

**Attila Ürményházi**

**Hungarian Immigration in Australia**

\*

**Biographies of 22 outstanding  
Hungarian migrants**

## Table of contents

<b>Hungarian Immigration in Australia .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Biographies .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Abeles, Sir Peter (1924–1999) .....	9
Bornemissza, George Francis (1924–2014) .....	11
Bozoky, Rudolf (Rudy) (1933–2007) .....	13
Deak, Laszlo (Les) (1928–2002).....	14
Ferencz, Stephen (1926–2004).....	15
Friedman, Isaac (1805–1875).....	16
Goetzl, Stephen (1856–?) .....	18
Gosztola, Béla (1909–1988).....	19
Herendi, János (John) (1925–2011) .....	21
Horvath, Alfred (1924–2000).....	23
Kozma, Elemér (1929–2003) .....	25
Kunz, Egon Francis (Frank) (1922–1997) .....	27
Lakatos, Geza (1890–1967) .....	29
Léderer, András (1918–2004) .....	31
Leviny, Ernő (1818–1905) .....	33
Mattay, András Ivan (Andrew) (1941–2004).....	34
Molnar, George (1910–1998).....	35
Nyulasy, Charles (1825–1903).....	36
Orban, Desiderius (Dezső) (1884–1986) .....	37
Pólya, János Béla (1914–1992).....	39
Pongrass, Alexander (Alex) (1923–2000).....	41
Radvansky, Baron John George (1924–2007) .....	43

## Hungarian Immigration in Australia

As a small ethnic group, Hungarians have lived in Australia since colonial times, and have often contributed constructively to their adopted country. Their experience as newcomers has generally been harmonious and their integration into Australian society smooth. Many have found success in their adopted country, but not without hard work and frustrating times, starting with the struggle to acquire the command of English so necessary for career advancement and social involvement. The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and the associated website 'Obituaries Australia' have published 59 biographies and obituaries of Australians of Hungarian birth, and others who, although identifying as Hungarian, were born in the neighbouring countries after the vast reduction in Hungarian national borders in the aftermath of World War I.<sup>1</sup>

In most cases, the Australian Hungarian community's origins can be traced to four distinct refugee-migrant waves, each resulting from political and social upheavals in Hungary. The USA and Canada were always the first choice destinations, with Argentina in third place and, by comparison, only a trickle came to Australia according to pre-WWI public records.<sup>2</sup> The first wave of Hungarian arrivals in Australia followed the 1848-1849 Hungarian war of independence against the Austrian Empire. The loss of that war and the impact of continued repression by the Austrian rulers resulted in the arrival of political refugees seeking freedom and opportunities in a promising new country, the colonies of Australia. Back in Europe, Hungarians experienced Austrian despotism until 1867, when a political compromise was reached with the declaration of Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy, which accorded the kingdom of Hungary equal status through national sovereignty, equal rights for its citizens and development parallel with Austria in every field.

According to official records, the first Hungarian in Australia was trader, later pawnbroker, Isaac Friedman (1805-1875) who arrived in Sydney in 1833 with his wife and son, from London aboard the barque *Enchantress*.<sup>3</sup> Their first step on Australian soil was a stopover in Hobart, a colonial town which impressed them, with its attractive harbour side and busy waterfront, surrounded by leafy streets lined with humble but neat cottages. After five years in Sydney, the family returned to settle in Hobart. A deeply religious man of Jewish faith, he was one of the founding committee members of the first synagogue in Australia. Moreover he was the main funds provider and backer of the building's construction and refurbishment. Consecrated in 1845, the National Heritage-listed building, in Egyptian revival style architecture, is at 59 Argyle Street, Hobart.

The first wave of Hungarian migrants numbered no more than a hundred, and comprised ex-army officers, soldiers and resistance fighters, some of them landed gentry, with a sprinkling of adventurers among them. They knew that after a long and unfamiliar sea voyage to a faraway land, and with a bit of luck, they could be rewarded for their determination. What attracted many of them were the Victorian gold fields, well-known in Europe, and they joined the rush to try their luck as prospectors. In due course, they became established settlers to pursue their own lives as colonials once the diggings became unproductive. A few among them moved on to

---

<sup>1</sup> The *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and 'Obituaries Australia' are fully searchable online. Visitors to the sites can either do a general search or a more detailed faceted browse. The biographies and obituaries of Hungarian Australians can be accessed by either means.

<sup>2</sup> Egon F. Kunz. *Blood and gold: Hungarians in Australia*. Cheshire, Melbourne, p 278.

<sup>3</sup> Egon F. Kunz. *Blood and gold: Hungarians in Australia*. Cheshire, Melbourne, pp 17-20.

California as experienced diggers in the new, booming gold fields there. Four of the first wave Hungarians became well-respected in their fields of endeavour during the Victorian gold rushes. Their achievements have been documented in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, and in some cases their obituaries published by the ADB website 'Obituaries Australia'.

They include: Ernest (Ernő) Leviny (1818-1905), an outstanding goldsmith, silversmith, artistic jeweller, and businessman; Sigismund Wekey (Zsigmond Vékey) (1825-1889), ex-army officer, prospector, solicitor and author; Charles (Károly) Nyulasy (1825-1903) ex-army officer, mining engineer and inventor of subaqueous blasting for minerals, and hotel and later drapery shop proprietor; and Béla Makutz (1857-1923), an expert safe maker and later a safe manufacturer in Perth, Western Australia.

A devastating depression in rural Hungary in the late 1890s and early 1900s saw over 1½ million Hungarians, mainly from poverty stricken rural peasantry, emigrate. At the turn of the century about 53 per cent of agricultural properties were tiny holdings, offering only a marginal existence to large families. The majority of migrants went to North America and some to Argentina, and less than fifty came to Australia to work in agriculture. For those who came, Australia was well equipped to offer the conditions they desired: achievable socio-economic well-being through equal wages, affordable tracts of productive lands, peace and the unfettered pursuit of their dreams. More than half of them went to Queensland to work in the sugar cane fields, and others to Western Australia to work on wheat farms, work that was familiar to them. The rest settled in the other states of the mainland, on country properties. As rural workers they integrated successfully into Australian society without leaving any particular trace, other than their original names and national origin on State and Commonwealth naturalisation records.

The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I (1918) and the Treaty of Versailles-Trianon (1920) reduced by 72 percent the size of Hungary. This left some 6.6 million ethnic Hungarians living, not in their own country, but in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine (USSR), Romania and in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later to be Yugoslavia) as ethnic minorities. Discrimination after 1920 against these sizable Hungarian minorities in most of the countries adjoining Hungary brought a steady migration to Australia, to free themselves from the injustice and lack of opportunity they faced at home. This movement was not a 'wave', but rather a steady stream, year-in and year-out, of Hungarian migration by professionals and their families sponsored from within Australia.

The second period of Hungarian migration was also minor compared with the later ones. From the mid-1930s in Hitler's Germany, the gradual oppression of German Jews, and open threats to European Jewry, caused many, including Hungarian Jews, to liquidate their property and migrate to overseas destinations while it was legally possible. Until the outbreak of World War II, Australia offered a safe haven and accepted some 6,475 new settlers, mainly of Central European Jewry, fleeing Nazi Germany's legalized discrimination, persecution and manifest threats to their safety. The number of Hungarian-Jewish arrivals in Australia during this period is estimated to have been about 800 persons. Most were businessmen, intellectuals, doctors, architects, and engineers who, through their acumen, hard professional work or further studies for recognition of qualifications, rapidly found their place, and flourished in the host country.

Much later, when the first post-World War II Christian Hungarian refugees arrived en masse, and set up their clubs and associations in the early 1950s, these earlier Hungarian migrants rarely mixed and socialized with them. This was mainly due to sheer resentment of the imposition of many restrictive laws by pre-World War II Hungarian governments against Hungarian Jews. An example was the introduction of the quota (6%) system in higher education intake in order to attain the pro-rata balance of university students according to Christians and

Jews in the actual population. The invasion of Hungary in March 1944 brought the formation of compliant, subservient Hungarian governments and saw the rounding up and deportation of the Jewry in Hungary. Until then, Hungary was the last safe country in Europe and, despite some contentious racial injustices, the 700,000 Hungarian Jews and the 100,000 foreign refugee Jews endured. The Hungarian-Jewish people who managed to escape the terror and death of Nazi-dominated Hungary, have difficulty forgetting the bitter past etched in their memory.

Hungarian-Jewish migrants have contributed significantly to Australian society, and have shone in many of their fields of specialization. Among them are several dozen luminaries, such as Dr John (János) Béla Polya (1914-1992), FRACI, scientist, academic and world authority in organic chemistry; Desiderius (Dezső) Orbán (1884–1986), art teacher, artist, painter and author; Erwin Aladár Radó (1914-1988), producer, and film festival director; and George (György) Molnár OBE AO (1910-1998) professor of architecture and a celebrity as political cartoonist with the *Melbourne Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

The third wave of Hungarian immigration was directly attributable to World War II and its consequences. As in most parts of Europe, the war had caused immense devastation, economic collapse and impoverishment. In Central and Eastern Europe, totalitarian communist regimes came to power, introducing ruthless and inhumane policies. Hungary fell under this kind of repressive rule imposed by Soviet Russia-USSR. Soon after the end of World War II, the Australian government crafted and implemented a mass immigration scheme, designed to boost the skilled and willing labour force in the long-term national interest, as well as to respond to humanitarian needs in post-war Europe. In Hungary, the rise of communism brought an exodus of large numbers of people to refugee holding camps in Austria, Germany, and Italy (Trieste), which were run by the International Refugee Organisation. Escaping to the West was possible until 1948 when the communist regime closed the Hungarian borders. From these refugee camps, alongside many other European nationalities, Australia recruited about 15,000 stateless Hungarians between 1949 and 1952, officially terming them 'Displaced Persons', who became widely known as 'DPs'. Australia did not admit Hungarians immediately after the war (June 1945), as they were still considered 'ex-enemies', a policy which was reversed in mid-1948. For a two-year duration, the DPs were subject to work contracts and mandatory job designations, partly to recoup the cost of the voyage, by making them into working, taxpaying, productive new settlers immediately on their arrival. Many now look back on their first years in Australia with bittersweet memories. At the time they were severely handicapped by their lack of English, and faced many years of struggle to have their skills and qualifications recognised in their new country.

Both the location and type of work to which the DPs were assigned were already determined by the authorities so that, after they arrived by boat from Europe, they were assembled in old army barracks converted to refugee holding camps in Bonegilla, Victoria, or at Greta, Hunter Valley, New South Wales. Their hostel accommodation thus was ready and waiting unless they continued on their journey to other jobs, full board and lodging with their first employer. Many of these new arrivals were professional and middle-class people, ex-officers, and tradesmen; very few were without skills. Most of them arrived with their families, and were willing to work hard and attain success in their field, becoming affluent in a relatively short period, despite the hardship of their first years as assignees in jobs unrelated to their skills.

