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RESEARCHING IMMIGRATION TO TASMANIA FROM GERMANY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: A PROGRESS REPORT

MICHAEL WATT

In Issue 8 of *Former Times*, I published an article with this title. Distributed at the Tasmanian Family History Society's AGM and Conference held at Swansea in June 2015, this issue of the newsletter reached a wider audience than usual. An outcome of the article's publication was an invitation to give a presentation on this topic to a group at a Tasmanian Family History Society general meeting held on 17 November, 2015 in the Sunday School, St John's Park, New Town. The talk focused mainly on the immigrants, who arrived from Germany on the *Procida* in 1885. An outcome is the publication of two articles on this topic in the Tasmanian Family History Society's journal, *Tasmanian Ancestry*.

The first article investigates Frederick Buck's recruiting mission to Germany in 1884-1885, and analyses data about the immigrants' places of origin. The main finding showed that ten families and three individuals, totalling 60 out of 118 emigrants, lived in Kiel or its hinterland at the time they were recruited. The explanation for this pattern of recruitment lies in changing conditions arising from German unification, and Buck's method of recruitment, relying on placing advertisements in German newspapers. The completed article was published in volume 36, number 4 of *Tasmanian Ancestry* in March 2016.

The second article investigates where the immigrants settled, who they married and their children, and where they died. The main finding showed that the immigrants' decisions to settle in particular localities were influenced by four principal factors: initial engagement by an employer; the immigrant's demographic background from either an urban or rural community; the availability of land; and the presence of clustered settlements of German and Scandinavian immigrants in rural areas.

The completed article will be published in volume 37, number 1 of *Tasmanian Ancestry* in June 2016.

Following completion of these articles, the intention is to produce a document examining in greater detail the main clustered settlements that German and Scandinavian immigrants established at Collinsvale (known as Bismarck) near Hobart, Bruny Island, south of Hobart, Falmouth on the East Coast, St. Marys (known as Germantown) in the Fingal Valley, Lilydale (known as German Town) and Harford (known as Heidelberg) in northern Tasmania. Other small clustered settlements that German and Scandinavian immigrants established, such as Swansea and Pyengana, will also be covered in the document.

Contact details

Interested readers, unable to access the articles in *Tasmanian Ancestry*, can contact the author to obtain the articles.

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SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

PETER HUTTEMEIER SECRETARY

We have, as they say, some good news...

Firstly the good news. Membership has grown since our last Newsletter, it now stands at 102 with the following additions to our Membership:

David Edwards of Hobart, Kathleen Fergusson & Melanie Kelly from Triabunna, Betty Dawn Hansson of Margate, Diane Phillips of Dodges Ferry, Graeme & Jill Salmon of Orford, Chris Tassell of New Town, Angela Turvey of Buckland, John Wanless from Orford, Adrienne Barber of Ringwood Vic, Michel Kolnar of Neutral Bay NSW, Ying Zhong West Ryde NSW, Sandra Doyle of Kellevie, Bruce Hull of Sandy Bay, Katelin Teller from London UK, Krishna Ellis Sawtell NSW, Eleanor Bray Newstead, and Sue Anderson Avalon NSW.

We welcome these new and returning Members to the Society. I think our newly published Louisa Anne Meredith Book has something to do with this influx of Membership.

SPECIAL BIRTHDAY

Our Life Member and dedicated Photo Archivist Ray Lewis recently celebrated a Special Birthday, his 90th. After the last General Meeting this was recognised by the Society with a lovely cake baked by our Treasurer Noel, and attended also by Ray's wife Barbara.

It is worth noting Ray's contribution to the Society, at last count Ray has digitised over 15,000 photos.



And so to the sad news. The society lost Life Member Elizabeth Hodson after a long battle with multiple myeloma. Many members were able to pay respects to Elizabeth at her funeral held here in Swansea. In this issue we are pleased to reproduce a wonderful history of Elizabeth's life written and presented by her friend Robin Smith at the funeral. Thank you very much Robin for letting the Society print this.

