

THE HUNGARIAN CONNECTION

CANDID PORTRAIT-STORY OF 12 SELECT FORMER REFUGEES

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Author & Publisher
Hobart 2012

The author dedicates this work of twelve biographical summations, to the memory of those subject persons who have already departed.

Acknowledgements

Attila Urmenyhazi (aka Ürményházi) is deeply indebted to the subject persons who granted interviews or kindly supplied the information that was sought. Special thanks to next of kin family members who graciously helped him in his challenging task to gather data of a private nature and insights that could not have been sourced in any other way. His profound gratitude goes to The National Archives of Australia for enabling him to access in full, many official records that were of crucial support in his research based work. All research, translations, narratives, etc. are original thus he entirely assumes responsibility for the material herein, discounting the clearly attributed texts.

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Foreword

A vision that well served the national interest was the introduction of Australia's mass immigration scheme soon after World War II. This successful program helped a much faster rate of development and also meant populating the country in relatively accelerated way, a necessity that first manifested itself earlier during WWII, when southward Japanese military expansion came close to Australia to alarm and alert the nation. One has to acknowledge the tremendous contribution the new settlers have made since Australia adopted a regularized yearly intake of migrants. In this context, with the exception of rare individual cases, the mass of the Hungarian community's origin can be found in the combination of three distinct refugee-migrant waves. This is not a generally known fact at large, in Australian society.

The first wave was minor one compared to the following ones. From mid-1930's in Hitler's Germany, the oppression of German Jews and open threats to European Jewry caused the bulk of the rather elite and affluent part Eastern European Jewry including Hungarian Jews to seek migration to overseas destinations. Until the outbreak of World War II, Australia offered a safe haven and accepted some 6,475 such new settlers mainly of Central European Jewry fleeing Nazi Germany's legalized unbearable discrimination, persecution and manifest threats for their life. The Hungarian-Jewish arrivals in Australia among them is estimated to be about 800 persons. Most were businessmen, intellectuals, doctors, architects, engineers, etc. and through acumen, hard professional work or further studies for recognition of qualifications, they rapidly found their place to flourish in the host country.

The second wave is directly attributable to World War II and its consequence. Like in most parts of Europe, WW II caused the devastation, economic collapse and impoverishment across the continent, and in Central and Eastern Europe it was followed by the gradual takeover within a few short years of totalitarian, communist regimes. Hungary fell under this kind of repressive rule dominated by Soviet Russia-USSR, the masters. These developments gave rise in the ensuing years to the exodus of masses to refugee camps in Austria and Germany run by the International Refugee Organisation. From these refugee camps, alongside many other European nationalities, Australia recruited about 15,000 forlorn Hungarians between 1949 and 1952, officially terming them as "Displaced Persons". However, Australia did not admit Hungarians straight after the end of World War II (1945) as they were considered "ex-enemies" until the government policy reversal by mid-1948 when they were welcomed. This DP scheme of migrant intake also served to alleviate the acute labour shortage prevalent in Australia at the time. A 2 year duration work contract and mandatory job designation was imposed upon the DP's by the authorities to somehow recoup cost of voyage by making them working, taxpaying, productive new settlers soon after arrival. This was a bitter sweet experience to all but, in the end however, a win-win situation to the English language handicapped and even to those for whom recognition of their skill and qualification would take at times many years of hard struggle.

After arrival by boat from Europe most of the refugees were taken to the old army barracks converted to refugee holding camps. The starting point was the camp at Bonegilla, Victoria from where they were sent to their first jobs and place of accommodation. Their overwhelming majority spoke no adequate English enough to hold a basic conversation or discussion. To some it took many valuable years to overcome this serious language setback, to be able to quit their jobs if unrelated to their skill, trade or profession. Their bulk consisted of professional and middle-class people, ex-military officers, tradesmen, very few without skills. Once out of that 2 year bond, the ex-DP newcomers were independent and free to pursue their aspiration, move about, change jobs, work and live anywhere in the country, thus becoming absolute equals in Australian society. Without exception these Hungarians turned out to be tireless workers and hard money-savers driven by a healthy desire to catch up with the rest of the Australian community for the enjoyment of a wholesome and comfortable lifestyle in one's own home, financial certainty and a secure future. They generally were the perfect role model for success for the third wave of refugee-migrants from Hungary who arrived less than ten years later, following the collapse of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

This third wave of mass emigration was again through refugee camps in Europe, following the failure of that Revolution against communist tyranny and the Soviet Union's hegemony in the homeland. This uprising in 1956 was crushed by Soviet-Russian military invasion and closure of the borders but not before 200,000 people managed to escape to the West as refugees. Once more Australia generously welcomed about 15,000 stateless refugees as immigrants, paying their fares but without an impost of a 2 year work contract unlike for the earlier arrival, post-WWII, DP Hungarians. By then jobs were plentiful in the country and despite the serious language handicap which they too had to overcome in due course, the competent ones were free from the outset to seek better opportunities in jobs and careers soon after mastering the necessary communications skills.

Fleeing from War, famine, persecution or just for want of a better life, freedom and human dignity; they all had their own reasons for choosing Australia. Migrants from these three waves totalling well over 30,000 people showed extraordinary ambition, mindset and exemplary enthusiasm to better themselves fast at all levels. This typically demonstrates the Hungarian character and spirit which in turn was well rewarded by Australia. Individually they all proved to be diligent, upright, loyal citizens in full harmony with the mainstream of the country.

Nowadays rapidly aging and dwindling in numbers, the post-WWII DP's and 56-er refugee-migrants formed the nucleus of the Hungarian communities. Those who are active are still trying to nurture with pride their ethnic heritage with social and cultural activities mainly centred in every Australian capital city. Their hope and efforts are directed towards the progeny younger generation for the continuation of this nurture and retention of heritage. Among the original refugee-migrants, the remarkable number of Hungarian-Australians who have risen to prominence in academia, industry, medicine, business, science, arts and virtually in every other field, reflect their valuable contribution at every level not excluding trades, to Australian society that can be colloquially termed as "they punched well above their weight" in Australian society.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution-Uprising of 1956, the following tribute was expressed by the then Prime Minister John W. Howard in October 2006:

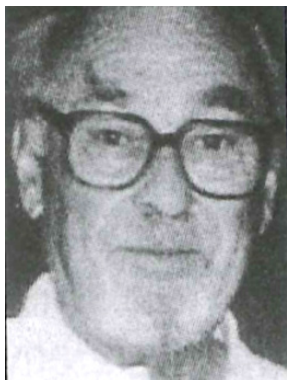
"I am pleased to join the Hungarian community of Australia in commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian Uprising, an event of great significance for the Hungarian people and the struggle for democracy and freedom worldwide. I commend the remarkable courage shown by the Hungarian people and the sacrifices made as they fought against the overwhelming might of the occupying Soviet forces.

The 50th anniversary of the Hungarian Uprising also provides us an opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous contribution Australia's Hungarian community has made to the development of a stable, prosperous and culturally diverse Australia. The success of the community in embracing the spirit, values and opportunities of this great country is reflected in the remarkable number of Australian Hungarians who have risen to prominence in business, science, sports and the arts. Today, we honour these achievements. I take this opportunity to send my warmest wishes to all those commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Hungarian uprising and congratulate the organizing committee on what I'm sure will be a memorable event".

In addition to the 30 biographic accounts released in earlier years by the author, the 12 particular profiles introduced herewith represent a random and valid sample of educated quiet achievers in the mix of depth and diversity of calling among the migrant origin, new settler experience of the Hungarians (Magyars) in Australia.

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1. **JOHN HERENDI OAM (1925-2011) teacher, editor, publisher, community leader**



Son of a machine toolmaker, John (János) was born in the historic city of Eger in Northern Hungary in 1925. After completion of his secondary schooling at the Roman Catholic religious order Cistercian college, he studied Philosophy and Humanities for some time at the Péter Pázmány University of Budapest. The event he counted himself fortunate and privileged to experience was when, as a young local, he witnessed excavations under archeologist Dr. Vidor Pataki around the famous, national heritage Castle of Eger which unearthed objects of enormous value museological significance. Well into his second year at university, due to the outbreak of WWII and the deep anxiety felt by individuals, John decided to quit his studies to be back with his family throughout that crisis time while contemplating his own future. When the Red Army and rampant Communism started to threaten future freedoms in an impoverished postwar Hungary, in 1945 he fled with his family to promising Austria.

Proficient in German, he followed successfully lectures for two and a half years at the Faculty of Medicine in Graz. But once more he had to give up his tertiary studies due to personal financial misery and hunger which started to affect him in a similarly impoverished postwar Austria. Seeking a secure and intellectually rewarding career in life, John went to England. He started to work as a humble brickworks hand. A year and a half later, in 1949 he returned to Austria to join his parents and his sister still languishing there. They decided to migrate to Australia where they saw their future.

The family arrived in Adelaide where they settled in a totally foreign but welcoming surrounding. Lacking proficiency in English at the beginning, John again had to contend with menial work, working as fettler for the railways for eleven years. In 1952 he married Martha Gaszner, a compatriot, and they had two sons, John and Erik. Studying at night, he obtained his BA degree at the University of Adelaide in 1966. Afterwards he taught Social Studies, General Science and German at high schools for twenty four years until retirement in 1985. In his teaching career John also taught History, Geography, German, Hungarian Studies and Multicultural Studies.

Refugee arrivals from the failed 1956 Hungarian Revolution trickled down in big numbers to boost the Hungarian community in Adelaide. The need to provide greater community service for cultural outlet, social functions, fellowship of old WWII veterans, church and welfare groups, a play group, scouting and Hungarian language school for the youngsters and children, particularly to those from mixed parentage, became necessary. John and like-minded benevolent organisers took up the challenge with outstanding results. As president for 15 years of the Council of Hungarian Associations in South Australia (between 1973-1988), and President of the Federal Council of the Hungarian Associations in Australia and New Zealand for 3 years (1975-1977), John was involved in all facets of multiculturalism. Also as president, he ardently supported the work of the "Good Neighbour Council" welcoming migrants from Europe and co-opted with the "Captive Nations Association" where representatives from various ethnic organisations aimed to bring to public awareness the tyranny and oppression suffered in Communist dominated European countries (1953-1989).

In 1966 he joined the Hungarian Scouts in Adelaide as secretary, and was scoutmaster from 1970 to 1978. John helped establish Hungarian as a matriculation subject in South Australia. Parallel to his teaching career, John dedicated his free time to the nurturing of Hungarian heritage, particularly the language among the younger generation when it became evident that when they listened to and spoke English all day, they forgot and fell behind in proficiency in expression. So, the Hungarian Language School was established in 1959 where he taught. In its successor school, The Hungarian Community School, he was the principal from 1985, and his wife Mrs. Martha Herendi taught Hungarian to youngsters with missionary zeal until their retirement in 2001.

John is well known Australia wide for his key role in the success of four Hungarian Cultural Conventions when they were held in Adelaide: 1976 (3rd), 1988 (7th), 1997 (10th) 2003 (12th). A State capital becomes the venue regularly every three years for the holding of this nationwide event called Hungarian Cultural Convention. This is a festival rich in celebration of Hungarian cultural heritage through concerts, exhibitions, talks and lectures, balls, folk dance shows, etc. where Hungarian origin individuals from every corner of Australia, family and friends add to the merry get-together that lasts a week. The staging of this demanding event is an enormous organisational challenge but very rewarding to the praiseworthy committee members.

With the steadfast help of his loving wife Martha, John worked tirelessly in running, editing and publishing successfully a Hungarian monthly periodical, "Adelaidei Magyar Értésítő" the Hungarian Bulletin of Adelaide for 25 years, that achieved its 44th year of circulation in 2012. Its main aim is contribution to social cohesion and wellbeing of the Hungarian community in South Australia, keeping fellow Hungarian-Australians well informed of news, ongoing issues and notifies them of social functions. He was always ready to undertake a key role in organising and promoting the occasional ethnic folk art exhibition, food tasting carnival, etc. alongside his many other commitments to onerous tasks, all to serve his community. In retrospect, to John, the most important role among the countless voluntary tasks he undertook in life that brought him fulfilment, was teaching and promoting Hungarian culture in multicultural Australia, his much loved, adopted homeland.