The majority spoke little English, barely sufficient to hold a basic conversation, let alone to engage in discussion with English-speaking Australians. For many, it took years to overcome this serious language handicap and to shed their 'refo' tag. Once released from the two-year work bond, the ex-DPs were independent and free to pursue their aspirations, move about, change jobs, and work and live anywhere in the country, thus becoming equals in a free Australian society. Many turned out to be tireless workers and determined money-savers, who

were driven by a desire to catch up with the rest of the Australian community, and secure the benefits of a comfortable lifestyle in one's own home, with financial certainty and a positive future. These post-WWII migrants laid the foundation of an Australian Hungarian community which was to be an example for the fourth wave of refugee-migrants who arrived less than ten years later, after the collapse of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

From this third wave, ten preeminent and inspirational achievers on a national scale were: Tibor Paul (Pál) (1909-1973), conservatorium teacher, musical director, and conductor of international fame; Sir Peter Abeles (1924-1999), entrepreneur businessman, airlines transport magnate, and benefactor; Andrew (András) Mattay (1941-2004), colonel, training director for the Australian Army, and Army Commanding Officer, Tasmania; Alex Pongrass (1923-2000) AM (Sándor Pongrácz) entrepreneur businessman in engineering, boatbuilding, furniture manufacture, joint-founder of the National Soccer League (NSL), and benefactor; Dr John G. Radvansky (János Radvánszky) (1924-2007), hereditary nobleman, and university lecturer-educator; Egon F. Kunz (1922-1997), PhD in literature, history and social researcher, demographer, librarian, and author; Dr George (György) Bornemissza OAM (1924-2014), entomologist-coleopterist, research scientist, naturalist-ecologist, and world authority in his specialisation; Dr Anthony (Antal) Endrey (1922-2010), Queen's Counsel lawyer, author, cattle farmer, and community leader<sup>4</sup>; Dr Laszlo (László) Benyei AM (1920-2006), lawyer, International Refugee Convention expert, immigration resettlement director, church elder and organist<sup>5</sup>; and Dr Andrew (Andor) Fabinyi (1908-1978) OBE, PhD in Psychology of Aesthetics, journalist, publisher, and internationalist.

The fourth wave of Hungarian migration began after November 1956, again through refugee holding camps in Europe, and followed the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution against communist tyranny and the Soviet hegemony. This national uprising was crushed by Soviet-Russian military invasion and brought a closure of the borders, but not before 200,000 people had managed to escape to the West, mainly to neighbouring Austria, as vulnerable and stateless refugees under United Nations protection. Australia welcomed about 15,000 Hungarians by recruiting them from migrant camps run by the UN's International Refugee Organisation (IRO). Their fares to Australia were funded by the Australian tax-payer, but unlike the situation facing earlier refugees, there was no impost of a two year work contract. At the time, jobs were plentiful in the country and, despite their lack of English language skills, most of them soon managed to find jobs and establish careers in their trades and professions. The general composition of this fourth wave of Hungarian immigration (the '1956-ers') included tradesmen, university students, factory workers, senior apprentices, 'jack of all trades and master of none' types, and a number of professional people. Singles by far outweighed families on arrival and there were more men than women among them.

Most were ambitious, tireless workers, some working in two jobs in order to make ends meet and purchase property. The 1956-ers often benefitted from the support and experience of fellow Hungarians who had arrived less than 10 years earlier, and were already established in their suburban homes with their families, and on the way to modest prosperity. These two groups became united and active, to nurture their common ethnic heritage, speak their language, and participate in social and cultural events. Biographic data is available for the following notable 1956-er profiles from the ADB and OA websites:

---

<sup>4</sup> Attila J. Ürményházi. *The Hungarian connection: candid portrait story of twelve select former refugees*, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Attila J. Ürményházi. *The Hungarian connection: candid portrait story of twelve select former refugees*, 2012.

Andrew (András) Léderer OAM (1918-2004), butcher-tradesman, smallgoods manufacturer, businessman and employer, and philanthropist; Elemér Kozma (1929-2003), toolmaker, master instrument maker, car parts manufacturer, and employer; Stephen (István) Forgács (1935-2012), machine tool tradesman, shipbuilder-industrialist, large ship dockyard owner-operator, and employer; Dr Otto Abbott-Oerdoeg (Ördög) (1920-1998), veterinarian, and cattle diseases specialist; Rudolf Bozóky (1933-2007), architect, large scale apartment builder, and developer. Other 1956-ers continue to contribute to Australian public life, including Nicholas (Miklós) F. Derera OAM (b. 1919), research agronomist-plant breeder, and adjunct professor at the University of Sydney; Les Murray AM (born László Ürge) (b. 1945), sports journalist, SBS soccer broadcaster and analyst; and Attila Abonyi (b. 1946), soccer administrator, and ex-national soccer player who represented Australia 61 times. Worth mentioning also are two distinguished Hungarian migrants who were not part of any migration wave, arriving under the family reunion scheme: Géza Lakatos (1890-1967) Hungarian army general, and the last constitutional Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Hungary between 29 August and 15 October 1944; and Dr George Berczeller (1914-2008), medical doctor, music composer, pianist of operettas, jazz and medley genre repertoire, and an entertainer par excellence during his stellar Sydney musical career.<sup>6</sup>

In the capital cities, Hungarian communities remain active through their long-established and well-run associations. They assemble regularly, not just to enjoy charity fundraising events, festivals, or to celebrate New Year-Xmas and Mothers' Day with barbecues, but to commemorate the important events in the Hungarian social calendar: 15 March National Day, 20 August St. Stephen's Day and on 23 October, the Hungarian Revolution. On these special occasions patriotic oratory is the order of the day in keeping with the spirit and heritage of the assembled. The Australian and New Zealand Cultural Convention, a triennial Hungarian cultural festival, has been rotated between capital cities of the mainland since 1969. Attended in large numbers, the event brings together Hungarians from every part of Australia to bond in camaraderie and enjoy a rich, colourful and vibrant program of concerts, art and craft exhibitions, performances by interstate dance groups and solo artists. Participants partake in lectures and symposiums, dinner dances and balls, playhouse shows, competitions, games, 'Hungaricum' product sale markets, and organised day trips. This recurring expression of identity reflects the desire of Hungarian Australians to nurture their heritage and renew their common connections.

The hope of the remaining post-World War II and the 1956-er ex-refugees, now dwindling fast in numbers, and that of the first generation Australian-born descendants, is to secure the long term future of the Australia-wide associations. They face the challenge of remaining relevant to the expectations of the progeny generation, and to encourage younger Hungarian Australians to take up the baton when they retire. A general expectation, if not heartfelt wish, is that the multigenerational Hungarian descendants in Australian society, now and in future, continue to feel pride in their culture and the land of their parents, grandparents and great grandparents, enough to pay a visit to their ancestral land, the land of the 'Magyars', at least once in their lifetimes to connect with the rich and unique cultural heritage of Hungary. From an ethno-sociologist's perspective, it will be interesting to know in fifty years, when over a century would have passed since their organised social clubs and associations were formed, whether Australians of Hungarian ancestry have succeeded in their efforts to retain their culture and heritage.

---

<sup>6</sup> Attila J. Ürményházi. *The Hungarian connection: candid portrait story of twelve select former refugees*, 2012.

# **Biographies**

## Abeles, Sir Peter (1924–1999)

Sir Emil Herbert Peter Abeles (Péter Ábel), was born in Vienna in 1924 into a Hungarian-Jewish family. His father was an affluent metals dealer. When Peter was a little boy his family moved to Hungary to avoid the onslaught on Jewry by rampant fascism. He completed his secondary education in Budapest. With the Nazi Germany invasion of Hungary in 1944, he was sent to a death camp whilst his family managed to flee to Romania. They all survived and were reunited but the regime change and gradual communist takeover in postwar Hungary again forced the family to flee. In 1949, aged 25, Peter, who had enriched himself with the business acumen of his father, landed in Sydney as a refugee.



*Peter Abeles, by Gary Ede, 1986*

Abeles started his career as a door-to-door salesman selling encyclopedias and clothing. In his second year, with George Rockey, a fellow Hungarian, Abeles founded Alltrans, a trucking company. With two second hand lorries the budding entrepreneurs chased transport contracts, the first one obtained from the mining town, Broken Hill. Abeles organisational and business genius was guided by his belief that in a country where distance is a high cost tyranny, there was great opportunity for transport to flourish. By 1967, Alltrans was operating about 500 lorries across Australia and had merged with Thomas National Transport (TNT); in 1968 Abeles was appointed managing director of the company. Through the 1970s TNT expanded beyond Australia to the United States, Canada, Britain, Brazil and New Zealand with takeovers of, and mergers with, other transport and shipping companies.

In 1979 Abeles forged a strategic alliance with media mogul, Rupert Murdoch's News Limited, to take over Ansett Transport Industries one of the two big airlines in Australia. Both Abeles and Murdoch jointly controlled the airline as Ansett's joint managing directors until 1992. By the mid-1980s TNT became the second biggest transport empire in the world, operating by road, rail, sea and air.

Abeles, a major force in Australian industry, influenced the careers of important business and political figures such as Kerry Packer (owner of Australian Consolidated Press and Australia's richest man at that time), and Bob Hawke (Prime Minister of Australia, 1983-1991). Abeles supported Hawke's Prices and Incomes Accord and participated in his 1983 National Economic Summit. He formed strong links with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) in respect to the two-airlines agreement of the 1980s. Hawke's recommendation saw his friend appointed as a director of the Reserve Bank by the then Treasurer Paul Keating in 1984.

Abeles position as a close confidant of Hawke aroused suspicion, particularly during the 1989 airline strike when prime minister Hawke's action in taking on the pilots' union enabled both major airlines to enter the deregulated market in a far more competitive position. At the time Australia's domestic airline pilots through their union, demanded an immediate 30% salary increase which was rejected by the government. It was a prolonged, bitter dispute which the pilots lost as the air force and pilots from overseas were called in to keep the airlines operating.

Abeles and Hawke's friendship had started in the 1970s when Hawke was president of the ACTU. According to Blanche D'Alpuget, Hawke's biographer and later his second wife, Hawke looked upon Abeles as a "father figure"; he found the older man "subtle, sophisticated cosmopolitan, immensely fascinating".

In 1992 TNT was suffering from debt-ridden investments in Europe and Abeles retired as its managing director but was later re-elected to its Board. He chaired the Trade Advisory Council, and the Australian Opera Foundation. In 1987 he was named "Australian of the Year" by *The Australian*. The NSW Askin's government recommended his knighthood and in 1991 he was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia in recognition for services to business and the arts. Under his dynamic leadership, his transport business empire at its height spread over more than 60 countries with about 55,000 employees.

As a corporate mogul, Abeles faced his share of unsubstantiated attacks and allegations about unscrupulous business tactics, ruthlessness against minority shareholders, buying his knighthood, etc. He also had his supporters. Rival transport magnate, Melbourne businessman Lindsay Fox, said Sir Peter was an "outstanding individual. His scope and vision was way ahead of anyone else in the industry. Peter was very tough but his vision for what he did was nothing more than incredible". Former ACTU secretary Bill Kelty said "Sir Peter was a decent and humane person", with a vision for Australia that "few people matched".

He respected those who worked with him, negotiated countless agreements with unions and the ACTU, and not once broke his word. Away from business his passion was cards: either intense bridge games or very high-stakes poker. For many years the then NSW premier, Sir Robert Askin was a regular at Sir Peter's table entourage. He was seen as a warm, generous, erudite and humorous gentleman by those who knew him, who built up and cultivated a network of friends that covered all sides of the political spectrum.

Seeking to explain his enormous network of influence, he once remarked: "I can't help if my friends have been successful in their fields". He was generous with his time and money in charitable and community causes. He established and chaired the Australian Cancer Research Foundation, which raised and distributed millions of dollars for research into the disease that, unexpectedly, was to claim his life. According to Bob Hawke, he was truly a man of the world, fluent in half a dozen languages and had a profound interest in international affairs. When delivering the eulogy of Sir Peter Abeles, the former prime minister went on to say that: "Of the 5.5 million immigrants and more than half a million refugees who have made Australia their home since World War II, none can match the breadth and magnitude of Sir Peter Abeles' business achievement".

## Bornemissza, George Francis (1924–2014)

George F. Bornemissza was born in the town of Baja, on the banks of the River Danube in southern Hungary on 11 February 1924 to Katalin and Ferenc Bornemissza, a civil engineer.

Both parents were from the landed gentry and were able to ensure the best education in Baja for their children. George began collecting and studying beetles in the forests around his home town during his mid-teens and dedicated much of his spare time to volunteering in museums and scientific institutions in Budapest, where he pursued his tertiary studies. He graduated in science from the University of Budapest, but by 1948, with the onset of a repressive and ruthless brand of communism in Hungary, he fled to Austria. Bornemissza obtained his PhD in Zoology at the University of Innsbruck in 1950 and migrated soon after to Australia as a Displaced Person. He sailed for Australia on the ‘Anna Salen,’ and, on 1 January 1951, set foot in Fremantle, Western Australia.