REFLECTIONS ON ELIZABETH HODSON BY ROBIN SMITH

Our initial shock at Elizabeth's death has turned to sadness as we struggle to come to terms with the loss of someone so special. I hope that by talking about her today, we can begin to come to terms with our loss.

Elizabeth and I attended the same school but I was older so was not really aware of her then. However this was to change when I noticed a very glamorous photo of her in The Mercury as an entrant in the Miss Tasmania quest. Some of you may recall those days. She next entered my vision as a newly appointed teacher to a country school. I think it was Geeveston. Anyway she quickly added to her popularity there by taking on the coaching of the school football team and once more appeared in The Mercury, a slim young woman in a floral dress kicking a football. Not to raise an eyebrow now but quite exceptional then!

Now move onto 1970. We were both still unknown to each other – living a street apart in Tarooma. I was awaiting the birth of my first baby but she already had hers and used to push him past my house on a fairly regular basis. I watched her and wished that she would speak to me. I felt quite friendless in those days and was too reserved to make the initial contact, but when we finally came to meet a friendship that was to last for almost 40 years was forged.

Elizabeth Ann Mars was the second daughter of Meridy and Stan. She was born in Sale, Victoria on August 28th 1943 and the family moved around the country a lot before settling in Hobart. She loved Tasmania and especially the last 15 years spent here on this beautiful part of the Island.



I would like to dart back in time a little here and talk about our working life. In 1970 Elizabeth was employed by Mrs Gloria Keil to teach English to newly arrived migrants in Moonah. The students, almost only women, attended 2 hours twice a week and a little crèche was organized so they could take their babies and Elizabeth hers. This arrangement lasted for 8 years until the Moonah group merged with the full time intensive courses which had been set up and funded by the Federal Government since 1970. I was one of the teachers working on the intensive courses and so it was that in 1978 Elizabeth and I finally became work colleagues and firm friends and I could get to know such a remarkable woman who had already had a stellar career in the Education Department before joining the Adult sector.

Much changed in the field of language teaching in those years and Elizabeth was at the fore front of that change in Tasmania. She began by going to the Macquarie University in Sydney for 3 months of a Master of Linguistics Degree. While there she met and impressed Professor Chris Candlin and Dr David Nunan who headed the national program for change. They designed an approach that included much more professional development in linguistics for teachers employed in the Adult Migrant Education field and the opportunity for many to earn their Master's degree. A small group in Tasmania joined Elizabeth in this study and we were rewarded with frequent visits and weekend schools delivered by Candlin and Nunan. It was such an inspirational and exciting time and we have Elizabeth to thank for bringing it to us. We felt proud to be a real part of a national program and not merely an appendage.

Elizabeth's contributions on national committees advising on curriculum development and professional development were keenly sought and she frequently travelled to mainland meetings whilst still managing the program in Tasmania as she had been doing since 1994. It was during this period too that she joined the Ethnic Communities Council to gain an insight into what the various groups desired or hoped for from our language classes. She became a member of Premier Jim Bacon's Multicultural Tasmania Committee, advising government policy in that area. Not only was Elizabeth highly regarded by the State Government, her retirement from Adult Migrant Education was marked by an official ceremony attended by the then Federal Minister

for Immigration Phillip Ruddock.

Now I would like to make a detour into country life. As the century drew to a close, Elizabeth and Kyrle decided that they wanted a change from suburbia and Swansea was the place. There followed a period living in the barn, building the house and planting the olive grove. It was all accomplished with energy and enthusiasm for the next phase of her life so by 2000 she decided that she would immerse herself fully in country life.

