



**It's All Good...**

**by**

**Ivan Gaal**

***My Motto is  
'Always do your best'***



*I have written these pages  
as a reflection of  
the main events  
of my 80 plus  
years of life  
on this planet  
Earth, and  
some of the  
people who  
have shared  
it with me*

*Something to do*

*Someone to love*

*Something to hope for*

*Indian Proverb*



*Photo by Nigel Buesst*

*To Nicolas, Tomas and Jett*



It's All Good...

*Special thanks to my wife Cathy Gaal*

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*Cover photo is a reflection of Fisherman's Bastion on the Budapest  
Hilton in the 1970s. (where am I...?)*

## *Foreward*

*We are roughly the same age, Ivan and I, yet when I met him for the first time in 1961 he had been through the second World War, the 1956 Hungarian uprising and pestered the invading Soviet troops. He fled to Vienna to avoid incarceration and from there migrated to Australia. I could not imagine myself in Ivan's position having no family here, needing to learn English and embracing a new lifestyle. My life to that point could be deemed to have been tame by comparison.*

*Ivan has a strong desire to succeed in life stemming from his formative years in a somewhat dysfunctional family. This shows out in his years of living with a step-mother who exhibited preference to his siblings. He relied on his father's friends for meals and sorted out his own education path. In Australia his achievements in his work and sporting fields also reflect his drive for success.*

*Over the years we have kept in touch and Jan and I have enjoyed a regular social life with Ivan and his wife Cathy. However we couldn't compete with him on the sporting field. We did try sailing and playing tennis a few times but his intensity to win was slightly intimidating. I could keep up with him swimming laps in the city pool that is until he pulled his flippers on.*

It's All Good...

*It's remarkable that someone who had been in the country such a short time could have been selected to represent Australia at the 1960 Olympic Games. And so unfortunate that canoeing was considered a minor sport and required him to raise his own funds to go to Rome with the team. That is where Australia let him down and being unable to come up with sufficient funding Ivan had to pass up what should have been the ultimate recognition of his ability. A gold medal perhaps gone begging.*

*I tease Ivan that he has become one of our landed gentry with his holding in Dereel as a chestnut farmer and following that episode to mix with the aristocracy in the high country of Victoria. Mind you the arts-loving community of Warburton quickly recognised his passion and talent for the photograph and film while he regularly skittled through the lawn bowls comps in Warburton.*

*Jan and I hope that Ivan gets to write many addenda to his biography and that he passes on his record to those following him. He has often said to me that I don't really know him and until I read this document I think he was probably right.*

*John Matthews  
a friend for 60 years*



*Jan and John Matthews in Warburton*



1938

*I was born on 23rd March 1938 by Caesarean section in Budapest. My mother's maiden name was Ilona Varga. I had an inner ear infection, so I spent extra time in hospital with my mother for a week after I was born.*

*She was a custom dress maker working with her brother Istvan Varga.*

*My father, Istvan Gaal, and mother were married in 1935. They had a good life together. Theatre, cinema, dinner parties and visiting the opera were on their agenda almost every day. My birth almost put the stop to all that. Luckily my maternal grandmother took over the mothering role, so my parents could continue the good life they were used to. My maternal grandmother, Maria, was a helpful wonderful person.*

*My father was the manager of one of the Austrian Julius Meinl outlet in Budapest.*



*With mother in hospital.  
One week old.*



*The standard baby photo in the 1930s*



*My parents wedding photo in 1935*



*My mother modeling her brother's latest creation.*

*1939*

*We lived in an elegant flat in the CBD in Budapest (on the Pest side). All seemed to be going well. I had an expensive Moses basket to sleep in and the photos portray a happy family life. World War II began when Germany invaded neighbouring countries.*



*My father Istvan and my mother Ilona in Austria before World War II*

*... with the Moses basket*



*Gyula, my mother, Olga  
and grandma*



*My mother's mum, Maria looked after me for two years*



1940

*On Christmas Eve my mother abandoned my father and me for another man. My grandfather, who was a detective with the police force, on a tip off, found my mother in a hotel with a male friend.*

*My father was with him, he took off his wedding ring, threw it at my mother and that was the end of their marriage. I remained with my father, and my maternal grandparents. My mother was forbidden to see me.*



*Lonely Christmas with Steiff teddy bear in 1940*



*Mother made me a nice coat*



*Another Christmas...*



*With father at Vörösmarty Tér (Budapest)*

It's All Good...



*A bit lonely...*



*With my nanny, Christmas, 1941*



*At the zoo*



*At Nyarazsd, in the country where  
the Gaal family lived for centuries.*



*1941- 1942*

*We lived in 52 Mester Utca, on the top floor opposite an old church in Budapest.*

*The war came to Budapest. During bombing raids at nights I was very disturbed and couldn't sleep. To manage my crying outbursts they put me in cold water to calm me down. They called it Vitus Dance. I remember it as if it was yesterday.*

*My father started to go out with my future stepmother, Margit. I remember one morning I told her while having breakfast that I didn't like her. I remember she was crying.*



*In the Kindergarten*



*The Varga family without my mother*



*With my step mother, Margit*



*My father with  
friends and Margit*

1943

*The war was getting closer to us. The Germans were occupying most of Europe. Hitler gave back part of Slovakia taken away from Hungary after World War I. This was the part where my paternal relatives had lived for centuries. In exchange, Hitler asked the Hungarians to fight on the Germans side. This meant that Margit and my father could take me to Nyarazsd (today called Topolnyik) and aunty Peppi took care of me. I loved it there. The place belonged to Hungary again.*



*With aunty Peppi in Nyarazsd*



*At the zoo in Budapest*



*On the farm*





1944

*My relatives had a fairly big farm. They had horses, cows, poultry, pigs and I even had my own pet goat. Aunt Peppi and uncle Jozsef gave me everything I needed. They didn't have any children so they treated me as their own child. In the same year my half brother was born in Budapest, Frigyes, we called him Frici.*

