

This is the story of how the Beek family; Johannes Bartholomeus Beek, Alida Anna Beek Burgers, Jurriaan Jan Hein Beek, and Hajo Bastiaan Beek, came to migrate from Nederland in 1950 to Australia, and became part of the Australian community.

During the war my father, Johannes Beek, was a welder for Fokker Aircraft, assembling aircraft for the occupying German military. Being a trained sheet metal worker and an aluminium welder guaranteed my father a job, albeit a dangerous one as the Fokker factories were frequently targeted by the allied bomber command. We lived in a rental apartment on the 3rd level in Filip van Almondestraat in Amsterdam West.

During the war my father was an active member of the Dutch underground, which he rarely discussed in later years. This emanated from his membership of a socialist youth organisation called the AJC. Many years later his role in the resistance was recognised, being awarded a medal by Stichting 1940 - 1945. This is an organisation that looks after the social welfare of those resistance fighters and their families who survived the war. My parents also received a 'buitengewoon' war pension upon retirement.

Post war, the Dutch economy was struggling to rebuild the national infrastructure, and unemployment was common. The evolving Berlin Crisis, the outbreak of the Korean War and the recent horrors of World War 2 suggested a bleak future for their 2 young children.

So, like many in post-war Europe, my parents started to consider emigration to the New World; Canada, South Africa, and Australia were all possibilities. They started attending information nights including one at the Australian embassy highlighting its advantages.

My father spoke no English but my mother at least had studied English at school. I was 8 and in 3<sup>rd</sup> class at primary school; my brother, Hajo, was 6 and in second class. Although I had no real concept of what emigration actually was, I recall feeling disappointed when earlier attempts failed. But finally our application to migrate to Australia was accepted.

But there were still many hurdles. We had to prove that we had sufficient funds in the bank to survive in Australia. A close friend of Dad's came to our assistance, depositing the requisite amount of money into our bank account. Once the migration officials were satisfied that we had the money, it was immediately transferred back to the friend.

My Dad being a tradesman, apparently meant that we did not qualify for assisted passage. So we needed to raise the full sea fare for the family.

Mum's brother had a well-paid job at Philips in Eindhoven, and offered to pay our shipping costs in return for all my parents' furniture, including their favourite piano. So we had absolutely nothing to our name when we departed Amsterdam, apart from some clothes, table linen and a set of cutlery all packed into 4 suitcases!

On the 20th July 1950 we boarded the train at Amsterdam Central railway that took us to Hoek van Holland. It must have been one of my Grandmother's saddest days saying good bye to her only daughter and 2 grandchildren, as the train slowly pulled out, not knowing if they would ever see each other again. My mother did see her mother again, just the once, when in 1967 she took her 3<sup>rd</sup> child, Ingrid, who was born in Australia to the Netherlands to meet her extended family for the first time.



*De landverhuisers – "The land Leavers"*

*Waving goodbye to Glasgow and to Nederland. 20<sup>th</sup> July 1950*

At the port of Hoek van Holland we boarded the "Koningin Emma", a smallish ship that took us to Harwich, the port of London.



