

Country of Birth: **The Netherlands**Date of Arrival in Australia: **November 1957**

Herma Long

I emigrated from Holland with my parents and two older brothers in 1957. My parents' names are Antonius and Johanna Veltman but were always called Tom and Ann, and my brothers are Gus and Bob. We arrived in Brisbane in November (I think) 1957 and lived in the hostel for seventeen months. I had my fourth birthday on the ship that brought us to this lucky country. My memories of the camp are not very vivid because I was so young but I do remember a few things.

My father was a watchmaker and decided that Australia would be a warmer, safer place in which to bring up a young family, and so a work colleague of my father's in Holland sponsored us. None of us could speak English so my parents were enrolled in English classes taught by a Mr Bernard Milton which were held at the centre, and I began my schooling by attending the kindergarten within the centre.

We lived in one of the timber huts for which we were very thankful because the corrugated "water tank" houses were very hot. I remember all the fly paper hanging from the ceilings in the houses, and the pump up Mortein flyspray, which we also used. I remember the houses being split into four sections so that they would house up to four families, and the walls were thin enough that we could hear our neighbours. My two brothers shared one room and I slept in a bed next to my parents in their room, and in the middle of the house was the living area. My mother remembers that there were twelve people altogether in the one hut.

There also wasn't a bathroom or toilet in the house, so we all had to go to the amenities block. She also remembers vividly that there weren't any doors on the showers, and the laundry was next door and was only separated by a thin wall. The laundry had copper washers so the washing was all done by hand but there were wringers, which helped somewhat. The washing lines consisted of two large poles at each end crossed over each other and they were raised by just lifting them straight up or put on an angle while hanging up the clothes. We were allowed half a pint of milk per day per person and we kept it in an icebox. My parents also built a small bamboo garden from trees that my brothers found near the river.

She also told me that there was a big communal kitchen where our meals were provided for us as we didn't have any cooking facilities in the hut. There weren't any TVs either, so we had to make our own fun. I have asked her if she has any photos, but as she has recently moved into a retirement village, a lot of old photos have been tossed out. We lived there for this length of time as we didn't have enough money to pay rent or to buy a house, but my father gained work as a watchmaker with Hardy Bros in the city, and eventually, our sponsor had a house in which she let us live.

In 1960 my parents bought a block of land and built a house in Gales, in which my mother has lived up until September of last year when she moved into a retirement village closer to me at Sunnybank.