*I still had a problem sleeping, so my relatives made me special grappa, which I drank at night...Not a good idea for a five year old!*

*The Germans were retreating through the village, but they behaved in a civilized manner.*

*I saw my first aerial battle between an English Spitfire and a German Messerschmitt over Nyarazsd. The Spitfire was damaged in the battle and fell to the ground not far from us. They kept me away from the wreckage. I saw the English pilot's parachute was on fire as he was falling, and he died on impact. That was my first close experience of the war, which I never forgot.*



*Istvan Gaal, my father*

*... at work*



*... front of his shop*

1945

*The Soviet Red Army had arrived to Nyarazsd. I was very lucky my name was Ivan. Every second Russian soldier was called by the same name. They brought me toys they stole from the neighbours.*

*The downside was that 20 dirty flea infested soldiers slept in the main bedroom. They drank any alcoholic fluid, even the kerosene. They were 'withdrawing', because they were given rum before every battle, to make them braver.*

*One night I was sleeping in the grain cupboard when a drunk soldier threw me out. Aunty Peppi called the officer who picked up the common soldier and threw him out. He picked me up and gently put me back on top of the sacks. I never forgot that experience either.*



*At Óbuda, the old family home*



*The Gaal boys with my grandfather Mihaly in 1920s*



*Aunty Olga*

## 1946

*I was enrolled in a Slovak school, but we did everything in Hungarian. This was the year when this part of Slovakia was reclaimed by the Slovaks, which Hitler had given to the Hungarians before the war. Hungary had lost another war, so when the war ended I was in Slovakia.*

*One day my stepmother Margit turned up to take me back to Budapest to the "family".*

*Another big change in my life was coming up.*

*I remember she smuggled me over the border for a packet of cigarettes on the bridge in Komarom. The Danube river was running fast, it was dirty and it was raining. I was separated from people who took care of me for four years and loved me like their own child. Later I learned that they wanted to adopt me, but my father wouldn't allow them to do that. He wanted me back.*

*In the same year my half sister Ildiko was born. Life was different now from the life on the farm. We lived in a very nice flat on the 3rd floor in Buda, at the foot of Castle Hill. With two young children, Margit needed a lot of help. I became her servant at the age of nine. On top of the hard work I had to carry out, she also hit me on the face many-many times for no reason at all. It scared me a lot...She had a hard life growing up, so she took it out on me.*

*I went to a primary school nearby, Attila utca, but I had problems with my school work.*



*My father the entertainer*



*My uncle Istvan the custom dress maker, at home*



It's All Good...

*My brain was 'blocked' from all the alcohol I had been given to help me sleep in Nyarazsd over four years.*

*My father's sister, aunty Olga came to my rescue. She walked from Obuda (outskirt of Buda) to our flat many times to give me one to one tutoring. She helped me over the hurdle. She was an angel.*

*About this time I often used to get high fevers. One day my temperature was over 40 degrees. Margit arranged transport to the nearest hospital. We were still close to the end of World War II, so the wards were full of wounded soldiers. They put me next to a man with 'flesh falling off his legs'. I couldn't bear the sight of this, and his moaning every time he lifted his leg. I knew I had to get out...but how? I realized if I took the thermometer out of my mouth before it reached 38 degrees, I'll be OK to be sent home. That worked, but back at home it reached 40 again. Margit was furious, but she couldn't send me back...*

*The Communist Party of Hungary took over the government with a rigged election.*



*With Margit, my stepmother, Frici and Ildiko*



*With Frici and Ildiko on Castle Hill, where we lived*

## 1947 - 52

*During this period my father lost his job, because he was not a member of the Communist Party. His last job was as a manager of the first all day/all night supermarket in the CBD. Previously he was shop manager for Julius Meini, coffee and chocolate specialists, for 25 years. It was an Austrian firm, but after the war it was nationalized by the Communists and became Közert. He had to learn new skills, study Marxism and joined the Party. He had three children to support. I remember Margit selling her breast milk to make up for the loss of income. My father got a new job as a manager of a collective farm's outlet in the market. (Lehel uti piac) I finished my elementary schooling with distinction.*

*I wasn't smart, only diligent and hard working. Loved reading and enjoyed my own company at home, whenever I could. I had many friends and with my new roller skates, given to me by my father's friend Uncle Karcsi, I skated around Castle Hill and the Fishermen's Bastion, which still carried the damage of war. Castle Hill was our playground, today it is a major tourist attraction. .*

*I also did a lot of work in the market selling, delivering orders to clients and eating lots of watermelon. (Gorogdinyer). I joined the amateur wrestling club as well. (Vasas SC) I had a very good trainer, 1928 Olympic*

*champion, Lajos Keresztes. I attended training regularly and I was good at it. I enjoyed wrestling. That's where I could express the anger I felt towards Margit. I started to win competitions.*



*The wrestling medals from the 1950s*



*Lajos Keresztes - Olympic Champion 1928.  
My wrestling coach*

It's All Good...

*Photo - Ian Maddison*



*The building in Buda. Lived here for ten years. Third floor*



*The inside area*



*My high school in Buda.  
Toldy Ferenc Gimnázium  
(1953-56)*



## 1953- 55

*Enrolled in the best High School in Budapest near us, Toldi Ferenc Gimnazium. I was again a good student. We had to learn Russian, which I enjoyed and I was good at it. My father got another job, as an accountant with a state owned sewer cleaning company. So I had the opportunity to work there during the summer and winter holidays. It was good money, so I could buy my own books and take care of my educational expenses. I was 15 years old at that time. I was small, so I had to go down in to the sewer pipes and clean them, while the others pulled out the 'shit' on the trolley which I filled up.*

*One day when I was working a couple of meters from the surface in the slaughterhouse sewer, I heard a roaring sound. They quickly pulled me out just before a flood of water from the nearby dam rushed through. One more minute down there and I would have been dead!*