*"Koningin Emma".*

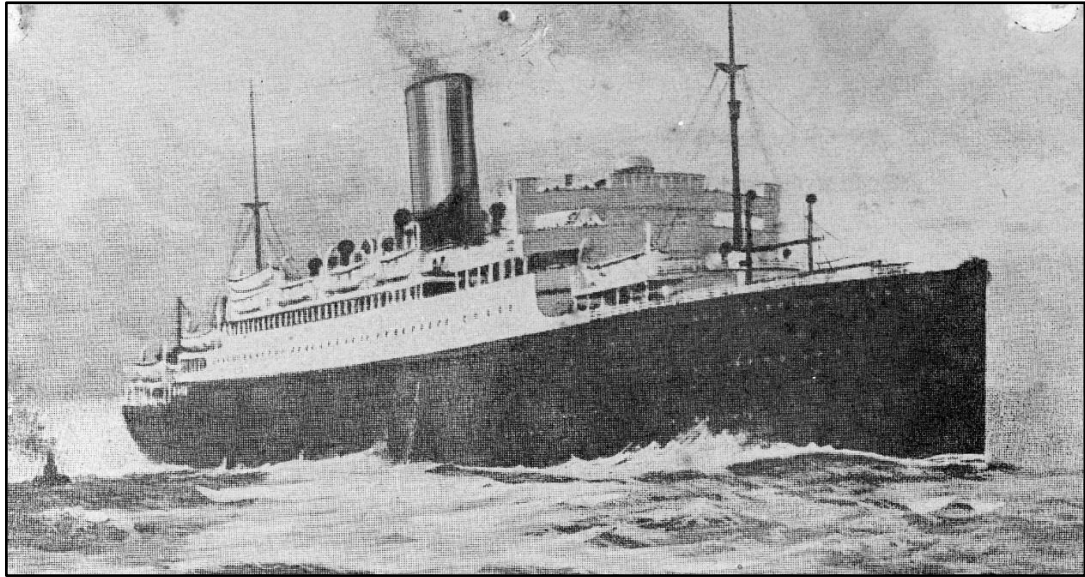
*op de "Koningin Emma"*

*op weg naar Engeland – "On the way to England".*



It was there that I first heard people speaking in a foreign language – I'd thought everyone would be speaking Dutch! From Harwich we boarded a train to Glasgow - a journey that took 6 hours. I recall how we travelled through tunnels and saw mountains for the very first time.

In Glasgow we boarded the "Empire Brent" - the ship that took us to Australia.

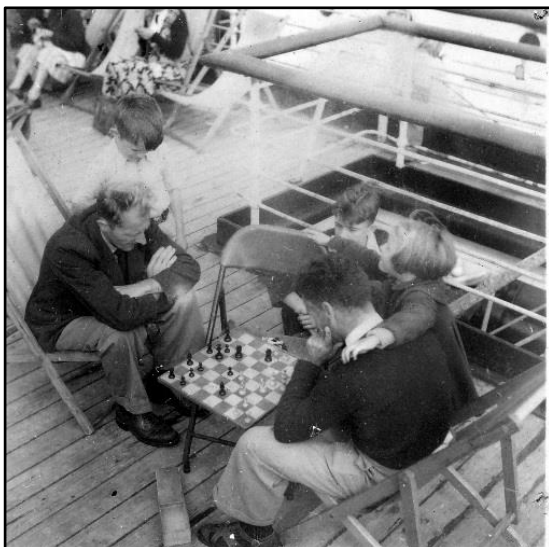


*Ministry of Sea Transport T.S.S. "Empire Brent".*

Unbelievably the name of the ship's captain was James Cook.

We were third class passengers so certain sections of the ship were out of bounds to us.

I shared a large sleeping area below deck with Dad and a crowd of other men. I was fascinated looking at the waves out of the port hole. My brother Hajo shared a similar large sleeping area with Mum and a large crowd of women, there was scant attention to any privacy.



*On board the "Empire Brent". Dad playing chess with Franz Husing, whilst Mum, my brother and I watched.*

While this was no fancy cruise ship, we still thought it was pretty grand. Dad and a

friend spent a lot of their time playing chess.

The trip to Australia took us to places of which I had never heard. We travelled through the Suez Canal, then much narrower than it is today. We sailed past pyramids, and while we weren't allowed to land at Port Said for geopolitical reasons, many on board bought exotic items



*Port Said; some of the small trading boats alongside our ship, doing a brisk business selling tourist*

from the numerous small row boats that pulled up alongside what must have seemed a giant ship. They would throw up long ropes with the goods in baskets attached. We would return the money likewise, my brother acquiring a fez to wear on his head!

The next stop was Aden, then a British protectorate, where Dad took some classic photos with his two and a quarter square Voigtlander camera.



*Aden, our first port of call where we saw domesticated camels for the first time.*



Thinking back it was indeed an incredible journey given that Mum was just 29 and dad was 6 years older.

After the long crossing of the Indian Ocean, extended by the loss of power when one of the two propeller shafts broke mid-ocean, we arrived at Fremantle, Australia, on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1950. Because of an industrial dispute no one was allowed to disembark. Then off to Melbourne, where Commonwealth migration officers boarded the ship, giving Mum and Dad the option of disembarking at Sydney or continuing on to Brisbane. By then we were keen to get off anywhere we could, so we chose Sydney. Such significant decisions when you think about it, made so randomly.