*George Bornemissza, n.d.*

Bornemissza’s first career appointment was that of graduate assistant in October 1951, when he became a staff member of the Zoology Department at the University of Western Australia. He was grateful to his new homeland and wanted to repay Australia by advancing the study of beetles (coleopterology). After many field studies across the State, he concluded, in a pasture at Wooroloo, 60 km north-east of Perth that, unlike in Europe, native dung beetles do not devour cow pats and thus, do not increase soil fertility, since they prefer the droppings of native marsupials. While carrying on his field research work aimed at the reducing populations of bush flies and blood sucking buffalo flies, which were infesting livestock and costing farmers millions of dollars annually to control, Bornemissza observed that their eradication could only be through biological control. As a result, he proposed the introduction of exotic bovine dung beetles to Western Australia.

In December 1954, Bornemissza joined the CSIRO in Canberra as a Research Scientist in the Division of Entomology. In 1965, the CSIRO approved funding for a national project to control the bush fly plagues which afflicted human and bovine populations during the summer months, under George’s scientific direction. In May 1967 he established a research station for the ‘Dung Beetle Project’ in Pretoria, South Africa. He travelled through 32 countries, carefully selecting bovine beetles of all sorts for their introduction and breeding in Australia under stringent quarantine control conditions in the laboratories of the CSIRO, Canberra. Fifty-four species were brought in from overseas, but only 28 of them subsequently established themselves. With the release of 100,000 dung beetles across the continent, the 10 year national project at last yielded results and, within a few years, was shown to benefit the farmers and ultimately the people of Australia. It was the beginning of the end of the Australian ‘bush salute’ that had characterised travel in the bush and, furthermore, heralded the start of a new, ‘eating outdoors’ lifestyle, something considered impossible in earlier times. Between 1957 and 1983 Bornemissza published 18 scientific papers under the aegis of the CSIRO, which widened his reputation as a world authority in his field of expertise.

Retiring from the CSIRO in 1983, Bornemissza and his family settled in Hobart, where he devoted his time, with a perfectionist's attention, to his other passion in life: his massive private insect collections made up of stunningly spectacular specimens. The first post-retirement public display of some of his beetle collection was in Canberra, which he donated to the Australian National Insect Collection at the CSIRO. The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery was another beneficiary of his extensive collections of rare, colourful and intricately mounted beetle and insect specimens, which are named after him and have received considerable public acclaim.

Bornemissza continued to work to foster public awareness about the usefulness of beetles in the eco-system, and was involved in conservation issues, supplying specialist knowledge to nature and environmental support foundations. Hard work was his ethic until his final years. In the course of his career, he discovered, hitherto unknown by science, twenty insects and beetles which were later named after him. His favourite among these was "Bornemissza's stag beetle" (*Hoplogonus bornemisszae*), which he discovered at a Pyengana property's virgin wet woodland, in North-East Tasmania. That beetle is one of the rarest and most spectacular insects of the State.

The honours bestowed on him were the Britannica Award Gold Medal (1973), the Rolex Award for Enterprise (1981), the Medal of the Order of Australia (2001) for services to science and entomology, Fellowship of the Alexander von Humboldt Society, and the CSIRO Service from Science Award (2003). He was made an Emeritus Fellow of Entomology by the CSIRO in 2006, while the 'Australian Geographic' voted him Conservationist of the Year in 2008.

Dr. George Bornemissza directed the ingenious, game-changing introduction of the exotic bovine dung beetle into Australia, which indirectly brought forth soil fertility and an increase in agricultural production to boost the national economy. These facts are well known Australia-wide and are highly appreciated by academia, scientific colleagues and government authorities. The author of one of the most successful biological control introductions of exotic species in history, he passed away on 10 April 2014, in Hobart.

## **Bozoky, Rudolf (Rudy)** (1933–2007)

Rudolf Bozoky (Rezső Bozóky) was born in Siófok, an idyllic vacation town on the shores of the vast Lake Balaton surrounded by beautiful rural countryside. His father was a marine mechanical engineer serving in large River Danube ships plying between Vienna, Budapest and the Black Sea; a life with long absences from home. Rudy's mother taught him and his three siblings how to cook and be self reliant, while his grandfather taught him carpentry and building skills.

World War II saw first the Nazis, then the Soviets, occupy and ravage Hungary. The young Bozoky became caught up in the ensuing terrible times with his family. He already had a talent for wheeling and dealing and survived by bartering goods and chattels. Those early experiences left a lifelong imprint in his mind.

After the war he attended Budapest Technical University's faculty of architecture. The eruption of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 prevented his class sitting for their graduation final examinations, yet he considered himself fortunate to be able to flee Hungary after the revolution failed and communism was re-established under Soviet occupation. In the dead of night he crossed the barbed wire, electrified and well guarded border to become a refugee in Austria under United Nations protection. He opted for migration to Australia.

Bozoky quickly found his way in the building industry. Working first as a fit-out carpenter foreman with Hungarian cottage builders in the Western suburbs of Sydney whilst learning English, he moved on to become a contract builder-partner and large scale home unit builder. By 1967 he was a well known large-scale developer/builder working mostly in the inner Sydney suburbs of Newtown, Leichhardt, Annandale and Rosebay. He typically worked on at least four large ongoing projects at any given time and drew all his own architectural plans. His lack of recognised qualification, though, meant the drawings had to be checked by qualified architects. He also supervised the work of all of his contractors, including structural engineers, with daily visits to construction sites. The outcome of his endeavours met the demand of thousands of working couples for modern, compact, affordable apartments close to the heart of Sydney.

In mid 1976 Bozoky's investments crashed due to an unexpected mammoth escalation of interest rates on his interconnected and mortgaged borrowings on speculative land purchases. He was declared bankrupt and moved to New Zealand where he was soon involved again in building projects with developers providing the same modern, quality, compact apartment accommodation for thousands in Wellington.

He later moved to Western Australia to pursue new opportunities as a consulting engineer in pipe laying & earthworks projects with the North West Shelf Gas Company. He then moved to Perth to rejoin his family and start afresh on his own building projects, albeit in a much diminutive scale as a semi-retired person. Three times married, Rudolf, the affable man with a keen sense of humour and zest for life, passed away in August 2007.



*Rudolf Bozoky, n.d.*  
photo supplied by family

## **Deak, Laszlo (Les)** **(1928–2002)**

Born in 1928, László Deák (Les) was the son of a well-to-do, landholding and sawmill-owning family in Pusztakovácsi, Southwest Hungary. In 1944, at the age of 14, he was taken by force by the German occupation troops and sent to a labor camp in Czechoslovakia where he spent a year under unforgivable inhumanity. After the war he watched as his family interests and businesses were confiscated by the new communist Hungarian government. He decided to defect to Austria and became a refugee under the United Nation International Refugee Organisation's care.

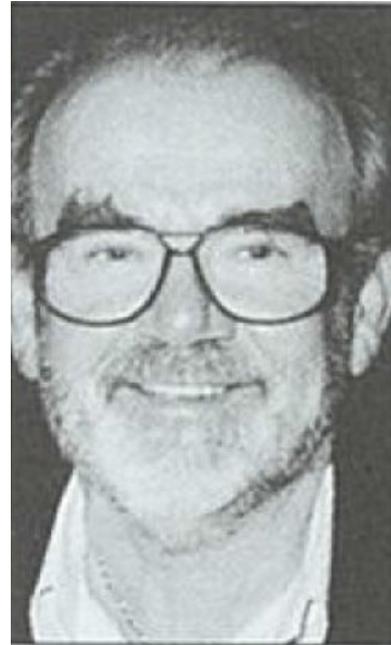
He arrived in Australia in 1949 under the Displaced Person's scheme and had to spend his first two years in obligatory work assignment wherever the authorities would send him. As he lacked a command of English and had no certificated skills he was classed as an unskilled labourer and was sent to work on the Snowy Mountains Authority's (SMA) giant national hydro-electricity scheme.

As his English improved he trained as a hydrographer and continued to work with the SMA until 1960 when he became redundant as the national project neared completion. During his time there, he was elected a union representative.

In 1962 he took a job as hydrographer with the Tasmania Hydro-Electric Commission projects where he remained until his early retirement due to an industrial accident in 1985. He then became a part-time shopkeeper in a mixed business partnership.

For ten consecutive years energetic Deak served the small Hungarian association in Hobart as president of their association, fostering the retention and nurture of their culture and heritage. For eleven years he presented a community radio program in the Hungarian language, after fighting for its introduction amongst other community languages.

He was also a passionate birdwatcher and a keen photographer. His stunning bird photos enriched wall calendars. In recognition of his outstanding services to the community, Laszlo Deak posthumously received a Centenary of Federation Medal in January 2003.



*Laszlo Deak, n.d.*  
photo supplied by family

## Ferencz, Stephen (1926–2004)

Stephen (István) Ferencz was born in 1926 in the village of Gerse in county Vas, Western Hungary. Soon after the end of World War II he crossed the border to become a refugee in Austria under the International Refugee Organisation's care. Termed officially a Displaced Person, he arrived in Australia as a migrant in 1949 and spent his first two years in obligatory assignment as a postal employee. At the age of 25 he became an apprentice plumber. Qualifying as a tradesman plumber, in due course he became a partner with his employer, a plumbing contractor. In 1962 he settled in Hobart. After a major work accident he left the plumbing trade altogether and began producing yoghurt on an industrial scale, learning the trade from a specialist dairy in Melbourne. Yoghurt was then a novel food product and was not available in Tasmania. He later sold his ongoing business enterprise but remained its production manager until 1971.



*Stephen Ferencz, n.d.*  
photo supplied by family

Ferencz then ventured ambitiously into the love of his life: producing and selling quality wine. It was a craft that he knew a lot about from his childhood. Studying suitable micro-climate environments in southern Tasmania, he bought potentially productive acres of land in Cradock. He cultivated and developed a winery from pastureland and then managed his estate, continually perfecting his cultivation skill and deepening his product knowledge. He gradually became a very successful winemaker, with his lounge walls covered with exhibition certificates of awards attesting to the excellence of his much sought after chardonnay and pinot noir wines. In 1984 he won the coveted gold medal Chardonnay-of-the-Year National Award. In the early 1990s Qantas Airlines bought his entire annual chardonnay release for their first class passengers. During that time he travelled to Europe eight times to study wineries in France, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Transylvanian Romania to deepen his knowledge of viticulture-grape growing and to familiarise himself with the latest production technology. His fame was national, yet he was a humble man.

Ferencz sold his entire winery estate in Cradock, but not before passing on his invaluable skill and knowledge, over a three-year period, to the new owners. With the nationally renowned 'Panorama Wines' label in safe hands, he retired in 1996. The gentleman "vigneron par excellence" passed away in 2004 in Hobart, missed by his family, his associates and the small Hungarian community that he supported and served well for decades.