*I did less work for Margit, my father was drinking more and I don't remember much about my brother and sister. They were Margit's favourite children. I felt I was on my own at the age of fifteen. No one ever came to see me at wrestling competitions or at school meetings. I won the junior Budapest championship in my weight division, in Greco Roman wrestling. During training with a European champion I was badly*

*injured. I dislocated my left elbow*



*1955 Junior Championship.  
Among all the activities I kept up with the sport of Canadian  
canoeing*

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*and that was the end of my wrestling career.*

*That same year, after two years at the prestigious high school, I left and enrolled into a well known technical school, thinking that the technical diploma will give me income after I finish my studies. That would have made me more independent. I remember I always had to think about my existence and future. My parents never worried about it and I knew it. I also knew that I wouldn't have a chance to go to university because of my 'class' in communist society. There were workers, peasants, intellectuals and miscellaneous classes. I belonged to the last one. Doors were closed for me...I had to be very good to be accepted.*

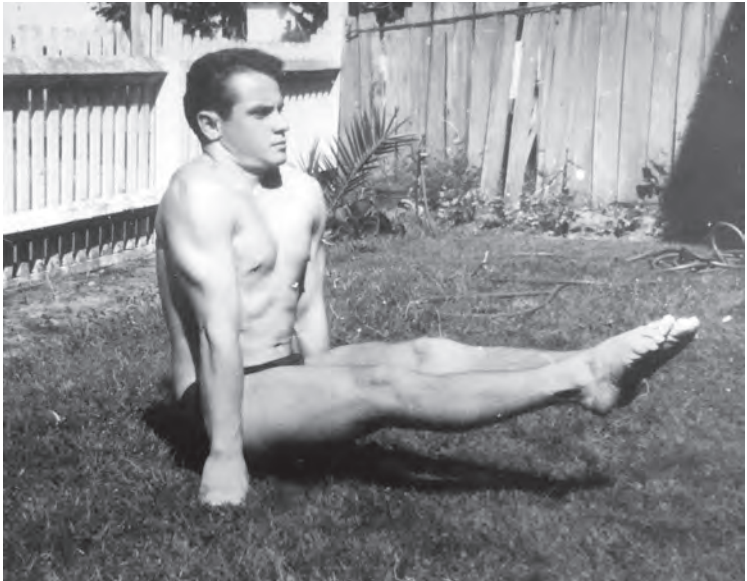
*In the winter I regularly worked as a street snow cleaner during the night. It was good money.*

*Sometimes I worked, also at night, unloading briquettes from wagons at the railway station with my friend Mohacsi Csaba. (I wonder what happened to him. I heard that he migrated to Canada, but I couldn't find him via the Red Cross.) I remember I was sleeping in the classroom during lessons, but the teachers didn't know why!*

*I always kept busy, and visited my father's friends at night to get free meals. I was waiting for something to happen, I even thought of how lovely it would be if I was adopted by a nice family...*



*My yearly travel card*



*Showing off ... because I could*

It's All Good...

*During that time I met my mother Ilona Varga for the first time in more than 12 years. I didn't know what to do. I heard so many bad stories about her that I didn't know how to respond to her. After meeting her a few more times, and with Margit's interference always there, I was forced to drop the whole issue.*

*The last time I saw her was at the Budapest Motor GP dressed in all black leather. She was competing in the sidecar race with her new husband. She didn't see me.*

*To strengthen my left elbow and shoulder I took up canoeing. That was a good sport for me. I had to travel long distances for training, but I fell in love with sport. Here I met my canoe partner Gyuri Molnar and in the second year of paddling together we came third at the junior national championship (See C2 film in Wikipedia under Ivan Gaal).*

*I was editing the school's bill board and did well in my studies. I visited my father's friends almost every night, to get free food and keep away from Margit.*



Gyuri and I have our first meeting in 57 years at the Danube in 2013



*In our boat with Gyuri on a tour in 1955*



*Attila, Irene and Gyuri in Visegrad  
in 2013*



## 1956

*I still worked in the winter shovelling snow, I read a lot, went to movies and fell in love with Gina Lollobrigida after seeing her in Italian films, the only few foreign films we were allowed to see. No other Western films were allowed. Everything was censored.*

*Our diet, regarding films, were the Soviet productions. I must admit I liked Sergei Eisenstein films. They were powerful, creative, informative and educational. I think they influenced me a lot, at that time and later in life.*

*I really didn't have a home anymore. Margit doted over my half brother Fric who had lung problems, and Ildiko was too young to relate to. My father had a new girlfriend and I was visiting even my mother's uncle as well. I was waiting for something to happen.*

*It happened on the night of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, on 23rd October. Gyuri and I went to Margit Island to enrol to the elite Honved Canoe Club, in order to get better coaching.*

*As we walked out to the bridge and to the city, the revolution was in full swing. Gyuri and I said goodbye to each other and we went our separate ways. We didn't see each other for another 55 years (See film C2-No Escape*

*from the Old canoe under Ivan Gaal in Wikipedia). I joined the crowd and he went home.*



*Photo Pesti Srác2*

*We thought we won the revolution on November 4th 1956*



*Photo Getty Images*

*After four days of freedom, this is the punishment by the Russians*

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*I stayed with friends near the centre (Corvin Koz) and was involved every day in a small way with the action. It was uplifting as well as depressing. First the Russian tanks came, destroyed lots of buildings, then they left and we had four days of freedom. After that, 20 divisions of Russian troops and tanks came and killed many people and destroyed more buildings. The Revolution was on the way to be suppressed.*

*One day accidentally I met my father in the street and told him that I had no other choice, but to leave Hungary and escape to the West. He agreed. The reasons were, firstly I was scared that somebody might report me for building the barricades and secondly I had nowhere to go. I didn't really have a home by now.*

*On 20th November 1956, on a sunny autumn day, at 4pm I took a bus to Obuda to visit my aunty Olga who lived in the old family house. I hoped I could stay with her. I knocked on the big gate, but she wasn't home. I made a quick decision and hopped on the bus going to the old cemetery on the Vienna Road. That was the road to the west. Got off the bus and started to walk towards Vienna. It was six o'clock in the evening.*

*I met up with an old gentleman who was also going my way. We hitch hiked and a truck picked us up. Before a village it stopped and we were told that Russians are there, so we got off and ran into the forest. We leaned against the trees and wondered, what's next. Night fell and snow*



*The gate I knocked on 20th November 1956.  
No one home ... headed to the West*



*...Where I crossed the Iron Curtain  
22nd November 1956*

It's All Good...