I recall my fascination with the coloured, sandstone cliffs, along the coast from Wollongong to Sydney harbour, a short journey that seemed to take forever. We were all waiting for the ship to make the final left turn into Sydney Harbour. Many of us were convinced that the ship's tall mast and funnel wouldn't fit under the Harbour Bridge but it did. Finally, late in the afternoon on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1950, we berthed at Pier One, just west of the most stunning bridge that we had ever seen. We were picked up by several waiting buses and transported to the Randwick Race Course barracks, formerly army barracks.

Other Dutch passengers stayed on till Brisbane. Dad speculated that these were most likely those from the former Dutch colony in Indonesia, preferring the warmer

Brisbane climate.

The next day we were transported to Central Railway where for the first time I saw a clock, the size of which none of us had ever seen before. We had breakfast at the station restaurant at the far end, next to platform one. This was our second day in Australia.

All this, as seen through the eyes of an eight year old, who had never been on a bus before, never been on board a ship, never seen a mountain and was unaware that there were foreign languages, was pretty amazing!

On a small crumpled map of Australia that my parents had, Bathurst was located about 2 cms west of Sydney, which didn't look too far by European standards. We were amazed at the actual distance as the steam train traversed rivers, big and small, went through numerous tunnels and after some 4 hours arrived at the Bathurst Railway Station.

We were met by a fleet of buses and transported several kms west of Bathurst to a place called Kelso, where there was an old disused WWII army base.



*Bathurst, September 1950, G Block*

The camp was run by the military, and Colonel Guinn was in charge. We arrived late in

the afternoon, and in true army style we queued up to receive our neatly rolled up bundle of army blankets, sheets and pillows. A camp orderly then escorted us to barrack 11, rooms 7 and 8, located in G Block. These were constructed from corrugated sheet metal with a similar roof, freezing cold in winter and boiling hot in summer. I shared room 7 with Dad. My brother shared room 8 with Mum. The rooms were not interconnected; each had an outer door, sharing a wide entrance set of steps to ground level.



*"Mum on the steps in front of our House".*

*Barrack 11, rooms 7 and 8.*





*My brother, Hajo. Het straatje waar we eerst woonden - "Our first street"*

Apart from a simple standard army type wire, mesh steel bed, there were no furnishings.

We felt discriminated against upon learning that the English migrants stayed in furnished barracks in another block complex, well away from where we were located.

Our block complex was occupied by all manner of World War 2 displaced persons from about nine countries, but mostly Poles, Hungarians, Germans, Latvians, and Russians. Fortunately my mother could also speak passable school German because it wasn't long before it was realised that the best way to communicate to a former Polish or Russian POW was in German. My parents found this necessity quite galling after 5 years of German occupation in Amsterdam, the last thing they'd expected upon migration to Australia.

After three days, my father and a close friend sneaked into one of the unoccupied English barracks late one night and managed to extract a table and four chairs. They cut the table in half and propped the half tables against a wall for stability and hey,

presto – 2 tables! And this along with two chairs each; we thought we were in heaven.

More embarrassing were the toilets located in what was called a latrine block, each one serving 10 or so barracks. Each latrine block held two rows of ten large smelly tar-coated steel cans, separated by thin suspended hessian curtains. There was no toilet paper. Most people simply used the hessian curtains to wipe themselves, making the whole latrine smell terrible, also attracting big swarms of blow flies.

Somehow we acquired a large white chamber pot with two handles. It was my job to empty this out in the latrine every morning, walking over frozen puddles during the winter months.

I wonder what my parents thought back then about coming to a strange land, at great expense, and then being reduced to living in barracks with no running water, and no onsite toilets, chairs or tables – let alone a piano. It may have reminded them of the then news film documentaries of the day depicting POW camps immediately in post war Germany. But they never complained, Mum often saying that they were young and it was all one big, crazy adventure.



*"Eetzaal" - Mess Hall*



Post Kantoor" - Post Office & Canteen

Meals were served in a large mess hall. We sat on a long bench and ate at a long table. Food was served out at the far end of the mess hall, from giant steel pots. Owning a dish and a few basic eating utensils was vitally important, else you risked not being fed. We were also eating unfamiliar food now.

The non-English speaking migrants were served meals from 6 am until 7 am, whereas the English migrants ate from 8 am to 9 am. This segregation made us feel like second class migrants, especially on cold mornings.

The entire camp complex was fenced off, with a manned boom gate at the main front entrance and a locked back gate at the far end. Inside the camp there were numerous loud speakers mounted on tall poles from which all manner of official announcements, pronouncements and orders were broadcast. These were interspersed with the repetitive playing of "Irene Goodnight", the most popular song of the day.