John was a well known organiser, charity fund raiser helping out beyond his own community. He was a regular collector for the Red Cross; under his direction the scouts raised \$2000 for the victims of Cyclone Tracy, the Premier's Bushfire Appeals, and the "Help Poland Live" appeal.

John Herendi was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2006, with the citation: "For service to the Hungarian community of South Australia through cultural, social welfare and educational activities, and to the promotion of multiculturalism". John led a very active life as a well loved and highly respected leader of the Hungarian community. The altruist educator, the humble family man, the outstanding Hungarian-Australian passed away in Adelaide on 5 August 2011, aged 86.

2. **Dr. ANTHONY ENDREY (1922-2010), Queen's Counsel lawyer, author, cattle farmer, community leader**



Born in 1922 at Hódmezővásárhely, in south-east Hungary, on the Great Hungarian Plain, Anthony (Antal) Endrey was from a family of lawyers, politicians and affluent cattle farmers. His maternal ancestors were of Transylvanian origin nobility and his family was engaged in beef cattle raising along the Tisza River in Csongrád county. Anthony's secondary schooling was with distinction at every stage of his education at the private Roman Catholic Saint Norbert Premonstratensian high school in Gödöllő. Pursuing a legal career, he studied at and graduated from Péter Pázmány University in Budapest. Studying further, he graduated Summa cum Laude and gained Doctor of Law with Honours from the same University.

Proficient in German, Anthony earned a rare scholarship of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs during his studies, and spent two terms in Berlin's Friedrich Wilhelm University. Parallel to his legal studies, Anthony devoted time to economics, finance and associated disciplines, and was assistant to the great Hungarian economist, professor Ákos Navratil at his special class seminars. As a law student he also worked for the Business Law magazine.

When WWII reached Hungary, Antal was exempted from war service owing to his key position at Budapest University. He nevertheless saw action when he voluntarily joined the Royal Hungarian Army's armoured brigade in spring 1945, in the closing months of WWII, to fight against the Soviet-Russians. Taken as prisoner of war by the Soviets, he miraculously managed to escape from them to blend into the Hungarian populace. By the end of 1945 he was among the few officially released prisoners. In July 1947 he passed the attorney's examinations and qualified to practice as registered lawyer-solicitor. He then opened his law office and practiced in his hometown of Hódmezővásárhely. He later was recognized, decorated and awarded the title of Vitéz (Hero of Hungary) for his voluntary participation and, however short, his meritorious WWII war service.

By 1948, the onset of a repressive, unjust and inhuman Communist regime in Hungary and his vigorous opposition to it, forced Anthony to defect to the West. This was followed by his migration to Australia in April 1949 as a Hungarian refugee among the 14,300 then officially termed "Displaced Persons" that Australia welcomed. His name Antal became Anthony or simply Tony for practicality. Arriving in Hobart, he discharged his obligatory 2 year work contract imposed upon DP's by working for Hobart Council as a humble Council worker. Afterwards he joined Simmons Wolfhagen, lawyers and was employed as clerk/courier/factotum whilst attending university studies. Tony graduated LL B with a First Class Honours degree, Bachelor of Law from the University of Tasmania School of Law, and with it, the right to practice in the profession. Earlier in the same year, Tony had won a case that had set a precedent in jurisdiction in the Supreme Court of Tasmania. Tony Endrey was one of the founding members and the architect of the constitution of Saint Stephen's Association in Hobart, the first Hungarian association in Tasmania, established in 1952 but defunct since the early 1980's to give way to its successor, the Hungarian Association of Tasmania, Inc. actively serving the small but tight community.

In 1957 Tony Endrey moved to Melbourne, where he continued to advance in his career as a lawyer. He headed the common law department of Gillot Moir & Aheam until, in 1962, he was accepted to the Bar, reading with Peter Murphy, later Justice Peter Murphy of the Victorian Supreme Court.

Tony was appointed legal counselor to one of the Senate's Standing Committee in 1972. He also acted independently for prominent Australian and British business corporations' Australian subsidiaries like: Vickers Armstrong, Lloyds of London and also for The National Council of Australian Credit Unions, The Age daily newspaper, National Trustees of Australia, the Public Trustee of Victoria, and several nationwide insurance companies. Operating from his Melbourne base, his successful advocacy on several occasions gave rise to the setting of legal precedents in federal Commercial & Business laws. In 1975 he was invited to the Victorian Bar and earned the high honour of Queen's Counsel, taking silk and wig by merit and experience.

He was appointed Master of the Supreme Court of Victoria in July 1976, but resigned from that position a year later. In 1979, he retired to his cattle farm at Marden near Leongatha where he raised Aberdeen Angus cattle. Tony's passionate hobby was to raise beef cattle, the field he knew well and which earned him many prizes at the Royal Melbourne Shows. He returned to the Victorian Bar in 1981 where he practiced until 1989.

Tony was a leading member of the Hungarian community in Australia, serving as President of the Federal Council of Hungarian Associations of Australia and New Zealand, the Hungarian Cultural Council and the Hungarian Institute in Melbourne. Tony's work as lawyer, his preoccupation with Hungarian community work and his serious hobby of raising beef cattle were never enough to him. He was a gifted and prolific author on matters Hungarian, historical genre discerning books. The National Library of Australia and many Australian university libraries have his published books in English (a few in Hungarian as well) in their collections. Their titles are: Hungarian History (3 volume parts: 1,2,3), The Holy Crown of Hungary, Sons of Nimrod: the Origins of Hungarians, The Kingdom To Come, Pride of my Country, The Other Hungary: History of Transylvania, The Yugoslavian Problem (co-author), The Tyrant (stage play in Hungarian). Legal in nature, his mind stretching articles appeared in Law Institute Journal's (1984) and in the Australian Ethnic Reporter (1988).

In 1989, following the fall of the loathed Communism in Hungary, with the rapid establishment of full liberal democracy and restoration of human rights and freedoms, Australian citizen Tony returned to his native country and settled in his old town. He resumed his law practice after 43 years, this time practicing in both international and Hungarian law. In 1991, guided by religious conviction, he founded and launched the short lived Hungarian Christian Movement, which did not go far. Following the setback, ever active Tony started his own political journal, the centre right, liberal, Christian ideology oriented Nemzeti Újság that he successfully published until 2007.

Tony was erudite in four languages and capable to hold a conversation in two more. In his late years he devoted his well earned restful times to running his cattle farm estate on the flats of the Tisza River, in Batida village near his hometown. Dr. Anthony Endrey Q.C., the dynamic intellectual, brilliant lawyer and author-historian passed away after a brief illness, on 28 May 2010, at age 88. The pain of a great loss was felt by his family, colleagues and friends both in Hungary and Australia.

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3. Dr. GEORGE BERZELLER (1914-2008) Medical Doctor, piano tuner, music composer, pianist-entertainer of operetta, jazz and light medley genre



Son of a local hotelier family, George (György) Berzeller was born on 4 February 1914 in the town of Ipolyság at the time part of Hungary within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He was of Hungarian-Jewish background, spoke Hungarian at home but was already a multilingual at high school, fluent in Hungarian, Slovakian and German. With the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire following WWI, his home town with an overwhelming majority ethnic Hungarian population became part of the new and independent country of Czechoslovakia. As a consequence his native town's name changed to Sahy and his family became Czechoslovak citizens. Destiny would have that southern Czechoslovakia including his hometown would be part of Hungary between 1938-45 as a result of the First Vienna Arbitration & Award of 2 Nov.1938, decreeing the partition of Czechoslovakia.

George's love for music and playing piano was intense since childhood. By the time he graduated from high school, he was already an outstanding pianist who performed in public occasionally and, at times, cleverly improvised for fun when the music allowed for it. By age 18 he also had mastered conversational English adding to his range of abilities. However, he decided to pursue a medical career and went to Prague and enrolled at the German University's Medical Faculty. He had to quit his studies in 1936 due to new discrimination laws against Jewish descents. To complete his fairly advanced medical studies, George went to Budapest barely 65 km from his home town, across the oft changed Hungarian border. Early in 1938, the year he was to graduate, similar discriminatory laws against Jews were introduced in Hungary to appease the threatening Nazi Germans and, in exchange, recover Hungarian ethnic majority populated lands lost to Czechoslovakia after WWI. Discontinuing his studies at a stage very close to graduation from medical school in Budapest, George had to be resilient once more to fall back on piano playing, embracing and nurturing passionately his gift which brought him popularity, recognition and security throughout his long life. He learned the skilled craft of piano tuning from masters, and never had to worry over this bugbear, bedeviling pianists. This professional skill put him to practical and financial advantage in life, especially when on tour in countryside.

In 1938, he started his musical career as professional pianist in Štúrovo / Párkány in a local hotel's cafe and went on to gradually build up his repertoire and reputation. In 1940 he was engaged by the Budapest Dance Revue to play in their orchestra in which he played until 1943. George performed at noon at the radio and in the evenings at the inner city's Palais de Dance, a plush venue hosting mainly ballroom dancing. He would occasionally break his routine to give concerts either at the Academy of Music in Budapest or go on tour in the country. When Germany invaded Hungary in 1943, he first had to hide but owing to his medical experience, managed to obtain work at a Budapest hospital through the good offices of the Swedish diplomat, Raoul Wallenberg, the legendary saviour of 4500 Jews. His family, except his sister, perished in Nazi gas chambers. He survived the horrors of war and in 1945 moved to Vienna to later propose to Elizabeth, his heart's desire, whilst playing a piano serenade to her. They shared 49 years together in marital bliss.

In 1946 George returned to his home town which by then had become once more, part of Czechoslovakia. His dormant ambition was rekindled and he finally completed his twice left off studies and graduated as medical doctor in Kosice at the end of that year. He soon realized that under the Communist system there was a far better living to be had as a sought after dance orchestra pianist who also enjoyed recording for the State's record company and performed at the national radio, than a medical doctor employee in a State hospital. So he successfully launched himself in Bratislava's night life, pairing off with singers as accompanist to them or teaming up with dance orchestra musicians. By 1956 George had cut 46 original phonograph/radiogram records together with a variety of singers and musicians. Jazz music became trendy in post-war Europe and George soon revelled in its dynamic sound to become an accomplished jazz pianist playing in night life cabarets with his dance band. From 1958 on, for ten years he was the resident pianist at the Tatra Revue Theatre in Bratislava, the capital. Both the bloodless "Velvet Revolution" national uprising of 1968 and the call of his sister in Sydney, made the Berczeller family migrate to Australia that year.

George and his family felt at home soon after arrival in Sydney. He adopted the stage name of George Best. His success continued on as he played in dance bands, at times as solo performer at special events, some even at the Sydney Opera House. He would entirely produce and play his own concert repertoire, offering a variety of his experience gained as piano accompanist in famous operetta productions from the past. However, he found his permanent niche, regular work, in the café-piano bars of Double Bay in Sydney playing brilliantly medleys of well known songs, classics, traditional jazz, the evergreen and the latest melodies that captivated his audience. At the Cosmopolitan Terrace Cafe and Woodfire Cabaret Restaurant he was a well known fixture able to put his listeners, ordinary people into a very happy mood that he enjoyed observing. The one event that remained etched in his memory is the 4 July 1946, USA's Independence Day celebration, when the versatile pianist played at a special private reception before General Eisenhower, Marshall Zhukov, General Tassigny and Marshall Montgomery, the WWII Allies military chiefs of the USA, Soviet Union, France and Great Britain. Vienna's Hotel Bristol was the venue of this unforgettable, once in a lifetime occasion for George.

George was acknowledged by his peers in Europe and Australia as the best piano interpreter of the great Hungarian composer of operettas, Emmerich (Imre) Kálmán. In 1998, he was invited to perform at the Kálmán commemorative gala concert held by Cologne Radio Orchestra in Cologne, Germany. At the end of his concert he received jubilant accolades from tens of thousands and had met Vera, the widow of Emmerich (there was 49 years age gap between her and her late husband) who, after his rousing performance, openly complimented George saying: "- No one in the world can play Kálmán's music as you, the Hungarian master, can".