## **Friedman, Isaac** (1805–1875)

Isaac Friedman was born in 1805, in Pest (part of Budapest before 1873), Hungary, son of Judah and Rebecca Friedman, devout followers of the Jewish faith. Isaac was an orthodox Jew and a learned man who trained to later tutor and minister at the historic Yeshiva (Rabbinical College) in the Kingdom of Hungary at Pozsony (now Bratislava, the current capital of Slovakia). The date and the reasons for Friedman's departure from Hungary are unknown, but it is likely that he sought a better future in England in business, and his commitment to serving Judaism.<sup>7</sup> Here he heard about Australia, and figured that the opportunity to work for the same ideals better presented itself there. 'The extensive emigrations of artisans from every part of the United Kingdom; butchers, bakers, pastry cooks, provision merchants, shoemakers, apothecaries, fancy-bread bakers, booksellers,' would have been common knowledge. As Egon Kunz noted, he 'also would have known in his time in London that there were about three hundred and fifty people of the Jewish faith in the Colony and that about two hundred dwelt in Sydney town.'<sup>8</sup>

On 24 April, 1833, after a five month voyage from London aboard the barque *Enchantress*, Friedman, his wife Rebecca, and seven-month-old son, Francis, arrived in Sydney. Their ship had stopped over in Hobart town, and when they stepped ashore, they liked what they saw. The attractive harbour was the second largest town in the Australian colonies, had a busy waterfront, surrounded by leafy streets lined with humble but neat cottages. Isaac Friedman was the first 'Native of Hungaria' to arrive on Australian soil.<sup>9</sup> Soon after his arrival, Friedman established a trading house selling ready-made clothing, relying on the work of an assignee convict tailor. A month later tragedy struck when both his wife and son became ill and died. He did not remain a widower long and, on 23 December 1835, he married Maria Nathan (b. 1819), a daughter of Edward Nathan and his wife Ellen, both from Liverpool, England. Securing a town allotment at Appin, New South Wales, he expanded his trading activities by opening a general store that included the sale of spirits, wine, groceries, tools, ironmongery, gunpowder and muskets, stationery, glassware and other general goods. He prospered as he diversified his business ventures, being at different times, the owner of men's wear shop, a pawnbroker, a general dealer, and an innkeeper, holding licenses in Sydney, at Appin and Maitland. In keeping with his commercial success, he became a leading member of Sydney's Jewish community.

In 1840, the Friedmans sailed for Hobart, which offered good business prospects, a suitable place to raise a family, and a more temperate climate. He bought Kensington Inn in Argyle Street, which he operated from August 1841 to February 1849, and devoted himself to Jewish affairs, earning the respect of the local community. In 1842, a meeting was held in his home with fellow worshippers where the decision was taken to build a synagogue. Being adept in financial matters and a foundation member of the congregation, Friedman took charge of the fund-raising effort, and made up the difference after a serious shortfall in meeting the costs of construction and refurbishment. Consecrated in 1845, the National Trust building in Egyptian Revival style architecture still stands at 59 Argyle Street, the oldest synagogue building in Australia, and still the house of worship to the local congregation.

---

<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that there were never any pogroms in Austrian Empire, Austro-Hungarian or Hungarian history against Jews or any other people unlike in the Russian Empire.

<sup>8</sup> Egon F. Kunz, *Blood and Gold: Hungarians in Australia* (1969), p 18

<sup>9</sup> Egon F. Kunz, *Blood and Gold: Hungarians in Australia* (1969), p 18

Meanwhile Friedman's commercial operations as a publican and victualler were not without controversy, but he successfully defended himself against every incident and allegation during his eight years as licensee of Kensington Inn. The most damaging allegation in the late 1840s was that he ran a brothel, an accusation brought by a fellow committee member in the Hobart Hebrew Congregation. This was never brought before the Court, as the parties agreed to have the issue resolved through a process of private arbitration within the Congregation, where two arbiters were appointed for each side. As a result, Isaac was cleared and the parties were asked to, and remained, committee members. Yet, although he successfully defended himself, his name remained tarnished in the eyes of many in his community. By then the Friedmans had five children: Moses Joseph (b. 1840), David Solomon (b. 1842), Lewis (b. 1844), Ellen (b. 1848), and Rebecca (b. 1850). To protect their children from such damaging innuendos, the family moved back to New South Wales in 1850.

On 20 June 1851, Charles Fitzroy, Governor of New South Wales, signed Friedman's naturalisation certificate after he was recommended as a person of integrity and good character. He continued to operate as a general trader, moving from Maitland to Quirindi where he obtained a lease of 160 acres. This he used partly as an inn, as offices, and a warehouse, all in a garden setting and with an eye to investment. By February 1854, his wandering spirit prevailed once more, and the Friedmans returned to Hobart where he kept a butcher shop and became a pawnbroker. His name became widely known from the tokens he started issuing in 1857 in large numbers. These bronze tokens for the value of a penny and a halfpenny carried the inscription on the obverse side: I. Friedman Pawnbroker, Argyle Street and on the reverse side the figure of a sitting Justitia: TASMANIA 1857.

Retiring from business in 1858, Friedman, the orthodox Jew and Hungarian settler, was well known and respected in two Australian colonies (Tasmania and New South Wales). The following year he and his family arrived in the Victorian goldfield town of Sandhurst. The affluent Friedman immersed himself again in Jewish community affairs and as a mentor-adviser to the Congregation. He acted in the capacity of 'Chazan and Sochet', received an honorarium, and was entitled to use the title Reverend. With his family, he lived in Dowling Street where the local synagogue was situated and served the Sandhurst, Castlemaine and Echuca areas for the next ten years. In 1868, at the age of sixty-two, he moved from Sandhurst with his family to Melbourne. The remainder of his life he spent on his final calling: delivering lectures and collecting donations 'for our unfortunate brethren in Jerusalem', in Melbourne, on the Victorian goldfields and in the countryside, while his wife Maria taught in the Melbourne Jewish Sabbath school. By this time, the Friedman family numbered eight, after the birth of Ann (b.1852), Henry (b.1855), and Abraham (b.1858). Isaac Friedman died in Melbourne on 13 June 1875, predeceasing his wife by five years.

## **Goetzel, Stephen** (1856–?)

Following his schooling in Hungary, István (Stephen) Goetzel studied in Vienna and then at the school of mining engineering of Selmeczbánya in Upper Hungary (now Slovakia). After his graduation he became the manager of a copper and silver mine.

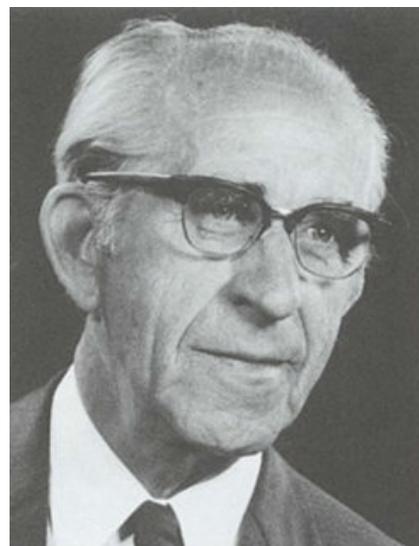
He arrived in Sydney in 1888 and went first to Queensland, then Tasmania, and in 1892 sailed to Western Australia where he travelled by camel to the Murchison goldfields. Commissioned by the Western Australian government, Goetzel undertook two expeditions. On his first trip he explored the Esperance-Bayley's Reward area, and predicted in his report the auriferous potential of the Red Kangaroo Hill and Norseman areas. His second expedition covered the Bayley's Reward-Menzies area.

Goetzel left government service in 1895 to practice privately as a mining engineer. His essay 'The Interior Gold Regions of Western Australia' was published in W. B. Kimberly's *History of West Australia* (1897). His pioneer work was a substantial early contribution to Western Australia's developing mining wealth.

## Gosztola, Béla (1909–1988)

Béla Gosztola was born on 17 April 1909 in Hungary, when the country was part of the dual monarchy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in the town of Felsőpor, Sopron county, in the North-West near the Austrian border. He grew up in the city of Sopron and completed his secondary education at the Lutheran college there. Continuing his studies at the Budapest Pázmány Péter University's Faculty of Medical Science, he obtained his medical degree in 1935.

To obtain hospital experience in his years as medical student, he served in the military sanatorium at Budakeszi near Budapest, where he spent another seven months following graduation. He then worked in the surgery department of the Erzsébet Kórház (Elizabeth Hospital) of Sopron as assistant surgeon, occasionally carrying out surgical operations alone. At the Budai Irgalmasrendi Kórház (Budapest Polyclinic), he was preparing for the examinations leading to Specialist in Women's Health when he was called for military service in the Army's Medical Corps.



*Béla Gosztola, n.d.*  
photo supplied by family

At the outbreak of WWII, USSR forces attempted to invade Finland after the Finns rejected their territorial demands. Hungary, in solidarity with their Finnish ethnic cousins, had sent a military combat company to Finland, consisting of volunteer officers and soldiers. Gosztola was one of the unit's officer-surgeons, and later received high recognition with his Finnish "Order of the White Star". From 1942 to the end of WWII he served as lieutenant medical officer in the Hungarian Army, receiving the National Defence Cross as well as numerous citations and decorations for high diligence and valour.

Following the establishment of the communist regime in Hungary after the war, Gosztola arranged to migrate to Australia in 1949. From Austria he made his way to Naples to board the migrant ship that brought him to Australia. Termed officially a 'Displaced Person', he arrived in Australia, and was sent to the Bonegilla migrant hostel/refugee camp. He worked in the G. M. Holden's car assembly plant in Melbourne for several years, as an assembly line worker, whilst trying to master the English language so that he could pursue a professional career.

In 1952 he married Livia Illés; their son, Paul, was born a year later. As his Hungarian medical qualifications were not recognised by the medical registration board, Gosztola decided to follow a medical career in Papua-New Guinea – then administered as an external territory of Australia – where there was a severe shortage of medical professionals. His application, in 1957, for a position in the Department of Public Health was accepted and he served his first two years in Buin, Bougainville Island. The doctor quickly earned the respect and trust of the region's mainly tribal people. He, in turn, appreciated their customs and lifestyle in close communion with the environment.

The acute need for medical service, coupled with his vocational calling, saw Gosztola serving in Manus Island, Lerengau, The Trobriands, Sakari and for many years in Kandria, Solomon Islands, where a large district hospital had been built. Despite endemic shortages and difficulties, and at times as acting chief surgeon, he performed onerous surgeries of all kinds

and often sat through nights with patients when he deemed his presence necessary. He had at his disposal at all times, a Land Rover, a motorboat with native drivers, a row boat, and carriers as needed, depending on the nature of calls for medical help from villages, some of them remote and scattered far and wide in rugged volcanic landscapes.

Wearing his District Medical Officer's hat, a khaki tropical outfit and enclosed sandals, Gosztola frequently set off with his helpers on foot to trail blaze through endless bogs, cross wild rivers balancing on wobbly single rope footbridges, or traverse long craggy terrain to deliver urgently needed help. His professional station required an ability to cope with physical endurance demands. He had the right predisposition and was well fitted for the job. When passing through religious mission areas he was treated as a most welcomed guest and accommodated like a prince. Evenings were spent discussing issues of the day in bonhomie before he retreated under mosquito netting for rest and sleep.

His isolation from the world at large was occasionally broken by visiting field study researchers and newly arrived government officers to whom he always extended a warm welcome, hospitality and guidance. When stationed in Manus Island he met and became part of the close circle of friends of the world famous anthropologist, Margaret Meade, who, on a few occasions, sought Gosztola's help, medical or otherwise. The Nippon Television Network of Japan also thanked him for his generosity in accommodating their visiting team and for his help in making the TV report, "Bougainville Today", which introduced to the public Gosztola's work, family life and Bougainville Island.

Dr. Gosztola was highly regarded by the departments which he dealt with in the Territorial Administration. In 1968 the Papua-New Guinea Medical Association and the registration board recognized his Hungarian medical qualifications. After fifteen years serving the people of Papua New Guinea, he retired in 1972. He moved to Adelaide where he enjoyed his golden years among family and fellow countrymen, dying there in 1988.

## **Herendi, János (John)** (1925–2011)

Son of a machine toolmaker, János (John) Herendi was born in the historic city of Eger, in Northern Hungary, in 1925. After completing his secondary schooling at the Roman Catholic Cistercian college, he studied Philosophy and Humanities at the Péter Pázmány University of Budapest. He counted himself fortunate and privileged to witness excavations under archeologist Dr. Vidor Pataki around the famous, national heritage Castle of Eger, which unearthed objects of enormous museological significance. At the outbreak of WW II he quit his studies and fled with his family to Austria.