You probably know much more about her community involvement than I, but I was kept informed by the weekly newsletters she wrote to help keep us all connected. Please excuse any omissions I may make here. I must speak of her work in the history room. She wanted to become completely familiar with the history of the region, the early French exploration and the settlement of the British. She was a great admirer of Louisa Meredith and her accomplishments and wrote about her for publication in a popular magazine. She spent hours working on submissions for funding for community projects - her career with the Adult Migrant Education program and the tender submissions required to keep that organisation afloat certainly helped here.

She joined the C.W.A., the Anglican Church, the local craft group, the Tidy Towns Committee, the Heritage Centre and was instrumental in the completion of the wall hanging in that centre. She helped to get better playground equipment and shade cloth in the park and also a grant to the coast guard boat. Her energy touched so many that in 2009 she was honoured as a Citizen of the Year.

She also formed very firm friendships with local people, including Helen and Dorothy who continued to support her throughout her illness as has her wonderful doctor Camilla. Elizabeth sat with Mrs Gaspari and regularly visited Marian Shaw. She was indeed generous with her time and genuinely interested in the well being of all her friends.

Elizabeth's love of language was such an integral part of her, as was teaching. Although retired from her managerial position, she offered her talent in a temporary capacity in both Swansea and Triabunna. She loved those schools and the challenges they presented to her and rejoiced in the successes she achieved.

In 2004 things changed again. Elizabeth was diagnosed with multiple myeloma and so began

a courageous and dignified battle with this terrible disease. Initially there were frequent trips to hospital in Hobart while she endured an onslaught of the most aggressive treatments. Then later there followed an extended period of visits to the specialist doctor which she combined with overnight stays with me. We had fun during that time, often eating out, taking in the latest movie or some live theatre and discussing and sharing books we were reading.

Elizabeth devoured books and only recently wrote "I've made a promise to myself that I'm going to attempt to re-read a bit of the Iliad. I don't know why I still have this mania to read books. I think I should have read rather than just what I enjoy". I was concerned that towards the end she said that her eyes were cloudy and she couldn't see clearly. I thought how terrible it would be for her if she lost the ability to read. She loved discussing books and poetry and as recently as last week was reading Christina Rossetti and W.H.Auden. She loved music too and favourite pieces accompanied her on the drive to and from Hobart. She told me that she was never lonely or bored on that drive and she maintained the ability to do it as late as December. Amazingly she was still driving herself around Swansea in January. She was determined to be independent and to live life to the full.

On one of her visits to me we discussed the very woebegon appearance of the curtains in the bedroom she used to stay in. I said that I had bought some material to make new ones but hadn't got around to it....anyway on her next visit she arrived with her trusty sewing machine and spent a day sewing up new curtains for me. They are still there, still looking pretty and reminding me of Elizabeth every time I look at them.

She took such delight in her children and grandchildren and great granddaughter. Nana Whizz they christened her, and a whizz she was at sewing new clothes and cooking up special treats and arranging exciting adventures.

We will all miss her terribly, she was an intensely private person but her quiet humour, her genuine care for all people, her consideration and wise advice, her grace and her intelligence, her fierce love and loyalty to all her family, her determination and her independence shone through.

Elizabeth's contribution to the professionalism of the Adult Migrant Education program will be a lasting legacy, as will the trust and respect with which she was held by all the teachers and volunteers working in that area. Her days as the head of the program in Tasmania (1994 -2000) are still regarded as the greatest period in that organization. Teachers and programs flourished under her inspirational leadership.

Her contribution to the community here at Swansea will also be a lasting legacy. She cared passionately for the natural beauty and serenity of the East Coast and she worked hard to ensure it survived.

Above all, I should mention her devotion to her immediate family, to brothers Steve and Phil, to husband Kyrle, and sons Steven and Kyrle, to grandchildren Joshua, Chloe and Monique and great granddaughter Anoushka. Elizabeth loved you all and was so proud of all you have achieved.

Vale Elizabeth, a very special and much loved lady.

The Glamorgan Spring Bay Historical Society thanks Robin for permission to use her Eulogy to Elizabeth Hodson.

