. A fairly fast boat, it had lots of entertainment and recreational facilities and activities. With all that and the fine Italian kitchen, the days passed very quickly. With me in the cabin were two young Austrian boys, and a Spaniard.

I had come to know many young men from Singapore, who had trained with our Department in Perth as Civil, Mechanical or Electrical Engineers, after their studies at the Australian institutions. I had the address of one of them, whom I contacted before leaving Perth. As soon our ship sailed into Singapore, he called to tell me, that he was coming to take me to the city that afternoon. Our ship tied up in the port for the whole day. I went to the city in the morning myself, to have a look at the famous shops of Singapore.

This city's arcades were known for discounted electrical and electronic goods. It did not take long, when I was passing through, an Indian "businessman" offered himself, to assist me in buying anything from the counters with a multitude of appliances on display. It was my first experience in dealing with these people on their own ground, but I have not received the best deal, and neither were the things which I bought of the best quality, sold to me by the Chinese. The "businessman" took me to the Chinese gardens of Singapore. I actually felt uneasy with this fellow, because there was not another soul in those gardens, in the searing tropical heat of high noon. I was glad to get back to the comfort of my air conditioned ship.

My friend came in the afternoon and took me to the city, where he showed me real quality goods in the Department stores, away from the Singapore Arcades. He invited me to his family home, where I met his mother and his sister. It was most interesting for me to see how the Chinese lived. My friend's mother was a charming lady, who prepared a nice afternoon tea for us. Chou then took me to his father's Civil Engineering offices in the city, and there I met his father, and brother as well, operating the family business. Their's was one of the leading Singapore construction companies, where my friend was the Operations Manager.

In the evening we drove to the eating markets, where the locals come to dine out. On the stands there, people could choose the Chinese foods, which were known to me, but also the extraordinary "delights" from the sea snakes and from the special black Chinese dog, hanging skinned on the hooks. After a drink or so in the famous bars, Chou took me to my ship. That whole day was an experience to remember, and I was happy to meet one of my mates from the Island of Singapore again.

PASSING THROUGH BOMBAY

Next port of call was Penang in Malaysia. In Singapore came aboard an Australian nursing sister, whom I got to know. She was on her way to Bombay in India for a holiday from work at the Australian Airforce Base, Butterworth. We had now been sailing in the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean, where the nights were particularly nice on the ship, cruising in the calm waters, so it was hardly felt that we were moving. The day we arrived in Penang was extremely hot and uncomfortable, so that I did not even venture into the city, but remained on board of the ship. The heat was dry and so extreme, it was unpleasant just walking around on the decks.

In early evening we were on our way again, the fresh sea was most welcome. There were games to play and things to do, and to continue enjoying the good life, while it offered itself. Arriving in Bombay, the ship was to stay in port for a day. My friend had all day at her disposal, we walked towards the city from the seaside. Bombay is an extraordinary Super City, now it was in front of me to explore in the time available. I had visited Colombo on the my way to Australia years ago, and whilst Bombay struck me in a similar way, everything was on a greater scale. The multitude of humans brought together, they try to use up every little nook of the living space, to sit, to lay down or moving around, to find a spot to spend the night. It was pitiful to see so many people begging, to get them through the day. As we walked the streets, a storm came over the city, it became dark and very humid, then it began to rain. This was the monsoon season we were experiencing. We continued our excursion into the centre of the city by Taxi. The driver took us to the front of the Metro Theatre, so we went inside, and stayed in the

air-conditioned comfort. In all, the city was pleasant and to us it seemed friendly, with its peculiar population, climate and customs. This was one city in the land of India, all new to me, but my friend had association with these people, having been stationed in these parts of the world for a number of years.

We spent a lovely day together in a strange land. Evening came, she accompanied me to the ship, and we parted. We wondered, would we ever meet again. We surely would, if it were our Destiny.

Our Galileo Galilei sailed on to Aden. The British Army was very much in charge there. Heavily armed British soldiers patrolled the streets, but during the day it must have been safe enough, as we the passengers from the ships were allowed into the city.

The shops were stocked with electrical appliances, radios, tape recorders and Swiss watches. All these articles were supposed to be Tax-free for passengers passing through, and the money so derived was probably the only income for the residents of this Arab city of Aden.

Travelling on into the Red Sea, to the City of Suez, on the southern end of the Suez Canal was again an eye-opener. From reports in the world press around the year 1965, the political situation in these regions was explosive. I joined a bus tour from Suez, which would take us to the Egyptian capital Cairo, and from there to Port Said, to board the ship again. I considered myself privileged, to be able to travel through these regions of the world, so important in history of religion, but also my personal involvement with the family, whose members lived and worked in this immediate vicinity for decades, made my presence here very important to me.

CAIRO PYRAMIDS ANCIENT EGYPT

The bus took us out of the city of Suez, along a road built in the desert sands. We went through a few settlements along this road, which was leading to the city of Cairo. Approaching the outskirts of this magical city, I had in front of me a metropolis, which we learnt about in the history and geography classes, but could never imagine how this important area of the ancient times could look like. I always wondered about its architecture, the building materials used in building construction, and the styles adopted.

The area had a very dry atmosphere, and a particular smell of this region was detectable in the air, and with the people. Everything was clean, but it was not the cleanliness which I was accustomed to. The effect of occasional strong wind, blowing fine particles of the desert sand, could be felt to be on the buildings, and on everything under the sun. Cairo City was packed with multitude of human endeavour, walking, carrying, pulling things along the streets, it was like following a travel talk, with the difference that it was actually happening right there before me.

The bus stopped in front of a hotel, it may have been the Sheraton. All passengers were guided to a low verandah, facing a busy street, only about two metres above the pavement, enabling us to observe the citizens and the traffic passing right close by. It was not excessively hot, as we sipped the strong coffee, and ate the Arabic sweets. The taste of honey impregnated cakes was also new to me, which would take a long time to get used to, which are distinctly different to the European rich creamy type. The honey sweetness also carried the aroma of rose water.

Boarding the bus again, we went on towards the ancient world of the Pyramids. Passing the last built-up districts of Cairo, the sandy desert suddenly came up ahead. We must have been travelling in a southerly direction, because that was where the Pyramids had to be according to my estimation, from photos in books and journals, which I came across over the many past years. I could never imagine how the Pyramids were spaced out until the tallest came into view, as our bus neared this famous area.

Finally I stood under the Geza, gazing at one of the greatest wonders of the world. I actually was quite shocked, seeing that the huge sandstone building blocks of the Pyramid formed steps, upon which one could climb to the top of this world wonder. This created a very rough picture, especially as the stone blocks were heavily eroded by the thousands of years of weathering. In my imagination, I always pictured the Pyramids having smooth sides, which was far from reality. I cannot remember, any teacher ever telling students how rough were the sides of the great pyramids, when we were in the mathematical problems calculating the areas, volumes and sections of pyramid models, beginning with the first confrontation with this phenomenon in basic mathematics, up to the use of calculus and computers. One has to see these ancient structures, to be able to apprehend their significance.

With some effort, it would be possible to climb these monuments on the outside. But what did they look like inside? Again in my imagination, I pictured huge halls inside the monumental sandstone blocks. A lot of tourists milled about outside the great Pyramid, taking photos, or just standing around in great wonder, how these monuments were put together some 4500 years ago, quite a bit before our time.

INSIDE THE GREAT GEZA

In the grounds around the Pyramid, Egyptian guides in their traditional frocks offered camel rides and souvenirs. Our own bus guide called us to follow him inside. To my astonishment, we had to begin a climb up a steep pedestrian tunnel, which at that time was strewn with wooden planks all along. We followed the guide in a queue, meeting people on the way down and out of the Pyramid. After climbing for some minutes, we came to a chamber, not much bigger than an average bedroom, but with a very high ceiling. The walls were just plain sandstone, and the floor might have been marble. In the middle of the room was a sarcophagus, which was the Pharaoh's crypt. That was all what we were shown, and it took altogether about 30 minutes climbing in, and out of this grand monument. It is possible, that the walls and the sarcophagus were once gold lined, which would have long ago been robbed of the precious metal.

So this was the tomb of a Pharaoh, high up inside the Pyramid, and just under it's summit. I do not know if what we were shown was the only space in this huge monument, there might be halls at lower levels, which were out of bounds for us travellers.

We looked around the chamber, touching and peering into the empty tomb, then returned through the tunnel through which we entered, out into the fresh air. There were other smaller Pyramids in the area, spaced out between one another. We followed our guide to the Sphinx, the huge sandstone Cheetah, or was it a Lion. This monument was damaged, still showing scars of cannon fire, when a

regiment long ago used it for target practice. But it is a great monument nevertheless.

I was not in the mood to take a camel ride, I thought to do so next time, when I would again be passing. We returned to Cairo City where we entered the magnificent museum, which contains the real marvels of ancient Egypt. Looking at the gold covered mummies and other treasures and objects of the long past, one could not but return in mind to the history lessons, when we heard our teachers telling us of the great times, when Egypt was the centre of civilisation. The monuments of Egypt must make a great impression on all, who take the opportunity to visit them.

Leaving Cairo, we travelled in dusk through the interesting land, then stopped in the Town of Ismalia. This was one of the more important points for the Suez Canal Company, administering the operation of Suez Canal. In Ismalia lived many navigation pilots, who guided all ships through the canal. Here used to live my wife and her family, before they all moved to other places around the world. I knew the town from her descriptions, of her youth spent there.

It was dark when our bus brought us to Ismalia, and we set down in a restaurant for refreshments. I asked in the restaurant, how to get to Tawfik Square. Apparently it was not far, where the family house was located, unfortunately we were only stopping for a short time, I could not risk being left behind, so I did not venture to see the home. In the restaurant garden it felt like a bit of tropical paradise, amid the lush vegetation and flowers.

We moved on to Port Said, where the Galileo Galilei was waiting for us, for the next leg of the journey, to Naples.

FAREWELL TO THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

Egypt, Cairo, the Suez Canal and especially Ismalia had made a great impression on me. This was more so, because I met and married a girl, who was born and grew up in Ismalia, on the Suez Canal. Before passing through these regions, I knew them at least from the map, which I chose to prepare about the Engineering project, built by the combined resources of France and England 150 years ago.

After seeing the area, I had a better appreciation of the land and the people. On the bus tour I saw that from Suez City, through to Cairo and the great Pyramids, the environment was what I expected, sand and more sand, naturally. But Ismalia area was something else. Although it was nightfall, when we reached the town, it was like the closest thing to passing through an oasis in the desert. The vegetation was prolific, beautiful palms in parks, and lovely, sweet scented flowers growing in the gardens, irrigated by the waters from the river Nile, providing such a contrast to the rest of the trip. I remembered my wife's stories about the mango tree in their garden, which bore each year abundant fruit for all the family.

I still hope to return, to explore the mighty river Nile Delta, which still holds fascination for me.

RETURNING WITH PLEASURE

Leaving behind the African continent, we sailed into the Mediterranean, and on to Naples. Our ship only stayed a few hours,

so that it was not possible to go into the city, but only to have a stroll around in the Port area. The Spaniard and the Italian young man from my cabin both disembarked in Naples.

We were off again, the last leg, to the northern Italian port of Genoa. The eighteen day trip from Fremantle was coming to an end, and most of the passengers felt relieved. Arriving in Genoa in the early morning, the last Italian passengers left the Galileo here, whilst the rest of us made arrangements, to travel on to Germany and other European countries by train.

I was made the Leader of the group, travelling North. Yet another environmental change made us tired, after leaving our good ship, which brought us safely from the other side of the globe. We had to store our luggage, as the train was departing late that evening. It was pre-arranged for our group to go on a bus tour of the City of Genoa, which was quite a welcome treat. My leadership was soon tested, when a mini-bus came to get us, there was no sitting left for one person, when all boarded the bus. So it had to be me, who had to travel in some discomfort, in an improvised seat for the whole tour.

It was a tour well worth taking, because Genoa is a beautiful city of great historical significance, as Christopher Columbus himself sailed out of this port, to discover America. For this reason I for a long time thought, that this great navigator was of Italian origin.

Genoa was built on slopes, which in some locations rise very steeply from the shores of Mediterranean. That provides many magnificent lookout points, which we visited on our bus tour. The city centre prides itself with some very special palaces and buildings. Returning from the tour, the train was waiting, with allocated cabins

and overnight sleeping positions.

DESTINATION FRANKFURT

The train moved out of the Genoa railway station, on our way through northern Italy, Switzerland to Frankfurt in Germany. That city was my first destination in returning to Europe because I was joining up with my sister Sonja, who moved there from Maribor to work at the Frankfurt International Airport.

The train sleeper cabins were each for four people. I was in a cabin together with three other men, including a young Danish farmer, returning from farming work experience in Australia. Although we asked him to place his shoes out into the passage, he still kept on his smelly socks. I must say, I never spent a more uncomfortable night on a train, most unfortunately.

After all night's journey, we ended up in the large, impressive Frankfurt railway terminal. I waited around for my sister, until I decided to call the airport, and sure enough, she could not get away from her work to meet me. I took the train to the airport and waited there until she finished her shift of duty.

It was a warm, sunny day in Frankfurt, I decided to wait outside in a park by the airport. Because of a sleepless night and staying in the sun, underestimating it's European intensity, one of those headaches returned, which I feared. Sonja finally showed up, we were so happy to meet again. Fifteen years had passed, since I left my homeland. We travelled to her flat near the river Maine and close to the city centre. We had much to tell each other about our family and our lives. We planned our journey home to Maribor where I would meet

the rest of my family. This was now only about another 900 kilometres to travel.

Somehow I did not feel very comfortable being in Germany. Over twenty years had passed since the end of World War II, but I was long removed from Europe, and a lot of the feelings about the war by Europeans had changed, whereas they had lingered on in us, who were not in close touch with the new realities. A lot of signs of destruction of Frankfurt were still there to see, but the immense activities of reconstruction were noticeable everywhere.

Due to the height of the Cold War, American military presence was most visible in Frankfurt, which I found very interesting, as I had not seen any Allied forces in operations, other than in the movies. One of Frankfurt's precincts was actually an American "city" within a city. Behind walls and barbed wire stood buildings, which were more than just army barracks. They were actually Allied Headquarters in Germany, including the War Command, administration, living quarters for whole families, with their own schools for the children. In special compounds were full weapons establishments with tanks, rockets, armed with nuclear warheads. About 70km from Frankfurt was the Allied Airforce base of Wiesbaden, always ready for a strike against the Warsaw Pact forces.

This awareness of a possible war encounter between the "East and West" made me feel uneasy, because the danger was very real.

THE RETURNING

I was a little worried about how the Yugoslav authorities would react

to my returning home. Slovenia was at that time still part of the Yugoslav Federation, but I thought, because I was away for many years, there should be no problems. With this in mind, and holding an Australian passport, my sister and I boarded the train, and headed for home. I had never travelled through Germany and Western Austria, so I found Bavaria and Tyrol very picturesque and fascinating. We passed through Vienna, only stopping a short while, then travelled towards the city of Graz, which I visited just once during World War II. By then we were only 65 km from Maribor, and close to the Austro-Slovenia border crossing. The train stopped at the border, where the train driver and the conductors of the two countries changed, and we now had a Slovenian crew, for the last 15 km to our home town Maribor.

We arrived at the station, which I knew so well, as it was from here that I commuted between Maribor and Ljubljana, during my studies in the Slovenian capital. My sister took me to her flat, not far from the railway station, where her son awaited us. An unusual, pleasant feeling came over me, at being back home again. We stayed there for the night, and the next day proceeded to meet our parents, my second sister and my two brothers. It was a Sunday, and the whole family gathered together, to meet us.

Seeing mum and dad was a moving occasion, and also the other family members, many of whom I had not ever met, as they were not even born, when I left my homeland. I felt that it was my correct decision, to make the visit home. I could see that the years of work, and caring for our family reflected on both the father and mother. They were both getting close to their eighty years of age. I brought them greetings from Frank, we discussed how he was getting along in Australia, but we all wished that he too could be between us for the

occasion. On a fine, warm summer's day we talked well into the night under the grape vine pergola by our home.

Two cousins also came with all their families, and their father, who was over 90 years old. But their mother, my aunty died only a short time before my arrival. A special dinner was prepared for my homecoming, and a lot of posing for photographs was the order of the day.

In the next days, I made it a point to see the changes which took place over the past years. Having been a socialist economy, there were no large private shops, only state-run stores, businesses and industries. A lot of flats had been built around the city for the employees of the government -run enterprises. Some new houses have appeared, I wondered, who was so lucky to have the possibility to build those.

I took the opportunity also to look at some of the buildings under construction at that time. Their interesting feature were nuclear fallout shelters under each of them. Ordinarily, when completed, the shelters were used as storage space, which could readily revert to the intended use, in case the need arose. The half metre thick doors between sections of the buildings were made of steel, to withstand a nuclear blast, and were separating sections of the underground construction. The threat of the Cold War heating up was quite evident also everywhere in Maribor at that time.

MOVING ABOUT

I was invited to visit my relatives and friends, who always prepared special dinners wherever I went, so very soon it became necessary to

start watching my weight. My cousin Vilma suggested to me to visit Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia. I had the time and I took the train one day, setting out through Zagreb, the Croatian capital and on to Serbia with its capital Belgrade. I visited Zagreb before with my school for the Zagreb Fair, which is held there every year in early autumn. I suppose Belgrade was worth seeing, since I heard enough about it, having been Yugoslavia's capital as well.

I found Belgrade a drab, grey place, typical of the socialist states, who renovated the inside of buildings only, completely neglecting the exteriors, which quickly start to crumble without paint, to protect them from weathering.

On a bus tour I saw many museums and their historical, mainly war artefacts, which the Serbs were very proud of. But any objects of value were long ago looted out by their invaders and masters for 500 years, and were probably used to beautify the rich monuments of Istanbul. The Serbs are proud of their misfortune in their history, although once they belonged to truly great dynasties.

The lady-guide on the bus tour of Belgrade wanted to impress me particularly, being Slovenian, that nations which did not suffer the Turkish slavery as did the Serbs, have no history. In an insulting manner, she exclaimed Slovenia had no history. One cannot but feel sorry for their misguided determination.

Kalemegdan Fortress, standing over all the surrounding land was impressive enough for its position, but in itself is again another manifestation of the Serb fighting spiritualism.

On my way out of the Serbian Plain it was a shame to see so much of the known fertile soil laying idle, uncultivated, with only few tracts

here and there planted with maize. The Panonian rich black soil was once known as the best wheat producing area. But in Serbian terms, it was better to export maize and import wheat and many other food products. In this way the Belgrade population could walk about with clean hands, mainly working in Federal Yugoslavia's offices, administering much of the rest of the republics of Yugoslavia, which were well able to do without Belgrade's forced assistance. One has to travel the world to recognise the Serb selfishness.

The time of my family visit was passing quickly. The autumn arrived, I was invited to a grape harvesting on my brother's wife's family farm. Wine production comes with special festivities and a lot of good food. For lunch they served a type of pizza, but instead of the Italian style savoury topping, fine sweetened ricotta cheeses are used, a delicious meal, with fine wine. The final great family outing was to the highest lookout point above Maribor, the peak of Saint Urban. This place offers magnificent views towards the city, and on clear days the views stretch right into neighbouring Austria.

SAYING FAREWELL

I saw my family and was especially happy that my parents were still in reasonably good health, but I definitely could not have delayed going to see them. Time came for me to say goodbye. I was saddened when my father said that we may not see each other again, and I was afraid that he may be right.

About 30 people came to the railway station to farewell me, when my train moved out on the way to Rome, Italy. The trip to Ljubljana and to Postojna was comfortable. Then crowds came aboard and there was room for standing only. That was the border area between

Slovenia and Italy, where workers commuted to work in their places of employment on both sides of the border. It was early morning when we crossed into Italy.

The journey was dragging on, travelling from Trieste to Milan, where I was going to see my wife's sister's family. Her husband's office was in Milan. He came to meet me at the station. While waiting for him to finish work then travel to their home in Varese, about 100km north of Milan, I used the opportunity to see the city centre. Milan is a very impressive city, and is northern Italy's business centre, with exquisite shops and many famous buildings, one of them the La Scala Opera house.