*began to fall. What now..? Suddenly a man, who turned out to be the forester, talked to us and offered his house for us to stay overnight. He and his wife gave us food and shelter for the night. I'll never forget their hospitality towards complete strangers. I still remember them fondly.*

*Next day we headed towards the border town of Győr over snow covered fields. We walked 15 km that day. We arrived in Győr late afternoon and got on the train travelling towards the border. With the help of 'people smugglers' we were given shelter in one of the local people's stables along with six other people. It was a very cold night and we had no blanket only straw to cover ourselves. I was woken up by a little calf licking my feet...My last night in my country, in a stable...I didn't forget that either.*

*At 5 am our guide, 'people smuggler' woke us up and we were on our way to the border, not knowing what will happen. We had to walk 10 km over flat land and frozen quick sand which started to melt under us, as the day was getting warmer. I thought that this walk will be my last trip before I die there.*

*Lots of little events happened during the day, which scared the hell out of us all, but at last we saw the border towers. Once we knew they were empty, we made a run over "no man's" land which still had the potholes where the mines were pulled up six months before.*

*I had to help a kind man who was a real 'freedom fighter'. He had his boots on for the last two weeks and couldn't take them off, his feet was so swollen. I remember it clearly*



*This is how we crossed the border.*



*We passed the empty border towers*



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*how I was trying to run with him. He leaned on me, he was over 6 feet tall, and he pushed me into the ground.*

*That was the longest 50 meters I have ever ran...I was totally numb by the time I was in Austria at 4pm on 22nd November 1956. I was finally in the West! I felt free at last... That's how the Western propaganda made us feel, which was broadcast over Free Europe radio station every day. We used to listen to it secretly in Hungary.*

*The Austrian Red Cross picked us up by bus and took us to the village of Andau. My friend got help from the Red Cross and was given a beautiful Swedish pullover as well. As soon as he got out he sold it to a local farmer. Now he had money and he treated me in the restaurant for a beautiful tasty dinner. After a few days without food it was heaven sent...The other refugees just looked at us through the window as we tucked in.*

*The bus was waiting and took us to Vienna 100 km away. It was unforgettable to see the neon lights of Vienna for the first time. Finally I was in capitalism and the neon lights of Coca Cola everywhere, but I still had not tasted the stuff.*

*We went straight into the CBD where they set us up in an old building which belonged to the Blind Institute. It was midnight when we set up our bed on the floor covered with hay. Luckily they gave us blankets. Twenty of us slept in one small room. Not the five star hotel, as we "Hungarian*

*freedom fighters" thought we will get. Haha...*

*Next day I met up with the old friend I had met on the road while escaping to Austria from Hungary and we went down to the local pub. This was the first time I had Coca Cola and listened to the juke box hearing Elvis Presley. I was knocked out by the song Six O'clock Rock by Haley's Comets. A kind Austrian man came to us and spoke perfect Hungarian. We made friends and he took us around Vienna in his small Fiat Topolino. We met his family who were partly Hungarian. They had a stone mason business near where we were living. I remember they were called Szeppals. They invited me for dinner, I met the family and they were very kind to me after my old friend left. I wanted to buy them a Christmas present, but I had no money, so I went to the Red Cross and gave blood, for which I was paid good money. Now I could buy some presents and I felt very good about it. They appreciated it as well.*

*We used to get food and clothing coupons from ICEM, which was an American refugee organisation. We were an excellent propaganda material during the cold war. We were very lucky; we were called the Freedom Fighters, who fought Communism...*

*My father had a friend from Budapest living in Vienna, who was a shop window dresser, called uncle Karcsi. With a young Austrian Good Samaritan I walked through the city to the suburbs to meet him, his wife Helga and his lovely daughter, with whom I went to kindergarten in Budapest. They took me in and I stayed with them for the*

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*rest of my time in Vienna.*

*During that time I received letters from my father every week encouraging me to go to embassies and express interest in suitable countries. My first choice was Canada. I had read lots of books about the Canadian adventurers in the outback over the Arctic written by Jack London. Also, canoeing came from Canada, so it made sense.*



*That is where the Iron Curtain was at Andau.*



*The cafe where we had our first dinner in the West (Andau).*

1957

*The Australian passport came first and the next day the Canadian arrived. As it happened, my father's letter also came around the same time telling me again about Australia, so I tore up the Canadian passport and made the decision that I'll leave for Australia.*

*The organisers took me to Salzburg by bus one Sunday morning. Uncle Karcsi's wife came to see me off and I remember she gave me a gold coin for good luck. I also remember the day, because I had a heavy heart for leaving my beloved Europe behind for something totally unknown to me. I saw one picture of Punt Road full of cars, taken from above the Richmond rail bridge; in our geography book...I knew nothing about Australia, except that there were more cars per population than in any other country at that time.*

*The Refugee camp next to the Salzack River consisted of old timber shacks. It was cold, snowing and I was sleeping with some young Hungarian thugs. I was scared at night, but during the day I was exploring the most beautiful city in Europe. ICEM gave us coupons to buy clothing and good food. We were still the Hungarian Freedom Fighters, so we enjoyed the privileges, but the Austrians resented our spending money on expensive items. I remember their looks and their faces in the shops.*

*Winter in Salzburg was magic and it was Mozart's 200th anniversary of his birth. The town was full of rich Americans, who came for the occasion. I enjoyed myself in Europe for the last time. Then one day uncle Karcsi from Vienna arrived. He came to pick me up, to take me back to Vienna, because he and his wife felt sorry to let me go to a strange continent all alone. Soon, I was back in the old city. Uncle Karcsi was a shop window dresser and he took me to his work places so I can learn the trade. It was hard for me. I didn't think I had the talent for that profession. Besides that, his daughter Erika, who was living with them made it obvious that she didn't like me being there.*