When he eventually ended up in a retirement home, he was able to entertain fellow residents by playing much loved tunes on the piano there. A truly multicultural gentleman (Hungarian-Slovak-Australian), eminent pianist entertainer George passed away peacefully in Sydney on 20 October 2008, aged 94.

4. Dr. LASZLO BENYEI AM (1920-2006), Dip. Jurisprudence, International Refugee Convention expert, Immigration Resettlement director, Church Elder & organist



Laszlo (László) Benyei was born in Budapest on 26 June 1920 to Jakab Bauer & Mária (nee Hadek). In his youth, Laszlo spent his holidays travelling with his father who was a ship's captain serving on the large Danube River cruising between Vienna and Budapest. Brilliantly studious and multi-talented, Laszlo was a church organist from age 14 and also worked as a tourist guide in the mountains of Hungary during holidays. A love of geography, demography, law, music and church history were the foundations of Laszlo's service driven life. He attended Vörösmarty Mihály Reál high school and matriculated in Latin in 1938. Choosing the pursuit of Law in line with his vocation, he entered Pázmány Péter University's Faculty of

Legal & Political Sciences.

Laszlo graduated and then obtained Doctorate in Law (Dr. Jurisprudence) in December 1942, and followed further studies to fulfil his ambition to become a judge. He attained the highest echelon in the legal field by securing the Diploma for Judges, State Prosecutors and Advocates. Thus in 1946, Laszlo became one of the youngest diplomates in the civilian legal system in Hungary. During his postgraduate studies he was employed by the Hungarian Discount & Exchange Bank as Junior Executive Legal Officer.

With the outset of a ruthlessly repressive, inhuman and unjust Communist regime in Hungary from 1948, like many thousands of countrymen and women refugees, Laszlo fled to the West. In Vienna, benefitting from his good command of the German language and stellar legal background, he worked for the UN's International Refugee Organization (IRO) Resettlement Office as Eligibility Registrar responsible to administer and determine eligibility criteria of tens of thousands of refugees under IRO's care but awaiting resettlement in a new country. When the post-WWII mass refugee flow from war torn Europe ended by 1950, communism entrenched Eastern and Central European countries sealed their borders and the languishing refugees at IRO camps cleared through successful resettlements, the mission of the IRO ceased.

Laszlo had seen his future in Australia. The same year he sailed on board the migrant ship Skaugum to arrive as a Displaced Person (DP), an official term given by the Australian immigration authorities accepting refugees but with a two year work contract. His first employer was the South Australian Railways where he worked as a clerk. After discharging his DP obligation in 1952, he moved to Melbourne. Laszlo then worked as a law clerk and held similar positions until his big break came in 1954 when he was appointed as assistant to Margaret Holmes, founding Director of the World Council of Churches Resettlement Department in Melbourne. In September 1955 Laszlo married Dorothy (nee Roberts). In 1968 he was appointed Director of Resettlement in the Division of Inter Church Aid, Refugee and World Service of the then Australian Council of Churches, a position he held until his retirement in 1985. This work perfectly suited Laszlo's legal training, fluency in several languages, compassion and abiding faith in God. Once a refugee himself, Laszlo worked tirelessly for refugees and developed strong networks with immigration departments (Federal & State) and non-government organizations both in Australia and overseas.

During his 31 year service with the Resettlement Department, Laszlo was directly involved with the sponsorship and resettlement of over 100,000 refugees, their families and other migrants in need who were not eligible for government assistance.

With a skilled, willing and selfless staff, Laszlo managed an interest-free travel loan program from the United Nations, non-government and church funds which provided around \$20 million to assist migrants in need to establish new lives in Australia. He researched and fostered integration of communities whilst promoting continuity of international cultural ties. Australian churches played a vital role in sponsoring, welcoming and resettling refugees. For example, Adelaide based former Catholic Immigration Services was federally accredited and thus sponsored countless numbers of young, skilled and suitable stateless migrants. This work and Laszlo's dedication to nurturing migrant churches saw the formation of the Victorian Inter-Church Immigration Committee which brought together 22 churches to focus on that which they shared, rather than liturgical and cultural differences.

Laszlo was appointed Australian Correspondent of AWR, the Association for the Study of the World Refugee Problem (Vaduz, Liechtenstein) and was elected to become a member of the Advisory Council of the International Institute for Ethnic Group Rights and Regionalism (Munich). He held executive positions with the former Good Neighbour Council, The United Nations Association and the Council for Overseas Aid as well as being active in many other government and non-government committees. His work was often politically delicate, but he was fiercely impartial in upholding the UN Refugee Convention, the rule of law and a vision for a better world.

In retirement Laszlo continued his interests in theology, liturgy, church history and demography. He maintained active involvement with international humanitarian concerns, interfaith dialogue and local activities, including the Hungarian Reformed Church and the Kew Historical Society. He received honours from the Patriarch of Antioch and the Archbishop of the Russian Church outside Russia. In January 1989 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in recognition of service to the resettlement of migrants in Australia.

In August 1989 he was elected into Membership of the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy. In 1996 Laszlo was awarded the Austcare (now called ActionAid Australia) Paul Cullen Humanitarian award for service to refugees and personal involvement in the migration and resettlement of over 100,000 refugees and needy migrants. Ever mindful of the need to be vigilant against complacency, totalitarianism and erosion of freedom, Laszlo's selfless, humble and compassionate work will long be remembered by many diverse churches, communities and individuals who have helped create the intricate cultural tapestry of Australian life.

Laszlo was a well-travelled man who had revisited his country of birth three times (1991, 1994, 2001) following the collapse of Communism giving way to a free, independent and human rights respecting democracy. Laszlo then established contact with international organizations active in Hungary including UNHCR, IOM and Red Cross with the intention to link global international professional work in the areas concerned closer to diplomatic work of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Laszlo was a respected and very active elder in Melbourne's North Fitzroy church of the Hungarian Reformed Church where he was not just the regular organist for the worship services for more than 30 years. He also performed on special occasions like wedding ceremonies and even went out of his way to serve as organist whenever the Missionary Minister of his Church, coming from Sydney, visited affiliate congregations in Geelong and in Melbourne city. When the situation demanded Laszlo was always ready to lead the weekly Bible Studies of his church, and, for several years he carried out financial auditor's responsibility of the church accounts. The man of God, Laszlo was the only permanent Council Member of the Basel based Calvinist Presbyterian Church in Australia.

In September 2005 Laszlo celebrated the 50th anniversary of his marriage to Dorothy who also had worked with the Resettlement Department. On 22 May 2006, Laszlo Benyei died peacefully in his sleep at home in Melbourne, survived by his loving wife, sons Jamie and Jonathan, their wives, Prof. Begona and Christine, and two granddaughters, Petra and Andrea. The departure of the saintly man was a great loss to family, friends, associates, his congregation and to the Victorian Hungarian Christian communities. By all accounts, in the field of immigration no one has contributed more towards the successful resettlement of refugees in the period 1954-1985 than Dr. Laszlo Benyei, AM.

Attribution to the Benyei family, Christine Bell & Mark Inston

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5. **Dr. ÁKOS NAGY (1913-2006) Doctor of Pharmacology, Pharmacist, author, sports club administrator, community worker**



Dr. Ákos Nagy was born on June 14, 1913 at Nyiregyháza, a large town in Eastern Hungary. Although from an aristocratic line, during the insecure times of the Great Depression years his family lived under rigorous conditions which must have impacted on him to shape his character as a resolute and indefatigable man in pursuit of high achievement in life. With his interest in pharmacy it was not hard for him to choose a career path following graduation from high school in 1931.

Ákos applied for and won a scholarship to study this favourite science at the University of Budapest. In 1937 he gained his graduate diploma in pharmacology and soon was engaged by Sanitas Pharmaceuticals as a pharmacist. In 1939 he enrolled to the same university to do his doctorate in Pharmacology, a demanding study that he successfully finished in four years instead of the prescribed two. The reason for this delay was the acute demand for his work by his employers, and as a consequence, immersion in his duties at the central laboratories for Public Health Institute of the Péter Pázmány Royal Hungarian University in Budapest. In that 4 year period WWII raged in Europe and Hungary was first on the brink of war, then in the actual war. Although working there as a pharmacist, Ákos took part in many of the Institute's important work as assistant to experts in bacteriology, furthermore became the executive assistant to the Institute Director, Dr. János Páter whilst working the extra hours necessary towards his doctorate.

Between the two World Wars, the Institute had a crucial role in public health and was the paramount authority for blood grouping, tissue culture and bacteriological, etc. analysis and reporting. When specialist Dr. Gyöngyi Békássy delivered a lecture on the complexities involved in the wholesale analysis of the human blood for determining racial ancestry at a point in time when genetics was at its infancy, this sparked a deep interest in him towards human blood groupings and their analysis in the context of determining validity or otherwise of the floating theories of migration of populations from ancestral geographic areas into different regions of the world. On 18 December 1943, Ákos earned his Doctorate in Pharmacology while working at the same Institute, a post he held until the end of the War in May 1945. By then Ákos was married to Magdolna (nee Erdösi) and they already were the parents of three sons: Ákos jnr., Csaba and Eörs. Under Soviets in control of the country and communism gradually getting entrenched in the war ravaged, devastated Hungary, the young family decided to seek their future as far away as possible from Europe and as the first step escaped to Austria, later to be taken eventually to a refugee camp in Germany.

The next trio of sons: Géza, Huba, Szittya and daughter Hajnal were born at various converted military camps in Germany run by the United Nations International Refugee Organisation (IRO). At that time, like the rest of the German population, the family endured harrowing times of deprivation but Ákos and Magdolna ensured they were rarely hungry and never without love. Ákos took good care by providing the necessities of life with his hard labour in the building of an autobahn and afterwards working in a textile factory.

When the opportunity arose to migrate, Ákos chose Australia in preference to the USA, Argentina, Canada or New Zealand, and the family of 10 to include his own mother arrived in Australia under the post-WWII displaced person (DP) scheme in 1950.

They were taken to the ex-army barracks outside the township of Greta in the Hunter Valley, NSW which had been promptly altered to accommodate migrant families arriving from Europe and this is where his last son, Botond, was born. His first money earning job was picking potatoes when at the end of his first day's work his lily white skin was badly sunburned. The next day, he cut an extraordinary figure by arriving to work with his white long johns protruding from his shorts to save his legs from further aggravation. After a while this daily physical hard work routine ended when he was recruited by the camp director, H.G. Ginn, to work professionally as the pharmacist (unregistered), but more importantly as bacteriologist and serologist at the newly established camp's hospital that had been created to serve the residents, particularly the expectant mothers among them. He was fortunate to receive this position because by 1953, whilst still picking potatoes on a casual basis, he was able to complete his 2 year work contract with the Federal Government for transporting him and his family to Australia. His laboratory work gave Ákos the opportunity to study closely the blood samples of about 600 camp residents representing 14 nations of Europe.

Following the initial two years, while the family was settled in the migrant camp, he worked as an unregistered pharmacist by day in a Randwick (Sydney) pharmacy (1953-56). After his shift, he would work as a cleaner at the Sydney Dental Hospital, finishing his night by playing piano at a Hungarian restaurant for his supper. Ákos visited his family every fortnight. While working in Sydney he used part of his annual leave to visit different universities to find out where he could regain his qualification with the least amount of difficulty. It turned out to be Adelaide where he was only required to complete two subjects in the final year. Thus in 1956 the large, tight knit Nagy family of eleven moved to Adelaide. Ákos Nagy regained his pharmacy qualification at the University of Adelaide in 1957 and then started his professional employment as a pharmacist at the Royal Adelaide Hospital where he worked assiduously until his retirement. A man for all seasons, he devoted his spare time to focus on many of his serious pursuits. One of them was inventing. By 1959 he had developed and patented a solar collection system which would convert solar energy to electricity. In 1960, he was invited to address the UN World Health Organisation in Rome with his invention but this was beyond the family's means.