I was glad to be able to visit yet another great city of the world. Guido was regional manager for Pepsi Cola, and in his office proudly showed me the Sales figures, which a pretty lady accountant was just then completing. His family lived in the exclusive town of Varese, the like of which I had not seen before. The streets, gardens and buildings were just perfectly maintained, and the fresh autumn air gave it additional serenity. I went shopping with my wife's sister. The supermarket was glistening in perfect cleanliness, and the food was so well exhibited and packaged, I was amazed.

The family once travelled to Sydney, where Guido hoped to obtain a comparable position, which he held in Milan, but he was not successful and they all returned to Italy.

As much as I was impressed with Milan and Varese, I suggested to Guido that it was Rome, he should try for his headquarters of Pepsi Cola to be stationed. I had the wonderful Roman climate in mind, because Milan does get very wet and cold in winter. He might have taken my suggestion, or advice, they eventually moved to Rome,

where in retirement, Guido possessed a splendid property in the outer environs of the Eternal City.

I moved on to Genoa, to board the Galileo again. The porters in the terminal insisted to carry luggage on board the ship. A huge man carried my suitcase, and as such surely should be strong and careful, but he must have dropped it on the way. In my cabin I could smell a strong odour coming from my suitcase, and I realised it was the smell of brandy, hoping that only the cork of the bottle in my suitcase came loose. Unlucky for me, the bottle was broken, the Plum Brandy, which my father brewed himself with great care and know-how spilled between my clothes. All I could do was to collect the broken glass, with a little brandy still in the bottom half of the broken bottle, and throw the lot into the Genoa harbour. I kept my fingers crossed, when my father's brandy hit the water, and mixed with the Mediterranean sea, hoping for luck in the distress. And to think, that I even gave the big clot of a man a tip!

SECOND SEA VOYAGE TO AUSTRALIA

I was leaving Italy by ship for the second time, bound for Australia, this time from Genoa. At my familiar port by now, Naples was the main exit for the many Italians returning to Australia from their visit to the old country. I was crossing the Mediterranean during the European winter this time, although still pleasant, it was nothing like the trip on Skaubryn, fifteen years earlier.

Our ship anchored in Port Said, Egypt. The passengers could soon sense the tension, which prevailed in the Middle East at that time. Sailing down the Suez Canal, the Egyptian fighter planes kept

buzzing our ship, in their training pretending to look for their target to attack. This tension spoiled my feelings I held for the area, which in peace time, I found overwhelming with respect.

Leaving Europe in the cool and rain, entering the Red Sea emerged as such a great extremity. It was extremely hot, noticeable more, when I hoped to cool off in the Galileo swimming pool on the deck. The water in the pool, pumped directly from the sea was so warm that I felt uncomfortable swimming in it. It was impossible to remain on the decks for any period of time, and even the ships air-conditioning could not cope with the super heated area we were passing through.

In Aden, the British soldiers were still patrolling the streets, armed to the teeth. But as before, shopping in the city proceeded uninterrupted. I bought a transistor radio and a Grundig tape recorder, a heavy and bulky appliance in comparison to how these appliances diminished in size in later years.

The journey on to Singapore was uneventful, but the ship's entertainment organisers had endeavoured to keep the passengers in good spirits. I was enjoying my holiday, away from work for a couple more weeks, arriving in Fremantle on a sunny late spring morning.

Robert was very excited with my return, my wife indicated that he missed me a lot. The tape recorder was for him to use, and we were soon recording his nice singing voice, and his piano music pieces, for which he was taking professional lessons.

RETURN TO WORK

Back at work, the highway construction had now centred on the Perth Ring roads. The assistance and the expertise of the Chicago Consultants was being applied by the Department's own workforce in the design and construction of roadways.

The surveying carried out with the team, in which I started work with the Department had a lot of meaning for me, when the Kwinana Freeway, Mitchell Freeway, Leach Highway and Tonkin Highway were all constructed as part of the whole Metropolitan Region road network.

OCCURRING CHANGES

The original teams, working in the Design offices were fragmented and disappearing. Some of my workmates had left the Department for overseas, other government agencies and private companies. The whole department moved from the buildings that once stood around the Barracks, under the Western Australian Parliament House to the former Superannuation building in central Perth, opposite the Government House. Mitchell Freeway cut across where the Barracks once stood, and only the Arch was retained as a monument to the original City Regiment, stationed there. The wisdom of the open freeway is now questioned, cutting off that part of the city, and also creating noise, fumes and visual pollution.

The tunnel which was an option before building the Narrows Interchange would have been a better solution for Perth traffic management after all. The powers, which were leading this state's

development did not possess the wisdom and vision for the future, were shying away from high cost, but ultimately a better solution, if they had adopted the tunnel variation.

Destiny was starting to guide my life more clearly again, I was not satisfied with my situation, especially regarding the location of my home. This definitely was not what I was striving for. I was stuck, not being able to move anywhere at all, no matter how much I was trying to persuade Robert's mother to move to a better area, near the river, anywhere between South Perth and Fremantle.

The irony of this was that we were in a financial position, when we could easily afford to better ourselves. I was in a permanent position, with good salary. I was continually striving to improve that too, by additional studies towards full membership of the Institution of Engineers, Australia. The years were slipping by, and thirty five years of age did not bring me to a point, when I expected of myself to have a say at least where my family should live.

The Snowy Mountains Scheme was being pursued by the Australian Government at full pace. I applied for an advertised engineering position in Cooma, New South Wales, but was unsuccessful in securing the position with the Snowy Mountains Authority. Until that time I had not travelled to Sydney or New South Wales beyond Bonegilla .

TO SYDNEY

On my next Long Service leave in summer of 1971, we prepared our car and set out to see the Eastern States of Australia. A number of

my friends had completed that trip and returned to Perth safely. The vehicle certainly had to be in good condition, and there were petrol stations along the Interstate highway at approximately every 200 kilometres.

We started our trip at 4 o'clock one morning and travelled 1200 kilometres from Perth, through Kalgoorlie and to a caravan park, past the town of Norseman. I travelled over this countryside before by train, it was familiar to me. Driving a car and stopping, where or when we wished it was possible to feel much closer to the land and getting a good appreciation of this vast Australia.

BEYOND THE DARLING RANGES

A short climb up and beyond the Darling Ranges is Northam town, 100 kilometres from Perth, the undulating, hilly topography changes to open and mostly flat agricultural land. Some strips of gum trees between the fields and paddocks indicate that a lot of clearing was done, to establish this land as the bread basket of Australia. In times of severe draught in New South Wales and Queensland, Western Australia exports 70% of all wheat for the world market.

The type of land use seen between Northam and the town of Merredin, about 300 km further on, also stretches North and South from Great Eastern Highway, between Esperance and Albany in the South, to Carnarvon in the North. From about 450 km East of Perth, a low type of vegetation predominate, to which the term "*Australian bush*" can be referred.

The town of Southern Cross is the centre of this type of vegetation on the way East, but Coolgardie, one of the first "*gold*" towns gives rise to sparse vegetation, typical of the Kalgoorlie region.

We did not stop in Kalgoorlie, but rushed on, turning South towards Norseman. In this area the bush again emerges, and extends to the edge of the Nullarbor Desert, on the Western Australia/South Australia border. We stopped at Madura Caravan Park, having driven 1200 kilometres, with only two short tea breaks. We realised that to drive such a distance in one day was too much, because we were extremely tired. It was worth though, to experience long travel, as long as it ends safely.

We spent the night in a caravan park, but it was not a restful night. The air was fresh, and we were reasonably comfortable, but it takes more than a day to get used to being on the road.

We left Madura early and drove the next 200 km to Eucla, and the border. This place boasted a Motel. We stopped for refreshments. Eucla was a lively border post, with a lot of people with their cars, like us, referring to maps before making the attempt to cross the Desert. The map showed we were only about 10 km from the coast of the Great Southern Ocean, and at the beginning of 400 kilometres section of the unsealed Eyre Highway. People arriving from Adelaide had just crossed that section of road. I knew that it was going to be a rough ride, but I was too eager to get going, instead of taking it calmly. The weather was fine, but here one can only expect one thing, that it would be hot from noon till dusk in the month of January.

I felt much too confident to be able to drive this road, and Robert

with his mother did not question my ability. But on such occasions, we should have been aware, other drivers were a factor, whether things would go without a hitch. I hoped there would not be many other drivers travelling in the same direction as we were. Soon enough, we were stuck behind a Victorian registered dark grey Holden Monaro, towing a caravan. Maybe I should have stayed behind at a distance, because it was lifting a cloud of dust, such that we could hardly see ahead of us. Over some distance, the roadway became firm and less dusty, I decided to overtake the Monaro. But he would not let me, he speeded up!

DANGEROUS EXPERIENCE

The road seemed wide enough, so I overtook the Holden Monaro at about 80 km per hour, and lost control of my car. The steering wheel just wandered about and would not respond to my gentle efforts to keep it steady, but I did not dare to apply the brakes, because then we would surely turn over. As the car weaved from one side of the road to another, luckily there was no-one coming from the opposite direction, I noticed these large rocks on each side of the road. I was desperately trying to avoid them, I just managed to keep the car travelling within the formed, smooth road. Then we hit a small boulder in our path with the rear left wheel, the tyre blew out, our car spun around 180 degrees and came to a stop, facing in the direction, from which we were coming.

We thanked God that we managed to stay on the road and did not overturn. I looked at my wife- she did not have her safety belt fastened! Robert in the back seat was a little shaken, but otherwise we were allright.

Some people coming up behind us helped us to change the wheel, it had a big dent in the rim. The man and his girlfriend in the Monaro, who would not let us overtake them then drove up and said: "*Why don't you look where your' goin' mate!*"

There was something squealing near the radiator, as I started the engine. This spot could have been the end of our journey, right there in the Nullarbor Desert. We just crawled on in case the radiator overheated, and we made it to the Nullarbor Homestead and the Garage. This was the first petrol station on the South Australian side, but still over 1000 kilometres from Adelaide. The mechanic at the garage told us that our car needed a new water pump, but they did not have one. It had to be ordered from Ceduna, a town nearer Adelaide, and could be brought to the garage the next day, by plane. There was no choice but to wait, in effect we were stranded for at least the next 24 hours, in the Desert.

While we were changing our car wheel, back at the point of our near-disaster, we could feel a gentle breeze, coming from the Ocean and over the expanse of the Desert. Without such a breeze, the conditions in that area must be overbearing, which probably is the case a lot of the time. The hot day at the Nullarbor Homestead was followed by a pleasant evening, but during the night a sandstorm blew up, and the fine sand found every little opening, and covered the inside and outside of our car with a musty film.

The next morning we were glad to see a light plane coming in to land on the Nullarbor Station airstrip. It brought the water pump for our car, and in a couple of hours, we were gratefully on the road to Adelaide. The same type of road continued on, smooth sandstone surface, the natural base, peculiar to this section of the Desert.

The Governments of both South Australia and Western Australia endeavoured to bituminise the Desert Highway, but South Australia had the largest part to finance.

We made good progress, reaching deeply into the South Australian side of the Desert. Whilst there was hardly any vegetation around Nullarbor Station, we were now moving in between low scrub.

YALATA ABORIGINAL SETTLEMENT

I had heard from my friends at work who crossed the Nullarbor in their holidays, about an Aboriginal settlement just off the road, on the South Australian side. After some hours driving from the Nullarbor Homestead, we entered a thickly wooded area and a soft sandy section of the Highway. Because it was slow going along the road, a queue of cars had accumulated. The traffic was also being delayed by a group of what appeared to be very primitive Desert Aborigines, lining the roadway. They were trying to stop every car, to sell their original handy-crafts, such as boomerangs, didgeridoos, bark paintings and other articles. Some cars did stop, but since we were coming through the area on our return journey, we kept going. This proved rather unpopular with this primitive tribe, and they banged on our car roof, as we slowly proceeded through the soft sandy, but shady area. We were warned previously, to take care if we decided to barter with these people, who up to very recently had little contact with whites of this country. A short distance beyond the settlement, we were again on a bitumen road surface. The flat Desert now behind us, we encountered kilometres of winding road, which seemed never ending, between some quite steep hills.

We covered a great distance since leaving Perth, but it was still a long way to drive to reach Ceduna, the first larger settlement on the South Australian side. Winding in and around countless hills, up and down the slopes, we reached Ceduna, which I long ago was hoping would finally emerge behind a hill.

With settlements closer together, and with the unfortunate experience on the Nullarbor behind us, we hoped for a safer drive from there on. We spent a pleasant, restful night in a caravan park, where we could wash the dust off, which accumulated on us over the past two days. There are definitely no shortcuts on the road connection between Perth and Adelaide.

Leaving Ceduna, we were on a good bitumen road, with long straight sections, but there was a long curve along and around Iron Knob, and through the mineral rich hills of this part of South Australia. The Iron Knob rises majestically above all other features, it's size only appreciated, when somehow we got a feeling, we could not get away from it's dominance. The road wound it's way into large plains, where we found ourselves driving along the picturesque Pink Lakes of South Australia. They are a very pretty sight. One that must remain a long while with everyone, taking the opportunity, to pass that way.

A few more hours through the agricultural northern belt, with giant wheat silos at railway sidings, there was the town of Port Pirie. With no planned stopping, we moved on along Flinders Ranges on one side, and expansive farms on the other, into the flat plain and the outer limits of Adelaide City.

What remained in my memory from the train trip from Melbourne,

we were now witnessing the many market gardens, lush and green, supplying Adelaide with fresh vegetables. We drove into the city as the evening started throwing shadows over the area, and stopped at a Pub for a well deserved drink.

NOTICEABLE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STATES

Sitting comfortably in a beer garden, we were amazed by the number of Aboriginal people having a drink there as well. It dawned on us that Aboriginals were more noticeable, because we had never seen them in Pubs in Western Australia. Obviously South Australia had progressed further than other Australian States in giving the Aboriginal people greater civil liberties.

We drove on right through Adelaide city, towards the Eastern districts and found a nice caravan park under Adelaide hills. There we found a source of fresh, clear water coming from a permanent spring. We walked around in the area, to the centre of the city with the typical cross-street layout, not unlike the Perth city centre. Adelaide was built on a large flat area, stretching from the sea to the gently rising hills some 30 km to the East.

MELBOURNE

Early next morning we left the city to continue our road East. We climbed the Adelaide hills along a solidly constructed highway towards Murray Bridge, a town on the longest Australian river Murray. We passed through this picturesque land, pressing on and

looking forward to seeing Melbourne. To reach Melbourne we still had about 900km to travel, but at least the distances between eastern Australian cities were in hundreds of kilometres, unlike the distance from Perth to Adelaide nearing 3000 kilometres. At that time we were not aware of a Tourist road linking Adelaide with Melbourne along the Southern Ocean, which we could take to see the breathtaking scenery of that route. Travelling along the main Highway at high speed on good roadway, we entered Melbourne in late evening. By then we had travelled about 4000km in four days, reaching the large metropolis of Melbourne.

19 years had passed, since I arrived to Melbourne on a cool, early spring day on the ship Skaubryn. This ship must have returned many times, bringing migrants to Australia. On one of those trips and for the last time, it was bringing migrants from Bremen in Germany, through Naples and into the Red Sea. Out of Aden, it caught on fire and sank. Luckily no passengers were lost, they were picked up by passing cargo vessels and by another passenger liner, and taken back to Aden. They had to wait for some weeks until they were finally brought to Western Australia. For many of the passengers on board, the sinking of their ship Skaubryn meant a bad omen, had returned from Aden to Germany, and did not migrate to Australia.

It felt good to be in Melbourne again, but I had to get used to some different traffic rules. Driving through the city centre, down Swanson Street, I was stopped by the traffic police. To turn right, I should have waited on the extreme left of the roadway, which did not seem logical to me. But we were in Melbourne and had to do things their way.

We found a comfortable Motel, close to the city centre. Staying a number of days, we got to know the city well and liked it. My wife

had friends living there and with them we visited the City's attractions, such as the Myer Music Bowl, Kew Gardens and Saint Kilda among other places. We went to Geelong for a Sunday picnic and in Frankston enjoyed a lovely farewell dinner. We were on the way once, to see the Penguins coming to their island for their night's rest, but could not make it because of heavy traffic congestion on the day.

ALBURY- WODONGA-BONEGILLA

In Melbourne I had to buy a new spare tyre before we proceeded with our journey. Our Chrysler Valiant performed very well, I was so much more careful with my driving following the shock experience on the Nullarbor Desert.

We had a fair idea which roads to take to drive to Sydney, taking in the Snowy Mountains. It did not take long at all and we were in Albury, then Wodonga, driving on the Hume Highway, and entering New South Wales from Victoria. I would have wanted very much to visit Bonegilla, about which I had such wonderful memories, following my arrival in Australia. We drove along a lovely lake, towards the base of Snowy Mountains. This section took a long time to traverse, the road was twisting and turning between the settlements along the way.

The road signing was disappointing, due to which we took a wrong turn. Instead of taking the Tumut Highway, we followed a road leading up the mountain, which further on became just an unsealed mountain trail. Luckily there were no other cars on the trail, because there would not be enough room to pass each other most of the way.

By then we were too far up the mountain trail to turn back. Carrying on though, we took a risk, as we did not have the slightest idea, where we would end up.

We kept on climbing for miles and miles, through the heavily wooded mountains. With my wife driving a good part on this mountain climb, I admired her courage, as from my passenger window I stared many an almost vertical precipice in the face. Finally we must have reached a peak, as the track began to wind downhill and we crossed some beautiful valleys, through which were flowing some fairly wide creeks, known to contain the famous Snowy Mountains trout. It was pure pleasure driving in this area, and going downhill on a constructed roadway now, there was no strain on the engine at all. Although the road still unsealed, but wider, we began meeting other travellers, some even towing caravans.

THE THREDBO RESORT SURPRISE

Suddenly some mountain resort was visible further down the valley. We could hardly believe our eyes, when signs along the road pointed to the famous Thredbo Village skiing resort. We missed the Hydroelectric basin complex, but we came to know the natural beauty of the Snowies, and the slopes of the highest Australian peak of Mount Kosciusko.

We settled for the night into one of the Thredbo cottages. We considered ourselves lucky indeed to find this lovely location, and to think that we did not really know for a considerable time, where we were headed, finding it by chance?

It was the month of January, and although the roads we just followed were unsealed, they posed no driving problems, because all motorists exercised caution and drove according to prescribed limits and warnings. Of course in winter time we could not pass this way, the mountains are covered with snow, and the mountain tracks are probably ideally suited for the skiers. This is one of the areas of Australia, where conditions for skiing are similar to those of European Alpine countries, but maybe even more reliable for good snow cover.

JINDABYNE-COOMA-CANBERRA

Before continuing our journey, we had a barbecue breakfast by the stream, running through the Thredbo Valley. The morning air was fresh, and the sausages and steak had not tasted so delicious in a long while. This complimented our visit to the idyllic Thredbo location.

We departed, driving down the steep mountain girding highway, towards the plains of New South Wales. It was only about an hour's drive to Lake Jindabyne. People from the caravan parks around the lake were fishing for trout, to prepare for their breakfast. We stopped a short time, then continued on to the next place, which I was looking forward to see - Cooma.

This was the headquarters of the Snowy Mountains Authority, where I sent my application for a job with the Authority a few years earlier. Had I been successful, this would probably be my place of work. In any case it was nice to see the town, so peaceful and calm in the morning sun. We found ourselves on the Monaro Highway, which is the connecting road to Canberra. The name of this area has

obviously been used by the General Motors for it's powerful Holden car version, which nearly ran us off the road. Monaro Highway was our connection to the capital of Australia, now only about 3 hours drive north.

Canberra is different from all other Australian cities. It was well planned, maybe even too much so, as it struck me somehow artificial as a comparatively new city. Tree-lined avenues, Lake Burly-Griffin and the office buildings are all very impressive. The mainly two-storey buildings give it a more European appearance, a definitely all modern city, which it was designed to be.

We visited the original Australian Parliament House then walked to the gardens near the lake featuring the most beautiful varieties of flowers, for which Canberra is well known. Just at that time the Aboriginal communities of Australia had set up their "*Tent Embassy*" on the lawns of Parliament House. They began a push to be formally recognised as a nation within Australia.

The Aboriginal "*Tent Embassy*" was of great significance for that period of time for Australia, showing the beginning of greater tolerance towards the native population. It had shown the freedom people in Australia enjoyed, because on some other continents the protesting people would have been quickly bundled into police vans and stuck in prisons. The voices of the indigenous people had from then on been increasingly more heard and taken notice of. We took our time to visit the excellently presented War Museum, which we could not pass by, before embarking on our next ambitious destination - Sydney.