*I went back to the Australian Embassy and asked for another visa. Within a few days I travelled by bus to Salzburg again. I spent a few more weeks there. It was most memorable, despite the hardship.*

*On 13th February 1957 caught the train with other Hungarians to Amsterdam, Holland to board the big transport ship, Johan Van Oldenbarnevelt. Travelling through Germany during a beautiful day was a big adventure for someone like me, who grew up in communism isolated from the West. We arrived in the evening and the port is where I met Hedy and Alex Szabo, who were waiting in the queue to board. Alex and I shared the common bunks quarter and we were the two people affected most by sea sickness. We became friends for life.*



*The ship Johan Van Olderbarnevelt.*



*Under the Pacific sun.*



*The sport people on the boat (mostly footballers)  
I am the first on the left.*



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*We travelled through the canals and I got seasick even before we hit the sea. I knew then that it was not going to be an easy journey. Another 20,000 km was waiting for me in the next six weeks.*

*Because of the Suez crisis at that time in Egypt, we had to sail around Africa and then to Australia. Our first stop was the Canary Islands. But before arriving there, we hit very bad weather in the Bay of Biscay near France. I was very-very sick. I couldn't get out of bed for the duration of that trip, which took about a week. All the single men were in one big cabin and Alex and I were still the worst of all the men.*

*Just as I got used to the boat rocking and rolling we landed in Las Palmas, Canary Island. Soon as I took my first steps on land I was sick again. I discovered that the sea and I are not made for each other... The next stop was South Africa, Cape Town. After spending 2 days there we sailed for Perth, Australia. By now I was enjoying the trip at last. Seeing movies, making friends and I even won the skittle championship. Because we were travelling with 1000 Dutch people and my name looked like a Dutch name, they pronounced my name with a K, so I missed out on many hand outs.*

*We arrived at Fremantle on my 19th birthday which was a very hot day. (40 degrees) We were allowed to go ashore to explore the 'little fishing village', which it was at that time.*



*... more of the same...  
with two European champion basketballers, the Hody brothers, and the  
European champion spinter, Vera Neszmélyi.*



*Arriving in Melbourne 25th March 1957.*

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*My friend and I walked the hot and fishy smelling streets and we both got depressed and wanted to go back to Europe...We both knew there was no going back.*

*Two days later we arrived at Port Philip Bay. As we sailed up to Melbourne we ran aground in the Bay, and had to stay put for 4 hours but finally we arrived at 6pm. We were looking for the tall high-rise apartments and the City. All we could see were small buildings and empty beaches...another disappointment. I remember walking out from Station Pier to Bay Street Port Melbourne, and saw the first TV in a shop and I bought some grapes. They were lovely.*

*We slept on board and the next day the train, the old "red rattlers", pulled in and we began our journey to Bonegilla, the migrant camp near Albury. It was an ex-army barracks converted for migrants in transition to their future jobs and new residences.*

*Two things bothered me at that time. One was that we saw ourselves as 'freedom fighters' and refugees, as we were in Europe, but in Australia we all became just ordinary migrants. The second problem was my ingrown toenail. It was now very badly infected by the heat on the way to Australia, due to my narrow and pointed shoes I received in Austria.*

*When we arrived in Bonegilla, I went straight to the*

*medical centre, before I was even registered in the camp. I remained there for three months. Alex and Hedy were there as well and they visited me regularly. The novice doctors experimented on me until they decided to pull off the whole nail. It wasn't a good start for me in my new country...*

*I spent my time learning English and racing around the hospital's veranda in my wheel chair. I worked on my PB all the time. When I came out of the hospital, I finally started my official life in Australia.*

*One day a Hungarian guy called Karl, came to the camp looking for soccer players. I wasn't one, but I offered him my bed during the day, to sleep off his long journey from Adelaide. He was very grateful and said that he will write a letter to the officials, promising me shelter and work in Adelaide, which were the conditions for my release. So the government paid for my trip to that city, and I was off to another start.*

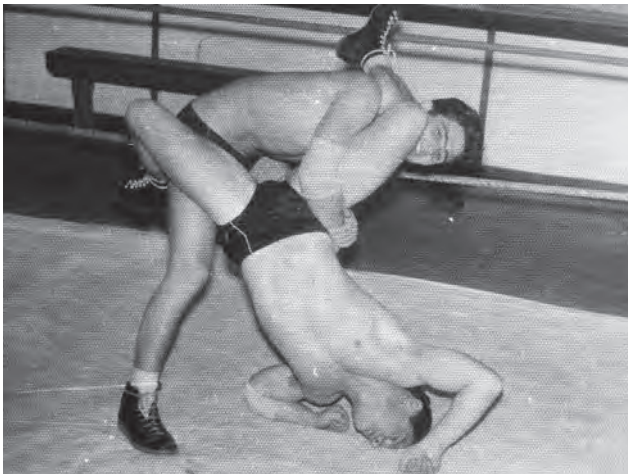
*After arriving in Melbourne, I was waiting for the train to take me to Adelaide. At peak hour time at 5pm, in front of Flinders Street Station, I bumped into my teacher from Budapest, Sandor Mokos. It was amazing...Our friendship is still ongoing because of that short meeting, with many happy times spent with Sandor, his wife Eva, now deceased, and their children, Robert, Carolyn, Ricky and Peter.*

*Arrived in Adelaide and settled with Karl and his*

It's All Good...