A dormant passion of Ákos was rekindled to become his ardent pursuit when he decided to extend the scope of the fundamental work by Dr. A. E. Mourant known for his collection of scientific data of blood group classification and its distribution across Europe.

Concentrating on the Carpathian Basin, Ákos researched to extract and compile scientific data on the region. The results of his exhaustive 25 specialised studies were phenomenal. He delivered his convincing and conclusive science based argument by detailing his results which he personally presented at several triennial Hungarian Cultural Conventions in Australia. His conclusive findings were that Hungarians are by and large the progeny of pre-Settlement era (pre-AD 986) natives of the Carpathian Basin.

Following his retirement as pharmacist, Ákos devoted virtually his full time to expound this topic of enormous interest to fellow Hungarians. He was invited to and addressed many grand cultural gatherings of Hungarians in the USA (Cleveland, 1988), Austria (Felsőőr), visiting Hungary twice and Switzerland (Zurich, ZMTE conferences) six times with the same endeavour: to explain to the learned assembly the science of analysis and tracing of national ancestry through blood groups, a "burning desire to know" issue of every cultured Hungarian in the face of eternally conflicting arguments about their origin.

Due to the scarcity of written sources the ancestry of Hungarians has been the object of passionate debate and controversy among historians, archaeologists, and linguists. In 1995, he wrote his first voluminous history book titled: "A Cultural and Historical Review of Central Europe". Akos wrote two more books this time strictly scientific in content and in Hungarian, which were released in Budapest. The titles were: A Kor Halad De A VÉR Marad (Time passes but bloodline remains) and A Vércsoportok Jelentősége A Magyar Östörténet Kutatásában (Significance of blood groupings to expose early Hungarian history).

With the completion of the Human Genome Project in 2003, genetic mapping of ethnic groups became much easier, cheaper; more widely carried out and thus geneticists joined the arguments, all of which arouse deep interest but only to Hungarians the world over. Ákos Nagy's earlier findings and assertions in the subject matter is corroboration of genetic evidence that became available much later to his great credit. He claimed, however, that his research endeavour will achieve its ultimate objective and will turn into uncontested evidence among specialist scientists only when the significance of the haptoglobin groupings in the Hungarian population are further refined to correlate with genetics and thus link findings to ancestry along the path expounded by the Polish Prof. J. Wozczik.

Throughout life his loving wife Magdolna, with whom they enjoyed 66 years of marital bliss, was the bedrock support upon which the head of the family reached his achievements and successes. In truth, uniting Hungarians in the diaspora was Ákos Nagy's life work. The physical height and number of his sons led him to be one of the founders of the local Budapest Basketball Club where they played. Ákos eventually became the inaugural president of the Budapest-Norwood basketball club, overseeing its evolution and assimilation into Norwood. He was intimately involved in the formation of the Hungarian Club, Osmond Terrace, Norwood, wrote a monthly newsletter for the Hungarian community and ran a weekly radio program for decades. Over the same decades he has been made a knight of a number of Hungarian knightly orders and became a member of professional organizations known worldwide.

Dr Ákos Nagy passed away on 1 December 2006 after a serious illness. He was a self-effacing gentleman who loved to laugh and could laugh at himself, a brilliant applied scientist, the father of eight, an indomitable community spirited man, always proud of his roots as Hungarian born Australian.

6. **ANDREW SZABO (born 1923) military translator, cameraman, professional drummer, musician-accompanist, sales representative**



Andrew (András Szabó) Szabo was born in 1923 in the Hungarian resort town of Keszthely, on the shores of the great lake Balaton, the "inland sea" of landlocked Hungary, an idyllic destination for holidaymakers, particularly in summer months. He was the son of Menyhárt Szabó and Mária (nee Kövér), from a Roman Catholic family and had a younger brother named György. His father was baker by trade and a businessman owner of a productive, large scale bakery providing them an advantaged lifestyle. Andrew grew up in Keszthely and matriculated at the private Roman Catholic Saint Norbert Premonstratensian high school there.

During his teenage years two factors played an important role that were to influence him in his future pursuits in life. One of them was that, in order to back up the curricular German language taught at school, his parents sent him to an Austrian family where German was spoken. He experienced three consecutive summers with them resulting in an enriched command and fluency. The other factor emerged when he started attending the social dances organised by his school for their students. At age 14, instead of being preoccupied with dancing he was fascinated by the drum player's skill and the captivating beat of the music played. Playing the drum became his objective, later to become his more than hobby intense passion and a good money earner as a young adult performing at elegant lakeside resorts in summer. He proudly completed his full drum kit from savings put aside whilst a high school student.

Succumbing to parental pressure, Andrew enrolled to the Agricultural Academy of Keszthely, a tertiary college where large country property, animal husbandry and farm management was taught. In 1944, at age 21 while in his 4th semester of study, Andrew was called up for National Service in a Hungary involved in World War II under German Nazi occupation. He was posted to an artillery unit in Sopron, near the Austrian border, for the initial training. A month later, for the advanced training he was sent to the School of Artillery at Hajmáskér in the central North-west. By that time, the Soviet-Russians were rapidly advancing from the East and approaching the national border of Hungary. A measure to safeguard the military training was the transfer of the artillery school outside Hungary, thus both staff and trainee artillerymen were taken to near Stettin by the North Sea in Nazi occupied Poland. However, owing to his fluency in German, Andrew was picked out to train and serve as army interpreter-translator from German to Hungarian at a specialist crash course in Berlin. He wore the Hungarian military uniform during this national service time in Germany.

Berlin at the time was subjected to the heaviest of Allied air bombardment. Soon, the military centre of translation was relocated to the small, safe Bavarian village called Pressath. By March 1945 Prassath was taken by the American Army pushing forward from the West. Later, when word was received that they were approaching the village, Andrew discarded his military uniform, changed to a civilian outfit and tried to melt into the village folk. He nevertheless was picked out as a suspect person and taken to a P.O.W. camp in Bamberg for interrogations. By producing his student identity card issued by the agricultural college in his home town Keszthely, Andrew managed to convince the camp authorities that he was a work-experience student stuck in Germany during his studies.

He was set free and soon formed his own band which was contracted by the entertainment unit of the American forces. He performed with his band until his migration to Australia where he saw his real future.

In June 1949, Andrew arrived in Australia as a refugee, then termed as a "Displaced Person" from Naples aboard the American, Liberty class ship "General Black" to disembark in Pier 1, Melbourne, after a four week long voyage. He was taken to Bonegilla migrant camp where he stayed on with fellow refugees until the end of the coal miners nationwide strike which had paralysed Australian life.

The Tasmanian government had sought migrants from that camp to fill acute job vacancies in the island state. His compulsory but paid work contract for 2 years was an unskilled conveyor belt worker's job with Arnold Biscuit Company, in their production factory at Liverpool Street, Hobart. After a while, following a work reassignment, when Andrew realised that the new job held a serious risk of injury to his hands or fingers owing to his duties involving machinery, he strongly protested and sought an alternate and suitable work through the Commonwealth Employment Service. The CES understood his case and sent him to his next job at Watsons Plant Nursery in Harrington Street where he worked happily for about 6 months. Whilst still within the contract period, the CES offered Andrew a job at the Prince of Wales picture theatre in Macquarie Street where his wife Maria was already working. During his full time employment with the movie theatre, he was engaged by Leicagraph Photographic Studio as cameraman. Working part time and on commission, he attended many hundreds of weddings, birthdays, engagement parties, christenings, baby photos, etc.

Once out of his contract as DP, Andrew became a door-to-door salesman working on commission and started to sell household Electrolux vacuum cleaners in day time, whilst continuing on with his "on call" and "on commission" arrangement with Leicagraph as their cameraman for all social occasions. By 1965, Andrew became fluent in English and terminated his engagements with both employers to carve himself a new career in the insurance industry. In the ensuing time the Szabo family grew happily with the arrival of their daughter Elizabeth in 1950 and of Andrew George in 1956. Andrew Szabo thus joined MLC Insurance and was engaged as sales representative, with commission based remuneration. Legal & General Insurance was his next employer. The two years spent with these two companies did not just provide a comfortable livelihood but was also a professionally enriching experience for him.

Aiming higher, Andrew became senior field representative of Medical Benefit Fund of Australia (MBF) with a responsibility to service existing MBF members, advise and sign on new ones in an area extending from New Town to Brighton. His work thus consisted of liaising with both administration and workers of 187 industrial companies and organisations across "his" territory. Earning the coveted "Salesman of the Year" award in 1983 enhanced his standing with his employers and fellow representatives. Andrew worked in that capacity with the MBF for 20 years with diligence until his retirement.

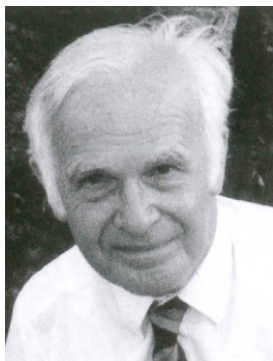
In order to fulfil his lifelong passion for playing music, he joined the Musician Union of Tasmania, a must to enable playing with established, professional bands. He played for many years with the well known local pianist John Sydney as his accompanist-drum player. Despite his advanced years, Andrew is still a sought after as a band musician, playing with swing and country music bands performing regularly at retirement homes to cheer up the residents.

For 62 years Andrew was wholeheartedly supported by his loving wife Maria in all his endeavours until her passing away. With her help he managed to secure an enviable, prosperous and most happy lifestyle in their adopted country, Australia. Apart from his son and daughter, Andrew is very proud to have 5 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren. He held membership of Howrah Bowls Club Inc. for 6 years and Tasmania Golf Club Inc. for 17 years, enjoying the relaxing sports these clubs offered during a hectic lifestyle.

Andrew Szabo always nurtured his Hungarian heritage with zeal. In Hobart he is the active, oldest original post-WWII migrant, the last founding member of St. Stephen Hungarian Association established in 1952 but defunct since the early 1980's to give way to its successor, the Hungarian Association of Tasmania, Inc. He is a respected veteran member of the Hungarian community who, on very many occasions, delivers speeches and recites heart rending patriotic national poems.

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7. **GABOR FOLDVARY Master of Science, Geologist, Palaeontologist, author, researcher, museum advisor**



Gabor Foldvary (Gábor Földvary) was born in Budapest on 7 February 1931, the younger son of Dr. Laszlo Foldvary forestry engineer and Katalin (nee Papp). The young family was composed of three siblings: Gabor the elder son, Madeleine and Laszlo.

Some of us in adolescence day-dream of foreign landscapes, wandering the roads to discovery to imagine ourselves explorers with the right to designate a name to a hitherto unknown rock, stone or fossil findings when stumbling on to them, yet how many of us later in life could be credited with such an honour in the name science? At Kemeny Zsigmond High School of Budapest, the serious student Gabor entertained such high hope not knowing that in future his dreams will become reality.

World War II and its aftermath brought untold misery and ravaged Hungary. Gabor’s high school studies were interrupted whilst the country rapidly turned into a Communist state marked by repression and inhumanity. In 1947 the family fled to Austria, then moved on to war torn Germany where they became refugees under the care of the International Refugee Organisation whilst awaiting resettlement. Gabor finished his high school in Passau, Germany. Termed officially as a Displaced Person, they arrived in Australia 1950. The male members of the family spent their first two years in obligatory assignment jobs in line with the DP scheme. Gabor started working in Sydney at a tannery works in Botany. The physically demanding, menial job he had was in the raw skin, raw hide treatment and preparation section, the basic stage to finished leather.

Despite the energy-sapping days at work, ambitious Gabor studied part time for long years (1957-1966) at the University of NSW. Achieving success, he finally obtained a “Bachelor of Science” degree. Good fortune would have him join the University of Sydney to fill an advertised staff position, that of Curator of the University’s Department of Geology and Geophysics, where the fossil collections Gabor was to curate for twenty five years of devoted and meticulous service.