SYDNEY TOWN

It was my long standing wish to visit Sydney, but had I been more determined, this would have happened before. So Sydney was our destination this time and we were looking forward to reach it.

In our final section of the trip from Perth, we have experienced what the great distances mean, which are separating the Australian cities and we now had an idea of the size of our adopted country. For Robert, this was his country, but in all this trip was an extraordinary enlightening for the tree of us. I had heard about Blue Mountains, or Australian Alps as they are also known, now that we had driven over them gave me a great satisfaction. On the way to Sydney, after leaving Canberra, it seemed we were driving to the East of the mountains, but somewhere along the way, Blue Mountains emerged as the dominant feature. Monaro Highway joined the Hume Highway, which carried heavy traffic by the time we were approaching Liverpool, one of the greater regional New south Wales centres.

The outer districts of Sydney gave an impression of the strength of a large city. This could be due to the fact that Sydney is built mainly on rock and combined with the great size, gives an awareness of strength. It seemed a long drive through the suburbs, but we were taking it in with delight.

My wife had relatives living in the city, but before we let them know we had arrived, we booked into an older, central city hotel. We reached Sydney in 6 full days driving, not counting rest periods and were exhilarated that we made it. The three of us got along fine, sharing the driving, so avoiding over-tiredness of either driver.

We stayed in central city, so we could walk along Castlereigh, George, Pitt or Elizabeth Streets to all the central city shops. In the next days we explored the greater Sydney and really began to enjoy our holiday. We were in touch with my wife's brother, who invited us to come and stay with his family. So we moved to Five Dock, a fine area, not far from central Sydney.

The young lady of the house soon showed us the view of the famous Sydney Harbour Bridge from the front verandah of their home. For a closer look and driving over it, Marie-Jane's husband kindly offered himself to do it. The bridge having been built in the year of my birth, and of steel construction, was of special significance to me, from the engineering point of view.

We were staying with a lovely family. They migrated to Sydney from Elizabethville in the former Belgian Congo, Central Africa, where my wife's brother had steel construction business. Their son in law came from Italy. When the nations all over Africa began gaining their independence, this family like many others moved to Australia and the more stable regions of the world.

We stayed in the cottage at the back of the main house, between the lush vegetable and flower beds, which my wife's brother tenderly cared for. We wondered at the rich clay, loamy soil of the Sydney city area, which was so different from Perth's sandy soil. The climate is also considerably different, pleasantly humid, probably better for one's skin and possibly better for lungs as well. The lush, deep green plants and trees surprised also. Unlike in the dry, rainless Perth summers, we had experienced heavy Sydney downpours on high summer days. Sydney is different and exciting in so many ways, and we enjoyed each day as it came. The Sydney people are rightly proud

of their city, which is truly more progressive than any other in Australia.

SYDNEY HARBOUR BRIDGE-BONDI BEACH-MARTIN PLACE

The bridge is a magnificent structure, no wonder it is known the world over, and walking or driving over it is an unforgettable experience. So much steel and so many rivets in one structure cannot be found in many places on this planet. The Sydney Opera House was still being built, when we drove over the Sydney Harbour Bridge. We climbed the bridge tower, walked to Martin Place, Hyde Park and took photos of the monument, sailed to Manly and the Toronga Park Zoo. On a sunny day we could not go past Bondi Beach without having a swim at this famous landmark.

The pinnacle of my stay in Sydney for the first time was the fishing experience in the harbour, off Watson's Bay. The three of us in the boat held fishing line in one hand, and an umbrella in the other, when a light rain came, but we were prepared, in the magnificent setting of the Outer Harbour. Our visits to the city's department stores usually ended on the sixth floor restaurant of one of the large department stores, for a full meal at very reasonable prices. There was always a good selection of roasts, and sweets to top up a special lunch.

DEPARTURE TIME - RETURNING TO PERTH

Time came to say farewell to the fine family and their friends, who were our hosts for a number of weeks. We could have taken the Princess Highway, travelling to Melbourne along the south coast through Wollongong, but were not sure about it's condition. We left central Sydney, briefly stopping at the Martin Place post office and Circular Quay, where it was always interesting to watch the arrival or departure of ferries and harbour cruise boats.

So we travelled along the busy Hume Highway back to Melbourne. Spending a short time with friends, we found some more places of interest around Melbourne and bought some presents at the popular Myer Department store to take back with us.

To not backtrack the road to Adelaide, we drove northwest to the Victorian border town of Ararat, then through Barossa Valley to Port Pirie. Robert's friend, Eddie joined us in Melbourne, so the ride was more interesting for them. As we reached Iron Knob again, it seemed to follow us for hours until we reached the Pink Lakes. We drove on to Ceduna and in another few hours we reached the Eastern end of the Nullarbor Desert. With the experiences gained on crossing Eastward, and with better luck this time, we traversed the Nullarbor without an incident. The conditions on the Desert on this crossing were extreme, as I imagined to be most of the time. Due to constant heat during the past summer weeks, the road became very dusty and the driving more dangerous and uncomfortable. Crossing the Nullarbor Desert was always risky and considered a major feat for those who dared. We were happy to have accomplished this feat.

We reached the long straight bituminous sections of Eyre Highway between the border settlement of Eucla, Balladonia, Norseman and Kalgoorlie. Stopping for short breaks only, but sleeping at nights, we were again in the Western Australian gold mining region of

Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. The straight sections of road are very tiring for the driver, where intense concentration is required to remain on the roadway. Following the driving at high speed over a long period, the final part of the highway between Northam and Midland seemed strangely slow, and we had to observe the 80km per hour speed limit. It seemed we were hardly moving at that speed. Returning to Perth gave us all great satisfaction, and we thanked God for the long but safe journey.

BACK TO WORK

Following another few days at home and attending matters that arose during our absence from Perth, I returned to work and Robert to school. To gain advancement in my position, I was offered a transfer from the Urban Road Design, to Advance Planning Section. Many young men were now gaining their professional qualifications, with few senior positions becoming available. I decided to transfer to these quite different duties in a new environment. The Department was not engaged in any major construction work at the time, I was satisfied with my new position. The Department's sections had been scattered around in many city buildings since we moved from the West end and the Barracks area. A new building for the Department had just been completed, and so we all came together under the same roof again.

Up to that time a main frame computer was available to all staff in the Department, then a new era began, when we were introduced to personal computers. Computer science had come a long way, from the Bendix-15 which we used for the design of the Perth Freeway Interchanges. The new development brought much excitement to all

of us involved in the various spheres of work, from structures, road design, to accounting and clerical sections. There was much to learn, so a new section of computer specialists was established, to get the work moving. Computer technology was embraced with enthusiasm quickly by all employees of the Department.

AN UNFORTUNATE DIVE

On a hot summer's day I took Robert to the local swimming pool. Maybe we should have rather driven to Cottesloe beach, because when I dived into the deepest part, which was in the middle of the pool, as distinct from pools which have the deep water on one end, I had to suddenly twist in midair to avoid falling on two small boys , who suddenly appeared before me in the water. I did miss the boys, but in the avoiding action I badly injured my base of the spine. I managed to pull myself out of the water but could not move due to the severe pain in my lower back.

Robert was by me, he was taken home by a pool attendant, while an Ambulance took me to the Royal Perth hospital. In a number of X-rays, no fracture could be detected, but I could only lay flat on my back. A rude nursing sister did not want to understand the terrible pain I was in, when she was winding the centrally folding bed up or down for me. I was taken home, when after a week I was finally able to start moving about.

I objected to the Perth City Council about the unusual design of the pool before it was built, and so did other ratepayers. But the City Engineer Green ignored all suggestions and went ahead building the pool his way. The injury has been plaguing me ever since that

unfortunate dive, causing me to spend many days in hospitals and the ever present pain.

ACCUMULATING PROBLEMS

No matter how much I tried to persuade the Belmont City Council not to make the Guide Dogs Training Centre, only two houses down the street from us into an Animal hospital, but was what they had done. Now the noise of the sick, or injured howling dogs did not let me sleep at nights, crippling my senses. There was more reason now than ever for my family to move out of the Belmont surroundings, to a better environment. But even in this of my dearest wishes, I could not succeed. I was hopelessly stuck.

THE RIGHT MEDICINE DOES HELP

My nerves were finally affected, so that not only had I a painful back, which especially flared in winter, but was prescribed Valium tablets to make me go calmly through the days. The only people who were sympathetic with my predicaments were my son Robert and my good doctor Stanton, the local G.P. One winter the combination of ailments put me in hospital, when I was very run down. I began to doubt in my complete recovery and feared for my life. I was in Royal Perth Hospital with severe depression and apart from injections, I was put on a treatment course with the new wonder drug, Valium. This mighty pharmaceutical discovery helped me to recover. When I was given these tablets for the first time, I fell into the deepest sleep of my life. Before waking in the morning, I had a feeling of

travelling up and up in a tube toward a light, which must have been the morning light. It was a feeling of comfort and relief from the tension, which had a hold over my mind until that morning. The Valium tablets released that constant tension, and I felt better, but was still very weak. The spell in hospital with the new treatment became my road to recovery and although still feeling insecure at times, my health gradually improved.

The problems I had been experiencing were strictly my own and went unrecognised by my wife. As long as she was near her sister there was nothing in the world to bother her, the well being of her husband did not even enter her mind.

The subject of moving out of Belmont could not be mentioned any more so we were being increasingly alienated. But we had a son, now in the local High School, and he was our main responsibility.

We lived in a sort of forced togetherness, which had no future. To ease the feelings, we travelled in the Western Australian countryside, to Albany, Margaret River, Busselton and through the Southwest forest areas. Rockingham Bay was still our favourite spot for fishing trips with my brother Frank, or friends from my work. Robert was still doing the piano lessons, and with his friends formed a "*jam*" group of young musicians, which was a popular pastime for young people at that time.

I had managed to free myself of medicines, which were part of my existence for too long in my recent past. As far as my back pains were concerned, doctors told me that I will just have to put up with them for the rest of my life. Some people take surgery as a choice to try to rid of the pain. Success in this is never guaranteed, so I did not

even seriously consider surgery but instead accepted my situation.

ANOTHER LONG SERVICE LEAVE

My long service leave became due every seven years, which was a most welcome realisation. Having three months leave available, I could use any part of it, or the whole lot combined even with the annual holidays. It must have been a consideration for the Public Service, that Perth being so far away from the rest of the other capitals of Australia, the Government was most generous and understanding, granting excellent working conditions to the employees in those years.

As usually, we planned our holidays around Christmas and the New Year. We decided to travel to the Eastern Australian States by train. We booked sleeper compartments and travelled in comfort all the way. In comparison with driving a car over such long distances, it was very nice to just sit back and relax in comfort, read, listen to piano music in the afternoons in the lounge car of the train. In the evening we sat down to an excellent dinner prepared for us by good train chefs. Such diversions in life do help for problems to be put aside at least for some of the time.

The train moved towards Adelaide, while we were making plans, what to see in Melbourne and Sydney. In Port Pirie we had a couple of hours waiting time. Robert went to the town with his new found friend and gave some worries, when it seemed that they took a long time to return. Finally they showed up and the train was on the way to Adelaide. Arriving there, we had a look at some shops and as it is in the capitals, Adelaide was filled with shoppers. The city had

changed considerably since our last visit, there were more tall buildings in the city centre, with the new prominent Festival Hall standing out.

From the point of distances within Australian cities, Adelaide is a lot closer than Perth from Melbourne and Sydney. In Melbourne we met our friends again, stayed a few days and visited Kew Gardens and the nearby famous Art Gallery. In this city it is a must to ride the trams and with it ride to Saint Kilda, exploring there the shores of Port Philip Bay.

Sydney was our main destination, where we arrived after the overnight trip by the Southern Aurora. It was fantastic to be back in Sydney. The new land mark, the Sydney Opera House was completed, dominating Benelong Point, alongside the already famous Harbour Bridge. To think, that I myself actually contributed in a small way to building the Opera House, this new masterpiece in Port Jackson, by buying the Opera House lottery tickets, was some great satisfaction.

SYDNEY

We again stayed with the kind relatives in Five Dock, this was in return for their many visits to Perth, when the family travelled between South Africa and Sydney in the earlier years. They were a lovely family and I was very grateful that they let us share with them most memorable holidays in Sydney.

At that time Television started to be used to keep children occupied with special children's programmes. I remember the little ones glued to the TV screens, but I doubt that in the long term this could be good for them. The physical activities of children became restricted with

the advent of Television. There is so much to see in and around Sydney and we took advantage of it.

This time I mixed Business with pleasure. I was fortunate to work in the Department of Main Roads, to gain experience in the latest design techniques, where at that time work began, designing the Western Distributor roads over Darling Harbour.

I was sad to part from Robert and his mother, when they left Sydney to return to Perth, where Robert had to attend High School. I stayed on in Sydney and was settling well into the Design Section, finding the work and the experience very satisfying.

I was about to make the greatest mistake of my life, as far as my profession was concerned. There was nothing stopping me to stay in Sydney. I could keep the good position in the city, which I most admired. Staying in a hotel room, I had meals anywhere in the cafes I pleased, but my breakfasts I had in a nearby Lebanese coffee shop. The David Jones cafeteria in George Street, near Martin Place was also one of my favourite eating places. I enjoyed the Saturday afternoons, when the city was almost deserted of people and traffic, and I waited for a bus to take me to Bondi Beach for a swim.

It was high summer again my life and place in the world felt serenely satisfying. I could not wish for better. My son and wife were in Perth, but I could call them back to Sydney anytime. As I lay on the white, sandy beach of this best known swimming location in Australia, I remembered the day, when during the summer long school holidays, I sat on the riverbank with my three school friends and we contemplated, where in the world we would wish to live, if we were given the choice. It was not Canada, because it gets too cold there. Not America either, because the line of security between

success and failure there was too tight. It was Melbourne, but preferably Sydney, Australia, where each of us wished to settle.

As the regular thump of the waves broke over Bondi Beach, and a surf-rider made a swish entering the tube the waves just created, it occurred to me that I alone succeeded in making that wish the four of us expressed, a reality, and it was not a dream. Whilst I was successful in realising the wish to settle in Australia, each of those three friends of mine reached a high standing in society in my native land, becoming economists and scientists.

TRAGEDY

My wife sister's husband in Perth had been involved in a traffic accident. Soon after the accident he was diagnosed with lung cancer. He was a heavy smoker all his life, and it appeared to me, the accident triggered the serious illness, and he died. He was a very nice person, kind and always pleasant to be with and to talk to. He greatly enjoyed the strong coffees, which are a custom of the people coming from the North African and Arab lands. He was of Italian origin, born in Alexandria in Egypt, and an accountant by profession. His wife had absolute influence over her sister and him, and I had seen that he was too nice, to be able to resist her dominance. They had no children and appeared to be happy with one another. Work was their life and in their annual holidays painted their house over and over again, and definitely did not use them for leisure. Just before he became ill, they built a new home for themselves, in Belmont of course. He had no opportunity to enjoy it at all, when he died at the age of only 51.

LEAVING SYDNEY WAS A MISTAKE

I was in a great dilemma. I could travel to Perth just for the funeral, then should have returned to Sydney. Instead I resigned from my position, which suited me so well, and went back to Perth. I made the greatest mistake of my life in haste, which has been haunting me ever since.

The Engineer in Charge of my section tried desperately to persuade me to return, not only for my sake, but also from the section's point of need for professional personnel. The Department of Highways Sydney had just begun designing the Western Distributor roads in the Darling Harbour area. My mind was made up and I was entering a new phase of my life, according to my Destiny? So it was a mistake that I made for myself, but can we go against a path, which had been plotted out for us at birth?

I have found from experience, that when I insisted on anything in my life, it produced negative results, but as the saying goes, life was not meant to be easy. There was one consolation. Back with the same Department, I got involved in a most interesting stage of Narrows Interchange construction, with the French Contractors. This French company won the contract to build the bridges in the Interchange, which involved building the Caissons. These prevent excessive movement of steel piles, which support the columns of the bridges, sitting on the soft, muddy base of Mounts Bay.

I was in the site office, preparing detail plans for this great engineering enterprise, and it was great to see, how the French engineers operated. Actually, I was already involved with the French

experts before, in my first job back in Maribor. They are an ingenious lot, always nice to work for. It was a magnificent experience for me, while it lasted. I had to return to my section, where I left off, before going to Sydney.

PROBLEMS ARISING

My dissatisfaction with my position which I held in the Department increased, when younger graduates began to overtake me on the salary range with their promotions, whilst I had reached the end of my career path. All my efforts to improve my position, including Industrial Appeals came to nothing. But the greater discontent with my family life also resurfaced, which all put together made my existence more than uneasy. With my advancement at work at a dead end, the lack of co-operation of my wife to move to a good area of Perth, preferably on the Swan River, and the noise and pollution coming now from the Animal Hospital, it was all becoming too much for me.

BOTH PARENTS PASSED AWAY

When I was leaving my family in Maribor, to return to Australia after my first visit there, I saw that the age of my parents was clearly showing, and their health was gradually deteriorating. My father especially had problems with his breathing. Such ailments can affect

much younger people, more so if they were smokers. My father smoked all his life, and cigarettes in his time did not come with filters. Who knows, smoking could have been the cause of his lung problems.

I received the sad news, that Father had passed away in hospital. Because of his breathing difficulties, he was taken to a hospital specialising in lung diseases, which was some distance from Maribor city. Father objected to being taken there, and apparently took a lot of persuasion by the paramedics for him to enter the ambulance. Eventually he agreed to come along. He must have felt he was leaving home for the last time, because he died the same night in the hospital, which was supposed to be in a more pure environment than the City General Hospital, where he wanted to be taken.

Now our mother has been diagnosed with cancer of the bladder. My sister Sonja gave me the description of terrible suffering our mother had to endure, for a considerable period of time. She passed away soon after reaching the age of 82.

Our parents had both died, I felt a terrible loss and emptiness, which affects people who come to face this sad, but inevitable situation. It is more difficult, when the distances make sudden departures to funerals impossible.

LIFE'S REALISATIONS

Our son Robert had been studying at a University career in Science, majoring in Chemistry and Physics. This was a gratifying experience and conclusion to our efforts, to give the child good education. But it

would have been much nicer for all concerned, had there been more understanding in the family.

I tried to reach an in-depth understanding, why some wives cling to her family's parents paths of life, completely overlooking the new family they represent with their man and children. Lucky is the man, whose wife sees in her own husband, or mate, the person with whom she can create a future, and not taking her father and family as the only valid example to follow. I am sure, many marriage breakdowns stem from such wives mistaken beliefs, when they use their old family's model as their own, instead of her new family establishing own identity. This is not to say, that a man cannot, or does not fall into the same trap.

Leading from such conclusions, I decided that it was my time to leave our household, and I moved in with my brother. It was a sad moment, but it was better for all concerned, in my opinion. The parting of any family is distressing as long as it does not lead to the tragedy of violence. This is unfortunately becoming ever more common in our society.

WITH MY BIG BROTHER

I stayed with Frank a couple of times before, this was the third time that I joined him, which proved that it is nice to have a big brother around. His place was in a small settlement, under Kalamunda hills,

and although only 15 km from Perth, it had an environment of a country town. The differences begin with the soil type, where the rocks of the hills provide the lowlands below with a clay soil and loam. This area had therefore numerous orchards, and to lesser extent, vineyards. The land lot sizes were not less than one hectare, but many much bigger. A peculiarity of the areas bellow the hills in summer time is the strong wind blowing from the hinterland, especially on hot nights, when the cool sea air interchanges with the superheated inland air, commonly known as the "easterlies". The Indian Ocean is about 25 km to the West of the Darling Range and Kalamunda.

These conditions take a while to get used to, but I had the additional novelty of becoming independent again. Robert came to see me regularly. On a spring evening he brought along his girlfriend, and we built a huge bon-fire, having cleared Frank's land of dry bushes and branches of the tall Jarrah trees on the property, which Frank retained as a windbreak, and to keep the natural surroundings. From time to time Frank went with his Builder-friend Ted, on jobs in the country, and he was away on that evening, when we lit that fire, with flames reaching 20 metres into the night air, lighting up the area around us.