Proficient in German, Herendi attended classes at the Faculty of Medicine in Graz for two and a half years. In 1947, seeking a secure and intellectually rewarding career, he moved to England where he worked as a brickworks hand. To years later he returned to Austria to rejoin his parents and his sister. They decided to migrate to Australia.

The family arrived in Adelaide where they settled in a foreign but welcoming surrounding. Lacking proficiency in English, 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; 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, German, Hungarian Studies and Multicultural Studies at high schools until his retirement in 1985. He also helped establish Hungarian as a matriculation subject in South Australia.

Herendi played a major role in welcoming, and helping fellow Hungarian refugees settle in Australia. President of the Council of Hungarian Associations in South Australia (1973-1988) and the Federal Council of the Hungarian Associations in Australia and New Zealand (1975-1977), he ardently supported the work of the Good Neighbour Council, welcoming migrants from Europe, and the Captive Nations Association, which included representatives from various ethnic organisations who aimed to bring public awareness of the tyranny and oppression suffered in Communist-dominated European countries (1953-1989).

In 1966 Herendi joined the Hungarian Scouts in Adelaide as secretary, and was a scoutmaster from 1970 to 1978. In 1959 he helped to establish, and taught at, the Hungarian Language School to keep the Hungarian culture alive amongst the younger generation. From 1985 he was principal of the school's successor, The Hungarian Community School, and, with his wife, Martha Herendi, taught Hungarian to youngsters until their retirement in 2001.

Herendi was well known throughout Australia for his key role in the success of four Hungarian Cultural Conventions held in Adelaide: 1976 (3rd), 1988 (7th), 1997 (10th ), 2003 (12th), which celebrated Hungarian cultural heritage through concerts, exhibitions, talks and lectures, balls, folk dance shows, etc.

With the steadfast help of his loving wife Martha, John worked tirelessly in running, editing and publishing a Hungarian monthly periodical, *Adelaidei Magyar Értésítő*, the *Hungarian Bulletin of Adelaide*, for 25 years. 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. In retrospect, the most important roles among the countless voluntary tasks he undertook in life, that brought him fulfilment, were teaching and promoting Hungarian culture in multicultural Australia – his much loved, adopted homeland.

Herendi was a well known organiser and charity fund raiser, and 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. In 2006 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia, for "service to the Hungarian community of South Australia through cultural, social welfare and educational activities, and to the promotion of multiculturalism". He led a very active life as a well loved and highly respected leader of the Hungarian community. An altruistic educator, humble family man, and outstanding Hungarian-Australian, John Herendi passed away in Adelaide on 5 August 2011, aged 86.

## Horvath, Alfred (1924–2000)

Alfred Horvath, forester, technical draftsman and roadworks engineer/contractor was born in Moson near the Austrian border in North-East Hungary. After completing his secondary education in Mosonmagyaróvár, he attended the Royal Hungarian József Nádor University in Sopron, graduating in 1950 as a forester/engineer in silviculture. A few months later he married Emma Dollmayer and the couple left Hungary for Austria where they spent seven months as refugees, awaiting re-settlement under the care of the United Nation's International Refugee Organisation (IRO).

In November 1951 they landed in Adelaide. Sponsorship by the Australian government being conditional on working at a designated, paid job for two years, Horvath worked hard in assignments foreign to his qualifications but compatible with his field of engineering competence. He proved himself to be versatile and industrious, working in a government utility office on calculations-based draft design for excavations necessary for the laying of power lines in Gawler, close to the Barossa Valley. He later switched jobs and installed electricity power meters to Adelaide homes. For a short period he was also employed in a furniture factory whilst looking for fulltime, satisfying professional employment. He then worked, sometimes seven days a week, in a surveyor's office in Adelaide where his exacting work entailed calculations to set out future road networks in accordance with cadastral and survey requirements in town and urban planning. Drawing specific plans and topographic maps, he then supervised the earthworks operations necessary to carry out various projects like golf courses, private dams, elevated roads, etc.

With a combination of skills, many years of acquired experience, expertise and self-confidence, in 1976 Alfred embarked on a new career as a large scale earthmoving contractor. His first major earthworks subcontract was renewing, to new design standards, the badly eroded 560 kms long Adelaide-Alice Springs railway line. His company carried out the fundamental works before the re-laying of tracks could start. In 1978, near Adelaide, he directed the setting up of approach roads to a main public road and the construction of two suspension bridges. These operations, and the project's success, brought him recognition among his peers and the public works authority. Later on, his successful tenders took him into the remote outback, involving him in road design and construction in the Tanami and Simpson Deserts and the Moomba gasfields.

Among many professional achievements, Horvath's company is credited with carrying out the extensive drainage works project in Adelaide's Morphettville race course. At 65 he decided to semi-retire, and work as a consultant for half a day, a few days a week. He was enthralled when, unexpectedly in 2000, he received from his alma mater university in Sopron, their rare award, the "Golden Diploma", in recognition of lifelong industrious and versatile application of his engineering skill.



*Alfred Horvath, n.d.*  
photo supplied by family

The Horvaths had two sons, Alfred and Robert, both of whom are surveyors. In retirement Alfred devoted his free time to support the local Hungarian community in Adelaide. He was an active member of the Hungarian Scouts support group and a volunteer worker in their summer camps. He was also a good organizer of Hungarian socials and balls. A life-member of the Hungarian Club of South Australia, he served tirelessly to bring the community together. He also helped to establish the Roman Catholic Blackfriars School in Prospect, Adelaide. Intrepid and selfless, Alfred Horvath passed away in December 2000, aged 76.

## Kozma, Elemér (1929–2003)

Elemér Kozma, master instrument & toolmaker, manufacturer, industrialist, and founder of Kozma Industries in Bayswater, Victoria, was born in Csíkszereda, eastern Transylvania's pure ethnic Hungarian region of Romania. Renamed Miercurea after World War II, the township lies in the midst of idyllic alpine, forested country. Kozma's master tradesman toolmaker father, Áron Kozma, had his own machining and die-toolmaking business whilst his mother took care of the three children: Béla, Elemér and Klára. The family was devastated in 1941 when Áron died aged 41. It was suspected he may have been poisoned due to his leftwing political activities.

When Elemer graduated from middle school in 1944, he fled to Budapest with his sister, mother, uncle and aunt. His mother, Klára, worked at a patisserie while he enrolled in high school (the Berzsenyi Gimnázium). That year Budapest turned into a war torn city in ruin – the result of Nazi German occupation and Allied bombings.

All formal education came to a halt. Heeding his uncle's advice, Elemér took an apprenticeship in the toolmaking trade. His first employers were Sved & Tsa, fine instrument makers. Afterwards, as a qualified tradesman toolmaker, he joined Medicor works until the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution in October 1956. Elemér was a star ski jumper since childhood and when his club Bp., Honvéd, asked him to join a forthcoming ski jump training camp in Poland, he decided to go but changed his mind when two close friends, planning to escape to the West, persuaded him to join them. The three friends crossed the Austrian border on 6 January 1957 to become Hungarian refugees under UN protection.

Living at the refugee camp in Linz for a year, Elemer was able to work in his trade outside the camp. He applied to settle in Switzerland but when not successful he opted for Australia. He arrived by boat on 15 January 1958.

By the end of his first week at the Bonegilla migrant camp, Elemer had found a job in Melbourne, in his trade, at the American-owned Ferguson agricultural machinery company. Later, he took up the offer, made by a chalet hotelier friend in the Victorian Alps, to become a full time, live-in ski instructor. He also took part in the ski jumping nationals, winning the bronze medal. He maintained that had he not been marked down by the referees, who were unacquainted with modern techniques, he would have scored enough points to come first and win the gold medal.

After two years he left the snowfields to return to Melbourne and his trade. He married Eleanore, an Australian woman, in 1960. A year later he set up his own company. At the beginning, he was given a corner in his father-in-law's shoe heel fabrication workshop where he worked tirelessly, saving hard to later invest in lathes and production machinery. He then became his own sales representative, going from company to company showing samples of gadgets and contraptions, to promote his work. Later on, when he owned a full set of metal press machinery, he realised that it was better to mass produce and deal with the big-time



*Elemér Kozma, n.d.*  
photo supplied by family

players. From 1969 he began supplying General Motors with car parts and components, developing further his business which was now operating under the name of Kozma Engineering Pty Ltd.

1975 saw the arrival of Toyota in Australia and Elemer's company began to supply seats, seat adjusters and recliners, head restraints, etc. as well as car parts to their local assembly plant. Because the plant had no large storage facility, he supplied the materiel required regularly, at pre-set times, in keeping with mass assembly and the production of Toyota cars. Working very long hours to deliver his quality products on time, Kozma Engineering earned the satisfaction and respect of the Japanese company. He visited Japan several times on business to study their technology and methods. His manufacturing company changed its name to Kozma Industries to reflect its expanding operations. The big expansion occurred in 1985 when, having outgrown the site of their production facilities, Elemer purchased a suitable large tract of land at Bayswater, outside of Melbourne, investing all his savings in the new venture. A steady and methodic construction of the planned buildings followed. In those days he devoted 16 hours daily to ensure that his project materialised. The spectacular growth of the company was helped by the employment of highly skilled and qualified staff headed by the Managing Director, Charles Ellul, who, as engineer with 30 years experience, greatly contributed with his specialist knowledge, and at times designed machine tools that were necessary for the success of contract operations. Kozma Industries now occupies five sites in Bayswater, totalling 10,000 m<sup>2</sup>, and comprising four principal manufacturing plants and a tool manufacturing plant. It employs over 100 workers and produces a wide range of items, particularly for car assembly plants.

Three of his four children, Andrew, Tim and Felicity, are associated with the company. His other son, Martin, nowadays works for himself. After Elemer handed over the reins, when a friend asked about his new project, he quipped that: "I've talked to St. Peter, He is waiting for me. My heart won't allow me to stay!" The tenacious achiever, the happy natured man, Elemer Kozma, departed on 14 November, 2003 with a substantial corporate legacy.

## Kunz, Egon Francis (Frank) (1922–1997)

Egon Francis (Frank) Kunz was born on 11 March 1922 into a prominent Budapest merchant family. Two devastating events marred his childhood: his parent's divorce and the collapse of the family business, József Kunz & Company.

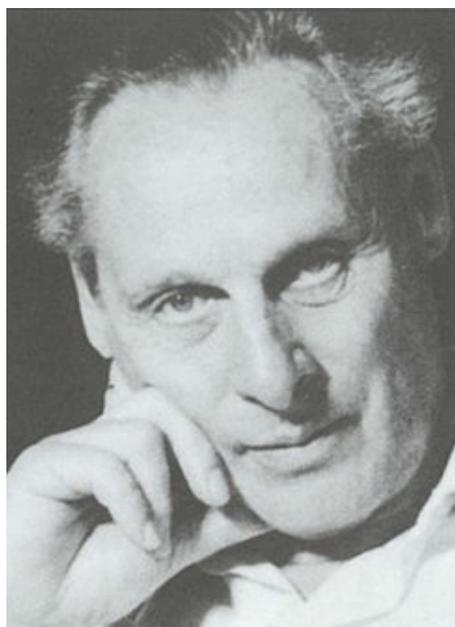
Kunz completed his secondary studies in 1940. Conscripted into the Hungarian army in 1943, he served in the relative tranquillity of a radar station. After the war he commenced tertiary studies at the University of Budapest. His university years were marked by political turmoil and he was active in anti-communist student organisations. By the time he graduated in 1948, with a doctorate in literature and history, the Communist Party had seized control of the government. Three weeks after graduating, like many Hungarians of a middle class background, he fled his homeland.

As a refugee he was housed in an International Refugee Organisation camp in Linz. He opted for Australia as his resettlement location to be as far away from Europe and its chaos as possible, and became one of the 170,000 'Displaced Persons' (DPs) from war-ravaged Europe, who were transformed into 'New Australians'.