Gabor Foldvary’s marriage to Australian born Beryl Searle was in 1957. The happy union brought forth three girls and one boy in the following years and thus enriched a stable and good family life in the eastern suburb of Matraville. Although immersed in science related professional work through the extensive and ever growing university collections under his care, Gabor’s yearned for higher achievement in research as a field scientist. So, between 1966 and 69 he did his “Master of Science” attending the university once more part time. His coursework Master’s degree incorporated a substantial research project that entailed the uncovering of the geologic and palaeontologic nature of a 400 km² terrain in Trundle-Condobolin area of Central Western New South Wales. His demanding task turned out to be of high importance since it revealed numerous hitherto unknown data, specimens and fossils. For good measure, after establishing the presence of an unnamed mountain range and a dominant high hill in the area, following due survey work he was able to name and register his discoveries with the Geographical Names Board of NSW “christening” them as Botfield Range and Bogan Hill.

Another first to Gábor's credit was the study of his find, a 400 million years old trilobite that he named Cheirurus Crotalocephalus regius. He had many such fossil discoveries officially yet unknown to palaeontology. Scientific research and analysis work on them is ongoing and is another one of his passionate preoccupations.

He has a continuing interest in the research of Silurian and Devonian corals, brachiopods, gastropods, bivalves and trilobites of Central Western NSW. All of the specimens that Gábor has collected are held in the fossil collection of the Australian Museum.

*In 1969 and in 1975 Gábor went to Hungary and other Central European countries to study the geoscientific conditions of the Carpathian Mountain Ranges and the enclosing basin area through his extensive field studies, a project he undertook to establish, also contributing many unknown data to the world of science. In his 570 page book (his magnum opus) entitled "Geology of the Carpathian region" published by World Scientific, Singapore in 1988, he presented an outline of all the scientific findings on this Central European area, not attempted before, which met a great deal of appreciation by his peers in academia and in the mining sector. He also co-authored the book "Geology of Hungary" which appeared in 1996. He wrote the chapter "The Area: Its Geology and Geography" in *Quest for a New Central Europe* ed. J. Varsányi. His various scientific articles published in journals, the most recent was in 2009: "The Carpathian Mountain range and the enclosed interior", *Central European Journal of Geosciences* 1 (3): 291-302. The paper "Siluro-Devonian Invertebrates from Central New South Wales", *Records of the Western Australian Museum Supplm. No. 58: 81-102* appeared in 2000. The paper "Pseudoplasmopora (Tabulata) in the Siluro-Devonian of Eastern Australia with comments on its global biogeography" in *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales* 127, 175-189 was published in 2006. The inspirational Gábor is a contributing editor of the *Hungarian World Encyclopedia (English Edition in 3 volumes, from 2006 onwards)*.*

Since his retirement in 1991, Gábor has been an honorary associate of the School of Geosciences at the University of Sydney. He also has been doing work curating the fossil collection at the Australian Museum during this time as a dedicated volunteer, an authority with a record of over twenty years of service. His contact with the Hungarian Institute of Earth Sciences in Budapest is a continuum of exchange of views. Outside of university life, Gábor has been a committee member of the Sydney Mozart Society for twelve years and is interested in the study of Buddhism as a philosophy of life. In his field of science, the well reputed geologist and palaeontologist is not just a member of the Hungarian Historical Society in Sydney but has the honour to be its president since 1982. He is the publisher of "Magyar Mult" a Sydney based journal in Hungarian catering for the Hungarian-Australians who nurture their original culture and past history that was much distorted during the era of communism in Hungary (1947-1989).

Living in marital bliss for 55 years, he is the proud grandfather of two girls and one boy. Gábor Földváry, the multifaceted brilliant man epitomizes high achievement in life. He in fact gives a new dimension to the words of perseverance and juggling in life.

8. Major Felix Fazekas MC (1928-1998), Major in the Australian Army



Felix Fazekas was born on 2 August 1928 in Szolnok, a major city at the heart of the Great Hungarian Plain and on the banks of the river Tisza. He was the son of ethnic Hungarians Károly and Teréz Fazekas (nee Váczy) who were born outside today's Hungary in the pre-1918 Austro-Hungarian Empire's Hungarian Délvidék territories now part of Serbia which were lost in WWI and had become part of Serbian Vojvodina province. Due to ongoing ostracism of the minorities in the old territories, many thousands of ethnic Hungarians migrated to the "mother country", north across the border. Felix's younger sister Flóra was also born in Szolnok which confirms the permanent settlement of the Fazekas family in that city. Felix went to school in Szolnok and by age 14, having completed Year 8 (1942), he entered the Military Academy High School for NCO's in Infantry (Szolnoki Katonai Altisztképző Kollégium), established a year earlier in 1941 and, with reference to his distinguished career later in life, inherently was the perfect candidate to a military future.

In March 1944 when Hungary, until then a thorny ally of Germany, sought peace with the Allies, it was invaded by Nazi Germany and a puppet government was installed. As a consequence the Hungarian military fell under the direct control of the Wehrmacht. From then on, all previously military trained boys aged 16 and over were conscripted for national service within Hungary. Felix had to join the Hungarian Army at age 16. By the end of WWII, a year later, he was a battle experienced youth soldier. Both countries tried to support the common war effort with their youth at home deployed on paramilitary duties as military auxiliaries whilst their respective main armies fought at the Eastern Front in Russia along the Don River. Both German and Hungarian armies suffered heavy military setbacks during fierce battles, retreated and after the 7 weeks siege of Budapest by the Soviet Army, a decisive Hungarian defeat ended the war in Hungary. When German forces together with many Hungarian divisions retreated from the Westward advance of Soviet Russians, they surrendered to the American forces charging Eastward in Bavaria. They became the Prisoners of War (POW) of the USA, under safe and humane American administration, a destination that every defeated combatant wanted to end up, in preference to capture by Soviet Russians.

When post-WWII Soviet occupied Hungary gradually turned into a merciless communist state, the rest of the Fazekas family fled to Austria as refugees and then moved to Bavaria, to eventually unite with Felix after his release from the POW camp. His family was among the countless thousands of forlorn refugees in war torn Germany whose life was a hard struggle and enduringness of deprivation. Felix learned German, did his matriculation, was accepted in the University of Heidelberg and pursued studies as a medical student whilst his family was under the protection and care of the International Refugee Organization, languishing in a Bavarian refugee camp.

In 1949, with two years of studies behind him, Felix and his family were accepted as immigrants by Australia under the post-WWII Displaced Persons (DP) Scheme. They left Naples on board the S/S "Dundalk Bay" to arrive in Melbourne on 14 September 1949. According to photo attached to his Alien Registration document, among other data, it is stated that Felix was 183cm (6ft) tall, a former Heidelberg University student.

Felix then discharged the 2 year prescribed work obligation under the DP Scheme, working in factory jobs as directed. Once out of his bond he became a Hospital Attendant at Northfield Mental Hospital (S.A.) and studied diligently to later qualify to become a Registered Mental Nurse, employed by the SA Hospitals Dept. at Northfield Mental Hospital. On 8 April 1955, swearing allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Felix became a naturalized Australian. Following his citizenship, Felix stayed on with his employers until May 1959, but in November 1955, he joined the volunteer Citizen Military Forces as a first step towards fulfilling his aspiration and goal for a military career in the Australian Army. His time in the CMF entailed strict military training at weekends, year-end studies and bivouacs, etc. In due course he was promoted from Private to Corporal, then to Sergeant and in October 1959 to Supervisor of Training in the CMF. Building up the necessary background, he confidently applied for enlistment in the Australian Army and was readily accepted since he was by then not just an experienced and trained soldier with tested leadership potential, but also met the trade or professional qualification standards by virtue of being a qualified male nurse.

On 4 September 1959 Felix commenced his military career from the rank of Lieutenant (Army No:48049) as Male Nurse Officer. Lieutenant Fazekas then saw his Army career in a different avenue open to him and decided to become an Infantry officer. Starting his training in the 1st Recruit Training Battalion he then served successively at the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment and at the Infantry Centre Ingleburn, NSW. In November 1964 he underwent the Tropical Warfare Instructors Course at Canungra Jungle Training Centre in Qld. According to the Chief Instructor's Course Report on graduates, Felix was a thoroughly competent and exemplary infantry officer who was ready in all respects of service in the Australian Army Training Team, Vietnam (AATTV).

By September 1965 he was a Captain posted to take command of the (AATTV) serving as senior Australian Adviser at Tra Bong Special Forces Camp in Quang Ngai Province. The AATV was both elite and unique. Its members were specially selected, it was small, and for its size it was one of the most highly decorated Units in the history of the Australian Army with four Victoria Crosses to its credit. The Unit existed during the Vietnam War only and its task was training, proficiency testing, advising and commanding a variety of Vietnamese forces fighting against the Viet Cong guerillas. On 13 November 1965 an extraordinary chain of combat events took place which culminated in Captain Fazekas receiving a rarely granted award, the Military Cross medal in recognition of his outstanding individual bravery and leadership under fire. His Military Cross citation being a 2 pages long account in detail, it could be summed up as follows:

“A Vietnamese Civil Irregular Defence Group Company was engaged in a search and destroy operation on three flanks. The centre one was accompanied by Capt. Fazekas whilst 2 other Army Advisors W/Officers K. Wheatley and R. Swanton accompanied the other platoons. When a Viet Cong Guerilla force and a well dug Main Force company attacked under heavy machine gun and rifle fire the right platoon suffered heavy casualties including W/O Swanton. Assistance was called and Capt. Fazekas who then rallied and led 15 Vietnamese soldiers to the scene of the action 800 metres away, rushing through knee deep rice paddies whilst under automatic fire but returning fire while on the move. He shot at least 2 enemy and continued the assault. This offensive action caused the enemy to abandon his position leaving behind significant number of weapons, dead and wounded.

Continuously under flanking fire Capt. Fazekas reorganised his platoon and directed fire with such success that the enemy ceased firing and withdrew. He then organised the evacuation of casualties and directed a successful air strike on the enemy. The Vietnamese Company Commander decided to withdraw. Capt. Fazekas aware that 2 wounded Australian Advisers were still unaccounted for, organised a relief force which arrived in the area at last light. He led a search force the next morning and recovered the bodies of W/Officers Wheatley and Swanton. The complete engagement resulted in 38 enemy killed and 40 wounded ”.

Captain Fazekas displayed heroic personal courage and outstanding resoluteness and aggressiveness in all his actions during the engagement, whilst continually under enemy fire and with complete disregard for his own personal safety. His actions inspired the Vietnamese soldiers to stand and fight, caused the rout of an enemy party of superior strength, inflicted significant casualties and enabled the capture of a considerable number of enemy weapons. Throughout the engagement, Captain Fazekas demonstrated outstanding attributes. His actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of individual bravery and professional dedication to duty in the Australian Army.

On that occasion Warrant Officer Kevin Wheatley was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross, the first such award since World War II. Felix Fazekas, then Captain, served with distinction fighting the Viet Cong. The U.S.A. awarded him their distinguished military decoration: the Silver Star. The tally of other medals and decorations were: Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Medal, Emblem of the Meritorious Unit Commendation, Vietnamese Unit Citation Gallantry Cross with Palm, Infantry Combat Badge, and the Service Badge: Returned from Active Service Badge.

At one stage during his combat duty tour in Vietnam, battle field experienced Captain Fazekas was seconded the 5th US Special Forces Group (Airborne a.k.a. Green Berets) and operated from their Headquarters. On 16 July 1966, passing the airborne assault training course he earned his Parachutist qualification. Felix Fazekas returned to Australia in September 1966 to take up his next commission of Instructor at the Canungra Jungle Training Centre. He was promoted to Major in April 1967 and served as Senior Instructor there from 10 Jan. 1967 to 10 Jan. 1969 with Battle Wing, conducting AATV courses, Junior Officers training and several Patrolling, Tracking Courses and specialist warfare courses to RMC Duntroon graduates. In March 1969 Felix was deployed to Singapore/Malaysia where his second overseas service took place. Returning home in July 1971 his next posting was that of 2nd in Command at 3RAR at Woodside, South Australia. Felix retired on 8 September 1976 after 17 years of distinguished service in the Australian Army.