Joining a Social Club, I was moving in a new circle of friends. I got to know a lady at one of the dance evenings. She had a teenage daughter, who came along with us on occasions, on drives and outings, but she did not wish to form a relationship, which I hoped she would. Some years later, when I met this lady again, she told me her lovely daughter suddenly died of a mysterious illness.

INDEPENDENCE?

I found independence did not mean much, if there was no possibility of a close relationship with a nice lady. I met another lady in that very useful Club. This was a new dimension of a circle of people I was involved in, I was meeting Australian ladies, and had no idea, where would it all lead to.

I had lived in Australia for 25 years, but I only knew and talked to the wives of the fellows from work, or the young women in our offices. This new lady I met, was definitely something special. She belonged to a prominent Perth family, and although married before, she had the body of a model. A little younger than I, and like most Australian girls, she exhibited a confidence, that can be appreciated only after a long time spent with them.

DREAMS COME TRUE

I could see, this new girl of mine had business confidence, as she was running a business, but deep down, I could sense her personal insecurity. This could have been due to the experience of an unsuccessful marriage. I could have only dreamt about meeting a woman with such perfect physical characteristics. She was slim, tall, with curves in perfect places, lovely long thighs, that would drive a man to the end of the world with desire. She was now my woman, and physically I was completely comfortable with her, as probably never before. She might have been satisfied in the same way, but we were in a different emotional world. I was to discover, there is a difference between people, born in a land, and those, who come from another world. Nationality means more than we may realise.

NADA

During the past year, before establishing the latest relationship, I made contact with my first devotion, my beautiful Nada from the High School Years in Maribor. Nada now lived in Ljubljana, the Slovenian capital, where she was a Professor of Political Sciences. I got in touch with her by writing to her address, which I remembered from our school years. Her father only still lived there, and so we began corresponding. It was extremely exciting for me, that I could discuss with Nada so many things, which I had locked away for so many years. We had both lived through years of experiences, yet the acquaintance lingered on in me, I could only hope, she had the same feelings about me.

The situation of a man approaching a woman for friendship or a relationship, love may be a one sided affair, because it is not the woman, who normally reaches out for a man, even if she has such desire. Therefore, if after a relationship, or even marriage things do not work out, the man should always remember, that it was his first action, which led to a relationship or marriage in the first place, and should not even think of being sore about it. On the other hand, just because of this, the woman assumes the right, to search for another partner for herself. The man sometimes wrongly assumes, especially in marriage, that he has the right to claim the woman and the family like his personal possessions, for better or for worse.

Such beliefs unfortunately often lead to the man doing terrible harm to all, including himself. A woman with remorse or resentment of her partner can provoke jealousy, by taking a lover, which then

causes danger to all concerned, in a vicious circle.

In my case, I had not been happy with my first marriage, and had left the family. I had chances, to start all over again and realised, it would be me reaching out for friendship, relationship and more. This is almost always the case for men.

FLYING TO EUROPE

My third Long Service Leave was overdue and I decided to leave for Europe. Robert came to the Airport, and for the first time, I enjoyed a jet, Qantas flight to Frankfurt, Germany. My sister had well established herself there, and with a German partner bought a block of units, including a restaurant. As I looked over the street intersection from my bedroom above, barrels of beer were delivered for the restaurant by a carriage, pulled by beautiful brown and white pack horses, something I had not witnessed for a long time. It was raining lightly, the sky quite dark, although it was about 11.00 in the morning. But it was nice to be back again and a change from the clear, sunny Australia. It is said, too much of a good thing, even sunshine may not always be right.

A lot of improvements had to be done to the 5 storey buildings just acquired, new window and door frames, double windows to close out the cold and the noise of traffic, and general renovations, which were otherwise impressive buildings. With so much activity, and with myself being engaged in the works, my holiday started well and full of surprises in Frankfurt. I kept in touch with my son in Perth, but there were difficulties arising. My good Doctor Stanton was very helpful regarding Robert, who also discussed any problems with my

brother Frank. With the parting of a family, some problems are solved, but new ones arise. In Frankfurt I was given the use of a Volkswagen Passat station sedan, for bringing materials for the builders mainly. I had become accustomed to the right hand side of the road traffic, but the congestion not being a great problem yet at that time, it posed no difficulties.

DRIVING TO MARIBOR

Sonja, her partner and myself then travelled for the summer vacations to Maribor, and on to the Adriatic coast. I drove my car behind Hans and Sonja, through Munich and the Bavarian flat-lands and valleys to Salzburg. Entering Austria and on mainly down slopes, it felt as if my car had wings, and I was "gliding" between the Austrian mountains on each side of me. It was a marvellous feeling, there was so little strain on the engine, I could not hear it, just the swishing of the wind along the body of the car, as we neared Southern Austria, and our home town in Slovenia.

The Austrians are masters in the shortening of highways. No mountain is too big for them, to drill a tunnel through it. There was a tunnel 8 km long, and I felt a bit apprehensive driving through, but then I had to trust the work of Engineers. We travelled into the night, which made the trip so much more magical. The distance of 900 km was behind us, and we entered our city of Maribor. It was great to see my relatives again.

After a few days spent with them, we took to the road, and drove towards the Croatian Riviera. The highway to Zagreb and beyond

had always been carrying thousands upon thousands of holiday makers in peak summer seasons.

ON THE DALMATIAN RIVERIERA

We were in the stream of traffic, comprising cars and many heavy trucks, travelling to destinations in Bulgaria and Turkey, and the many resorts on the Adriatic coast, from Zadar, Split, to Dubrovnik. Beyond the plain around the Croatian capital city of Zagreb, we began climbing the mountains of the Dinara. Like driving through Germany and Austria, I let Hans and Sonja travel ahead, into this area unknown to me. They were rushing on, when I wished sometimes to see the landscape more leisurely, but I suppose, we had a long way to go. An interesting sight was an Astronomical Observatory high up on the tip of a mountain. Once we reached a mountain pass, it was then all the way down, along a road in many places cut into the mountain side. Night came, and just as well, so I did not see the precipices, but just followed the white centre line on the road. I was glad, when we reached the plain of Zadar, and turned onto the Coastal Highway, which begins at the northern Port of Reka, and leads to Dubrovnik in the south.

It took hours of concentration, to follow the car ahead of me. We reached our destination of Vodice at midnight, where the accommodation was booked for us for a two week stay. I was not impressed with my quarters, which was right on the Promenade, where holiday-makers were passing along from celebrations into the early hours of the morning. But I was now on the Adriatic coast, and it was up to me to make the best of it.

The next day my other sister Lizika with her husband joined us at the resort, the lovely place of Vodice. A long promenade wound its way all along the shoreline. The weather was excellent, nice and hot, with the multitude of people cooling off in the clear waters. Several large hotels were all booked out.

I read the story in a local newspaper that one of the hotels took bookings for a group of Swedish tourists, but when they arrived, there was no place for them. That was a sorry situation of over booking, which unfortunately occurs sometimes in the height of summer season. I happened to be in the foyer of that hotel and heard the manager being grilled by his superiors, for the mistake that occurred. I would not have liked to be in his position at the time.

MY GROUP TAKES TO THE SEA

Hans brought his inflatable dinghy with a small motor along. He took my sisters and a young nephew on a long ride towards the Port of Sibenik. A fairly strong wind came up in the afternoon, and it took hours to battle against the wind, for them to return. Hans' passengers were not amused with the situation, sitting crammed in the craft for so long. I remained ashore, as a cold shower inflamed my already aching back. I could not even enjoy a game of minigolf for two days.

I could see how much people enjoyed their holidays on the Riviera. In the evenings each hotel and restaurant provided music by popular bands and singers, all adding up to unforgettable good times by the sea. The people on summer holidays had planned well before coming to the charming places along the coast, and the many islands

in the Adriatic. In contrast, winters can be most inhospitable in these places, when the freezing winds begin to blow from the mountains in the background.

THE SCENIC DRIVE - VODICE TO REKA AND LJUBLJANA

At the end of the holiday in Vodice, Sonja and Hans returned to Maribor via the National Park of Plitvice, while I took the scenic Dalmatian Coast Road to Reka, and on to Ljubljana. I have still not seen Plitvice, one of the natural wonders of the world, but had heard descriptions of the beauty of the cascades between the lakes, which form that unique place. The drive along the Adriatic coast was most memorable for me too, to see for the first time the pretty bays and inlets, with the many islands dotting the western horizon. Unfortunately I had to transport the outboard motor, and some leaking petrol from its tank spoilt the natural pleasant smell of flowering fig trees and other aromas from flowers in the stony gardens all along this lovely trail.

I was on the way to Ljubljana, where I would get in touch with my Nada, from my high school years. On way from Port of Reka, I travelled through an area, where I had a number of times previously gone by train. It was really enchanting, to drive through towns with Slovenian names, and in a car, it was possible to feel much closer to my own country. The most prominent town along the way was Postojna, famous for some of the nicest caves anywhere. I could not wait for the great moment coming, when I would meet Nada, after many years which had passed, from our schooldays together.

It was late afternoon when I arrived in Ljubljana, and drove to her

address. She was not there, but left a message with neighbours, to call her at the seaside cottage, on the Slovenian Riviera. The kind lady, who gave me the information also suggested that I could stay overnight at the nearby Faculty of Economics student accommodation. This proved to be quite satisfactory, so I stayed there one night. The next morning I took the road towards the Slovenian coast. It was pure pleasure driving through all those lovely towns, to the Port of Koper, and on to the resort of Portoroz. Nada's holiday place was some distance away in Pelegrin. I had never visited these beautiful places before. All I could do was to marvel at the natural beauty whilst driving on.

A MOMENTOUS OCCASION

Arriving in Pelegrin, the first lady I saw was Nada crossing a path to the beach. She soon recognised me in the car with the Frankfurt licence plate, and quickly came to me. This was the moment I had been living for. We embraced and kissed, which should have happened long ago, and lasted.

Nada was holidaying with her son, and she took me to her home. I have not lived many occasions of total happiness, but being with the lady of so many of my dreams. What more could a man wish for, than to meet the love, which had blossomed for 30 years ?!

In that summer's paradise, we swam together, shopped in the local centres and visited the Luna Park. Nada took me into the hills, where a lovely old church was used for organ concerts, given by many local and international organists, for the tourists, who each summer flock to these beautiful seaside resorts.

MORE THAN A LADY OF DREAMS

Nada cooked simple, but excellent meals. I was most impressed, because her cooking reminded me of my mother's dinners, therefore my admiration for this lady of mine had even increased, if that was possible. And these were not dreams, but we were actually together, under the same roof.

Nada was also from Maribor, so our customs, and food were the same. She knew how to enhance our memories of school days and life to perfection. That was how I knew her, and that was the reason for my admiration of her, from the moment I saw her walking into my class and life. And even now, after all the time had passed from "The Class of 48", she was still a most beautiful woman.

The days were passing all too quickly, the strolls between the lovely smell of pines of Savudria, and the walks along the beach in the sunsets were coming to an end. Nada had only two weeks available at the seaside. On the last evening we danced at the resort of Portoroz. I noticed she had become uneasy, she was responsible for two almost grown up children. But there was more, her position in Political Sciences at the University of Ljubljana involved her with the Government of the Day.

FACING THE FACTS

I drove back to Ljubljana, Nada had an engagement in the Port of

Koper. We came together in Ljubljana in the next few days. In Pelegrin, at the Riviera, she warned me, that in the capital, her life takes on a new dimension. She invited me to her home and prepared a great dinner, with her family. When one evening we left a hotel, she was driving, I could see that we were being followed. She appeared to be an expert at evading whoever was after us, and we ended up at another hotel, for coffee and cakes.

Nada took me back to the University hostel. As she drove towards the stairs of the building, a great green frog jumped across our path. I am still wondering about that big green frog, was it a good or a bad omen, did it want to be a witness to our last evening together, Nada and I? I discovered later, the lady of my dreams had a high function in the national security organisation.

I left my country so many years ago, striving, and succeeding to make a satisfactory life for myself. There is a big difference, when one achieves a high career and position in one's own homeland. This entails definite, unquestioned authority by fellow countrymen. My Nada on a holiday was one person, but on duty she represented a responsibility, even difficult for me to imagine. I returned to Maribor, where I received a card from Nada, expressing her happiness of meeting me again. I was surprised to get this on a postcard.

SLIGHT SUSPENCE

Originally I had plans, to even settle down in my first homeland, if things worked out. I would have no difficulty getting employment. In Frankfurt, Germany, I had a standing offer to work for the City Railways in my engineering position. But I realised, my place was back in Australia, for at least another decade. Spending some more weeks with my family in Maribor was always a pleasure.

MARIBOR - VIENNA - FRANKFURT

To return to Frankfurt, I decided to travel there via Vienna. It turned out to be a very nice drive, through the green fields and forests, vineyards and apple growing areas, with the fruit ripening in all the colours of the autumn season. It was my first visit to Vienna, a very nice city. Staying there one night, I found it absolutely necessary to ride the giant Riesenrad, famous Ferris Wheel, which I heard so much about in my elementary school days, from my Austrian teachers.

From Vienna I drove the original autobahns to Nuremberg, Munich and on to Frankfurt. My sister had returned there before me, the renovations of their buildings now nearing completion. I was leaving all that, to make a fresh start in the far away Western Australia.

On the evening before leaving Frankfurt, Hans and Sonja took me to the Bad Homburg Casino, a town about 50 km north of Frankfurt. Some excellent freeways connect the cities, and for the first time I travelled at the speed of 240 km/hour on a roadway. These speeds are a common thing on the German super-highways.

Bad Homburg is a nice little town, which has existed from the Roman times, for particular types of recreation. Besides the

luxurious Casino in nice surroundings, it is also a Spa Centre, with its mineral spring utilised from the earliest times. Entering this exotic Casino palace was another first for me, with great hopes to take some of the German wealth with me. I soon realised, it is necessary to begin with much higher stakes, than I could manage, to win, or probably lose, in this type of entertainment.

FLYING DOWN UNDER

I said farewell once more, and flew to Australia. I enjoyed the flight, firstly by Alitalia to Rome, to join the Qantas flight. The sight of the snow peaks of the Swiss and Italian Alps was just tremendous, I had only seen them before from the ground up. The Alitalia plane was alright on the inside, but appeared not to have been washed on the outside for a long time, or was that the sign of pollution occurring in Europe, I could not decide about. I felt somewhat more at ease in the shiny Qantas jet, when we left the runways of Rome. But most important of course, arriving safely from any flight.

The 12 hour straight flight to Singapore was long, but one reaches the destination faster, than with more stop-overs on the way. We experienced the tropical heat of Singapore, before travelling on. Back in Perth, a new summer was starting for me, when I just left autumn in Europe. I still enjoyed the clear skies and the warm climate of Australia, but was very close this time, to not returning to Perth to stay. Who knows how would life turn out, had I remained in Europe, but did I really have a choice in my actions, or was it my Destiny?

I was happy to see Robert and Frank. Most of all, but in a different

way, I was anxious to see my Australian lady, whom I was courting before leaving for Europe. My Long Service Leave was all over and used up, and I was back behind my desk in the Highways Department.

As I did not resign from my job, my service continued on normally. Robert was in his first professional position in Leinster near Kalgoorlie, working with a French Nickel Exploration company. But Frank began to suffer ill health, the medicines did give him some comfort.

A FATEFUL RELATIONSHIP

I started a loving relationship with my new lady, and life was alright for me. She gradually introduced me to her family, who were extremely nice, especially her parents. I was finally starting to know Australian people, which I never had an opportunity before. It was a prominent Perth business family, with budding young sons taking up Civic duties for the Perth community.

My lady bought a house, and we began life together. As she was married before, like myself, neither of us insisted on anything more than a close relationship. We began to know each other, and everything was working out well.

Her father was for some time in the past involved in the Horse Racing industry. Although I sometimes before went with Frank and his lady friend to Trotting evenings, the race meetings I attended with her family were most memorable, because I got involved more

closely with betting, in a small way, but with similar "success", as the stint at the Bad Homburg Casino. Although in this type of entertainment, the people making money are those actively engaged in the industry, and it is not betting on horse races, but running the businesses associated with it. There are so many easy ways to lose money, lottery and lotto included, but some lucky people do strike it rich.

MY BROTHER DIES

My brother's health suddenly deteriorated. He had a heart condition, and what appeared, also lung problems. He did not indicate to me there was something seriously wrong with him. Until very recently, he seemed a wealth of energy. Then one day I noticed, he did not dare to pick up a screw that fell, when we were working on his boat. Frank was once taken to the hospital, and for his heart ailment, he should have had a by-pass operation. But at the time, such operations were still only carried out in America and England, and not yet anywhere in Australia. Fluid on his lungs was another of his fatal problems.

It hit me like lightning in the kitchen of my lady friend, when I got a call from the police, that my brother was taken from his home to the Queen Elizabeth II hospital, and was found to be dead on arrival. This brother of mine, because of whom I most likely had come to this far away land, now lay dead in the hospital. I could not but cry out loudly, having been left alone, in a way.

My new family were wonderful and understanding, and with my son

Robert I came to the realisation, that such was life, and cannot be any other way. We said good-bye to Frank in the beautiful Subiaco church, near St. John of God hospital, and he was laid to rest with his wife Lotti, in the Karrakatta Cemetery. It was Subiaco, where they first settled, and it was near there, where they came together again.

I quickly informed our family in Slovenia of the tragedy. Frank was the eldest in the family, and the first to depart this world, after our parents. I made the necessary steps to secure his property in my name, according to his Will, but it was not simple.

It was thought, that Frank's lady friend had an interest in his property. Eventually this matter was cleared up, and so we, Robert and I could from time to time go to Maida Vale, and enjoy the fresh air, that still prevailed in those areas, under the Kalamunda Hills, much more so, than in the city.

RECOGNISING THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA

After nearly 3 decades in Australia, I began to know through my new lady and her family, the life people lead in this country. Soon after my arrival in Perth, when I was waiting to be placed as a nursing assistant in the Wooroloo Sanatorium, I had a temporary job at the Metropolitan Markets. There I experienced, what was expected from a worker. The Markets were the prime example of free enterprise, where part of my job was carrying bags of onions into a huge storage shed. The bags were heavy, and soon rubbed the skin off my shoulder, but the truck had to be unloaded for another delivery. For an honest day of work, one could expect an honest pay, no questions

asked. In this country, the work was well organised, and the Unions were there to see, that the conditions of work were respected by both the employee and the employer. Leading from this, the work was done to the expectations and satisfaction of both.

But having my shoulders bleeding meant, that I was not built for such physical activity, but it showed me, that there was a good life in this country, because everybody did their work to the best of their ability. This was a firm and secure society, which comes only conditioning of people to such order, over many generations.

The Australian sportsmen and women in all fields are proof, that people sent from England endured great difficulties and hardship, and had gained resilience, that few nations could come even near to the capacity of Australians, who come through and win the day.

I was assisting in my free time to paint my lady friend's house, her business buildings, and do various jobs to show, that I was trying to fit in. There was no-one standing behind me, but I always endeavoured to prove my ability to be in this family's circle. Although it seemed that more was expected, I did get some recognition, if not directly, but in a special sort of way.

COMPATIBILITY

My lady friend and I were getting along fine. One has to be appreciative of the other, and recognise the good and the failings in a person. Maurice Chevalier in the movie "Gigi" exemplified in the beautiful songs a lovely relationship between a man and a woman in good times and bad, so true in real life.

A woman can be so loving at one time, but can swiftly change her mood to a most aggressive creature. But whilst a man holds a grudge, a woman can be forgiving, whether there was a basis to something or not. Such became my relationship, and if any man is still trying to understand women, they should take to heart the theme of "Gigi", as I had done. Although as a couple we got on fine, because of her quick temper I was afraid I could not cope, if we had a family. I pleaded with this lady of mine, to take all the precautions, to avoid conception. I did not realise that it was up to me also to prevent us starting a family.

A BABY BOY

We were both getting on in ages, which should have made this commitment more sincere. But the unbelievable situation arose and we found that we were to be parents.

Considering our age, but especially that of the mother to be, we sought advice from my Doctor Roy Stanton. Upon exhaustive tests and assurances, we decided that it was safe to have the baby. We arranged for the best maternity doctor possible, and on a bright winter's evening, our darling Andrew was born in the St. John of God Hospital in Subiaco.

It was a beautiful experience to see this good size baby boy laying over his mother's tummy, just a few minutes after he was born, when his grandmother and I were called in, to the maternity room. We were grateful to the Doctor and to God, that our baby was delivered healthy and sound. What pleasure it was having him, and he was

loved by all the family.