Dad got a job as a labourer working on the camp's dirt roads. Meanwhile Mum and a close friend got jobs in the camp's mess hall kitchen mostly peeling potatoes.

As a reward we were classified as staff and moved away from the other barracks,



*Mum's first job in Australia – peeling potatoes.*



*So called "Staff Barracks"*

*Aan het aardappel schillen. Eertse baan in Australia als "kitchenmaid"*

to a timber barrack, but we were still housed in separate but adjacent rooms. We carefully took our previously acquired few precious furnishings with us.

We used to often go for walks just outside the Camp by climbing over the Camp's locked back gate that opened onto a dirt road (Yarras Lane) that passed a historic looking red brick farm complex. We also used to follow a creek (Swamp Creek), where my brother and I would swim and play. It was an ideal playground. Dad would pick up tiny grains of yellow looking sand that he was convinced was gold dust. I recall on one occasion coming across a bearded, old man who lived in a mud brick hut not far from the Camp that we as kids were afraid to go near.

In retrospect I think he might have been an old time gold fossicker.



*The Camp's "Back Gate" connecting to "Yarras Lane".*



*Hajo and I searching for alluvial gold in "Swamp Creek" with Dad.*

Coming from Amsterdam, we found the Camp's mountainous background scenery to be awe inspiring, something I've never forgotten. I used to love drawing it with my colouring pencils.

After about 6 months the camp set up an education unit, and for the first time an attempt was made to teach us English. By then I had effectively missed almost eight months of schooling. This was made all the more challenging by not being able to read cursive writing. My schooling back in Amsterdam had not gone beyond printed script.



*de scholen-complex" - Camp (Primary) School*



*"de bioscope" - Camp Cinema.*

To make matters worse the teacher spoke no Dutch and was clearly not going to be able to communicate all that well with a class of 9 year olds none of whom spoke English.

By a stroke of good luck, the children of those migrant families employed at the camp complex were then offered mainstream education at the Bathurst Demonstration School. This meant a bus trip from the camp to and from school every day.



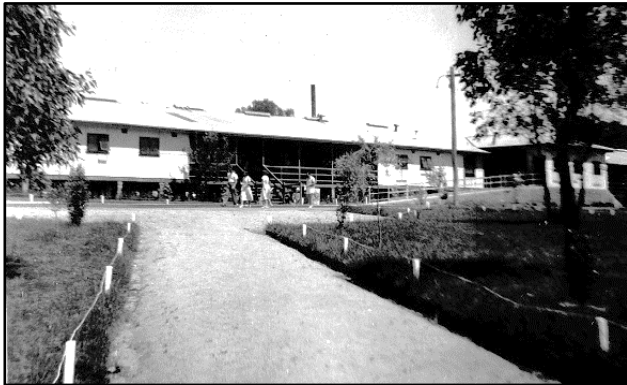
*Bathurst Demonstration Primary School – Boys' School section 1951.*

We were placed in proper class rooms but found the cultural settings weird. Lining up for assemblies before going to your class, scripture classes, and wearing school uniforms was unheard of in Nederland in 1950.

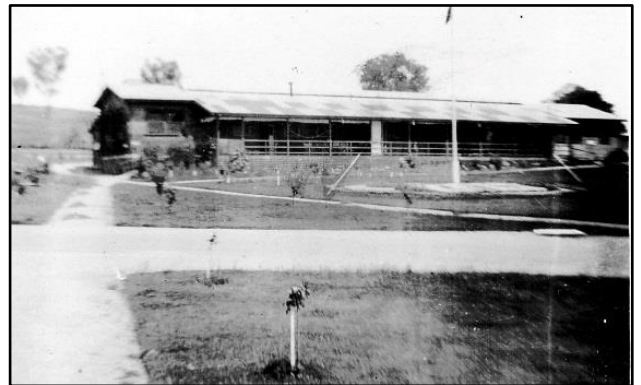
I was placed in the back of the class room, where I couldn't hear what the teacher said, so I wasn't learning too much. The result was that many of us including my brother frequently wagged school, getting off the bus before it got to the actual school. We would then spend the day roaming the Kelso countryside, which was mostly vacant paddocks, where we'd pick blackberries, and later walking home at about sunset.