General Peter Cosgrove, a past Chief of the Defence Force (2002-2005) in his memoirs “My Story” published in 2006, wrote half a page of commentary on Felix Fazekas, once a brother-at-arms in Malaysia/Singapore. On page 52-53 the General quotes that: “Another great character was Major Felix Fazekas. Felix was an extraordinary man. A Hungarian by birth, he had as a teenager been a member of the Hungarian Military Forces under German control during the last year of World War II. On emigrating to Australia, he joined the Australian Army and was highly regarded and widely admired for his professionalism and courage during his service with the Australian Army Training Team – Vietnam, for which he was awarded the Military Cross. The Training Team mentored and accompanied South Vietnamese Army units on combat operations.

He was a bit older than the average major, craggy, crew-cut and tough as nails, with a thick Hungarian accent to boot. He was battalion operations officer and part of his additional duties in getting the battalion ready to go to Malaysia was to act as our teacher in the Bahasa language. We are probably the only group of Aussies who speak Bahasa with guttural Hungarian intonation!"

In retirement Felix embarked on a totally different lifestyle, devoting much time to his farm at Langhorne Creek in country South Australia. In an idyllic environment, he enjoyed being active and working, loved his cattle, sheep and his many beloved pets at the farm.

Felix taught his 4 sons to love the wholesome country life and to respect nature. In 1977, he was made a member of the civilian Hungarian Knightly Order of Vitéz in recognition of his bravery in active military service during 1944-45 in the defence of the motherland. Major Felix Fazekas MC, the valiant soldier and veteran of wars, passed away in March 1998 victim of an incurable disease. He was a passionate patriot defending both his homeland and his adopted country in time of war. He was fiercely loyal to Australia and mankind's right to freedom.

Attila J. Urmenyhazi & extracts from " VIETNAM VETERANS - A Record of Service " book by A. M. Palmer

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9. **PETER ANTAL, jeweller, public servant, interpreter-translator, spiritual counsellor, reflective poet**



Among the forlorn refugees that Australia welcomed following the collapse of the world shattering Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was Peter (Péter) Antal who had taken part as a fired up patriotic youngster of sixteen, the consequence of which drastically changed the course of his future. Peter was born in Budapest in the summer of 1940 to a humble but tight knit and devout Christian family where he, his sister and 3 brothers grew up instilled with respect and nurture of human values. South of Budapest on Csepel island on the Danube River is the industrial heart of Hungary where his father István Antal was a tradesman-quality control supervisor of a large engineering and steel mill complex. The familial home was in the residential township part of the large island. During Peter's formative years his share in caring for their grandmother at home struck by a serious illness was to give him a deeper understanding and sensitivity towards compassion, charity and kinship values that guided him throughout life.

After completing junior high school, Peter was apprenticed by a company of watchmakers-goldsmiths and attended trade high school in pursuit of qualification in his chosen trade. With the outbreak of the Revolution on 23 October 1956, Peter joined the ranks of the revolutionary youth whose selfless role remains legendary in the annals of European history. From 4 November the uprising was extinguished by a militarily far superior Soviet Union, all routes towards Western borders of Hungary were controlled and borders sealed. Hard as it was to leave his loved ones behind, Peter sought his destiny in a free Western society country and thus decided as a first step to cross the Southern border into Yugoslavia. He successfully ended up in a refugee camp in Osijek, Croatia under the care of the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) until departure to Australia by boat via Trieste, Italy.

Peter stepped ashore in Melbourne in 1957 aboard the migrant ship "Aurelia". He was taken to the migrant hostel-camps at Bonegilla, Vic. where he stayed for 3 months before his employment at the Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Scheme at Kenny's Knob. Peter worked there for a year as a kitchen hand in the cafeteria until the Tumut 1 project was completed. Returning to Melbourne he found work at a Swanston Street jeweller, gaining competence in that trade over the six years employment there. Parallel to his occupation Peter attended High School to matriculate in 1969, all in pursuit of a better knowledge and masterly command of English which he saw as key to tertiary studies and a professional career. Inspired by good will, benevolence and kinship bond values, early in the 1960's Peter spent several years regularly visiting a Pentridge gaol inmate to provide friendship to a fellow Hungarian but otherwise a total stranger who was serving a reduced sentence of 27 years. That moving experience was the starting point of his spiritual calling, the passion to reach out and try to lift out the downtrodden. In anticipation of meeting similar challenges and in order to steer through his spiritually uncharted life, he took seriously attendance to church services and immersed in the study of the Bible

In 1967 Peter, the independent single man, left his employment and went to Canada to test that country's offering. He sought and found work at the Montreal World Fair, at "Expo 1967". At the Fair, in the Atlantic Provinces Pavilion he was assistant cook for two seasons, preparing seafood delights. Coincidentally Peter's enthusiasm for introspective poetry writing and self-confidence culminated in his composing his first poem in English he titled: "Expo For Man and His World". Afterwards, as the novelty of his Canadian experience wore off, he decided to return to Melbourne back to his trade and to studying. Upon completion of high school and successful matriculation, Peter joined the Federal Public Service in January 1969 and in 1970 enrolled to the RMIT University for part time studies.

Peter graduated as Bachelor of Public Administration in 1988. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Melbourne Office was to be his professional career station for 29 years of diligent service. However, in the ensuing years his Public Service Department employer underwent several changes in title and structure and he, in due course, retired from the technically specialized Australian Trade Commission of Melbourne. During his long tenure, Peter's administrative tasks and responsibilities gradually grew as his job titles differed. Administrative Clerk, Publicity Officer, Special Project Nominee, Trade Development Officer and Hot Line Advisor. A blissful event in Peter's life was his marriage to Ilona in 1987.

A supplementary function at times linked to his departmental post was translating and interpreting to and from Hungarian whenever such a necessity arose. Additionally he worked in that capacity for the Public Prosecutor's Office, Victoria Police and was interpreter to any Hungarian delegation on official visit. Falling on his handy linguistic ability and his contribution towards boosting international trade, was his organizing the formation of the Australian-Hungarian Chamber of Commerce. In 1986 he invited all Hungarian origin exporters and the Head of his Department to meet and set a constituted body that was to be duly registered the following year. For his long and distinctive public service, in 1997 Peter was honoured to receive a departmental certificate of recognition in 1997, the Award for Effective Team Work. After his retirement in 1999, he was engaged twice to render service to visitation programs, the first of which was later in that year for Árpád Göncz, President of Hungary and his official party.

Peter's involvement in charitable endeavour never ceased during his career employment. Endowed with a deep social conscience his "Good Samaritan" activities were demonstrative of his commitment to Christ, and the needy in the community. In line with this inner calling he trained in the Hungarian Reformed Church, under Rev. I. Maczi and Rev. Francis Antal, studying theology, public speaking, counseling and all other necessary subjects which consequently enabled his entry to the clergy, specifically to the Hungarian Reformed Church of Australia where he was ordained into religious ministry in 1991 as a Missionary Pastor. He had to apply this vocational pursuit necessarily on part time basis when he was a public servant. Thus Peter's spare time was spent in spiritual counseling, mentoring in the Youth for Christ Hungarian movement, caring for the disadvantaged and the elderly in his local community from Wantirna, Vic. where all the social activities of the Hungarian community are centered.

A keen interest of ever active Peter now a retired but only from paid employment, is the monitoring and analysis of international economic trends and developments, as the continuum of some of his public service functions in the past, thus is ever ready for a learned comment in the subject to his entourage. An ardent intellectual pursuit, a mind stretching interest of Peter is to compose introspective poems in both Hungarian and English, religious or secular in theme. His countless in number poems are to be anthologized in the near future. Rev. Peter Antal's guiding force in most of his narratives is his concern for society that he observes is discarding intrinsic moral values in this complex and fast changing world. He believes that this phenomenon may lead to disastrous outcome and emergence of debasement to our collective detriment.

EXPO FOR MAN AND HIS WORLD

*Man and his world as we find it,
 Man and his world what's behind it?
 Do we know this world as we would,
 And are we doing all that we should?*

*In this big world what is man's aim?
 In this big world what can we claim?
 All these questions we must answer,
 After seeing this great venture.*

*For centuries we have pondered,
 And many secrets we unfolded.
 To show the world what we can do,
 Our best effort is seen in Expo.*

*This World Fair is like dreams come true,
 We see past all that is new.
 Many nations and their achievements
 Are combined here with entertainment.*

*This wonderful celebration
 Is the birthday of a great nation.
 But what of those who can't celebrate:
 Whose lives' danger is just too great?*

*Guests at this long, happy birthday
 Throng to learn life's most worthwhile way.
 That man with a world of his own
 Should know better than he has known*

*Man and his world as we find it,
 Man and his world don't deny it!
 From Expo on should be better
 Till there won't be war and beggar.*

Peter Antal,
Montreal, 1967

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10. TIBOR VEREBES (1915-2002) Barrister & Attorney, Church Elder, opera singer, romantic poet



The son of a middle class Hungarian family of Jewish faith, Tibor Verebes was born on 16 April 1915 in Hódmezővásárhely, a large, affluent market town in the south-east of Hungary, in flat grass land country near the river Tisza and in the heart of the Great Hungarian Plain. His father Imre Weis was the owner of a menswear retail store whilst mother Jolán (nee Tischler) looked after the family comprising of his elder brother Jenő and younger sister Magda. Young Tibor grew up in that quiet provincial population centre which was endowed with a rich museum, baroque churches, triumphal wells, statues, parks, a swimming pool and a thermal spa. He had a privileged childhood and youth; never experienced dull years since he was able to do gymnastics, play the violin and follow his interest in classical music, at the same time, he was a first rate student at school. Tibor attended the local Bethlen Gábor Református Gimnázium (est.1723) to matriculate from that elite high school in 1933.

In 1928 after the death of Tibor's father, well before the establishment and spread of Nazism in Germany and subsequent Jewish persecution in Europe, the Weis family chose to adopt officially the Verebes name and changed their religion to Calvinism. Much later, when anti-Jewish restrictive and discriminatory laws were introduced in Hungary by April 1939 in order to appease and strike a deal with Nazi Germany for the recovery of overwhelmingly Hungarian-inhabited lands (Felvidék/ Southern Slovakia and Erdély/Transylvania) lost after WWI to Slovakia and Romania respectively, many families changed their name to avoid persecution in that era. Those who could afford to quit, left the country legally. During the occupation of Hungary by Nazi Germany in March 1944, Tibor's mother and sister were deported to German concentration camps but they miraculously survived and returned to Hungary at the end of WWII.

In 1933, the same year that he finished his secondary education, Tibor started his tertiary studies at "Ferenc József Tudományegyetem" University Law School in Szeged, the busy second metropolis in Hungary after Budapest, 25 km. from home. Tibor graduated to obtain Doctorate at Law in 1937. He gained his law practice license and worked for himself, opening his own law office in Budapest. Later he was called up and discharged his military service, serving in a cavalry unit at home and in Gyergyóholló, a Northern Transylvanian town (called Corbu in today's Romania) when Hungary, under the Second Vienna Award of 1940, was granted part of her former territories lost after WWI. Following his return to civilian life once more he worked for himself, coming back to legal practice in Budapest. This venture was not to last more than a couple of years when he joined the Hungarian Red Cross at their Headquarters to become their Chief Legal Advisor in charge of their Legal Department until 1949, the year he and his family were to flee Hungary.

Since his university student days, Tibor kept up with his long standing passion for singing, music and literature. So much so that he later attended the Budapest Opera's Performing Arts Academy to gain the Diploma in Singing (Operas and Operettas). Alongside the workload in his legal career, he performed on stage at the Budapest Opera House in minor singing roles, time consuming rehearsals, etc. These were demanding additional responsibilities yet to him a deeply fulfilling experience.