Winters in Perth can be quite chilly, so we made sure he was warm, by buying all the latest in warmth for him to lay in comfort in his cot. We kept Andrew with us in our bedroom, and when he was a few months old, we tried to get him used to his own bedroom. I have no idea why, but he did not feel safe on his own, and was happiest, when with us in our bedroom.

This insecurity of Andrew started the first strained relations in our new family. There was no reason for this to become a problem, but this was the sign of a mother's insistence to be too firm, without willingness for understanding of a situation.

Andrew could not get used to his room, down the other side of a long passage from ours, and with our relations becoming strained more often, Andrew could not understand, why his mother got so upset. When she sometimes forbade both of us from entering her bedroom, locking us out, Andrew would plead with her, putting his head to the base of the bedroom door, crying to his mother, but she knew no mercy. Only the next day she calmed down, but unfortunately, there were signs of increasing problems.

I have experienced a situation, where the child was born perfectly normal, healthy in body and mind, but there was in me fear, that actions of a parent and the environment around the child could very adversely affect it in it's final behaviour, and the ability to develop normally. I am now sure that normal people grow up and are a mirror image, of how they were treated as children. I believe, children are not born genetically bad or undesirable. This is only true, if they are born mentally and physically healthy.

Andrew was a model baby, except of the fear of being alone, until he

was one year old. Then the effects of his mother's inability to show true, deep love and understanding for her child, began to show signs of confusion in his mind. This was exactly the problem of his mother, who herself must have experienced as a lack of total care or security, that is absolutely essential, for total stability in the development of a normal human being. Total devotion, love and understanding are the ideal requisites of parents towards their children, which are in real life impossible all the time. But if parents could at least be aware of the necessities in up-bringing of their children, we would all be contributing to better societies in the world, than has been the case. These have been words of experience and nothing more.

SAD EXPERIENCES

I have had the experience of seeing, that a mother can be most cruel towards her child at times, because of the immovable standards she set for herself and the child.

It happened with my first wife, holding a match to our son's cheek, so he would eat his dinner more quickly. I have witnessed hot fried egg pushed into my second son's mouth, to force him to eat more quickly. I often wondered, why such incidents had to happen to me, but then, it may be possible that mothers generally display such frustration with their children at times.

In Australia, as in some other countries as well, physical punishment has long been an acceptable part of children's upbringing. Mothers sometimes exclaim: "My father would take his belt!" Such reaction shows, that they cannot get away from their notions and old ideas, instead of realising, they are rearing their own children now, and in

totally different circumstances. There is not much wrong, if various actions are exercised in children's up-bringing, if that is done to a reasonable measure. But life goes on, the world keeps on turning, and people all over have to fit in somewhere, including myself.

EUROPE IN WINTER

I had sold Frank's property in Maida Vale and bought a house in the city, which I used a part for myself, and a part rented out. We were lucky to have a wonderful, understanding grandmother, whom Andrew adored. It was also this lady, from whom Andrew and I sought help, when the now regular problems arose in our household. It was good too, that when the storms subsided, we so far had been able to start anew. Once reconciliation becomes impossible, then there is danger of collapse of the continued existence of a family.

Andrew was 4 years old when his mother and I decided to visit Europe in winter, but without Andrew. He was left with his kind, older sister to be looked after, while we were away. I would have loved for him to come along, to meet my family in Frankfurt and in Maribor.

We arrived in Germany in the cold winter, staying with Sonja and Hans a few days, then travelled to Maribor by car. A good cover of snow greeted us there, offering an idyllic start to the Christmas celebrations. It was nice that my family could meet my lady friend, and for the first time get to know an original Australian in person.

We drove to Krsko, near Zagreb, to meet our friends, who were also holidaying in Slovenia. It was a pity that the roads were all iced up,

and we could not risk driving to the Slovenian capital Ljubljana, which I would have liked to show to my lady friend. But we went to see the Ptuj Castle, not far from Maribor and discovered, that at one time a Scottish nobleman had an interest in this historic place, dating back to the Roman times.

The trip up the Pohorje Mountain by cable cars on a freezing Sunday evening, by moonlight was exhilarating. There were skiers on the slopes everywhere, the snow was dry and the cold biting. An experience that I would be happy to relive, which was something really unusual for my Australian lady companion.

When planning our trip to Slovenia, we hoped to also visit the historic city of Dubrovnik on the southern Adriatic coast. Due to severe winter conditions, it would not be easy to travel there.

ON EURAIL TOUR

We spent actually only a few days in Slovenia, which passed all too soon. Returning to Frankfurt with Sonja and Hans, we had a Eurail tour booked to visit Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Berlin.

We had met so many Dutch people in Australia over the years, it was most interesting to see this "Venice of the North", Amsterdam. On a bus tour we visited the North Sea coast and saw many windmills, and went cheese tasting at the Massam cheese production complex. The Amsterdam city Superstores were really worth seeing, where we ate some of the best prepared and tasty food, which the Dutch really know how to present for full enjoyment. The comfortable train took us across Northern Germany to Bremen, Hamburg and to the port

between Germany and Denmark, where our train was railed onto a huge ferry. In about an hour, we steamed into Copenhagen. A bleak evening descended upon the city, we booked into a central city hotel, but there was still time for a stroll through the Copenhagen streets. It was a very cold evening, so getting back to the comfortably heated hotel room was most enjoyable.

The next day we walked everywhere to see the sights of this famous city, which did not even seem too big, to take it all in on foot. The Royal Palace was open to visitors, and we could freely walk about the halls. The royal stables were open too and we admired the fine horses, which still serve in the daily routines of duty at the palace. I hoped to take a picture of the famous Mermaid in the Pond, but on developing the film discovered, the elusive maiden did not appear anywhere.

I do not think I ever dreamt of seeing the City of Berlin, but there we were on a day, when light snow just fell on approaching the slopes around this city of the world. The Iron Curtain was still well in place when our train rolled into the Central Station. Although alive with activity and movement, I at least felt a heavy burden over the place, which was present in me from the time of World war II, and with the advent of the Cold War. We saw West Berlin, it's nice shops and the bombed out Cathedral, still standing as a reminder of the dark war years.

On a tour of East Berlin, passing Check Point Charlie, we were guided through the magnificent museums, in which whole sections of ancient Egyptian palaces are on display in the great halls. We saw huge office buildings in the vicinity, but apart from the short drive through the streets, that was all we were shown of the city. The huge

Russian War Memorial of the Soldier with the Child was impressive for its theme and the size.

LONDON AND ENGLAND

Returning from the Eurail Tour, we spent some more days in Frankfurt, said goodbye to our people, and travelled to Belgium and Brussels. Not intending to stay, we hoped to catch the ferry to England quickly, but just missed the last one to Dover. We had to endure a freezing waiting room all night, then had to walk more than a kilometre to the ferry, carrying our own luggage. Bad luck, new escalators were being installed at the time. If the passengers were at least allowed on board the ferry to wait in heated comfort would mean something, but like this, our introduction to Brussels was plain miserable. That was the worst experience of our trip, which could not be wished upon any traveller. Had we known, we would take the Dutch connection to England, I am sure the Dutch would not put us in so much discomfort. This same Belgian port some years later featured in a great ferry disaster, when a ferry overturned, because the cargo doors did not lock securely.

Arriving in London, we took accommodation close to the well known theatres, and had a look at the large Department Stores. After a few days of sightseeing, we started the Britrail Tour, travelling up the East coast of England to Edinburgh in Scotland, spending a few days in that city. A very clean place, but very cold, especially known for its Military Tattoo, in the imposing castle grounds, on the rock above the city.

For me, this was all quite new, British and Scottish history unfolding in front of me, which I never had the opportunity to study. I did

know that some of the world's best scholars hailed from Edinburgh. I had to thank Dr. Fleming for his discovery of Penicillin, which cured a wound on my knee, that would not heal, until my school lady Doctor in Maribor placed some crystalline Penicillin on it. Many other discoveries were made by Scottish scientists, which became things taken for granted all over the world today. But as the Scots can be extremely good, they can be arrogant, when out of their familiar land. This I found personally, dealing with them in Australia. In my opinion, each nation behaves according to its past history.

The Scottish nation probably never could express itself freely, because of English greater power influenced the development of the territories of Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

The contribution of all British peoples could never be over-estimated, because they had a tremendous impact on the rest of the world over centuries. If it were not for the British strong will and determination in world affairs, and a fair handling of arising situations, Australia, New Zealand in my sphere, and America, Canada, South Africa and many other countries would never develop into advanced communities, which they are today, thanks to the foresight of the British nation. And we, who adopted these lands, should be most grateful for that.

These thoughts came to me, as if the walls of the Edinburgh city, and the castle on the rock could speak. We travelled to Glasgow, a cosmopolitan city, stayed one night, then south along the West coast to Vandermeer, and the Lakes Districts. On the way were numerous large pine plantations, indicating the land suitable for such vegetation, but not originally there.

The Lakes area is extraordinarily pleasant. It was winter, light rain falling most of the time, which was enchanting. In spring time and in summer, this area must be one of the nicest places on the globe. We booked into a little pub with a cosy, warm upstairs room and a view over the town towards the deep green valley. We had the best tasting roast pork dinner in a long time.

Taking the tourist bus up the valley, we visited the cottage of the famous poet Wordsworth, whom I had read before. From Vandermeer we travelled across the British Midlands and Bradford to Leeds, then south to the walled, historic city of York. We stayed just outside the city centre, but would have felt more of the warmth of this city, which it displays, had we taken a room in the romantic centre in the narrow cobbled streets. To see the historic cathedral is a must for every visitor to York, and the ancient walls and that mound by the wall.

SHAEKSPEAR'S STRATFORD ON AVON

Bypassing Liverpool and Blackpool, we travelled through the famous steel city of Sheffield, renown the world over, on to Birmingham. We boarded the special train to travel South to probably the most visited town of any person that ever lived in England and maybe in the world, the birth place of poet Shakespeare. That was the feeling I got anyway, when we walked through the garden settings and lovely souvenir shops of Stratford.

This is a truly lovely town, pleasant in every way, and so famous for the greatest poet the world had known. I mused in a bit of shame, I

had not yet visited the birth place of my own, Slovenian great poet Preseren, whose sonnets were a must to know in High School, yet I was visiting a foreign poet's birth place first. I shall not miss the next opportunity.

We walked the streets of Stratford, visited the poet's cottage of birth, and experienced the beauty and history of Shakespeare's home town.

PENZANCE AND LANDS END

There was so much to see in England. I missed our darling Andrew, and Robert, but being summertime in Australia, I hoped they were both enjoying it. I hoped Andrew fitted in well with the young family he was with. The westward train was taking us to Bristol, Penzance and on. On the way we took a tour to the interesting holiday place of Saint Ives on the northern coast of the Lands End peninsula. Penzance is another jewel of England, the effect of the Southern Atlantic was clearly felt there, with a mild climate, so different from the rest of the country. No wonder the pirates liked to hang about there not so long ago.

STONE HENGE

While in this general area, we stopped off in the City of Bath. From Bath the railway winds it's way through some of the most perfect farmland anywhere, as if someone personally shaped the topography of the fields in the valley. From Salisbury tourist buses took us to the phenomenon of Stone Henge. A puzzling monument from the past,

nothing definite is known about it's origin, how those stones got together into a circle, and for what purpose. Speculative propositions suggest they were used for solar observations on a special day of the year, the sun's rays shine through slits in the stones, pointing to the theories for observations. A most interesting place, which gives rise to questions into the activities of past human generations in the area.

The City of Bath dates back to the Roman times also, when the natural hot, bubbly spring in the centre of the city was utilised, and the buildings from the distant past have still survived the ravages of time. The hot spring keeps on filtering to the surface, but amazingly either the state, or the private enterprise had not taken advantage of this marvellous natural resource. This water probably has some healing properties, but at least it's high temperature and chemical substances could be used ?

THE LONDON MAGIC

Back in London, a nice private hotel in Russel Square became our temporary address. In the evenings we could stroll to the live shows of London and we saw "42-nd Street", Le Miserables and other shows so brilliantly performed, which only London can achieve. A large proportion of the patrons were Americans, who appear to just board the Concorde in New York, to spend a weekend seeing the shows in West End. That is the life for the privileged, but also ordinary people like us can do it, but at greater intervals in time.

This trip to London was a nostalgic journey for my lady companion, although not the first one. She worked in London for 2 years some years earlier, and was for me an excellent guide. She obviously had a

wonderful time then, full of rich memories, which she from time to time shared around special dinner occasions in Perth. Living with other Australian girlfriends near the famous Lords Cricket Ground, some were at times taken along to Paris with the Gentlemen of the Sport, to see the shows and the night life of that European metropolis. Who could blame one for the great temptation, to meet old acquaintances, when it happened also to myself.

RETURN TO PERTH

Arriving back to Perth, Andrew was brought along to meet us at the airport. It was lovely to have our darling boy near us again. In the car on the way home I noticed, Andrew started to tell us something, then he just stopped in mid sentence and could not continue. It was nice and kind of his older sister to look after Andrew while we were away, but her husband practiced a severe treatment of children, where "*children should be seen, but not heard*". So unfortunately it appeared, that Andrew could not express himself at all in their house. But I must add, that now Andrew and his brother-in-law can discuss everything better, than I could, at this tender age of nearly fourteen.

I am sure that our boy had good times with the young family, and was looked after well. Andrew could recite unendingly the stories of "*He Man*", the hero of the children's stories at the time. Those stories seemed to be imprinted on his young brain, and he could repeat them at will.

BEGINNING EDUCATION AT HIGHGATE PRIMARY

Andrew started his pre-school days at the local school, and was happy with the children's activities. When he was only two, we placed him in a Day Care centre, which he still remembers as his unhappy experience. Apparently one day, he could not make it to the toilet, and he wet his pants. The lady in charge reprimanded him so severely, and might have even given him a smack, so he cried, when we were taking him there. I went to work, and so did his mother. Then his mother rearranged her duties, so that Andrew did not have to be taken to that centre any more. But the pressure of her business started to affect us all, and unfortunately Andrew and myself bore the brunt of her frustration.

BE CRUEL TO BE KIND?

It turned out, that both mothers of my children practiced the notion, that parents should "*be cruel to be kind*" to their children, but with which I could never agree.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

It is utter nonsense, that a child in adult company has no right to be heard. Everybody should know their place, and should wait their turn, it is only a matter of politeness. All extreme beliefs should be avoided, particularly when it concerns a child's development, because the effect can trigger a variety of problems of behaviour, insecurity and adjustment within the family and community.

In the case of Andrew and myself, we were locked into a frame of total love and devotion by his mother one day, or a total banishment, rejection and threats the next day. That is the unfortunate characteristic of most women, that is the way they are built. That was why I mentioned the beautiful film "*Gigi*", which so clearly portrays the moods of our girls.

I believe every family hopes for a lot of devotion between one and the other family member, this was not our unique predicament. So many families are broken up because, I believe, the women were created to behave in this uncertain world unpredictably, moving between stability and infirmity, more so than men. Life goes on regardless, as had been happening for a billion years, without end, the way science and religion teach us, but each of us fits in, according to their determined path.

Ask a communist, if he believed in God, he will say, he only believed in himself. Who could believe that the Soviet Union would disintegrate, and the Christian America would triumph?

ANDREW COMING ALONG TO SYDNEY

We took Andrew along to Sydney on our holiday, for the first time, travelling there by train, and returning by plane. We stayed in a very central private hotel in the city. We all enjoyed the trip together, seeing the sights by using the tourist "step on, step off" buses. The highlight for Andrew was certainly the Toronga Park Zoo. The Sydney Tower probably came a close second.

REAL EDUCATION STARTS

Andrew entered the first year of primary school in Highgate, where many of his mother's family had attended the school before him. Some prominent Perth people have received their early education at this well known establishment. It is a tender moment for a child to go to school on the first day.

Andrew was a popular boy, and did well at all levels. He privately studied the violin, and he had a good singing voice, featuring prominently in school term, and at end of year performances. Andrew was happiest, when his dear Nana was in the audience for his performance, whom Andrew also entrusted to take him to that school on his first day.

Andrew was one of the few students there, having blond hair, with so many children of the predominantly Asian community in the area, attending this school. He wondered why he had blond hair, and often expressed the wish to his teachers, and to us, his family, that he too would like to have black hair.

BRISBANE WORLD FAIR

In our annual holidays we travelled to the Eastern States again, this time to Brisbane for the World Expo. We stopped in Melbourne on the way, just a stopover in Sydney, and were very impressed with Queensland's Gold Coast, with Brisbane City itself, and particularly with the World Exhibition. When I sighted the colour of the Brisbane River in photos or on film before being in Brisbane, I thought that the muddy appearance was due to tropical rainstorms. Now I saw and it was pointed out to me, that it is the muddy river bed, which colours the water in that way. We were also surprised how much the river is utilised for passenger and cargo transport, unlike our Swan River of Perth, which is mainly used for recreation and yachting.

Most of all we were surprised, how progressive was this State of Queensland, which the media and the peculiar personality of the former Premier of the time, Mr. Petersen did not portray in the light, that it actually was. I concluded that like Sydney, but in particular Brisbane with it's Sunshine Coast is a mirror image of the great land and the cities, which lay directly across the Pacific Ocean - California, with the cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles. This knowledge made me decide that the next time I travelled to Europe, I would make the trip around the world, through U.S.A., then on to Europe in that direction.

END OF MY WORKING LIFE WAS NIGH

We returned to Perth to face the life of reality, which is well to forget, when given half the chance. I was back at my work station, where I had now been for the past 30 years, and it appeared that I could not expect to advance any further on the promotional scale and

salary. This bothered me quite a bit, and I was fast exhausting all the industrial avenues to gain any improvement. I went as far as approaching and talking to the Head of the Department, as I respected the man for his professional status and achievement on reaching his high office. But this old fellow made me soon aware, that he was not worth the admiration I held for him. I began to see how he operated, and he was not valued in the profession as highly as I thought.

The Commissioner was already in that position, when the Narrows Interchange was decided upon, instead of tunnelling, which would leave Perth with the popular Matilda Bay intact. The Mitchell Freeway had to be widened as soon as it was completed, to carry the traffic to the north coastal districts, exposing his narrow vision.

I brought it to the Department's notice, that there was not one Aboriginal engineering trainee or cadet recruited in all the time, that I was with the Department. All this confirmed, that our Chief was on a narrow "track" not only in his profession, but also on the human side of life. He appeared not to be able to get involved in anything more deeply than what his duty statement showed on a piece of paper. Unfortunately it could be that the world was becoming too fast for the old-timers.

The human side of endeavours should never be neglected. It is most important that to avoid aggression between people, understanding of situations should be fostered. I have experienced the Nazis prompting aggression on us young boys, and the communists improving on it, both to their demise.

I was most disappointed, when in the interview, the Commissioner told me that he was loath for himself to look into my case. I was

aware that detailed personal information was kept about everybody in Government employment, especially for migrants.

It so happened, that years ago, I had to submit my final assignment for the Engineering Diploma urgently in the Department of Engineering. A British engineer, my immediate superior at the time abused me, when he found me doing some final calculations for the assignment in the work place. He did this in the presence of an officer, who, for his own advancement was known to have informed on people to the management previously, for similar misdemeanours. It appeared, this prompted the Department in my case to put a hold on my advancement. But I should not complain. I made a satisfactory living, the conditions in Government Employment in those years were excellent, and the salary and the holiday entitlements second to none. When retirement eligibility was decided at 55 years, I had 34 years of service with the Department, I retired.

The opportunity for myself, to take a trip around the world had arrived. Andrew and his mother allowed me to take that holiday. We came to an agreement, that they would travel to Europe, when I returned. By that time Robert has moved from his position as an Industrial Research Chemist into Teaching profession, for which he originally trained anyway.

AROUND THE WORLD

I never enjoyed going on trips, leaving my people behind, but it is not always possible, to take them along, with a business to run , working in a profession, or a child having to attend school. So I was off, through Sydney, from where a Boeing 747B took me to Honolulu in

Hawaii. Somehow Hawaii did not impress me especially, but then, I only saw it through the large glass panelling of the Terminal Building. The land appeared to be flat, though I remembered, there were volcanoes on the Island, therefore it must have high slopes also. The journey was tiring, the flight to San Francisco was long, but it felt good to finally step on hard ground of America. San Francisco, what a City !