*German wife Hilda. I had to speak German with her, but they were very nice to me. They helped me to get a labourer job at the Philips factory and I stayed with them for one year. I bought a 250cc Java motorbike, and now had a few friends. They were Hungarians and one of them was Leslie Voros (Les). He was a wrestler as well. We joined the Railway Wrestling Club and we were demonstrating to the Aussies how we wrestled in Hungary. They were impressed, because we knew the latest style from Europe learned from our Olympic Champion coach, Lajos Keresztes. Sadly I had to give it up, I was afraid of getting hurt. Who would look after me when I was injured or sick..?*

*I went to English classes at night in the prefab buildings next to the Torrens River. It was fun, but I did better by learning ten words a day on my own. Just had to practice during the day with anybody who listened...*



Wrestling in Adelaide with Les. 1958

1958

*I used to do exhibition matches where I usually beat a Greek wrestler in my weight division in the Adelaide Greek Club. His name was Tony Cacas, a very nice man, who went on to represent Australia in the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964. He had a chemist shop in CBD.*

*Les and I boarded with a Ukrainian family for a while. I remember the hot summer nights without air conditioning. It was unbearable some nights. At work I was promoted to the appliances assemble lines. First, to the personal fans and later to the car radio sections. One day I was taking home rejected parts so I could I put together a small fan, for use in the heat. Somebody saw it, dobbed me in and I was sacked on the spot. I was devastated.*

*Luckily I got another job in Pope Products working on small electric motors. Before the 1958 Christmas holiday the owner of the factory, Mr Pope came around and shook all the workers hands and wished them Happy Christmas. I was surprised and shocked. This was the first time I had met a real "capitalist". The communists back at home in Hungary told us that capitalists exploited workers, not shook their hands. I thought he was a nice man. I never forgot the experience.*

*With my motorbike I had two very close "shaves" on the*



It's All Good...

*road. Luckily I didn't get hurt. It was time to sell.*

*Les and I found another place to live, a city pub in Sturt Street. Another friend, whose name I forget, also came to live with us. We each had a room. Small but at last I had some privacy for the first time. I remember Saturday mornings buying liverwurst in the continental delicatessen, which I ate and had a glass of beer from downstairs. I thought I was in heaven.*

*The three of us were exploring the city and the gardens. They were all around us, just like in Europe. On Saturdays I also did some gardening work for another Hungarian living in the same hotel. In the end he never paid me.*

*We went to different town halls on Saturday nights to try some "community" dancing.*

*We tried the Canadian Barn dancing with fox trot, tango, etc but we were never successful in meeting nice girls. Adelaide was not into accepting 'wog boys' in the 1950s...*

*I had enough of Adelaide, which was terrific for married men with families but not for single guys. Being underage, my salary was very low, so I couldn't save much money either.*

*After some consideration I finally bought my bus ticket to Melbourne. I packed my belongings together with my Philips bakelite radio and left in the morning by bus on 1st of January 1959 for Melbourne.*



*The three of us in Adelaide*



*I was strong in 1958*

It's All Good...



*With the Scottish and German families in 1958*

*Not very happy in Adelaide...*



*I could walk on my hands for  
50 meters*



1959

*Arrived in Melbourne at midnight. Looked for a hotel to stay in overnight, so the next day I could visit Hedy and Alex who lived in Kew. I tried two hotels, they were all full. The Test Match was held in Melbourne that year, so no luck. A taxi driver took me to the only hotel he thought will have a bed, the Chevron Hotel on St Kilda Road. Half of my savings were spent on that night.*

*Next day I found my way to Kew, (I don't know how) only to find a note Alex left me in the letter box, telling me that they went to Adelaide to visit friends! Luckily he left an address for me to look up in Darling Street South Yarra. It was a boarding house ran by Bandi bacsi (uncle, we called him) and Juci neni (aunty). I arrived and they told me that they were full up. As they closed the door I suddenly panicked...what now..? I was walking down the street towards Toorak Road, when Bandi bacsi ran after me and called me back. He told me that they can clear the place under the staircase and I can stay there until there is a vacancy. We got rid of the rats, put a bed in, and now I had a home again. These nice people let me stay there on credit until I got a job. The boarding house was full of Hungarian and German young men, but no girls.*

*The food was terrific, but we had to share rooms. I was lucky again. When a room was available, I had an*

It's All Good...

*intelligent man for my roommate called Emil. He was an amateur photographer and an educated man. I got my first camera and started to take photos of everything.*

*My first job in Melbourne was in the Electrolux factory nearby. Low wage, hard work but it was nearby.*

*I found the Fairfield Canoe Club at Fairfield and I started to go paddling on the Yarra River. Problem was that I had to use the old boats from the club. Every paddler had their imported boat from Europe. No social welfare state here...the government didn't supply the boats like back in Hungary.*

*In the meantime I got another job with the Astor Radio factory in Huntingdale. A long way from South Yarra... Working as a radio repairman, I thought I might as well learn about the electronics, so I enrolled to the Marconi School of Wireless courses in the City. The course was very good for me. I was learning the language and a trade at the same time. In a year I finished the diploma.*

*To go training on the river in Fairfield, work in Huntingdale and live in South Yarra took up a lot of my time travelling. I met many Hungarians at the Club and I bought Frici's (another Hungarian) single Canadian boat, so now I was on the way doing the sport I loved so much. I was competitive in weekend races, but I knew I wasn't really as good in the singles as I would be in the double*

*Canadian canoe. I just had to find a suitable partner to paddle with.*

*Life was very hard, and all the activities didn't kill my feeling of loneliness. Sometimes I think now, that at that time my future wife, Cathy, was living across the river in Brunswick and she was only nine years old.*

*Luck came my way again. One of the canoeists, Frici, was working at the PMG and gave me a Hungarian engineer's name in head office. I went for an interview with him. I was successful, so got a job as a technical operator at the ABC Radio (3LO & 3AR) and Radio Australia's studios in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. That was my first "clean" job. My English was improving and life was getting better. The only problem was that I had to work shift work. The early morning shifts were the hardest, starting at five o'clock.*

*I was working at Radio Australia as well. Because Radio Australia was an international broadcasting station, with a focus on Asia and the Pacific, I met many interesting people from these countries, and I enjoyed this experience. I took out one of the Japanese announcers, Kimiko Orimoto who came from Hiroshima. She was very nice, but older than me, so we just drifted apart. She was a great influence on me regarding Asian culture for which I am very grateful now.*

*One summer day I was waiting for a train at Flinders*



It's All Good...