However, eventually Tibor had to give up part time professional singing when he married Ibolyka (nee Asztalos) on 9 August 1947. As a lawyer, he concentrated on his onerous work at the Red Cross whilst considering entry into politics, in strong opposition to the Hungarian Communist Party then resorting to power grab through deceitful plotting and illegal acting whilst the country was under Soviet Russian occupation and home grown Communist control. Tibor's political stance and aspiration were to be short lived when an old school friend who had become a member of the new Secret Police, advised him and his family to leave Hungary since he became a marked man to be hunted after the imminent government takeover by the Communists. Heeding prudent counsel, the Verebes family with son Tibor Verebes Jnr. (born on 28th April 1948) hurriedly departed Budapest in October 1949 in a clandestine fashion, leaving all property and possessions behind. They made it to the border to begin a new chapter in life as demoralized refugees in Austria.

In Austria, the young Verebes family was under the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) care like tens of thousands of others passing through their camps. The refugees were the flow of escapees from untold misery caused by WWII and, a few years later, by the inhumane repression in the Soviet dominated Communist countries in Eastern and Central Europe. Under Australia's Displaced Person Resettlement Scheme, The Verebes family was selected and in the Italian port of Genoa, they boarded the migrant ship SS Oxfordshire which arrived in Sydney in March 1950.

The Verebes family did not speak a word of English at the time. They were taken to the migrant camp, converted ex-army barracks outside the township of Greta in the Hunter Valley, NSW. Soon after, they moved to Brisbane where Tibor's 2 year work contract required working for the Main Roads Department. His first job was that of a humble pick-and-shovel worker, a ditch digger. Once out of his contract he managed to obtain some better type of menial work at the Olympic Tyre Factory. Sometime later he started working for a fellow Hungarian, as a commercial traveler/salesman of men's apparel and clothing, servicing outback Western Queensland. When Tibor attained a degree of self-confidence generated by his adequate command of English that gradually developed his since arrival in Sydney, he yearned for re-engagement in the legal field and pursue his true vocation in life.

A friendly neighbour who was a friend of the Brisbane City Council Town Clerk and also knew of Tibor's Hungarian past, his qualifications and his burning desire to follow a legal career, helped him obtain employment as an Articled Law Clerk engaged in Conveyancing work in Council's City Solicitors Office. On 8 August 1958 he was appointed Justice of the Peace.

He started studying Law part time at home to become a Barrister doing his Exams through the Bar Association. In 1960 Tibor switched employers to join well known Brisbane law firm Cranston McEachern & Halligan, as an Articled Law Clerk with the promise of a position as a Solicitor if he should become qualified. The Principal, Brigadier Cranston McEachern, the pre-WWII brilliant lawyer and ex-Singapore POW took him under his wings, whilst Tibor worked and studied diligently to eventually pass his Bar Exams to the amazement of his bosses with the highest marks ever recorded to that date. After his success, Brigadier McEachern's frank admission was that: "I would not have hired you if I was not pretty sure that you will fail your Bar Examinations, thus stay with us as an Articled Clerk for a long, long time". Nevertheless, the nice boss was happy to be disproved when Tibor became a Barrister first on 21 May 1962 and a year later a practicing Solicitor on 27 May 1963.

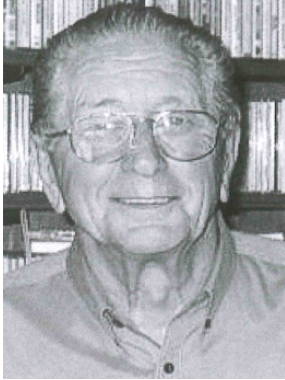
Tibor set up his own law firm in 1967 with a partner, then ventured to work for himself, to relocate and practice on the Gold Coast. He specialized in Criminal Law, Company Law, Commercial Lease Agreements, Bankruptcy, Litigation, Conveyancing, Insolvency and Family Law. The successful lawyer then merged his business with his previous employer and became a full partner in the same law firm he had worked for before: Cranston, McEachen & Halligan, Lawyers and Attorneys representing the well reputed large law firm of their Gold Coast branch. When Cranston McEachern & Halligan decided to close the Gold Coast Office, Tibor left the firm and again set up his own practice at Surfers Paradise on the Gold Coast rather than work in the Brisbane Office and the family moved from Brisbane to live at Burleigh Heads. Tibor was professionally very active until his retirement at 70 years old in 1985. In 1993 he received with great pride, from his alma mater university in Szeged, their rare award, the "Golden Diploma" in recognition of his lifelong application of legal expertise to benefit fellow men.

Always in communion with spiritual life, Tibor's soul was well nurtured through his lifelong association with St Paul's Presbyterian Church in Brisbane where he was a worshipful member and an Elder of that Church. Tibor was a totally devoted family man strong enough to get home straight after a hard day's work, skipping drinks at the pub with colleagues and associates. He was known to love literature, to write exquisite and romantic Hungarian poetry but somehow never published any of them.

Apart from a few good close friends, his social contact with the Hungarian community in the Gold Coast was negligible. The progeny of the Verebes parents are: son, Tibor Verebes Jnr. (born Budapest 1948), grandson, Steven and granddaughter Anita making up the family clan. Highly respected Dr. Tibor Verebes JP was an intellectual and a refined gentleman with a happy predisposition who enjoyed 55 years of blissful marriage with Ibolyka before his passing away on 25 November 2002.

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**11. TIBOR F. BORLAI (1929-2011), Consulting Electrical Engineer,
Honorary Consul, Ethnic Radio Broadcaster**



Tibor Ferenc Borlai was born in Budapest on May 4, 1929. Following completion of his secondary studies at the Piarista Gimnázium High School (run by the R. C. Order Fathers) he studied electrical engineering, circuitry design and drafting etc. at the Kandó Kálmán Electrotechnologia, a specialist tertiary institution. He graduated in 1950 as specialist electrical engineer in the field of light industrial installations projects. From 1950 to 1956 Tibor was employed at various Hungarian State owned industrial planning and design organisations namely at Iparterv, Könnnyüipari Tervező Iroda, Lakóterv and A.É.T.I. Starting to work as a draftsman he then was transferred to planning and design assignments. For 26 months, between 1951-53, he discharged his compulsory military service with the Signals and Air Surveillance Corps of the Hungarian Army.

When the world shaking Hungarian Revolution of 1956 against Soviet (USSR) occupation and communist tyranny to gain freedom and liberty erupted in Budapest, normal life came to a halt giving rise to heroic fights against the oppressors in the bloodied streets of his native city. Among Tibor's most horrific recollections was the time when he attended cries for help from an ambulance. After the Soviet occupiers had machine-gunned the Red Cross van from a tank, he cautiously ventured over waving a white sheet from a stick, to help carry to safety a seriously wounded woman emergency doctor, later identified as Dr. Vera Lehőcz. On his second sortie, Tibor tried to help evacuate on stretcher with an unknown person the second injured man, the ambulance driver. Tibor was assuring him that he'd be fine when a burst of machine-gun fire came from the same tank and the injured man's head shattered before his eyes. He was lucky not to get killed himself whilst trying to save others. The Revolution was eventually crushed by the overwhelming military might of the Soviets which precipitated an exodus of 200,000 forlorn Hungarian refugees from their country, mainly through Austrian refugee camps.

Australia selected and welcomed about 14,500 Hungarians as migrant-new settlers from European refugee camps. Among them were Tibor then aged 27 and his father, full of hope and ambition. Soon after arrival, Tibor realised that without a working knowledge of English his qualifications were useless while livelihood demands forced him to engage in menial work. So, his first job was that of a trench digger/council employee. When he explained his qualifications and professional background to fellow workers, to his astonishment he felt hidden derision if not ignorance couched under remarks like: "- Forget the past brother, forget where you came from, act and think like us Aussies, mate". He took their utterances in good humour. Later on in life, when reminiscing about his beginner's experience, his quip would be: "that's how I started my career in life". His determination to improve on his English paid dividends. Changing jobs to gradually get back to his profession, he worked as an electrical circuitry draftsman and also as electrician's assistant. By 1962 he was working as an electrical design project manager, with full professional recognition by the authorities.

By 1972 Tibor was running his own successful business as a registered Chartered Professional Engineer (C.P. Eng.), Member of Institution of Engineers (M.I.E. Aust.) and also Member of the Illuminating Engineering Society (M.I.E.S. Aust.). His company was called T. F. Borlai & Partners, Consulting Engineers, based at Karana Downs, Queensland, but operated projects in Brisbane and across the State.

Tibor always openly admitted that his Australian wife Gillian, from whom he enjoyed the deepest of understanding, was of great assistance to him throughout life and that her love for Hungary and things Hungarian was as passionate as his own. Owing to her encouragement, Tibor launched himself into active participation in community life in Brisbane. He was one of 6 founders of 4MBS FM radio station still broadcasting today.

From the early 1970's his voluntary work contribution was to present and manage the classical music broadcast of that radio station, later to broadcast the Hungarian language program on Community Radio 4EB. He was a classical music enthusiast, proud of his roomful of fine cassette and disc collection. In recognition for his service to music lovers, he received the Franz Liszt Memorial Plaque, of which only 4 were presented in the world, on 11 February 1987 in commemoration of the centenary of Franz Liszt's death.

His technical drafting board saw countless circuitry designs first tendered then adopted for large public building projects in Queensland. The work always entailed post-design field control at building construction sites and specialist discussions with the electrical contractors carrying out his installation specifications. The apex of his work, the achievement he felt most fulfilled by, was the commission of designing and the project managing of the entire electrical circuitry of the Hungarian Pavilion in the World Expo 88 held in Brisbane. In 1989 he became a Justice of the Peace in Queensland. By request of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce in 1990, Tibor helped with the organisation of the successful Hungarian Industrial and Commerce Exhibition in Brisbane. Whenever a party of visitors from Hungary arrived in Queensland for official business, he would readily volunteer his time as needed.

He presumed that his successful professional career coupled with esteem earned through his well appreciated community work were pivotal in the offer of Honorary Consul in Queensland that was made to him in 1991. He accepted the great honour of representing Hungary and discharged with dedication and diligence the consular duties required. In carrying out his consular commission, the time, energy and at times financial outlay were never considered. In this respect he loved his honorary, prestigious station so that he could better render service to fellow Hungarian-Australians.

The benevolent couple Tibor and Gillian sponsored to Australia in 1987, a Marika Simon and her baby son Janika who required a liver transplant. In Hungary and Australia \$110,000 was raised for the operation. Janika was 13 months old and weighed 5kgs. They housed and cared for the family for 14 months. Prof. Dr. Stephen V. Lynch performed the successful liver transplant 8 months after their arrival in Australia. Janika is now a grown man studying English and Maths at the University of Budapest. He has a younger brother named Tibor who was born in Australia whilst living with the Borlais, becoming their Godson. In November 2001, the Hungarian Minister of Health conferred upon Tibor and Gillian an honorary diploma in acknowledgement of their devoted and successful charitable activity in saving the life of Janika Simon.

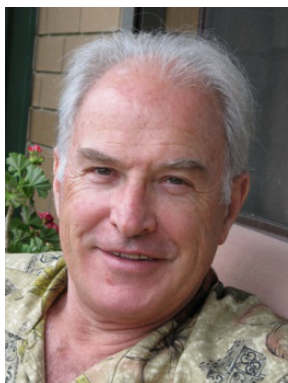
The official Hungarian Vitéz Order's Bronze Cross was conferred upon Tibor in September 2008 in recognition of his lifelong endeavours to serve Hungarian interests particularly abroad through fostering of international relationships. In June 2010, he was made a Member of the prestigious Hungarian Knightly Order of Saint László (incorporated in 1861) for outstanding lifelong services to his native country.

In February 2011, Tibor received one of Hungary's highest honours, the Medal of Merit Cross, for distinguished service to Hungarian-Australian relations, the promotion and nurture of Hungarian ethnic culture, particularly in the field of music.