I had never stayed in luxurious hotels before. This time I had no choice but to pay about \$200 for one night, which was done, when buying the Round the World ticket.

The street cars were soon visible and rambled past my hotel, the novelty for all visitors to this city, moving along the steep street, up and over the hill, starting at the Bay, and finishing the journey at the famous San Francisco Fisherman's Markets. I took that ride and walked through the Markets. The fish and the crabs and generally all the other sea creatures were different to those, which we know from the Fremantle Fish and Chips shops. The people in San Francisco seemed to enjoy lunch in this famous place just as much. But I had not seen fish and chips wrapped in paper anywhere there, which is an enjoyable and interesting peculiarity in Australia, and originating from mother England.

I was in San Francisco only two days, on the second day joining a bus tour, which took in all the major points of interest. Some views over the city were exhilarating, and to cap it all was the ride over Golden Gate Bridge. Just awesome! On the bus I met some nice nurses, who came to a symposium, held in the city for their profession, way down from Los Angeles and San Antonio. The Spanish influence, especially on the south of the city is very prominent. At the end of the day I bought an advanced electronic Dictionary and Encyclopedia for Andrew's birthday, and sent it to him. I was happy to find, that he

received it exactly on his birthday, when he was sick in bed, with his Nana looking after him. That made it a special day for all of us.

The flight to Las Vegas over the Nevada Desert and the Rocky Mountains was extraordinary. Such bare landscape, and so extensive I had never seen. We landed in this world famous gambling city, the fastest growing in the U.S.A. The only reason for this must be the attraction to big money, and to put up a building there, would need the highest finances. Again I stayed in luxury, then tried to recover the outlay, without success.

The Australian Golden Nugget, found somewhere in Victoria many years ago is displayed in the Golden Nugget Casino, but I doubt if the real nugget is actually in that glass case.

Flights from Las Vegas take tourists to the Grand Canyon, an exciting trip, which I booked for ahead. On the way we flew over the great Hoover Dam on the Colorado River, where the impounded water glistened a thousand metres below. We flew high above the Canyon at first, then lower and lower until we found ourselves between the Canyon walls and cliffs, then landed safely near the Canyon.

These were a special type of aircraft, with the passenger cabin below the wings, for better observation of the scenery.

FROM IMMAGINATION TO REALITY

There was ample time to explore the top area of the Canyon cliffs and the rock formations of awesome precipices, stretching hundreds of metres down, towards the green waters of the mighty Colorado

River deep down, so that from the top of the cliffs, the river appeared just like a small stream. In reality, the Colorado River is a torrent, which in the millions of years past had created, what is now one of the Wonders of the World, The Grand Canyon.

The only living creature, which is in command of the vast space made by the river, is the American Eagle, gliding majestically from one end of this space, to another. Solid rock filled this great void, before the canyon was dug by the violent force of the raging torrent of the "Coloured" River.

I wrote cards, depicting this magnificent landscape to my people in Australia and in Europe, trying to share with them my visit to this famous place. But one must experience personally the effect, which this, one of the worlds seven wonders had on me.

LAS VEGAS

Returning to Las Vegas, I spent the evening admiring the wonders of the gambling palaces, which they are in the true sense of the word. Caesar's Palace probably started the trend of buildings, now there are others, which in no small way try to exceed the extravagance, which can only be achieved with the wealth, created by people, some with success, but most of us with just dabbling in the hope.

Leaving this place behind, I flew to Denver, which lays on the great plain, beginning where we crossed the mountainous regions between East and the West of North America. How many areas of the land have I crossed, as described in the Karl May books, a famous German story teller, the books which I read in my high school end of year

holidays. That was the history of America, which I knew best, and was locked away in my imagination.

WASHINGTON D.C.

The Capital of the United States was my next stop. Having heard stories about the unfortunate experiences and dangers walking alone in the streets of this city at night, I took a Taxi to my hotel, and did not go out, as it was late in the evening when I arrived there. My bedroom window opened out onto a tiny, but lovely green park. Light rain was falling on the deep green leaves of the trees, whose branches were reaching towards my window and higher.

There was a lot to see, the Capitol Hill - Parliament House, the White House and much more. The next morning, when the rain stopped falling, I ventured into the streets and asked a pretty black American lady for direction to the nearest bus stop.

The Capitol is immense, and I got lost in time and space of the corridors of this magnificent building. I was so impressed with the Houses of Parliament, whose history dates back to the American Civil War. I could not pull myself away looking at the names of the Senators, who had served the great nation of the United States. I could recognise only a few from our modern times.

Spending too much time in the halls of the Capitol, I hurriedly took a taxi, driving past the Obelisk monument between the Capitol and the

White House. I arrived, when on Saturdays the White House was just being closed to visitors at midday. I was disappointed about not being able to go inside, but I had a good walkabout in the gardens around the Presidential Palace. The view from the Palace, across the open grassed area, extending right back to the Capitol Hill is tremendous.

A Washington City Tour took us to the Arlington Cemetery. Without doubt, the Eternal Flame over President Jack Kennedy's and his brother Robert Kennedy's grave is the most desired sight of all visitors to be seen. There are many memorials of famous American Army, Navy and Air Force Commanders of the U.S forces of past and more recent times in this cemetery, a most revered place for all Americans. The visit to Washington D.C. was one to remain clearly in my mind for a very long time.

NEW YORK

Since entering the United States of America in San Francisco, I travelled with the "American" and the "United" airlines. Apparently Qantas jets cannot carry passengers within the U.S.A. to protect the local airline companies. So in a "United" Boeing 747 we flew up along the East coast from Washington to New York.

I could never imagine the exact position of that city on the Atlantic coast. I often heard of Hudson Bay, but because of the great size of New York, my mind did seem to boggle at the thought, in picturing the position. Flying still at a great height over the coastline, I noticed a maze of inlets and bays in the Ocean below. It took about an hour, until a resemblance of a city became evident, but the large cargo

vessels indicated that they were heading towards a harbour. I wondered, how the airline pilots find the point, where they have to start turning, to land at an airport where so many other planes want to do the same thing, and to land safely. It was a nice, clear morning, when we approached the La Guardia Airport, but what about landing on a dark, cloudy night ?

THE EXCITEMENT - NO ILLUSION

Touching down at La Guardia, I was overwhelmed by excitement- I was in New York ! I did come a long way I thought to myself, starting from a small Central European Maribor, to this Metropolis of the World. A little early surprise, I sat with a young lady on the bus from the airport - a New Yorker, who just flew in from a holiday in Virginia. That was a warning from her, to be wary of strangers in the city. This young lady helped me to find my bearings, and finding the direction to my hotel, I just kept on walking.

My hotel was also pre-booked for me in Perth, at about the \$200 per night. If I remember well, it was located on the corner of the Third Avenue and 46-th Street. One sure thing in New York is that one must know where one is going, even in daylight. Walking the streets at night and looking for accommodation is not advisable.

The Airport shuttle brought us to the New York Central Railway Station, the well known building, which is really an architectural marvel. Parting with the helpful young lady, I walked with my suitcase on a trolley to my hotel, not far from the New York Central. The hotel was also a fine building, where I settled for the night.

All the hustle and bustle of the past few days and travelling caused me a terrible headache, one of those severe ones. I only went out to

have a bite for dinner, and did not stay out long on that first night. The headache just would not go away and just resting in the hotel room had no effect. By midnight I had to get some tablets for myself. From My hotel window I could see a 24 hour chemist shop across the street - a *Drug Store* as they call it in America. I went down into the street, where placed against the hotel walls were many black garbage bags. As I started crossing the street towards the Drug Store, one of those bags became a man, following me. I quickly moved into the store, so losing the unwelcome follower outside. I bought some Aspirin, and to my surprise, in this Chemist place one could also have a snack of pizza, sandwiches, cakes and coffee for refreshment. The tablets helped me to finally rid of the headache and I fell asleep. This "*Supercity*" really overcame me with all it's might.

SEEING THE SIGHTS

The next day I joined a bus tour of the City, the highlight being the visit to the Statue of Liberty. A ferry took us there, and soon I stood under this huge figure dominating the island, where it stood. I went only halfway up the monument, that gave me a sufficient satisfaction to being there. Walking all around on that level, gave me the feeling and appreciation of this great monument. As a man-made structure, it portrayed an artistic value, similar to the Pyramids of Egypt. On the second day I was more daring and walked along the 5th Avenue, 42nd Street, saw the Empire State Building, the Rockefeller building and Square and the World Trade Centre.

LEAVING FOR LONDON

I left New York in a British Airways Jet, most impressed with my visit to New York, which I too could have called my own, had I been prepared in my early years to be more patient, to migrate to Canada, then from there move to the U.S.A.

CHECKING FOR POSSIBLE RELATIVES

Passing through the American cities, I checked the telephone registers for people with the same surnames as my own. In all of Australia, my brother's and mine were the only two surnames, until I had my two sons. I found the same and some almost identical surnames to mine in San Francisco, Las Vegas and in Washington, but I missed checking the registers in New York.

One of my relatives on the father's side went to America in the early years of migration there in the 19th Century. During the Perth World Swimming Championships in 1990, a young swimmer, Eric, from Pittsburg, U.S.A. won the Silver medal for the 1500 metres freestyle swim. I went to meet him at the Perth Stadium and found that he was the image of my father when he was young, and had identical surname as myself. Researching the family tree is a most interesting pastime.

I felt sorry I have not given myself more time, travelling through the U.S.A., I would have liked very much to visit Cleveland in Ohio, where at one stage there were 120,000 people from all parts of Slovenia. Apparently after a century, they still have their own Clubs, but are of course full-blooded Americans by now. I would have loved to meet as many as possible.

The young swimmer from Pittsburg, whom I met in Perth was a student of Sports Medicine at the Michigan University. Next time in U.S.A. I will take time to find out more about our people there. My two sons are second generation Australians, and I call Australia my country too.

COVERING THE DISTANCES

The distances of the continents of the world apart can be really appreciated, when the trip from New York to London took only about 6 hours, and flying with the Concorde only takes about 3 hours. But it takes 16 hours flying time to reach Perth from Europe. The trip from Sydney to San Francisco was some 14 hours of flying. The size of Australia can be appreciated, when it takes over 4 hours flying from Sydney to Perth.

The flight from New York to London was pleasant, and we travelled over the North Pole. I only stayed in London for one night. On the day of departure from London I wanted to buy some of the good English Children's story books and tapes, so I walked from Victoria Station early in the morning, to be at the Harrods Store, when it opened. I had to rush though to get to the Heathrow Airport for the Frankfurt flight at 1.00 pm.

Trains to the Heathrow Airport were so packed that I had to stand all the way, holding on to my luggage. Then I stepped off at the International, instead of the European Terminal. I made it just in time to get on the Frankfurt flight, but only just. I realised, that for a comfortable stay in one world city should be a minimum of 3 days. That leaves sufficient time for sightseeing and browsing through and

buying any quality articles or presents at the famous shops of London, Paris or New York.

BACK ON EUROPEAN SOIL

In one hour from London, we were landing in Frankfurt, where my sister Sonja and her partner Hans were waiting for me. After a few days of preparation, including getting myself a car on the Sunday Open Car Market, we left Frankfurt to travel to Maribor.

ON AN ISLAND IN THE ADRIATIC

Hans was again leading the way, and I again enjoyed the drive South, but it was not such a novelty for me anymore, as I had driven through the nice German and Austrian landscape before. Traffic on the roads and freeways everywhere had increased so much, it became necessary to concentrate much more than previously, so the drive became very tiring.

Once in Maribor, my two sisters and I were on the way to the Spa Radenci, near Hungary. An impatient, speeding local, racing through the town of Murska Sobota crashed into my car, doing some damage to his car and mine. My holiday in Slovenia this time started badly.

Leaving my car with my brother Stan to have it repaired, I joined

Sonja and Hans and travelled with them to Split on the southern Adriatic coast. From Split a "Traject" ferry took us with the car to the Island of Solta, one of a thousand islands lining the Croatian Adriatic coastline. We spent two weeks on Solta, swimming in the clear waters, and in the evenings celebrated in the bars with music and dance. There was a lot of excitement between the German tourists, when their team once again won the World Soccer Cup finals.

One day I sailed to the mainland to have a look at the City of Split, which pleasantly surprised me for it's position and climate. I walked through the city, saw the imposing Roman Palace of Emperor Hadrian times, the lovely bay and the Saturday Market trading. Here the fresh farm produce shines on the stands, for the thousands of tourists and locals to stock up for the coming week of good living.

Split is one of the larger ports on the coast, which could be greatly enhanced with more care for this fine city, and particularly putting some paint to the walls of buildings and particularly to the Roman Palace and the Port of Split.

FIRST SIGNS OF POLITICAL DIVISION

While we were on the Island of Solta, the first signs of political problems in the area were emerging. When a train, carrying a popular Croatian soccer team was passing through the mainly Serb populated town of Knin, inland from Split, it was stoned by some radicals of the town. From that incident, the situation between the Serbs and Croats began to deteriorate.

The Solta holiday was a memorable one, which we spent together with my sister son's family, who have their origins on this island. Leaving the island with some sadness, that the days had passed all too soon, we travelled together to the mainland and over the Dinara Mountain Range to the Lakes of Plitvice. The children in our group only had a short swim, and we travelled on, through Zagreb and home to Maribor.

In the following days I took my brothers and their wives to the closest mountains, places which I myself had not visited before. We drove also right around the Pohorje Mountain, visited the Towns of Dravograd, Slovenjgradec, Velenje, Celje and returning to Maribor. This was a tour I wanted to make as long as I remember, to see the pretty towns, valleys and green fields, which were all out of reach before the advent of the car.

It was a nice late summer, cherries, apples, plums and grapes were plentiful for a good harvest. The pleasure of picking the ripening fruit directly from the trees is an insatiable experience.

REMINICING

I had returned to Slovenia a number of times to see my family. It would have been very sad, had this been made impossible for me to do for some reason. The distances are great, which makes one think before making the decision to make such a journey. I am glad, that it was possible for me to see, how my family was getting along there. Most of all, each time at home, I placed flowers on the grave of our parents. That meant a lot to me. Astonishingly, two fir trees, completely from their own beginning, joined together at ground level,

are growing by the headstone of the grave, making it unique in the whole cemetery. But how tall will they be allowed to grow ?

My sister and her partner had returned to Frankfurt before me, then I followed them with Sonja's grandson. The Austrians have built yet another tunnel, completely by-passing the City of Graz, much improving travel with this 9 km Underpass. We made it an easy drive, stopping frequently and arrived to Frankfurt in 12 hours, over the distance of 900 km.

Sonja told us the bad news, that the young man, from whom we bought a number of electrical appliances for our people in Maribor was accidentally killed while on a skiing holiday in Russia. He was a fine young man, so helpful, now he had passed away. It took a couple of weeks for his body to be brought from somewhere in the Urals. We went to the Frankfurt cemetery, where between tall fir trees he was buried on a cool, foggy winter's morning.

RETURNING TO AUSTRALIA

I stayed in Frankfurt only a few more days, then flew back to Perth. This was a tour of real discovery for me, for this time I travelled right around the Globe, proving to myself, that the Earth was indeed round. I bought for Andrew a complete suit and a sports coat. It was time for his confirmation, so the blue suit was just right for the occasion. His sports coat he wore, when his sister took him to a Symphony Concert at the Perth Concert Hall. The people admired him, because he looked like a real young gentleman.

I again had to join the system of things, and adjust to the climate of the Southern Hemisphere. The summers do become long, when

leaving Europe in October, and returning to the sunny Western Australia, the clear skies and the warm to hot spring, which altogether make it one long summer season. This also marks the beginning of outdoor activities for the various Clubs and Social Organisations.

As in all cities around the world, where people of various nationalities had settled, there is also a Slovenian Club of Perth. Here men and women gather for bowling, billiards, card games and maybe just for a cup of coffee, or a glass of beer.

The bar provides beverages of local origin and also imported ones, including the original mineral water, the "Radenska King Spring", which is claimed to be the water from rains that fell on the Maribor plain some ten thousand years ago.

Every two months the Club organises a dance or other function, for the Slovenian/Australian nationals and guests to come together and celebrate. The Anniversary of the Club's establishment is given a special significance, being the Year 1979. All the activities require support from all members, preparing for such occasions. The bowling grounds must be kept in good order for the summer games, the hall has to be painted from time to time, the windows have to be cleaned. A polished shiny floor, and nicely set up tables make the social gatherings so much more inviting, for the young and old.

A celebration is always more valued and appreciated, when the ladies and men prepare tasty national dishes, which become the highlight of a successful festivity.

It is getting close to 50 years from the time, when our people came to Australia in great numbers. These people are now reaching high ages. It will be up to their next generations to continue with the

traditions of the Slovenian nationality in the established Club's premises. In the case of small nations such as ours, this is not always an easy task.

In Ethnic communities had arisen an interesting phenomenon, where the second generation daughters with young children take their mothers out of their community activities. They are required to look after their children, if their daughters have jobs to aid their young family's finances, or in just any requirement for time. This follows the typical Russian model, where "babuska" cleans the house, cooks the dinner, then sits in a corner, when the family comes together at the end of the day. This phenomenon exists to a lesser extent in the long established civilised communities.

VISITING RELATIVES

Some years ago my sister Sonja and her partner Hans came to visit us here in Perth. We took them to the Slovenian Club in Guildford and they were surprised, how well had our people organised themselves, with a nice hall and grounds for recreation for members and guests to enjoy. I took them to Melbourne and Sydney for them to see as much of Australia as possible. They enjoyed Australia's open space and the pleasant climate. They welcomed the opportunity to get away from the bleak winter conditions of Frankfurt in Germany. Frankfurt does have some nice days also, a visit to the Taunus Mountain at any time really, would confirm that.

My sister Lizika and my brother's son Bogdan visited us more recently. They enjoyed the visit immensely, unfortunately due to my work commitments, I could not take them on any long trips into the

Australian countryside. They too came along to our Club a number of times and were dined by some of our nice friends in their homes. We had just completed extensions to our home, to which Bogdan contributed a great deal also. The highlight was the new swimming pool, which we all used to the full in the summer heat, some days reaching 43 degrees C.

On the day of the Federal elections in Australia, I took them to the Perth International Airport, and they departed, leaving within all of us here beautiful memories of their visit.

BACK TO NORMAL DUTIES

With my sister Lizika and nephew Bogdan departed, all the usual duties remained for us to continue. Andrew was in his last year at the local Primary school, I continued assisting to run his mother's business. Australia had elected Mr Bob Hawke to continue leading the country, this for the third term of office as Prime Minister. Mr Hawke as a young man qualified as a lawyer at the University of Western Australia, then went to Oxford, England as a Rhodes scholar, adding Economics to his vocation. A very forceful young man, he was made leader of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, entered politics and soon became the Labor Prime Minister. Before gaining that position I once had the opportunity to talk to him. I found him very dedicated to the Jewish cause, when there were great world problems, with the State of Israel in confrontation with the Arab World.

Mr Hawke had shown his feelings in this respect most openly, when as Prime Minister of Australia he visited the Wailing wall, and the

Holocaust Museums in Jerusalem, depicting the suffering of the Jewish people during World war II.

THE GREAT YEARS OF THE 1980'S IN AUSTRALIA

Great strides in development were made in Australia in the period from 1980 to 1990. The greatest excitement for Western Australia in particular was winning the America's Cup, that highly prized yachting event, by the Alan Bond Yachting syndicate, off New York in 1983.

The celebrations started at the New York Yacht Club and extended across the World to Australia, to the Perth Yacht Club, and the whole Australian population. When the race was defended in the Indian Ocean off Fremantle, the Americans wrested the Cup from us.

Up to 250,000 visitors flocked to the Fremantle shores, to witness the race fought out courageously between the best of the world's yachting nations, all vying for the prestigious trophy of the America Cup.

The 1980's were the business boom years for the industrialised world. Great projects were begun and completed in this country. In Sydney it was a new landmark, the great engineering facility, the Tunnel under Sydney Harbour, dug between the North Shore and the Opera House and beyond. Melbourne established the great Cultural Centre on the Yarra River. Perth City received a new heart, a city centre of magnificent proportions, with winding underpasses and malls, and on the surface rose the Bond-Bank West Tower and the Central Park Towers. The Burswood Casino Complex are buildings of excellence, comprising the magnificent Hotel, Casino and the

Superdome, Convention Centre and Golf Course. With electrification and extension of the Metropolitan Railways, Perth had received an efficient mode of travel.