*Street station. I saw a lovely young girl standing near me. I made sure that "accidentally" I sat opposite to her. As luck has it, a drunk started harassing her so I pretended that I was her boyfriend to get rid of him. Her name was Gloria Villis. I didn't get off at South Yarra, I travelled all the way to Noble Park with her. She introduced me to her family and finally I had a "sort" of girlfriend. They were "ten pound" migrants from London. Her brother, Terry, became a famous musician later in life. Another brother, Ray Villis, turned out to be a screenwriter back in UK. He is also the author of 'Stealing from the Bear'.*

*I used to change shifts so I could paddle more. It paid off. One race day the club coach, Zoli Szigeti, suggested that I paddle with "Pipper", Adrian Powell who needed a new partner. In the first race we came second to the Hungarian boys, Vidu and Frici. But that was just the beginning.*

*At work the ABC announcers were really terrific to me. They got rid off my terrible 'factory floor' Aussie accent. Some of them became my friends and I visited them in their homes, often. The ones who helped me most were Peter Evens, Joe Lipton, Brian Bogle and Beverly Cook. She introduced me to the humour of the Goons and Barry Humphries. I am eternally grateful to all of them.*



*Alex and Hedy getting married in Melbourne 1959.*



*Emil Ughy, my mentor  
at 20 Darling St. South Yarra.*

It's All Good...



*Bandi bácsi and Juci néni in South Yarra who ran a boarding house.*



*Cathy "across the river" in Brunswick at the same time. 1960  
(She is the one on the left).*



*Racing the singles on the Maribynong River.*



*...and with my partner in the boat, Pipper (Adrian Powell).*

It's All Good...



*With Gloria Villis.*



*ABC Radio/TV presenter Beverley Cook, who later married into the family of former PM Sir Robert Menzies.*



*My favourite photo of Catherine (Age three).*



## 1960

*It was a great year! In February Adrian and I won the Australian Canoe Championship in C2 (double Canadian canoe) class on 1000 meters in record time in Ballarat on Lake Wendouree. Our time on the distance would have earned us a bronze medal at the 1956 Games, on the same lake. Because of our achievement we were selected to represent Australia at the 1960 Rome Olympic Games. I wrote the news to my father, who was in hospital at that time in Budapest, that I am coming to Europe in August. He read the latter, but in two weeks time he died of thrombosis. I wasn't told about his passing away until he was already buried. Aunty Olgi wrote me and sent me the photos. I was devastated, but couldn't do anything about it. I couldn't go back to Hungary, it was too dangerous, they would have jailed me...*

*In the meantime I tried to get the 600 pounds needed to pay for my place in the team. In today's money it would have been around \$35,000. Hungarian sports people tried to collect money, but it wasn't enough. The ABC's Social Club tried to get the money, but it was too late. I stayed behind, but my partner, Adrian Powell got the money. It was a shame, because we were international standard, and Adrian, on his own wasn't. It was a big learning curve for me about how "capitalism" operates. In socialism I would have been paid to go. I was a victim of Robert Menzies'*

*credit squeeze. Gloria and I finally broke up.*

*A new life started for me. I enrolled to RMIT for the Radio and Television Stations Operators' Course in Melbourne. Left the boarding house and moved in with a Hungarian couple in Malvern. I had my own room with Robert and Vali and they were very nice to me. He taught me to play tennis, which I loved from the start. I gave up canoeing, bought a VW Beetle and finally I could get around on my own. To pay for the car, I needed another job. Robert Harcos was the green keeper at the Toorak Bowling Club and had many clients who wanted gardeners to cut grass and attend to their gardens regularly. So I became a part time gardener. I knew nothing about gardening, but I soon learned on the job. That is how I met John and Jan Matthews. I looked after John's Mum's and Grandmother's gardens. They were very nice to me. Invited me for Sunday dinners and other family events. I am still friendly with John and Jan.*

*Around this time I met Tony Todd, who worked at the studios, and we became friends for over 50 years. He introduced me to girls (his rejects, haha) and opened up my non-existent social life. I am always grateful to him for that. He died in 2019 in UK. Sadly missed.*

It's All Good...



*My father's funeral in 1960*





*Winning the Australian Championships in Ballarat in  
1960 with Pippin*



*The medals*

It's All Good...



*My first car...after the disappointment...*



*My friend, Ebet Kadarushman in the Indonesian band*

## *1961-1963-1964*

*These years were the best part of my life at the ABC Radio Studios and in Australia, in general. All the announcers liked me. My English was improving, I played a lot of tennis with other Hungarians, bought a drum kit and learned from the best drummer at the time, Garry Hyde. (Son of Billy Hyde, a well known big band drummer) Made friends with the Indonesian announcers and played drums in their band. I played lots of tennis with announcer Ebet Kadarushman, and visited his family and enjoyed his Asian cooking. He became a TV star later in Indonesia.*

*I moved in with Ali bacsi, (uncle) who was a dentist, so he could fix my teeth, which were in a terrible condition. We lived in Windsor, in his daughter's house. I took my hobby, photography, seriously. I was a keen photographer. I won photo competitions at the ABC, had photos published in magazines, but I wouldn't dare to give up my "daytime" job with the ABC for uncertainty.*

*I played drums with Phil, a retired policeman, who played the piano accordion. We played mainly at restaurants in the Dandenongs, like the Cuckoo. My exams came up at RMIT so I was studying hard. In the meantime I introduced my Hungarian work mate to Ali bacsi's daughter Eva. They hit it off and I had to leave my room, so he could move in. I panicked...again.*



It's All Good...