The best part of school in Bathurst was getting a school lunch neatly packaged with a piece of fruit supplied by the camp. The sandwiches were cut diagonally – another thing that I'd never seen before.

By about this time the camp's employment officers had made contact with most of the men, Dad was offered a choice of working with the Snowy Mountains Authority as a tunnel construction worker, or as a welder on the Warragamba Dam construction site, or as a steel worker in Wollongong.



*"arbeidsbureau" - Employment Office.*



*Colonel Guinn's Office.*

Dad chose Warragamba Dam as a construction site welder. Unlike the other options, this included cheap rented accommodation after a short qualifying period.

So it was that we moved to Warragamba on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 1951.



*Dad (back row 3<sup>rd</sup> from the right) as part of the construction site team of welders.*



*Our house No. 70, 13<sup>th</sup> street Warragamba, as it was on arrival in May 1951, and 1 year later.*

This was our first home in Australia. Mum was 30 years old, Dad was 36, I had just turned 9 and my brother was still 7. I effectively repeated 3<sup>rd</sup> class and my brother repeated 2<sup>nd</sup> class. We quickly made friends with the other kids in our class, and while we all spoke Dutch at home, I increasingly spoke English with my newfound friends. Within 6 months I became aware that I was actually thinking in English and no longer in Dutch.

In 1958 my parents became naturalised Australian Citizens, in a ceremony held at the Warragamba Town Hall. My brother and I were deemed automatically naturalised, being included on my father's documentation.

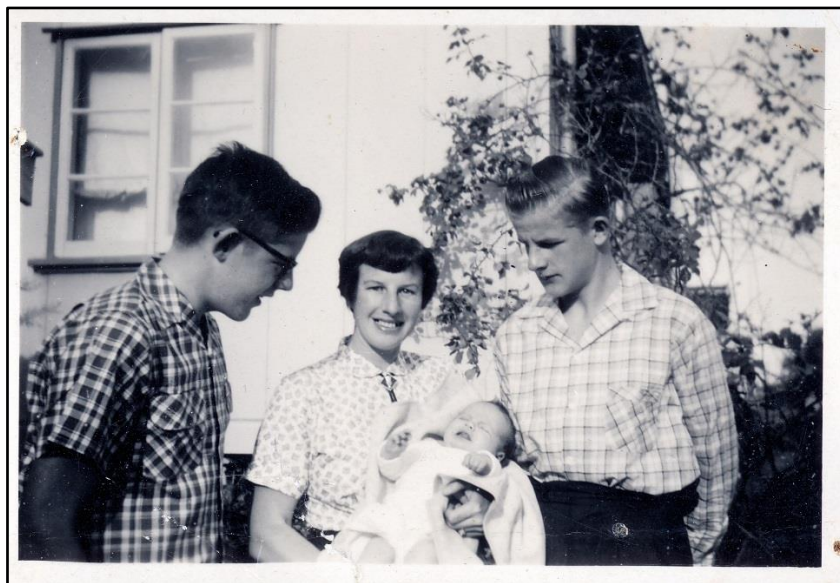




*Naturalization 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1958. Warragamba Town hall*

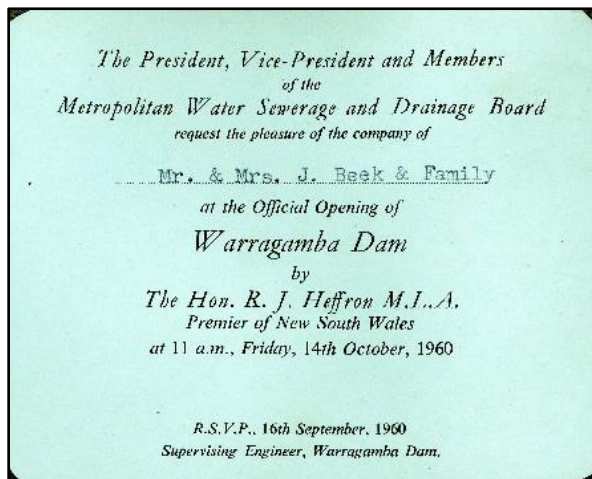
After completing primary school at Warragamba my brother and I both went to Penrith High School.

My sister, Ingrid, was born in 1959, when we were still living in Warragamba.