When I arrived in Perth so many years ago now, the city centre consisted of 6 cross-streets. The development which took place in the 1980's was just phenomenal, and was made possible by energetic young political leaders, who unfortunately succumbed under the pressure of political successes, but whose contribution to the advancement made in development of the city and the state in their time should not be forgotten.

On the World scene, the greatest engineering achievement was most definitely the completed English Channel Tunnel, a mind boggling project in the construction and expense. This project had only recently been dedicated to the People of the World, to use and admire.

A WHITE CHRISTMAS AGAIN

After all the years spent in the hot summers of Southern Hemisphere, it occurred to me, that Christmas and school holidays were again upon us. Since I had not experienced a Northern winter of cold and snow in all that time, the wish had persisted in me to go to Slovenia at this time of the year. I have been retired, and although I had a temporary job, there was nothing to stop me to go, there and then. I thought to myself, I deserved a winter holiday.

Many Airlines service the European destinations. I had previously travelled with Qantas and Singapore Airlines, this time I chose the

Malaysian Airlines, because of the specially good deal they were offering for a return flight.

The first stop-over was Kuala Lumpur, an amazing , picturesque City of Lights. Only stopping about an hour, I only saw the airport terminal, but I would have liked to see more of this progressive city and country. I nearly boarded a plane for Madras in India, when wrong directions were announced over the flight information system.

Next stop was Bahrain, where I walked the long corridors of the Terminal building, all new and sparkling, which showed that the oil dollars had not been spared, to provide splendour right through. The heat of the past daytime in this desert location could still be felt at night, even though the airconditioning seemed to be operating.

Arriving in Frankfurt, it was raining lightly, and the cool conditions even soothing, after passing through some of the hottest places on this earth. Sonja and Hans came to take me from the Airport. Frankfurt city centre was already glittering with magnificently decorated shops and buildings for the festive season. I spent Christmas day with my sister and her friends, then by car again travelled to be with our families in Maribor, in time to celebrate the coming of the New Year.

Light snow had already whitened the mountains and had also reached into the valleys, as we drove through Austria. Leaving Frankfurt in late afternoon, we travelled in darkness all the way to Maribor, arriving there at about midnight. It was cold, just as I wished it should be, light snow covered the land, but I hoped for really deep snow cover, as it was in winters of long ago. Lately good, real winters came few and far between, I was told. I took a lot of the winter scenery on Video tape, to show to my people on my return to Perth. Robert and Andrew had never experienced Slovenian snow

conditions, although a Japanese friend promised to invite Andrew to Tokyo, and take him to the Japanese snowfields and skiing resorts.

The snow began falling in earnest to my great enjoyment and for the local skiers too, who each year hope for good skiing conditions. When I got up one Sunday morning, there was at least 200 mm of snow on top of cars parked in the streets and in the parking area below my bedroom window. Being a Sunday, few people ventured anywhere early, so it was a beautiful sight and stillness prevailing, without any noise or movement in the city. The snow was still falling lightly, and as I had the experience of many years past, a serene peace reigned over the whole land all around.

The fresh snow fell just before the New Year, which ensured the success of the competition for the World Slalom Cup for Women, which takes place in the first days of January every year on the slopes of Pohorje Mountain near Maribor.

There were celebrations of the New Year still to come. Many of our relatives came together in our family home, where my second eldest brother Mirko brought up his family, and his daughters had settled in the neighbourhood, bringing up yet another generation. With so many relatives present, there was evidence of life continuing, as we got older and older. It was a memorable evening, there was music and dancing, and a dinner was prepared by Mirko's wife and their daughters, with specialities most enjoyable.

On the morning before the beginning of the Ladies World Slalom championships, Sonja's son Miro and myself visited the snow fields, where preparations were in full swing. It was minus 18 degrees C, when we reached the mountain. Music was echoing over the area of the Finish Line, the snow cover was excellent. Skiers specially

recruited to do this were compacting the ski runs, and some competitors were already trying out the slopes. The time was 8 o'clock in the morning then and in a few hours, the best lady slalom skiers would be hurtling down the very steep slopes at 80 km/hour. I was happy that this major skiing event had been taking place in my old home town.

Just as well Miro and myself went to see the preparations early, because at the times of actual competition, we were sitting in comfort at my sister's place and watched the proceedings on television. There are a lot of people who want to be right on the spot of championships taking place. All European skiing nations were represented, as well as ladies from U.S.A., Canada, and New Zealand also competed. The eventual winner was a French lady, a very popular champion.

THIS OLD HOMELAND OF MINE

I was pleasantly surprised how much conditions had improved since I left my old country. This was most striking in the comfort the people live, not necessarily in any excess, but in general high living standard. By comfort I mean central heating in homes, good services by local authorities, and most of all good food. Provision of Natural Gas to households was unknown in my times there. I myself, as one of the family had to contribute efforts in chopping the wood for heating the home. The firewood had to be cut to size and stacked in late autumn for the cold winters, after it was hauled from the woods. There was a lot of walking necessary, when it was not possible to borrow a bike from a sister or brother, and the buses only ran twice a day. That reminds me of a sad morning during the war.

The morning bus from the village station was so packed, the school children hung on to the rails of open doors, and on to the ladder leading to the luggage space on the roof of the bus. The bus stopped to let some children off the bus, and to take on more. A young girl lost her grip of the rail when the bus moved off, and she fell under the rear wheel, crushing her little chest.

The children of today have completely different stories to tell. I admire the bicycles that children almost anywhere in the world get for their birthdays, and cars, when they turn 17 years of age. The industrialised world is so similar now, that if I might have not migrated not to America or Australia, my Slovenia can now offer most of the goods, to us just not available in our youth.

But the necessity to study is just the same, who wants to achieve higher education, but study has taken a different form. In this computer age, students are not urged to present their assignments in their best handwriting, but can use the printer attached to their computer. I must admit, they are far more advanced in comparison with us of 50 years ago. They live in a fast changing age, they learn more, much faster. The knowledge is allotted to the computer memory. But there are so many of us now in the world, going towards the year 2000.

Soon after the Women's Slalom Championships, the warm Mediterranean air reduced skiing conditions only to the higher slopes. On an early Sunday morning we drove 70 km along Pohorje, then up the mountain to a height of 1550 metres. This was the Western extremity of Pohorje, on Velika Kopa, where the snow cover was still good and the snow dry, powdery and affording excellent skiing. The scenery was idyllic, the trees laden with

glittering snow. The access road to the top was rather narrow for my liking, but the locals being familiar with the conditions handled the driving safely. I tried the skies myself to prove, that once mastering the sport, it remains as long as the body can take it. For sure, I could not afford a heavy fall, so I did not venture to the steep slopes.

Experience of this day on the Mountain was one, which for many years I hoped to achieve again. There are excellent snowfields in the Australian Snowy Mountains, but Perth being so far away, I still had not made a winter visit to Thredbo in New South Wales, nor to Mount Buller in the Victorian winter sport resorts. That still remains a wish for me one day to achieve.

So there we were, my sisters and their families, high above the rest of the countryside. It was reassuring to have experienced drivers, for we had to return down the icy mountain road to the Drava River valley below. The sun disappeared behind the cold grey clouds in the West, but above us the stars began to shine in the clear sky, seeming so close to us. There were many sharp bends in the road, but we gradually and surely descended down the steep mountain side. It was sheer pleasure inhaling the cold winter air, as we got closer to the bottom of the river valley, and along and home into the warm rooms of our homes.

BITING COLD EXPERIENCED

I experienced some real cold nights and mornings, when the temperature dropped to minus 18 degrees C and enjoyed it, walking through the streets of Maribor, with my ears, nose and mouth covered with my woollen scarf, to avoid frost bite. While walking outside I

experienced that unique sensation of the biting cold, which I had almost forgotten. I was thinking about the heat of high summer that people in Australia just at that moment had to endure on the Southern Hemisphere. But the hot conditions over a long period of time become very unpleasant and hard to take, as the months of January, February and March drag on, for the people living in the cold climatic regions. It was different for me, because it was a novelty again, and in the next 3 weeks, I would be on my way back to Australia and going from one extreme to another. This is an interesting experience for travellers and something to look forward to, when we move across the continents during our vacations.

One early morning, as arranged, my nephew drove up to my temporary residence, my sister Lizika's place. I put my luggage in the car and we were on the way towards Graz in Austria, and on to Frankfurt. It was still dark, and thick mist lay over the countryside. There were no long queues at the border check points, and we were soon in the fast moving traffic on the freeways, which connect Slovenia with Frankfurt over the distance of 900 km to cover that day.

INDEPENDENT STATE OF SLOVENIA

Great political changes occurred in Slovenia in the year, after I left there. It all began at the check point between Slovenia and Austria, which I had been passing on my visits home. I was already back in Perth, when Yugoslavia as we then knew it began to break-up. We saw in television reports of armed encounters between the Slovenian National Defence Units and the Yugoslav army. The army aggressors in their superiority used tanks, aircraft and helicopters,

destroying the border installations and the border crossing buildings. Across whole of Slovenia, it's Territorial Defence Units, and the World opinion against the Serb dominated Yugoslav army aggression had been completely successful, in ejecting the would-be occupators from Slovenia.

At that stage, my little homeland of 2 million people proclaimed Independence on the 25th June 1991, thereby becoming a completely Independent State.

I left my homeland, but although the citizens, including my family experienced the happiness of a free nationhood, it takes time to satisfy the people with conditions of life, even if they are now finally free to choose the directions they wish to take as a nation.

TRAVEL CONTINUED

My sister's grandson, just 21 years old, was accompanying me to Frankfurt. Driving a fairly new, medium sized Ford, we were making good progress, and reached the Western end of Austria. At the Salzburg border crossing into Germany, we struck bottlenecks in the traffic, and it took at least an hour to get across. As soon as we were trough the check points, the drivers of the hundreds of cars opened up their throttles on the open freeway.

Only a few kilometres beyond Salzburg, an accident occurred on the opposite carriageway between the traffic entering Salzburg. Some debrie of a smashed car was thrown into our stream of traffic. As the cars ahead of us began applying their brakes to avoid hitting the bits of car, a huge pile-up occurred on our carriageway. A dozen cars

slammed into one another. The good ABS brakes of our car helped us to avoid a collision, but those cars just behind us could not.

We were so lucky to be able to continue our journey, but those behind us were delayed for six hours. The speed of over 200 km/hour has always the potential danger of accidents and injury, and I like everybody else travelling on these Freeways at such speed were aware of this.

On European Freeways such situations occur often, and are taken as just another unfortunate happening. Actually, it is difficult to enjoy any form of transport these days, with such multitude of people moving about everywhere at all times.

Stopping a few times at the well supplied Petrol Stations/shops along the freeway, it was a relief to reach the wooded flat-lands at the approaches to the River Main, and outer Frankfurt. We could soon relax in the comforts of Sonja's home, after the long drive. I planned to visit Rome, but instead visited the places of interest around Frankfurt city. This is a busy Banking Centre of Germany, and many exhibitions are held there at any time of the year.

The flights on the large Boeing 747's are fine, but I was never so uncomfortable as on the flight from Kuala Lumpur to Perth, in a DC10. I was glad the journey was over, and back on the firm ground of Perth International Airport.

BIG CHANGES

Andrew was settling into a new school some distance from central

Perth, where we have lived some years now. I take him there in the morning and pick him up after school. He likes the location and the extensive grounds of the school, with many sporting facilities, but it is also a much more demanding and competitive education centre. Hopefully he will do well towards his future vocation.

I continued with the routine of assisting Andrew's mother in running her business. She had also obtained assistance of a close relative, to work with her. My contribution appeared to have lost value and respect, leading to the point, where my presence was not welcome either in her business, nor in her home. I seemed not to be able to do the right thing for her, and our life together came under extreme strain. Who suffers in such situations are the children, and in this case it was Andrew, who was increasingly affected and alarmed.

Disagreements came early in the mornings, before Andrew was even ready for school, which affected his ability to react calmly to the pressures of study. It came to the point, where the effect of constant strain, mainly due to the pressures of business on his mother became a danger to his well being. On the surface, matters did not seem too bad, but the wrong assumption, held by his mother that parents should be cruel to their children, "to be kind" was carried to extremes.

On the suggestion of Andrew's grandmother, and it was better for me as well, I decided to move into my house, only one street away from them. In this way, we could still carry on as a family somehow, for Andrew's sake. I have been aware that women under pressure, especially in hot climatic conditions in the mornings react very badly with the prospect of yet another difficult day in business ahead of them. The fact that I was not there, made some improvement for a while in our dealings. For a woman under stress appeared to have

anyone around, even her own child was proving too much for our lady. Individuals with such problems do change overnight, and sometimes behave as if nothing happened the day before, but there is a limit of endurance by the recipient of their outrageous behaviour, which they display all too often.

ANDREW AND MOTHER IN EUROPE

During his winter school recess Andrew and his mother went on a European holiday. They stayed with my sister in Frankfurt for a few days, then travelled on to Switzerland with the first stop in Lucerne. The Gondola ride to Mount Pilatus really scared me on my visit there, but Andrew quite enjoyed facing the cliffs I was told. They visited Zurich and Geneva, then travelled to Venice, Florence and Rome.

Paris was next on their Eurail Pass itinerary, where Andrew was most impressed with the Eifel Tower and the Paris Disneyland. They rushed over to London, for which Andrew's mother holds sweet memories. She spent two years working there for various Engineering and Law firms, and was probably one of the most desirable young Australian secretaries in town.

Using Britrail, they had a comfortable ride to Edinburgh for the Military Tattoo, then to Glasgow. As we did before, they had the exciting coach trips in and around the Lakes District in the Western English countryside. Then they visited the City of Bath and Stone Henge near Salisbury, for Andrew a look into the distant Anglo-Saxon past.. Once on that trail, to the warmer parts of England, Penzance was a must for diversity, and to taste the original Cornish pasties.

On their return to London, they saw some nice shows in the West End theatres, and visited the sights of the city and the famous houses such as the Wax Museum, and the Palaces. Other famous places they saw were the Oxford and Cambridge Universities and the Shakespeare's Stratford on Avon. Both Andrew and his mother had enjoyed a well deserved break from their duties, Andrew from the pressures of school and his mother from her demanding business, which her relative and I looked after in her absence. I stayed in their house while they were away and moved back to mine, when they returned. This living apart did not make any sense, I could not see myself living like that for long. Anything I was doing was for the sake of our son, but any reason appearing so valid did not justify such a situation.

CONSIDERING MY OPTIONS

I was considering my options for my next moves. On the occasion by the River in Maribor with my school friends on a summer's day many years ago, we all firmly considered Sydney, or Melbourne the best cities in the World, to live in. Ever since that day I have been hoping to end up living somewhere near that attractive Sydney Harbour. For that reason I have been disappointed with myself, for not being more decisive, and I could already have settled in my favourite city in Australia. Four years after that discussion with my schoolmates on the banks of our Drava River I landed in Melbourne, then followed my older brother to Perth.

It was great to meet Frank my brother, but there was nothing to stop me returning to the Eastern States of Australia, especially to be with that wonderful person, with whom I parted in Bonegilla. It is never too late to do something, that one had set his mind on. I did make

some half-hearted attempts to move to Sydney, but decisions must be followed up with definite actions to realise a successful outcome, but I did not do that on too many occasions. Just in the last summer I went to Sydney again for a holiday, after working intensely for a number of months. I stayed at my usual Private Hotel in Castlereigh Street.

On this visit to Sydney I decided to see places, which I had not seen before. Captain Cook's Landing on Kurnell Peninsula was something most worthwhile to visit, realising that if it was not for this Sea Voyager, Australia would be something completely different, than what it developed into by the British manner of doing things. I was admiring the Landing Place in Botany Bay, and just across from there is the settlement of La Perouse, named after the French Explorer Captain La Perouse, who landed in Botany Bay also, only one week after Captain Cook in his windjammer, the Endeavour. With Captain Cook came also Botanist Banks, whose monument gives credit to the work of this renown naturalist. According to the information at the Museum near the landing site, the French Explorers moved on along the coast, doing exhaustive mapping of the area. But their ship disappeared until a long time later, wreckage was discovered on Solomon Islands.

CAPTAIN COOK'S ENCOUNTER WITH ABORIGINES

The documented history in the Museum not far from the landing place gives graphic encounter of Captain Cook's party with the Aborigines, who inhabited the area. The Aborigines did not welcome the intruders and intended physically to prevent Cook's party from landing. Captain Cook's sailors were ordered to shoot over the heads of two Aborigines, but they were not perturbed and went to fetch

their spears and wooden shields, facing Captain Cook's men. When one of the Aborigines was finally shot in the leg they retreated to their camp, Captain Cook's sailors could go ashore to search for water. There is a creek about 200 metres from the landing spot, from which the Endeavour was replenished with water, and it is still running today.

Captain Cook's landing place on the Peninsula is a gently sloping ground, consisting of meadows and slight elevations. This topography reminded me of Rottneest Island, off Fremantle Harbour in Western Australia, but the grass in the clearings was softer and greener. Directly North from the landing place, where the Endeavour dropped its anchor in 1770, the tall buildings of today's Sydney City beyond Botany Bay tower over the skyline. Wonderful tranquillity at this spot even in these days places the visitor in a situation of the 8 days, which Captain Cook and his party spent there over 200 years ago.

The early photos in the Museum of the Aborigines living around Botany Bay show, that they were an exceptionally nice race, tall and neat men, women and children. The area obviously suited them well, with good fishing and an abundant wildlife, and they were prepared to defend their territory from any invaders.

Surprisingly, there were few visitors around on these pleasant grounds, so important for all settlers, past and more recently arrived to Australia. The spot by the creek, from which Cook's party replenished their ship is clearly marked by a plaque. I could not but feel gratitude to the foresight of that great naval force that was Britain, because without the great day in Australian history there would not be a home, which this country now provides for over 150 nationalities. But unfortunately it brought a lot of suffering for the Australian Aboriginal people.

Visiting Sydney these days would not be complete without seeing the Darling Harbour. Walking over the millions of paving bricks and blocks, around the stylishly constructed Harbour and the fountain walls, is an indication of Sydney City wise planning and management, attracting visitors and settlers alike. Where there is work available or nice sights to visit, people will flock to, no matter how distant is the place on the globe. The magnificent position of Sydney in Port Jackson appears to be the main factor, that so many people want to live there, or invest in it's future. In turn this provided the finance to make Sydney the city, which it is now, one of the most progressive large cities in the world. Having the outstanding structure of the Harbour Bridge and the Opera House, there is now the new experience of driving in the tunnel deep under the Harbour, between North Sydney, the Opera House and beyond. 30% of all settlers arriving yearly to Australia choose Sydney as their destination.

VISITING THE SLOVENIAN CULTURAL CENTRES

I wished to see how the people of my Slovenian nationality had established themselves in Sydney. Following the completion of the Snowy Hydroelectric Scheme, during the Prime Ministership of the prominent Australian political figure, Sir Robert Menzies, many Slovenians engaged in the construction then settled in Sydney.

They established great social centres, halls, sporting and recreational facilities, and a beautiful religious centre in Merrilands. Like in Melbourne, the Clubs are very active, and one can feel quite at home in their company at the frequent functions and celebrations. I was happy to talk to the members of the Sydney Slovenian Community,

who were more lucky than myself and had landed almost directly in this most desirable of the World cities.

SYDNEY AND BEYOND

Travelling by train from the Sydney Central Railway Station, it takes about 45 minutes through picturesque southern districts and the wooded area of Como to Captain Cook's Landing Place, past Cronulla to the Kurnell Peninsula. I visited the Blue Mountains for the first time, travelling by a most comfortable Coach ever, on a full day's trip.

The Blue Mountains National Park is much like the American Grand Canyon, formed in a similar way by erosion, and by forceful retrieval and transport of material out to the sea by a river, except that a mighty river, such as the Colorado is not there anymore. Had the Blue Mountains not been wooded as they are, the topography would certainly look even more like the Grand Canyon. Maybe the Americans would not welcome such comparison, because their National Park is very unique also.