Tibor and Gillian Borlai have two children: Roderick and Liza and eventually four grandchildren. In recognition of his tireless work to his ethnic community, he was awarded the Centenary of Federation Medal in January 2003, from the State Governor of Queensland. The kind, family man of happy predisposition, the successful achiever Tibor Borlai passed away on 30 June 2011. The Governor of Queensland Penelope Wensley AC and hundreds of people attended the funeral of this distinguished and inspirational man, whilst Mrs. Borlai received a personal note of condolence from the Governor General Quentin Bryce AC, CVO.

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12. ATTILA J. URMENYHAZI, administrative manager, accredited translator (Federal & State Governments), research writer



Attila (Attila József Ürményházi) was born in Istanbul, Turkey, on 9 September 1938, of ethnic Hungarian, Roman Catholic parents. His father József Ürményházi and mother Magdolna (nee Sebő) were both from Budapest. His father was a WWI veteran, a proud recipient of the Royal Hungarian Order of Merit (1935), yet a humble tradesman hat maker, later an industrialist in hat manufacturing, a pioneer who had established the local industry in modern Turkey, rising from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. He was specifically invited by the Turkish government under their founder-leader and first president Kemal Atatürk when in 1928, among countless sweeping legislation, head gear reforms were introduced banning the fez and various turbans for adoption of the then Western world's fedora or trilby hats and cloth caps. The manufactured and fully fashioned hats were made from rabbit fur, much less from wool and worn by properly attired gentry across the world until the end of the 1960's. The end products enjoyed fame similar to that of the renowned "Akubra" brand in Australia.

Attila's parents registered his birth in Istanbul with the Hungarian authorities in Budapest as a Hungarian national. With 3 children born between 1934-38 in Istanbul, the parents plan was to return for good to Hungary for their education and upbringing in the homeland. However, the outbreak of World War II, the misery afterwards in ravaged Hungary and the onset of tyrannical communism in a Soviet style repressive regime, made the family's stay in Turkey permanent. They lived there as partly welcomed, partly tolerated foreigners in a secular but Moslem country with widely different culture, language and lifestyle. Particularly grateful that during that war, neutral Turkey offered them a safe haven, a secure life and the chance to maintain a comfortable livelihood, the Urményházis nevertheless retained and nurtured their Hungarian culture, language and the Christian heritage both within the family and outside among the small expatriate Hungarian community of Istanbul. Attila, like his siblings, attended bilingual French-Turkish private schools to complete his secondary education while experiencing a relatively privileged childhood and youth in a rather quasi-European, Christian milieu. At high school he learned grammatical English.

Creative and talented in drawing and design, Attila then won entry to and attended the State Academy of Fine Arts a tertiary institution for 5 semesters only. His art studies came to an abrupt end upon the passing away of his father which necessitated the takeover of the manufacture and retail side of the large enterprise where his late father had 2 Turkish equal partners. In compliance with family council decision, Attila worked for three years in the large enterprise albeit in a junior capacity whilst attending a business accounting course at the nationally accredited American Business and Commerce College in Istanbul. The study effort was mainly to familiarise himself with basic accounting so that he could become accounts savvy, help underpin the security of the family and also to acquire for himself a business /accounts skill as a "fall back" in life. In 1958, at age 20, completing the 1 year course, he acquired basic bookkeeping skills with certificate. This skill enabled him later to be classed as a skilled applicant for migration to Australia, subject to being sponsored.

In Istanbul, at adulthood, upon reaching 18 years of age, the youngsters of the family officially renounced their Hungarian (communist state) citizenship to re-register themselves as stateless aliens, all the same renewing every year their residency permit by the grace of the Turkish authorities. When they sought Turkish citizenship soon after, this was formally denied to the siblings born in Turkey where “Turkey is for the Turks” culture of chauvinism, ethnic and deep religious divide and discrimination both at law and in society prevailed. They had to face their future and emigration to a welcoming, multi-ethnic, pluralist “New World” country offering Western values, absolute legal equality and equal opportunity in every field. After Attila’s own exhaustive personal enquiries and application to the Roman Catholic Church, he managed to obtain from the Australian Catholic Immigration Services (ACIS) their official migration sponsorship. The ACIS was then run by the R.C. Archdiocese of Adelaide. He had to meet all other criteria i.e. pass all statutory security, character and medical checks and tests imposed by the Australian Immigration authorities then operating through the British Consulate General in Istanbul. and also pay for all his fares to Australia.

Attila set off to Australia in late November 1959, aged 21. Unsure about his future yet hopeful Attila boarded a Turkish passenger ship in Istanbul to Genoa, Italy. There he transferred later to a modern Italian liner named “Sydney” and left Europe to experience a dreary 24 days long sea odyssey. During the crossing of the Great Australian Bight the passengers encountered 4 days of frightening stormy seas, mountainous waves and exposure to harrowing sea sickness before disembarking on 13 January 1960 at Melbourne’s Station Pier, the gateway to a new life in Australia.

Attila’s first 9 months were spent in Adelaide and then he moved to Melbourne, changing addresses, job hopping and mastering English whilst doing dirty, menial type of non-descript work in factories. Always on the lookout to move to better paid positions in an era of low skill jobs abundance, he took them as a kind of inevitable military conscription, pretending to himself his universal “National Service” that was just abolished in Australia at the time. Arriving in the ‘big pond’ Sydney in 1962, the self-confident young man soon found work in accounts offices to begin a serious career path in accounting from primary bookkeeping to medium accounting, and in due course, attending the local Technical College’s Accounting & Business Management Course in the evenings. However, he was not to graduate as he quit studies in his final year at college due to hard pressing issues involving family relocation and financial commitments.

The lack of an all-purpose degree or formal Australian accounting qualification never impacted on him seriously. He responded with written applications to positions advertised, and always sought and found an employer prepared to employ him after hands-on testing of competency, assessment of fast learning and supervisory potential in medium accounting after the customary one month probation. In Sydney his first desk job was that of a modest accounts clerk at Healing Television Distributors in Botany. Restless and job hopping for better paying positions his work progressed to monthly debtors, creditors, trial balance, profit & loss financial accounts. Always chasing a higher salary and a more rewarding employment, he gained entry into managerial duties in administration with corporate companies: procurement, internal audit, cost control, large scale payroll administration, etc. with companies like Bayer Australia, York Motors, Sanderson Motors, Rick Damelian Motors, Martin Halas Dental, and Bozoky Design & Bldg. Co.

The latter was a large scale home unit construction company where he was the accounts executive (administration) of the property developer. Attila's career in private enterprise lasted a full 33 years with the above 7 employers in an era marked by plenitude of well remunerated middle echelon corporate positions in booming, industrial Sydney.

For 20 years (1964-1984) Attila held an extra part-time freelance employment with the Commonwealth Dept. of Immigration, Sydney and with the NSW State Government. He worked as a "level 3" professional translator, tested and accredited by the National Authority for Translators & Interpreters (NAATI) in Turkish-English and English-Turkish languages. Putting to good use his linguistic skill provided a respectable side income which, at times, entailed full weekend work. This boost in finances helped meet the budget of his young and large family. With the commencement of Australian Immigration program for an orderly mass intake from Turkey in 1983, his part time job became redundant when a permanent post for an interpreter/translator was created in that country. Attila was naturalized and became an Australian citizen in 1964 and later a Justice of the Peace in NSW in 1982 and also in Tasmania in 2004.

Readily cherishing the common values of society, he integrated well into the mainstream of his adopted country, never forgetting his Hungarian root culture in the process. In fact he nurtured it with pride through his involvement with the Hungarian community in Sydney and later in Hobart. Attila married Rosalind Whitlock, a 4th generation Anglo-Celtic origin Australian, D.C. midwifery nurse in 1963. They had four children in their first 5 years of their 32 years of marriage. The family enjoyed a wholesome, peaceful and relatively prosperous Australian lifestyle in Engadine, one of the leafy Southern suburbs of Sydney. Following marital estrangement, Attila retired relatively early from paid work and moved to Hobart in January 1995 to settle there permanently. Frankly, the business world and "bean counting" of sorts was never a passion but an endurance test for him, a necessary means to have a rock solid financial security throughout his productive life when he carried the responsibility to care for his family in bygone years.

In Hobart, Attila joined and remains a member of several clubs to make the most out of life in the attractive port city where he found an assortment of satisfactory social niches and opportunity for the great outdoors like bushwalking and also sport. Among them: the Hungarian Association of Tasmania, Pandani Bushwalking Club, Friends of the Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart Film Society, Tattersall's Aquatic Club, Alliance Française de Hobart (French association where he served as vice-president for 6 years: 2001-2007) could be cited. He served as volunteer at the Red Cross bookshop for two years in 1998-1999. Training for fitness and competitive swimming that he had abandoned since his youth, was re-activated. A personal achievement was his 3rd placing in 100 metres freestyle in the 60-65 age group in Aussi Masters National Swim, the national swimming championships for seniors that were held in March 1998, in Hobart. In his last 9 years in Sydney and the first 10 years in Tasmania, Attila was an avid bushwalker and he took part in club organised long bushwalks for wilderness discovery and mountain climbing trips with camping at long weekends. The Tasmanian experience familiarized him with the hinterland of the magic isle.

Since 2005 Attila embarked on recreational writing which then turned into an altruistic passionate pursuit to uncover and put on record a biographical summation of mostly eminent Hungarian-Australians who had outstandingly contributed to Australian society.

They predominantly had arrived in Australia from refugee holding camps in Austria or Germany. His ongoing, non-commercial with keen interest in writing of thoroughly researched, totally fact based Hungarian refugee-migrant stories primarily to have samples of narratives kept for posterity at the National Library of Australia, the repository of Australian social history records, before they are lost forever to the public and future researchers of Hungarian immigration. So far he has authored several publications on differing subjects.

*For his book titled “The Hungarian Revolution-Uprising Budapest 1956” chronicling the Hungarian Revolution that was written in English and released to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of that tragic event in 2006, he received high honours and a commemorative silver medal from the World Federation of 1956 Hungarian Revolution Veterans. His other works are: “Discovering North Borneo” (travelogue), “Synopsis Biography of 20 preeminent Hungarian-Australians”, “Hungarian Presence and Immigration in Tasmania” (parts 1 & 2), “Medley of 10 Remarkable Hungarian Migrant Stories”, “ Un Centenaire De Rayonnement De La Culture Française: Histoire Abrégée D’une Institution 1883-1983 ” translates to: *The Origins of the Alliance Française*, with “History of the Alliance Française of Hobart” in French & English (1 booklet containing 2 subjects: the former in French, the latter in English). He is a regular contributor of articles to quarterly magazines of his milieu.*

Multicultural and aesthete Attila is fluent and erudite in 4 languages and, by predisposition, ready to help and to lend support to worthwhile causes. Australia has the deep gratitude of this former alien in Turkey who never was a refugee from a European IRO camp but a desperate soul just the same, who was determined to seek refuge in a welcoming country where to forge his future. He became the perfect new settler as a productive and upright citizen in the adopted country. A proud Hungarian-Australian grandfather of 4 young adults, his life is rich in cultural pursuits and countless overseas travels. In this blessed country, he considers himself fortunate and well rewarded in life.

Autobiographical account

APPEAL TO NEW SETTLERS

*Sanguine and hopeful immigrants who arrive on Aussie soil
Soon grasp that attaining success is a most demanding toil
When longing for a better future, freedoms, equality
This welcoming land offers them all, plus opportunity.*

*The rewards are there for those working hard and smart
Newcomers! integrate, cherish a new lifestyle, soul and heart
Beside work, mortgages and commitment are: neighbours, barbies
Exploratory holidays and joyful get-together parties*

*Application of experience to overcome problems in life
Becomes eager task to combat handicaps and covert strife
The friendly attitude of fair minded, down to earth Aussies
Makes living an easier path in the great Antipodes*

*Later on when taking the oath at naturalization
Loyalty to new homeland is indeed the affirmation
To respect laws, share with and contribute to the nation
Where liberty, peace, prosperity and hope find bastion*

*So life goes on, a good mix of challenges and success
Then why not be grateful and truly value happiness
Knowing that the lucky country below the Southern skies
Secures prosperity to progeny with enterprise.*

*Attila J. Urmenyhazi
Hobart, 2012*

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