*Baby Ingrid, with her two big brothers Hajo & Jurriaan, June 1959, Warragamba.*

We were all invited to the opening of the Dam in 1960. Dad was very proud of



the role he played in the Dam's construction, at times making out as if he had built the Dam! This I might add, was a commonly held belief by all who worked on the Dam's construction.

Upon the Dam's completion in 1960 Dad was effectively made redundant, forcing us to move. Accommodation at Warragamba was conditional upon being employed at the Dam site. In anticipation of this Mum and Dad had already bought a block of land at Wentworthville, an area of Western Sydney well known for its many surrounding chicken farms.

They proudly contracted Sterling Homes Pty Ltd to build their first ever privately owned home, financed in part with a low interest loan from the Dutch Government, and in part with the help of my brother and me.

Like a lot of migrant children at that time, we supported our parents financially.



12 Jones Street, Wentworthville

Dad worked at several construction sites in and around Sydney, including as a welder on a gas pipe line project near Goulburn, the Dutch Shell Oil refinery, World Services, and EPL Elevator Company until his retirement. Up to the very end of his working life, he would understate his age so as to prolong his employment.

My brother and I left Penrith High School upon completion of our Leaving Certificates and remarkably both of us got jobs at AI&S (BHP) in Wollongong. I was a trainee industrial chemist and Hajo, a trainee mechanical engineer.

I left AI&S after 7 years, going on to do an Honours year (Physics) full time at UNSW; Hajo qualified as a marine engineer and worked with BHP shipping until his untimely death in a car accident in 1985.



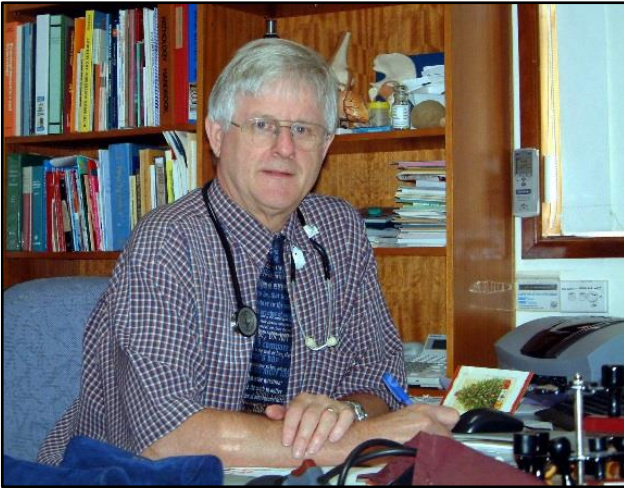
*Hajo in his BHP Shipping Uniform, circa 1975.*

In 1971 I changed career to Medicine, after having worked at the ACI Technical Centre, Sydney, as a Research Officer for 4 years while completing an MSc in Physics at UNSW.

I graduated in Medicine in 1976, and went on to complete post graduate obstetric training in Newcastle, moving to Casino where I have been a rural GP ever since 1980.

In 2014 I was awarded an Order of Australia in recognition of my contribution to rural health and the community.

The year after I graduated in Medicine, my sister, Ingrid, commenced Medicine, also at UNSW. She went on to specialise in public health and addiction medicine.



*Drs Jurriaan and Ingrid at work*

Ingrid has been a key advocate of the harm reduction approach, first articulated in Nederland in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic during the 1980s. She was also the founding medical director of Australia's first medically supervised injecting centre in Sydney's King's Cross for which she was also awarded an Order of Australia in 2010.

My parents' primary aim of migrating to Australia was to ensure that their children had good educational opportunities and fruitful futures. While there were many personal costs involved, they were endlessly proud of us.

After my Dad's retirement in 1989, my parents travelled to Nederland every year or two, often staying for months at a time. While they enjoyed catching up with friends and family they never regretted their decision to migrate to Australia all those years before.

My father died in 1999 at the age of 84. My mother lives on, now aged 102, and finally moving to residential care in Casino this year.

My mother, Oma, is now the Great Grandmother of seven; so the four Beeks who migrated to Australia in 1950, with little more than the clothing they were wearing, have happily thriven in their adopted country.

And what about Bathurst ?

Since 1950, we have always regarded Bathurst as our birth place in Australia.