But on the other hand, Blue Mountains without the woods would not produce the startling colour effect of photosynthesis, by the sunrays touching the green leaves of the eucalyptus vegetation. Standing opposite to the famous figures of the "Three Sisters" rock formation, the eyes of the countless admirers of nature in this National Park can gaze across and along the valleys into the distance of this natural wonder.

I always thought when visiting Manly, that I was close to the famous

"gap" of the Sydney Harbour. Instead I finally discovered by chance, that the "gap" is actually on the opposite side of Watson Bay. The beautiful blue Pacific expanse met the horizon a hundred miles to the South east, when my eyes glanced out from the top of the precarious rock faces of the South Head of Sydney Harbour. The huge waves some 30 metres below were breaking over a rock shelf, where a fisherman was risking his life, each time a wave crashed he ran closer to the gap wall face, to escape the wave grasping for him.

There was just one single yacht out there in this mighty Ocean. The sight must be tremendous at the beginning of the famous Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, when a hundred yachts with stretched sails pass the lookouts at the "gap" of South Head.

MIXING BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE

Passing through the areas of the East & Inner City of Sydney, I had a look at some Units and Flats at Darling Point and Rushcutters Bay, the main reason for being in Sydney this time.

I was told, these were the areas where the famous Australian politicians of the by-gone times established their stately residences. Today, it would just be possible for an average person to acquire a 25 square metre Studio, for the price of \$100,000 comprising of a bedroom, kitchen, and a bathroom all in one.

On my last day of this visit to Sydney I went to see the New South Wales Parliament House. Parliament being in recess, a pleasant lady-guide took me through both Chambers, where the names of N.S.W. Premiers of past and present appear on the walls. There was Mr

Lang, Wran, and the present Mr Fahey, who have made a name for themselves in politics of that state. In close proximity are the famous "Barracks". Walking through the rooms, halls and corridors, the stories and sounds coming from the microphones on the walls acquainted the visitor with the true life of despair, which the first forced migrants had to endure, if they were to be given the opportunity to eventually to be free, to work on the land, to serve and to die for those of us who came after them. The "Barracks" are the one monument to the first basic population of Australia, who were at the mercy of the powerful British rulers, once they strayed. (The portrayal of first forced settlers in the "Barracks" must have proved too real, as on my visit since then, the theme of the museum was considerably altered).

A THOUGHT OF HISTORY

I have not seen another example where the true beginnings of Australia had been shown so without fear or favour. There was no such vivid historical account of Western Australian early settlers, although the history of founding of all Australia was probably very similar.

There had not been a let-up in the strict rule over the people on this Island- continent. Until this day, the invisible but tight net of British dominance s strictly in place. It will be some time yet, before a clear call for an Australian Republic will be recognised, and admitted to. Who can say that it has been wrong, how the British had reigned over their possessions ?

Looking at the World, where today English is the language of the

nations, it must be admitted that much good came from the tight British rule. At times their way of doing things did not seem to reflect the humane variety, but it is the depth of thought and consideration, before the British make a decision, which brings eventual successful, and just outcome.

When Australia was opened to free migrants, a responsibility had been instilled in all future leaders, to follow the British Model of Society. Former Liberal Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies was a clear example, what was wanted for Australia, whose intentions for this country in the Asian Region may not have come from his original thoughts, he may have been guided, nevertheless have a lot of merit for the future of Australia.

It followed, that the departure from racial guidelines could not be tolerated. As much as the 1975 “Dismissal” may have upset a lot of people, Labor may well be reminded, that it is also up to them to guard against illegal immigration from the greater Asian Region, with it's massive populations and influence, too hard to contain.

It appears, that it was not too difficult to channel the non-British migration into the selected avenues of endeavour and enterprise, mostly only in a supportive role. But will it be possible to do the same with the more forceful nature of the peoples entering Australia now?

THE U.S.A. FACTOR

The presence of consideration of United States in the Pacific region has been all-important in the modern history. This country is now

the only World power capable of helping those that are willing to call themselves America's friends. United States must stay ahead, especially in the scientific-military endeavour and Australia in this region can rely only on America.

Since I have been naturally referring to my Slovenian background, the same consideration of the United States as the “world power” is also necessarily valid for Slovenia. With the increasing hostility of Serbia towards Slovenia, the only security for continued existence as a Sovereign State is a close military relationship with the United States. Until NATO'S ability to take care of Western Europe is established beyond doubt, Slovenia in the position on the New Front-line can look only towards U.S.A. for protection.

INTO THE FUTURE

It is said that travelling the World can be the best natural learning method. It had helped me to see the life of humanity on the continents of the World, which I had the opportunity to see, and the learning process still continues.

Sydney is arguably the most desired destination for people from all over the World, and this will now increase, with the Year 2000 Olympic Games. In this consideration, it is possible to evaluate the British Effect of Naval capability, which began in the 15th Century.

Northern America was opened up to people not only of British origin, but also to nations big and small from Europe, which made North America the vibrant continent, that it is today. It was the English language, which prevailed over the continent as well.

In the Southern Hemisphere there is besides Australia also New Zealand, where the flexible, democratic outlook by the British on the development of the world has been assured. There is no comparison, where the early exploring nations could have produced a similar evolvement of life and nations. South America, with the Spanish and Portuguese influence was primarily settled by Latin Peoples. France established South Pacific Territories, exclusively for their own requirements. The Dutch settled South Africa with their own people, while the other European Naval Powers of any consequence such as Italy, Germany and Belgium also used their newly acquired lands only for their own needs. Russia even then could not make an impression, although it could have been considered a major Naval Power. There was no vision of the World, comparable with the British. The conclusion is, that the unique position of England on an island, as it's population increased, had given it a need to look beyond their shores, sensing that there was much more, than the European mainland across the English Channel, and the new worlds were eventually discovered.

But as an individual is guided by Destiny, who can claim, that the nation of Britain in a global context, had not been assigned to expand the World, and in it's particular and just manner.

It is quite noticeable, that many Australian politicians made Asian ladies their companions. These ladies have been known to make partners such, that it does not leave much more to be desired. It is their homogenous nature with their own kin, which makes them attract men of possible influence.

Could this arid, but nice land welcome millions of people from the Northern hemisphere, who so desire to live in the freedom of mind

and space?

CONCLUSION

In my time I dabbled in politics, having considered both major parties of influence in this country. When my going at work was tough, it was suggested to me in a most direct way, to strive in becoming a Member in Government, rather than working as an employee for a Government Department. The possibility actually existed for me to try.

But it is evident, this was not on the agenda of my duties in life. In the 1970-ties there were serious complications already between the two bigger nationalities of former Yugoslavia, of which Slovenia was then still a part. To be a politician in Australia, even without connection to them, could have proven unpleasant, to say the least.

In our daily contacts it was possible for us to experience and meet people of the Asian Region. Our son Andrew was in this way invited on a skiing holiday to Japan. A fine Japanese young man became our close family friend, who came from Tokyo to Perth to learn and improve his English. A graduate of Tokyo University, through him we in a small way came to know the Japanese customs and their life.

So it was not an Indonesian, a Phillipino, nor a Chinese, but a Japanese family, with whom we could best communicate. We found, that apart from food and customs, there are common grounds between nationalities and races of people. Andrew travelled all alone by Qantas Airlines on a return trip to Tokyo. He stayed with Takashi's family for 10 days, and had the unique experience of skiing

on the Japanese slopes, for the first time in his young life. He was shown the City of Tokyo, and was looked after by the wonderful Takashi's family. It appears, the Japanese have no particular needs, but to keep good business relations, and for holidays they come and enjoy the Australian hospitality too.

It remains for me to say that I have no regrets for having chosen Australia as my second homeland. Because I did not experience a complete success of life in Perth, there is still time for me to look forward to some changes. Had everything happened exactly the way I might have desired, it would border on an unreal existence.

Since I was aware of every step made by myself, and remaining in a position to lightly contribute in the steering in my direction in the path of my Destiny, I am most grateful for my life to continue, just as it has until now.

Review

With the passing of time and generations, the life experiences of people who were part of the post-Second World War mass migration to Australia could be lost forever: in this multicultural society of ours there are all too few testimonies by migrants about themselves. Hopefully, however, Mr Namestnik's work will become part of an emerging trend which will ensure that this won't be the case.

I was struck by the openness of Mr Namestnik's autobiography. There were times I was touched and times I wanted to argue with the man behind this book. Indeed, I almost felt confronted by Mr Namestnik's presence, and I think that this is a good thing – it meant becoming engaged with his life story as I am sure others will. This work will surely be of especial interest to other European migrants in Australia; to compare and reminisce about life before migration, arrival, building a home, as well as return trips "home". It also provides second (and future) generation migrants with a peephole into one of the first generation's experiences and thoughts.

However, this work will be of especial importance to Slovenian migrants and those of Slovenian descent, not least because there is so little written about the lives of Slovenians in Australia. Furthermore, Slovenians are all too familiar with appearing invisible to the general community, and it came as no surprise to read that Mr Namestnik's workmates assumed he was Dutch!

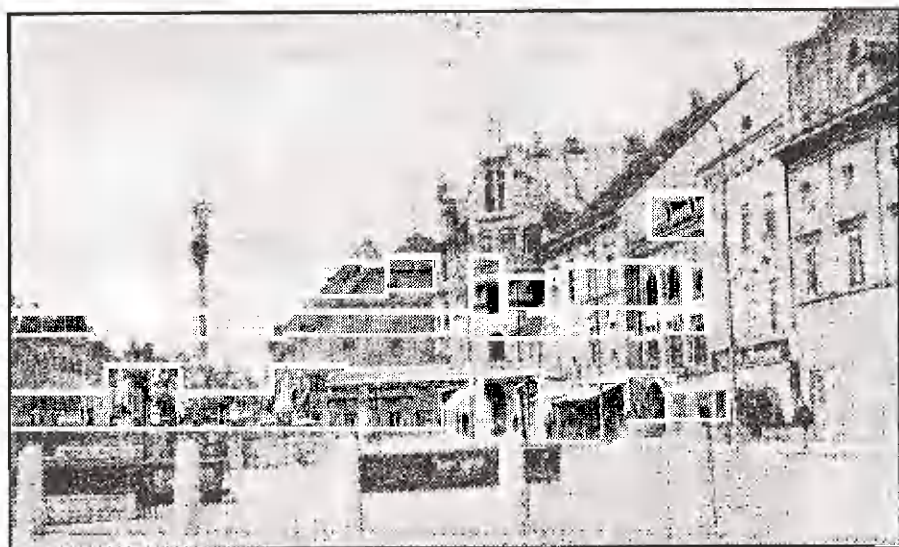
On the other hand, Anglo-Australians might like to know how they have been perceived in the eyes of a Slovenian migrant.

Veronika Ferfolja.

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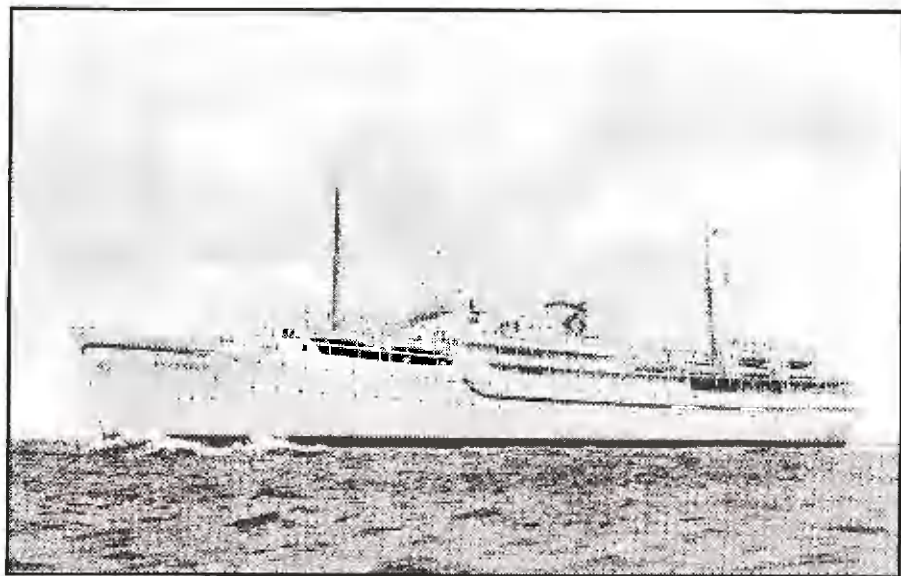
MY HOME OF BIRTH, BRESTERNICA, MARIBOR



MARIBOR (MARBURG) CENTRAL SQUARE, 1941

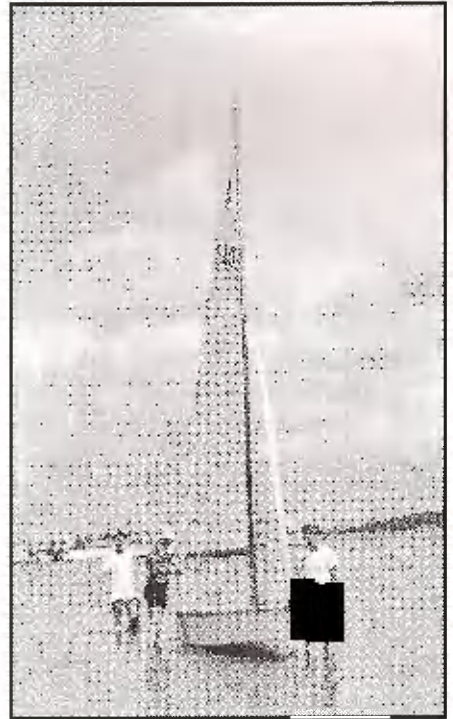
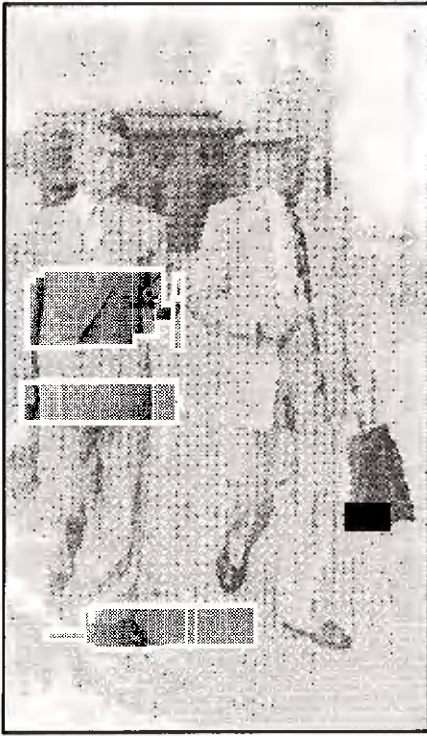


MAIN MARIBOR BRIDGE, DRAVA CROSSING, DESTROYED IN 1941.

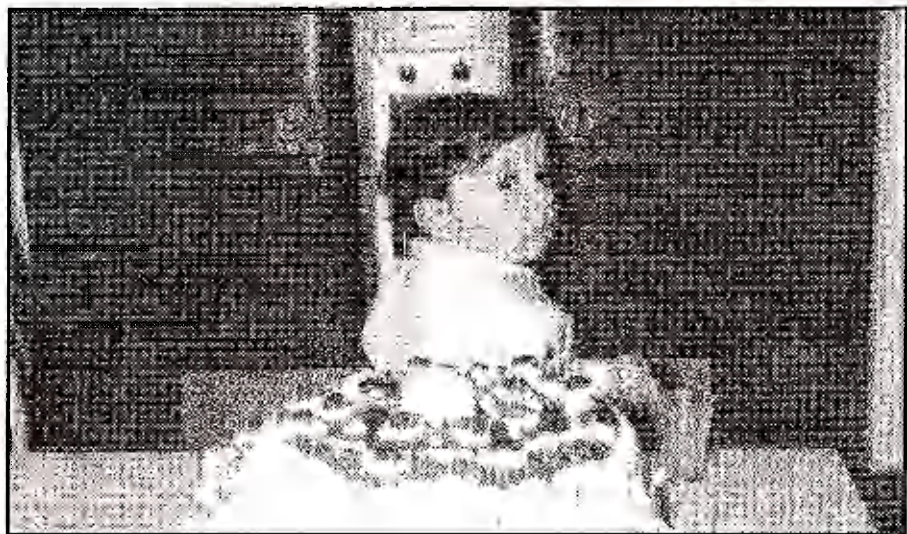


"WHITE SHIP" - EUROPE TO AUSTRALIA.

BROTHERS FRANK (RIGHT) AND
MAX MEET AGAIN IN PERTH
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



SAILING ON PERTH WATERS WITH
FRIENDS



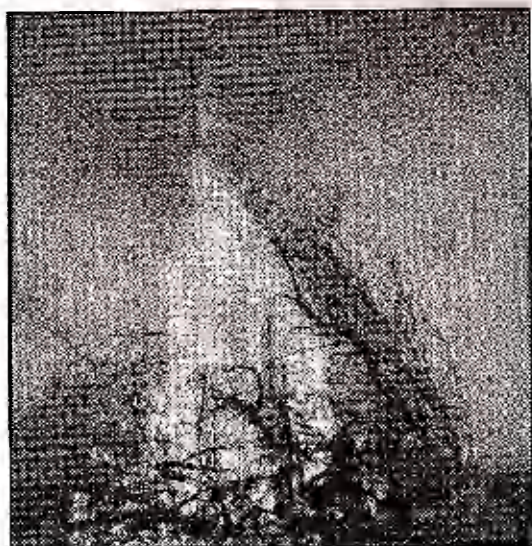
MY SON ROBERT - 1 YEAR OLD



MY SON ANDREW -
1 YEAR OLD



FATHER AND SON, ROBERT
BEFORE THE BON-FIRE EVENING



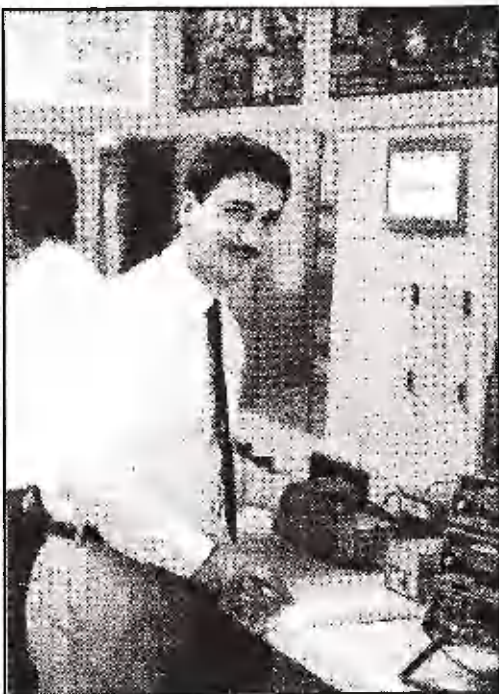
THE BON-FIRE



ANDREW IN AUSTRALIAN ARMY DRESS-UP



ROBERT WITH HIS FAMILY IN 1997



ROBERT AT WORK

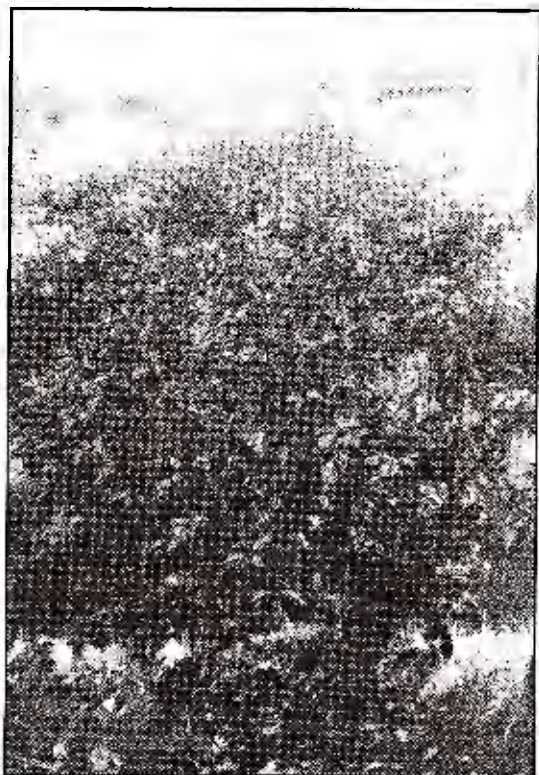
ANDREW IN 1997





THE AUTHOR - MAX

ORANGE TREE IN
MY BACK YARD





Perth City 1997 - View from Northbridge

Review

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