Kunz arrived in Australia in July 1949 aboard the US Navy supply ship *General Stewart*, disembarking in Adelaide. Like nearly all DPs, his qualifications were ignored and he spent his obligatory two-year labour service in various jobs in Adelaide and Sydney. In 1951 he obtained a position as library assistant in the Mitchell Library, part of the State Library of New South Wales and went on to complete the diploma course in librarianship at the University of Sydney in 1954. His vision, organisation and determination impressed his superiors and he progressed to the position of Senior Librarian. He was entrusted with custodianship of some of Australia's greatest early treasures – precious colonial maps, paintings, manuscripts and the personal items of explorers. He introduced systematic reform, starting with his much-loved Maps and Manuscripts section and became the first person to lecture on map librarianship.

In 1953 he had married Elsie Thompson, a fellow librarian who, over the decades to come, was his silent partner in authorship – typing and proof-reading his diverse range of works. She gave birth to twins Peter and Christopher in 1956, while their son, Stephen, arrived a year later.

Egon displayed his expansive general knowledge and mastery of English by becoming a champion on Bob and Dolly Dyer's 'BP Pick A Box', a popular TV Quiz show, where he won for his young family a washing machine, fridge and other items, only to be eventually eliminated when he failed to answer a question about a person he later described as a "total non-entity".



*Frank Kunz, n.d.*  
photo supplied by family

His literary career was launched in 1953 when he wrote the introductory page to the English version of the Hungarian drama classic *The Tragedy of Man*. In 1955 he translated *Hungarian Poetry* in a book of the same name and in 1959 wrote *An Annotated Bibliography of the Languages of the Gilbert Islands and Ellice Islands and Nauru*.

For some years he had pursued a personal interest in unearthing the story of Hungarian migration to Australia. This research burgeoned into his thesis for a Master of Arts (honours) from Sydney University. By the time it was published in 1969 as *Blood and Gold: Hungarians in Australia*, Egon had accepted a position as Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Demography at the Australian National University in Canberra. It was there he commenced his major research, a detailed survey and scholarly analysis of the background, motivation, education, hopes and varying levels of achievement of thousands from the DP ships that crossed the world to a new home. This landmark work, entitled *Displaced Persons: Calwell's New Australians* was not published until 1988, twenty years after his research had begun.

In the years between, he co-authored with Elsie *A Continent Takes Shape* (1971) – a ‘coffee table’ book that detailed the discovery and exploration of Australia through maps – and demonstrated their love of cartography as a medium for displaying a country’s evolution.

Another by-product of his DP research was *Intruders: Refugee Doctors in Australia* (1975) that exposed the treatment of European doctors and surgeons, whose qualifications were not recognised in Australia despite shortages of doctors. This work had a significant affect on the attitudes towards the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Kunz’s *Kinetic Theory of the Refugee in Flight* (1973), a theory on the factors forming refugee movements, brought him broad international recognition. He lectured widely as an acknowledged expert on the refugee and migrant experience generally.

*The Hungarians in Australia* (1985), expanded on his original 1969 work. He wrote both the Hungarian and Post War Non-British Migration sections for the 1988 Australian bicentennial publication *The Australian People*.

By then he had moved on to head and reorganise the library at the then Institute of Aboriginal Studies, further broadening his understanding of the ‘building blocks’ that made up modern Australia.

As a social researcher, historian, demographer, librarian and author, Kunz’s endeavours were recognised worldwide. He retired in 1984 leaving behind a career in diverse but complementary disciplines.

His passion was not confined to intellectual and literary pursuits. He was a life-long football fan, who was instrumental in the founding of Sydney’s Mosman Junior Soccer Club in 1967, and Canberra’s Hughes-Garran in 1969.

A few weeks before his death from cancer on 19 July 1997, Egon received one of Hungary’s highest honours, the Medal of Merit Cross, for distinguished service to Hungarian-Australians, particularly in the fields of scholarly research and the publication of Hungarian immigrant history.

A tribute to Egon, including an old interview, subsequent interviews with his sons, and family home movies, was shown on Hungarian television in 2004.

Dr Egon Francis Kunz made an integral contribution to bridging the gaps in our appreciation of the migrant experience.

## Lakatos, Geza (1890–1967)

Géza (Geza) Lakatos (1890-1967), General in the Hungarian Army and Prime Minister of Hungary, graduated as a second-lieutenant officer from Ludovika Academy, the Military College of Hungary in Budapest, in 1910. He served as army infantry officer of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in various posts until 1914 when he was accepted as a student at the War Academy in Vienna. His studies were interrupted by the outbreak of WWI and he was sent to the Russian front. From December 1915 to November 1916 he served as staff officer to a Brigadier, a division commander. Between 1917 and 1918 he saw active service on the Italian front.

In May 1919, whilst the Hungarian army was largely disarmed, a Soviet-style Bolshevik-Communist insurrection and revolutionary putsch saw Hungarian Communists take control of the national government for 133 days. At the time Geza was in charge of military headquarters in Gödöllő. He later joined the Nationalists under the elected leader, Admiral Horthy.



*Geza Lakatos, n.d.*  
photo supplied by family

After graduating from the War Academy in Budapest in 1921 Geza became a lecturer at the academy. From 1923 he was in charge of communications and intelligence. In 1925 he received the title of “Vitéz” (hero of the nation) and in 1928 was military attaché to Prague. He was promoted to Chief of Personnel in the Hungarian Army in 1935 and became a “3 star” General (Altábornagy) in 1939. Two years later he was appointed an Army Corps Commander and in 1943 was promoted to the ultimate echelon in the military: that of a “4 star” General (Colonel-General), Chief of the Defence Staff operating out of Kiev, Ukraine.

Two months after the Nazi invasion-occupation of Hungary, Geza resigned from the military and had an audience with the tolerated and neutral Head of State, Admiral Horthy, who told him that: “– after your well earned leave in the country, I will invite you back to Budapest to serve the nation, appointing you Prime Minister”. Lakatos reluctantly accepted the Prime Ministership but took up the challenge and tried to assemble a government formed by a majority of anti-Nazi ministers.

Whilst in power his military government stopped the deportation of the Hungarian Jews and, with Interior Minister Béla Horváth, ordered Hungarian gendarmes to use deadly force against any deportation effort. A man of honour, he also reopened peace talks with the Allies in a last ditch effort to save his nation. His attempts failed and he was arrested and kept captive by the Germans from 2 January 1945.

After the war he was subjected to harsh investigations by Soviet forces and endless People’s Tribunal hearings where his account as witness was sought. He was finally released from detention in January 1946. In 1949 the communist Hungarian government withdrew his military pension and seized his property forcing him to return to Budapest where he made a living illustrating books and handpainting silk scarves.

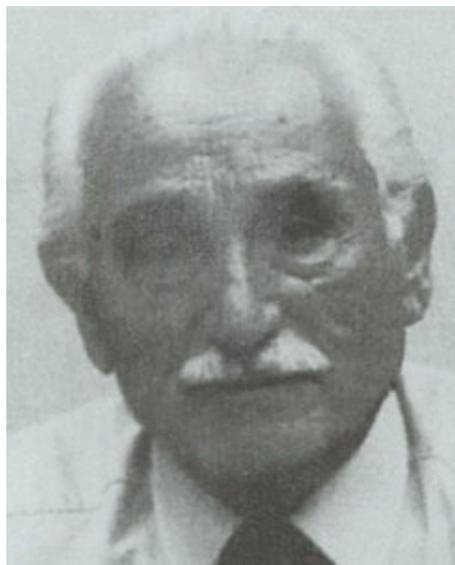
In 1965 the Hungarian government permitted Lakatos to join his daughter in Adelaide as a sponsored migrant. She had been living in the country since 1957. Afterwards he wrote his memoirs, detailing in particular his earnest diplomatic-political attempts during his Prime Ministership to ensure Hungary's neutrality, sovereignty and independence and also to steer clear the country out of a collision course between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. His book *As I Saw It: The Tragedy of Hungary* was published in 1981 and released in West Germany and the United States of America. In 1992, following the universal collapse of communism, the book was published in Hungary.

Geza Lakatos was the last constitutional Prime Minister of the Royal Kingdom of Hungary; serving from 29 August 1944 to 15 October 1944. The final years of this national hero, were spent among his loving family and fellow countrymen until his quiet and peaceful passing away in Adelaide on 24 May 1967.

## Léderer, András (1918–2004)

András Léderer (Andrew Lederer) was born and grew up in Poroszló, Central-East Hungary, where his father owned vast property, including an abattoir, and was involved in horse trading. Andrew had a conservative upbringing. With the outbreak of WWII he was drafted into the cavalry and saw action in Russia, at the battle of River Don's great river bend area, where the Hungarian 2nd Army was holding the Southern flank of the Nazi German grand army prior to their fall in Stalingrad. Lederer was the sole survivor of his 230-strong unit.

The post-war Soviet occupation of Hungary saw the Lederer family lose all of its businesses. Following the collapse of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, Lederer, and his wife Agnes, defected to Austria and became refugees under the care of the United Nation's International Refugee Organisation. In 1957 they opted for a new life in Australia.



*András Léderer, n.d.*  
photo supplied by family

It was, at first, a hard life. The couple had no friends and had to get used to a new culture and language. Nevertheless, Lederer aimed for success. Falling back on his butcher's trade, he was operating his own butcher shop within 10 months. At the beginning he worked on his own, cutting up carcasses of slaughtered animals to prepare special meat cuts, sausages, smoked ham and salami for sale to other butcher shops. The distinct flavour of his cured and smoked delicatessen products, such as hams and Hungarian salamis, and the wide use of traditional authentic recipes with paprika seasoning, became very popular. He enjoyed business success relatively early, but in a steady and measured way. His success was also due to his decision to use the latest high tech production facilities, to cater for the ethnic taste, and to promote his novelty items of tasty continental smallgoods among adventurous and connoisseur Australians. He employed skilled ethnics: Spaniards for his Spanish hams, Italians for his Italian range salamis and manufactured meat, and Germans, Austrians and Hungarians for his special frankfurts and continental sausages.

Lederer gradually began buying butcher shops in his area and the neighbouring suburbs. His brand name "Primo", meaning "quality", was launched in 1985. At the time the company had 38 employees and a meat manufacturing facility in Homebush, Sydney, and was soon Australia's largest meat and smallgoods manufacturing firm, supplying (for decades) Coles Supermarkets chains with special meat cuts, delicatessen items, pork, bacon, sausages, salami, etc. One big coup his company made was the sale, for \$100 million, of its land at Homebush Abattoirs for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. He bought his first luxury car, a black Mercedes Benz limousine. Always a humble man, he kept apologising for the extravagant purchase by saying it was important, as the head of a giant corporation, to arrive properly to meetings.

Lederer was knowledgeable in all matters concerning horses and equine sport. Saturday afternoons were spent horse riding followed by socialising with close friends around a card table. For his outstanding help to Australian sport he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 1985.

Lederer passed away on 21 April 2004. The grateful Hungarian-Australian ex-migrant was a diligent worker, an astute businessman and a wise entrepreneur who never overextended himself with high risk investment venture. Currently his legacy, the giant Australian meat processor, Primo Smallgoods, is in its 36th year of operation, has in excess of 2000 employees and is majority owned and run by Andrew Lederer's nephew, Paul Lederer, who follows his uncle's successful footsteps catering for an ever demanding market.

## Leviny, Ernő (1818–1905)

Ernő (Ernest) Leviny was born at Szepes-Szombat (now Spisska Sobota of Slovakia) near the Tatra Mountains in 1818. He was ethnic Hungarian but a citizen of the Austrian Empire which then ruled Slovakia. To improve his skill as a silversmith he went to Paris in the early 1840s. In October 1846 he settled in London, opening a silversmith and jewellery business with a partner.

Although he lived in England while the Hungarian war for independence from Austria raged in 1848-49, his heart was with his compatriot revolutionaries. After the collapse of the revolutionary war and capitulation, Hungarian exiles began to arrive in London. Leviny, already an established and well-to-do businessman there, befriended them.