***On the occasion of Oma's one hundred year old Birthday 25<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020.***

*Jurriaan Beek, Geoff Gallop, Patrick Gallagher, Emma Beek, Vaughan Beek, Sophia Tuckett-Beek, Clare Beek, Ben Gash.*

*Alex Beek, Astrid Beek, Nina Beek, Oma Alida Beek, Lara Tuckett-Beek, Ingrid van Beek, Maree Beek.*

*Absent: Kate Beek, Fern Maree Cook-Beek, Leo James Beek.*

Jurriaan Jan Hein Beek.

Casino 2470 NSW

16<sup>th</sup> December 2022



Australian Government

NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES  
OF AUSTRALIA

JURRIAN BEEK  
44 FAIRWAY DRIVE  
CASINO NSW 2470

Dear Mr Beek,

The Sydney Office holds Commonwealth Record Series C1115 Passenger lists, inwards ships, Sydney [Form M308]. The passenger manifests are arranged chronologically.

I have identified the passenger lists for passengers disembarking at the Port of Sydney for the arrival of the vessel "Empire Brent" which arrived in Sydney on the 6 September 1950 and identified a reference for a J Beek

A Certified copy of the page which shows the ship arrival details and a copy of the page showing the references for the Beek family has been included with this letter . I enclose an additional copies of these lists for your records.

Yours sincerely

Tanya Billsborough  
Access and Communication, Sydney

19 March . 2010



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
Navigation Act 1912-1942.

PASSENGER LIST.—INCOMING PASSENGERS.

Return of Passengers brought to the Port of SYDNEY from places outside Australia.

ADRIAN Name of Ship. N.W.A.A.	Official Number 14887	(a) Port of Registry. GLASGOW (b) H.O.F.	Master's Name. JAMES COOK	(c) Gross Tonnage 10,000	Date of Arrival. 17/3/20	Voyage. From GLASGOW. To SYDNEY.
-------------------------------------	-----------------------------	--	------------------------------	--------------------------------	-----------------------------	--

LIST OF NAMES AND PORTS OF EMBARKATION OF PASSENGERS.

(1) Line No.	(2) Port where Embarked.	(3) Name. (Separate line to be used for each Passenger.)	(4) Line No.	(5) Port where Embarked.	(6) Name. (Separate line to be used for each Passenger.)
1	GLASGOW	WALTER JANE	32	GLASGOW	YOUNG GEORGE
2	"	WELLS KENNETH	33	"	ALDERING ANNA
3	"	" JOAN	34	"	" CHRISTINA
4	"	WELLS JOHN	36	"	" JOSEFINE
5	"	WITAKER BRUCE	37	"	" ALIDA
6	"	WILLIAMS BERNARD	38	"	" CHRISTINA
7	"	WINDON WILLIAM	39	"	BEVERIDGE JAN
8	"	" EDNA	40	"	" GRARA
9	"	" WILLIAM	41	"	" BENIGNE
10	"	" BRUCE	42	"	" BRANA
11	"	" JOHN	43	"	" LINA
12	"	WALL MICHAEL	44	"	" ANNA
13	"	WATKINS JAMES	45	"	" JOHANNES
14	"	WHITE DONALD	46	"	" LEONARD
15	"	" WILFRED	47	"	" JAN
16	"	" KELVIN	48	"	BOERS LEONARD
17	"	WISHART THOMAS	49	"	BIEVER JOHANNA
18	"	WHITREAD THOMAS	50	"	BROCKEN BEREND
19	"	" ELIZABETH	51	"	" EUGENIA
20	"	WATKINS ANNIE	52	"	" MEINERT
21	"	" JOHN	53	"	" ANNE
22	"	" PHILIP	54	"	BECK JOHANNES
23	"	WATSON SIDNEY	55	"	" ALIDA
24	"	WILLIAMSON ALAN	56	"	" JURVAAN
25	"	WYATT HELEN G.	57	"	" NAJO
26	"	YOUNG CHRISTINA	58	"	DEJVER MARIA
27	"	YOUNG PETER	59	"	" ALEXANDER
28	"	" CAROLINE	60	"	" INGRID
29	"	" PETER	61	"	" ANTOINETTE
30	"	" JAMES	62	"	VAN KESTER NAANJE

I, T. BILSBOROUGH, a person to whom the Director-General of the National Archives of Australia has delegated his power under subsection 69(1) of the Archives Act 1983, certify that this document is a true copy of a document that is in the custody of the National Archives of Australia.

Signature: *T. Bilsborough*

Date: 17/3/2010