In 1853 he sailed to Australia, bringing with him machinery for gold digging, as well as four hired labourers. The men, however, defected when the ship reached Adelaide, and Leviny continued his journey to Melbourne on his own. It appears that he went almost straight to Castlemaine where he began working, often with the help of hired men, on the goldfields. He was successful and was able to combine mining with his silver and goldsmithing work as well as his jewellery and watchmaking business. He lived in Castlemaine until his death in 1905 at the age of eighty-seven. During his half century there he completed many outstanding pieces of artistic gold and silver work and won numerous distinctions and medals in various colonial exhibitions as well as at the London International Exhibition of 1862.

Leviny easily gathered friends and admirers. He had set standards of excellence in his craft to the extent that some pieces of his silverwork are held by the National Gallery of Victoria. An elegant mansion built over a good location house was his home at 42 Hunter Street, Castlemaine. It has a wide courtyard reminiscent of old Hungarian country houses and sports not only the typically green Hungarian shutters on its windows, but a wistful name on the gate: “Buda”. This mansion is now heritage listed under the care of the National Trust of Australia.



*Ernest Leviny*, by W. B. Latimer, c1897  
State Library of Victoria, H83.152/1

## **Mattay, András Ivan (Andrew)** **(1941–2004)**

András (Andrew) Ivan Mattay was born in Budapest to a Hungarian father and British mother. The family arrived in Australia in 1950. Following his high school education at St. Virgil's in Hobart he joined the Australian Army in 1960. He served with distinction in Borneo, Malaysia (1963-65) and Vietnam (1970-71).

He continued his postgraduate military war studies at the Royal Military College of Canada. In 1983 he was promoted to the rank of Colonel in the Australian Army and was the senior officer with the multinational force in the Middle-East in Sinai in 1985-86, returning to serve two years as operational colonel, Land Command Headquarters in Sydney. He was appointed Army Training Director and served in that capacity between 1988-90.

In 1990 Colonel Mattay took command of the Tasmania region as Army Commanding Officer, and in 1996 retired to Hobart with his wife Melegueta. His retirement years were devoted to military journalism and photography. Not losing his spirit, and keeping his sense of humour to the end, the popular hero passed away at age 63, of an incurable disease.

His funeral service was held with full military honours at St Mary's Cathedral, Hobart, on 3 July 2004. His qualities including specialist knowledge, were: courage, determination, resourcefulness and concern for others in all aspects of his life. Family, service personnel, friends and dignitaries, including the then Chief of Defence Forces, General Peter Cosgrove, attended the final farewell of the soldier's soldier.

The Hungarian origin migrant child grew up to become a top achiever in life in the military and shone in intellect and left an indelible mark in service to Australia as a proud Australian. Hungarian-Australians, who knew of him, claimed with equal pride that he was one of them.

## **Molnar, George** (1910–1998)

George Molnar (György Molnár) was born in Nagyvárad, Hungary (Romanian city of Oradea since WWII ) on 25 April 1910 and came to Australia as a sponsored migrant in 1939 with a B. Arch. (Budapest) to begin work as a government architect in Canberra.

In 1945 he took up a lectureship at the University of Sydney and also began contributing cartoons to the *Daily Telegraph*. His talents were recognized by the opposition daily newspaper, The *Sydney Morning Herald* which employed him from 1952 to 1984. His sharp, satirical and thought provoking, black & white fine line drawings more than just entertained readers three times a week. Considered irrefutably a conservative European in attitude and disposition, he frequently criticized irrational trends and social mores through his incisively executed art form.

As professor of architecture at Sydney and NSW universities, he alerted the establishment and the public to the high cost of the 1960s and '70s uncontrolled building development boom causing the destruction of many Victorian & Georgian buildings in Sydney. He was a passionate advocate of modern architecture but equally dedicated to the preservation of heritage assets and to modern urban development that was sustainable, soulful and allowed for humane dimensions. Unfortunately more than half of Sydney's heritage buildings were lost before the Heritage Act (1977) and Environmental Planning & Assessment Act (1979) were introduced.

Molnar was fluent in Hungarian, French, German and English and was a fount of Latin adages which were delivered with aplomb when opportune. The architect-professor, cartoonist-commentator, master water-colourist, writer (Statues) and social analyst was awarded the OBE in 1971 and the AO in 1988 for his unique contribution to Australian society. Australian newspapers responded to his death with substantial articles, praising his abilities as “the finest newspaper cartoonist of his generation” (*The Australian*) and his personal qualities as “a cultured man whose wit was as elegant as his art” (*The Age*).

## **Nyulasy, Charles** (1825–1903)

Charles (Károly) Nyulasy was twenty-one years of age, when he joined the noble band of patriots who took up arms against the Austrian Empire in the bloody war for Hungarian independence of 1848-49. As a nobleman himself, he sacrificed his property and possessions in the struggle for freedom of the Fatherland. With the collapse of the Revolution, Lieutenant Nyulasy fled to Transylvania and spent a period in Paris before moving to London before sailing to Australia in 1853. From Melbourne he went to the Bendigo diggings but, being unsuccessful, returned to Melbourne and organised and paid the expenses of a party to go to Creswick's Creek, where he developed the famous Hard Hill gold mine.

After several other mining ventures in Maryborough, he went, in 1856, to Sebastopol Hill where he became interested in the 12 Apostles claim. At this time there had been many accidents during blasting operations, and Nyulasy, applying his military knowledge to the subject, invented an original "safe and quick" method of blasting in water in the rock at Sebastopol Hill. The invention created great excitement in the mining community with five thousand miners assembled to witness the first experiment in the "Newcastle-men's" claim. The trial was a resounding success for Nyulasy. Later he was elected a member of the first local court in Ararat, and drew up mining regulations for the district.

In 1858, in Ballarat, Nyulasy married Sarah Browne, a twenty-three-year-old immigrant from Ireland. They moved around quite a bit: in Invercargill, New Zealand, Nyulasy became the owner of an hotel, while in Cooktown, Queensland he was a wine and spirit merchant. To give their children a better education the family finally settled in Fitzroy, Melbourne where, during the 1880s, Nyulasy owned a draper's shop.

The Nyulasy's placed great emphasis on the education of their children. Charles William became a surveyor and warden of the Pilbara Goldfield, dying on the goldfield in 1889. Francis Armand, known as Dr. Frank Nyulasy, graduated from Melbourne University and became a well known medical man and a correspondent of the Hungarian Medical Association. He wrote prolificly on subjects connected with obstetrics, especially puerperal fever, and was a fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine. Dr. Arthur Nyulasy, was a Surgeon Captain with the West Australian Army Medical Corps of the Commonwealth Contingent during the Boer War, and received the Queen's Medal with Clasps. His two daughters also graduated from Melbourne University.

Though living at times far away from each other, the Nyulasys were a close knit family, rallying round their father and pleasing him more than once by arranging for the saga of his patriotic struggle and goldfield exploits. Members of the family made scientific or medical endowments in memory of their parents and deceased brothers, and perpetuated the name of Nyulasy in the hospital, university and medical world of Melbourne.

## **Orban, Desiderius (Dezső)** (1884–1986)

Desiderius Orban was a renowned Hungarian-born Australian painter, textile designer and art teacher who started off in Australia as a humble, unknown artist. Born Dezső Orbán in Győr, Hungary in 1884, in keeping with family expectation (he was from a long line of public servants) he graduated from Péter Pázmány University of Budapest in philosophy, physics and mathematics. His real passion, though, was art. He was at times tutored by János Pentelei-Molnár but, overall, became mainly a self taught artist painter. In 1905, he commenced compulsory military service with the Austro-Hungarian army.

A year later, following early success as a young and promising painter in Budapest, he moved to Paris where he studied briefly at the Académie Julien but after two short weeks gave it up, finding it irreconcilable with his concept of artistic development. He acquired a studio and became a regular member of a close knit circle of well known artists that included Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso. Their philosophical exchange and collaborative exploration of perception and pictorial representation later resulted in analytic Cubism. No doubt under their esoteric influence, his individual style developed as Postimpressionist inspired with distinct flat primary colours seeking decorative effect in landscape, still life and compositions of religious nature.

In 1909 Orban founded a group of artists known as Keresők (The Seekers), bringing coteremporary painting to Hungary. In 1912-13 he was again called up for military service in the Balkan War. In 1915 he married Alice Vajda, a doctor serving in the Austro-Hungarian Army. In 1931, he founded the Arts & Crafts Academy in Budapest, Atelier. In 1937 his painting, Cathedral of Eger (1928), was seized by the Nazis from Nuremberg Museum collection, and was never recovered.

In 1939, he fled Budapest and arrived in Australia as a 55-year-old migrant, settling in Sydney and enlisting in the Australian Army as a private. In 1942, following his release, he worked as a textile designer-printmaker in a Sydney factory and, a year later, began his own Art School and held his first solo exhibition of paintings with thirty works, the bulk of which were European subjects. In 1944, the Art Gallery of NSW purchased one of his paintings, sealing his formal entry, recognition and acceptance by the elite of the Sydney art world. An exceptional art teacher he wrote *A Layman's Guide to Creative Art* (1968), *Understanding Art* (1968), and *What Is Art All About* (1975).

From 1946 to 1949, Orban was President of the NSW branch of the Contemporary Art Society of Australia; in 1953 he was elected Chairman of the UNESCO National Committee of Visual Arts and from 1957 to 1967 he conducted summer art schools at the University of New England, Armidale. He was also a judge for the 1960 Sulman Prize. Among his accumulated awards was the 1929 Gold Medal-International Exhibition in Barcelona, the 1957 Wagga Wagga Art Prize, the 1967 Muswellbrook Art Prize, the 1967 & 1971 Blake Prize for Religious Art and the 1971 Wollongong Art Prize. In 1974 he won the International Co-operation Art Award and in 1975 was honoured with the OBE for his services to the arts. In 1982 he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Order of the Hungarian Flag by the People's Republic of Hungary. Still painting at age 100 he was conferred the honorific title: Doctor of Letters (in Art) by the University of New England in 1984.

Orban's work is represented in the collections of the Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest; the Nuremberg Museum, Germany; the Harold Mertz Collection, Uni. of Texas, USA; the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; and in all of the state art gallery of Australia, as well as regional art galleries and in private and institutional collections.

Aged 101, Desiderius Orban died in 1986. His passing virtually closed the Postimpressionist era in the universal art world.

## **Pólya, János Béla** (1914–1992)

Dr. János Béla Pólya (John Bela Polya), (1914-1992), FRACI, scientist, academic, and internationally recognised authority in organic chemistry, was born in 1914 in Budapest, Hungary (Austro-Hungarian Empire) into a secular Jewish family. He was the son of Dr. Jenő (Eugene) Pólya, a university professor and famous surgeon (Polya Gastrectomy operation), and Livia Polya from a gifted, orthodox Jewish family. The Polya family was assimilatory and secular, changing their name to Pólya from Pollak in about 1880 and converting to Catholicism.

John Polya studied at a Catholic Piarist school in Budapest which also had Jewish, Presbyterian and Muslim students. He then studied chemistry at the renowned Eidgenössische Technischen Hochschule in Zurich, Switzerland, in the 1930s. In 1936 he completed his tertiary studies at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich. From 1937 to 1939 he was a Rockefeller Scholar in Organic Chemistry at the University of Manchester and the Imperial College, London; subsequently working as a Rockefeller Scholar on vitamin A at the two universities. While in England he became acutely aware of the Nazi threat to Jews. His sister, Susie, and brother, Michael, left Hungary before World War II for America and Australia, respectively. His father visited America and was urged by medical colleagues to remain in the USA. Confident in his eminent professional position, however, his father returned to Budapest and was killed by the Nazis in December 1944 just prior to liberation. John Polya's mother and younger sister survived the Holocaust in Hungary and emigrated to Australia after the war. The 1930s to early '40s saw the arrival, in Australia, of a highly educated Hungarian elite, mainly Jewry fleeing repression by a Hungarian government gradually compliant with Nazi Germany's demands.

Polya arrived in Sydney from the UK in 1939. He recalled preferring Australia over Chile as a destination for a refugee because at that time he spoke English but no Spanish. He initially worked as a chemist for Sir Edward Hallstrom (Hallstrom Pty. Ltd, refrigerators) (1939-1940). He then moved to Melbourne and worked as an industrial chemist for the well-known chemist, entrepreneur, wine expert and humanist Oscar Mendelsohn (1940-1945). His attempt to enlist failed because his "reserve occupation" was deemed more necessary to the nation than his military service. He subsequently worked for the Munitions Supply Laboratories at Maribyrnong, Melbourne (1945-1946) (arising from his discovery of the chemical basis of premature corrosion in RAAF planes). His stellar academic career took off from 1946 when he was appointed Lecturer in Organic Chemistry at the University of Tasmania. At the time, he was staunchly opposed to the fluoridation of Australia's drinking water and published *Are We Safe. A Layman's Guide to Public Health* (Cheshire, Melbourne 1964). In 1952 he was awarded a Doctor of Science from the University of Tasmania, and in 1955 was appointed Associate Professor of Chemistry at the university.

Polya had married Robin Barker in 1940. Their daughter (Michal) was born in 1941, Gideon in 1944, Rosemary (1948), John (1955) and David (1960). All of his children obtained their first degrees from the University of Tasmania and all pursued studies with a scientific leaning. Michal (BSc, DipEd, mathematics teacher), Gideon (BSc, PhD, biochemistry academic), Rosemary (BA, BSc, DipEd, ALA, teacher, librarian), John (BMus, mathematics and computing teacher) and David (BSc, PhD, geology academic).

Polya believed in the responsibility of scientists to speak out in the public interest and in 1977-78 became the president of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute, Tasmania branch. In 1978-79, he was chairman of the Organic Chemistry Division of the Royal Australian

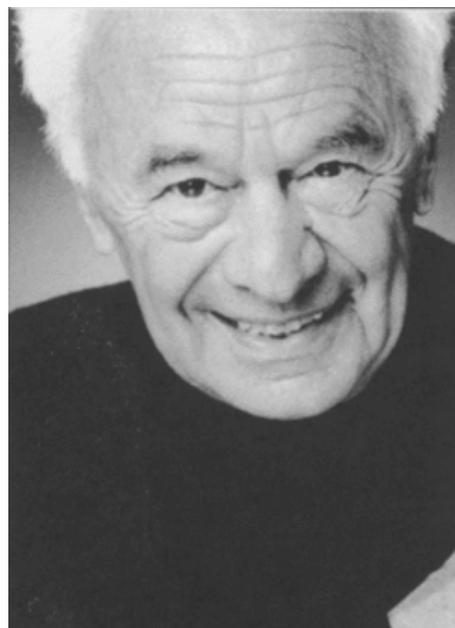
Chemical Institute. Highly regarded, respected and fondly remembered by his former chemistry and pharmacy students, he retired from the University of Tasmania in 1979.

As an academic and scientist Polya was known to be a very passionate and opinionated person who spoke bluntly, freely, and without fear of consequences. He was an extraordinarily gifted, multilingual polemist with deep interests in philology, science, philosophy, theology, literature and music. He was also a great cook and had a great love for Jewish culture as reflected in gastronomy, music, humour and literature.

Overall, Dr. John Polya made a major contribution to chemical research and chemical education in Australia. He published over 120 scholarly works and supervised numerous research students. With Dr Kitty Got (a Jewish Hungarian refugee who arrived in Australia in 1956) he introduced the teaching of biochemistry to the Chemistry Department and notably encouraged women scientists. He believed that a vital truth from the Jewish experience was the importance of “being different”, which he perceived as contributing to a better and culturally richer humanity. He died on 15 December 1992 in Melbourne.

## Pongrass, Alexander (Alex) (1923–2000)

Alexander Pongrass (Sándor Pongrácz) was born into an impoverished family on 10 November 1923 in Nyíregyháza, North-East Hungary. He was the second of three brothers in the family. Although endowed with scholastic aptitude, his parents could not afford his schooling past age 14. Well motivated, he then started on a textile apprenticeship but soon expanded his education by studying bookkeeping at evening technical college. Aged 16, at the outbreak of WWII he left home and quit his apprenticeship to work in his uncle's newspaper distribution business. He never saw his parents, who perished in the Auschwitz death camps, again. His brother, George, luckily survived the forced labour camps of Dachau. In 1944, when Hungary was under Nazi Germany occupation, Alex joined the Jewish underground, and managed to obtain false identity papers to pose as a liaison officer with the SS guards command in order to bring Hungarian Jews to the legendary Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who, by issuing protective Swedish passports, saved about 4500 Jews from death march deportation and/or execution.



*Alexander Pongrass, n.d.*  
photo supplied by Attila Ürményházi

After the war, Alex established connections to profit from commercial ventures, supplying food to a famishing Vienna. In 1947 he met his future wife Klára. Realizing that no prosperous future was possible for them in their homeland, they fled across the border to Austria in March 1949. Under the care of the United Nations Refugee Agency (IRO) they became refugees and languished in an Austrian IRO camp for a year. Like thousands of other refugees, the penniless couple, who could not speak any English, landed in Sydney in 1950 after almost a month-long journey by ship.

In Sydney, Alex earned 7 pounds per week doing nondescript manual work. Always astute, he saw great potential to prosper once his initial, mandatory, two year work contract with the government expired. A big change came when his elder brother, George, an engineer, arrived in Australia. Combining their individual skills – Alex as a businessman-trader, George as engineer-inventor – they established an engineering works to design and market significant industrial innovations. In 1951 they formed a company that specialised in the research and development of pneumatically operated clamping machines and bought a block of land at Rosebery for their manufacturing base. Inventing and producing the first Australian pneumatically-operated tube bending machine, their company was a spectacular success.

From then on Pongrass Engineering never looked back. The company changed its name to Pongrass Brothers Pty Ltd, and in 1960 added a fibreglass division which manufactured 28ft luxury boats and afterwards 12-17ft aluminum fishing and “runabout” pleasure craft. In 1972 the company sold 1000 boats, making it the largest NSW company in its field.

The enterprising brothers systematically expanded to buy up companies in industries utilizing their novel technology such as in metal furniture and plumbing supply. Their Rosebery-based company continually expanded and was publicly listed in 1965. By the mid-1970s they had

plants in Auckland, Brisbane and Melbourne, employing over 600 people. In the “mineral boom” period of Australia (1969-1974), Alex invested in mining exploration companies such as Kratos Uranium and Stellar Mining and also found time to seriously engage in real estate business.

Alex Pongrass greatly contributed to the Hungarian communal life in Sydney. He financially supported many charity drives, and gave a generous donation, of the equivalent value of a suburban house, to help the refugees arriving in Sydney after the failed Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

His greatest passion in life, however, was soccer. In 1958 he took over the St George-Budapest soccer club, then facing financial collapse despite fielding brilliant players. In those years the clubhouse at Hurstville (St George District) was mostly patronized by Hungarian migrants finding a venue for their week-end socializing, discussing soccer and their beloved club’s players who were mostly ethnic Hungarians, as in those days soccer was mainly the sport of young immigrants playing for their own ethnic based clubs. For forty years running Alex was their irreplaceable and successful president. In that time “his” club won every imaginable trophy, cup, and honour, and contributed an extraordinary number of players to the national soccer team. The wealthy businessman was the benefactor in the building of the Saint George Stadium (Barton Park Stadium) which has a total capacity of 15,000, including 2,500 seats. It is currently the home to the St. George Club (changed from St George-Budapest) which plays in the New South Wales Premier League.

To have a break from demanding business activities, NSL soccer politics, etc. the patriarch of soccer indulged in a hobby, that of horse breeding and riding. Alex and Claire (Klára) Pongrass had 2 sets of twins and eventually 13 grandchildren. In his later years, he was able to devote more time to his large family whom he idolized. Alex received the AM (Member of the Order of Australia) in 1988 for his contribution to soccer in Australia. In recognition of his long record of outstanding benevolence and help to charity, the Rotary Club, of which he was a member, conferred upon him their highest honour. Even in his last hours, Alex Pongrass was either surfing the internet or evaluating deal prospects to benefit family members. The unique and good man passed away on June 2000 in Sydney.

## **Radvansky, Baron John George** (1924–2007)

Hungarian hereditary baron, John George Radvansky (Báró Radvánszky János), was born in Radván (Radvaň, Slovakia, since WWI, post-collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). He was the only child of Baron Antal Radvánszky and his second wife Wanda Gleiman. He had a privileged childhood. The family property consisted of vast estates and the lifestyle allowed for a retinue of servants: cook, butler, maids, gardeners and coachman. Following the Treaty of Trianon, 1920, and the birth of Czechoslovakia and subsequent confiscation of the bulk of their property, the family endured serious financial difficulties but managed to keep control of an apartment block in Budapest which came in handy when, later in life, John Radvansky was pursuing his university studies.



*John Radvansky, n.d.*  
photo supplied by family

He was nine years old when his father died at the age of 51. This absence left a deep hole in his life. He never went to primary school but instead had a private teacher, and an English and German speaking governess, which gave him an excellent grounding in those languages. He started his formal schooling at fifth form level, attending the English College at Sárosatak, Hungary.

The period of his senior school years was during WWII and the difficult times under the Nazi occupation of Hungary. He then went on to study at the University of Budapest. During his student days he worked for an underground anti-Nazi resistance paper. He also briefly worked with Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish Ambassador who used his diplomatic immunity and privilege to get Swedish passports for Hungarian Jews facing deportation and the holocaust. Radvansky used his perfect German to enter the forced labour camps and say that a number of workers were needed outside the compound. He would take them into town and tell them to scam in different directions. The role he played was included in the documentary about the legendary saviour Raoul Wallenberg's life.

Radvansky had every reason to fear for his life as those who had been taken before him had been shot. He was eventually caught but saved just hours before his scheduled execution when the Soviet Army "liberated" Hungary from the Nazis. Towards the end of the war he met his future wife, Susan, who was studying medicine. They decided that it would be wise to leave the country. In 1949, carrying their treasured possessions and in great fear, they crossed the border to Austria.

Radvansky's Australian friend, Rhodes Fairbridge, who, as a young geologist, had stayed with John's parents at Radvaň, had remembered the family very fondly and secured them a sponsorship/landing permit in Australia. This meant that John and Susan were migrants and not refugees who had to work on government assigned jobs for two years. They arrived in Perth and both enrolled at the University of Western Australia where they studied philosophy and psychology. After their graduation, Susan went on to study librarianship and got a job at Melbourne University. John obtained his teaching qualification at Mercer House Teacher Training College, Melbourne, and started teaching at Lauriston Girls School. He also

undertook a Masters Degree at the University of Melbourne and launched himself into an academic career. He was a much respected and loved lecturer. After a few years, he transferred to the newly created Monash University where his wife worked as a librarian.

Following marital estrangement, John moved to Tasmania to take up the position of head of the inaugural “History of Ideas” course at the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education (TCAE). He soon proved to be a most inspirational and lively teacher. In about 1979 he was appointed Director of that college. Problems in Hobart with competition between the TCAE and the University for a small pool of students and overlapping courses, especially in teacher training, meant that, despite controversy and protests, in 1981 the University absorbed some Hobart courses. After restructuring, the TCAE was incorporated into the University of Tasmania and Radvansky was appointed Reader in Education in the Faculty of Education. Following his retirement in 1989 he taught courses for the University of the Third Age.

John Radvansky was a wonderful educator in the old fashioned sense, deeply interested in his students’ education. He could brilliantly explain abstract concepts and made learning entertaining.