*Exams were coming up and I had to find a flat to live in, on my own for the first time. I was 24 years old. Luckily I found one in Charnwood Road St Kilda, where I stayed for the next eight years, until the 1970s when I moved into a new flat with my future darling wife, Catherine. When I moved into Charnwood Road she was only 12 years old and I hadn't met her yet... (Funny) To start a new life under these circumstances was a painful experience ...despite all of what happened, I passed my Operators exam at RMIT. 90% was the passing mark...*

*My dentist and friend  
Ali bácsi*



*Joy Donovan, my first  
girlfriend in Australia*



*She taught me skiing at  
Mount Buller.*

## *1965-1967*

*After completing my TV Station Operators Certificate course I moved over from the Radio Studios in the City to the ABC's Ripponlea TV Studios. I became a sound recordist in Studio 33. I worked on Adventure Island, Bellbird and This Day Tonight and other smaller shows. The most pressured job I ever had was doing the sound for the seven o'clock news. That was the hardest operation of them all.*

*I also worked in Telecine, where we were running all the 16 mm films shown on ABC TV. Master control was also one of my regular working duties. These work places operated all day and night, so shift work was part of the deal. Because I lived on my own, I liked working at night. During the day I could live normally by playing tennis, visiting friends, going to the movies etc. I spent Christmas and New Years working most of the time. I changed shift with people with families. It suited me.*

*During that time I worked with Kevin Duff in Telecine and Master Control. He was always very kind and nice to me. One Christmas Day he invited me to his family in Camberwell for dinner. I remember it was a rainy night. His father-in-law, Harry, left a cigar for every man at the table to consume after dinner. Because of the stress at work, almost everyone had smoked, I also started to*

It's All Good...

*smoke Alpine. I wasn't an experienced smoker yet, but I smoked the cigar that night like it was a cigarette. Half way through the evening I became violently ill...all the nice Christmas dinner ended up in the garden. All I could remember was that the rain was coming down heavily. Despite all that, I became friendly with the family. Kevin's wife Margaret was also kind and friendly and their house was always open for me. They had two daughters and one autistic child Peter. More about that later.*

*I bought a sailing boat kit, a Mirror, which Kevin helped me to assemble in his garage. He was an old sailor...*

*While I worked in the radio studios and gave up gardening, which I had done on the weekend. Alex Szabo introduced me to "spec" photography. It involved taking photos of guests at the wedding ceremonies at front of churches. We gave people a card and they could purchase the prints from the photo studio later. I earned very little money because I wasn't pushy enough...*

*I tried my hand at doing the whole wedding with my new 2&1/4 Rollerflex camera. I worked on Saturdays for Lloyd Buchanan and Mark Keats both in Collins Street. It was hard work and the pay was \$12.00 for the whole afternoon. Mark Keats used my photos in his showcases around town, so I must have been good...*

*Tony was still my friend and introduced me to girls he met using his charm. That's how I met Joy (Donavan) a*

*nurse who just came back from overseas. She spent a few years in England and Europe and was in a culture shock when she came back. We got on well and she took me up to Dubbo NSW, to meet her father, who was an Irish man living with his second wife, a German. Joy and I travelled around in my little Beetle. It was a very good car. I joined the ABC Ski Club and Joy taught me how to ski the slopes at Mt Buller. I started to feel more at home now in Australia. It took ten years...*

*Around that time Tony met some more girls who were living in a boarding house in Dandenong Road, Windsor. The owner of the house was Mrs Ross. She was a gracious old widow, who had one son, Don. Her house was full of girls who boarded there, and we could go there and have their company and have some fun. I really liked Mrs Ross who was always full of advice. She kept telling me to buy a block of land for future security. I was very reluctant to tie myself down with property, but in the end I borrowed money from the ABC Cooperative and bought land in Glen Waverley, next to the future Monash Freeway. Now I was forced to save money for the first time. Joy's girlfriend, Helen, who had a great influence on Joy, didn't like me and eventually we broke up.*

*Kevin and I finished my boat and I sailed my Mirror a lot. Unfortunately I wasn't a born sailor, so I sold it later to go back to Europe for the first time.*

It's All Good...

*In the mean time I started to make 8 mm films. I really enjoyed making short films to express myself, just like I did with still photography. With Kevin Duff we made a 16 mm B & W film about the Autistic Playschool in Mansfield, Victoria. Peter Duff, son of Kevin, was a resident there and the school was run by the local doctor Joan Curtis who also had an autistic child called Jonathan.*

*It was a great experience to work with people and make a film with a purpose. It was called 'Thursday's Children'. That was the first film at that time in Australia about Autism and it helped to spread the message about this newly discovered condition. I think I was ready now to move into filmmaking, but the question was, how...*



Operating Telecine ABC TV  
Controlling picture quality.



*Mrs Ross, my Australian 'mother...'*



*Mrs Ross...always remembered...*



It's All Good...



*Autistic child in 1970*



*My late friend Brian Bogie at ABC TV*

## *1968- 1969*

*Another few big years were coming up. After four years working at Channel 2 at Ripponlee I decided that it was a dead end job, so I was looking around. Luckily I found a job advertisement which was created just for me. The Secondary Teachers College in Parkville, on the Melbourne University's grounds, was looking for an experienced person to run their television studios. After a successful interview I had the job. What a break from the purely technical world, where I wasn't really a full member. Now I was working with pleasant academic people without pressure and enjoying the company of intelligent young people. No more shift work...it was heaven.*

*I was still photographing weddings and doing my own photography as well. The Charnwood Road flat was a bit small for a studio, but still I did a lot of good work there.*

*I was photographing a wedding for Mark Keats one day in Brunswick, where I met a most attractive bridesmaid, Cathy, who is my wife now and the mother of our children. The road to the future wasn't easy.*

*I didn't know what to do. She looked very young and had a boyfriend, a rock drummer. So I really started behind the eight ball.*

*Luckily, I gave my card to the other bridesmaid, Sally, who was getting married in 1970.*

It's All Good...



*My first photo of Cathy*



*Still drumming in the 1960s*

*They booked me, Cathy was there again, and I made sure this time I got her phone number. I wasn't rushing things. I had other girlfriend at the same time as well, but somehow I knew who I wanted to have a future with...*

*I was still drumming, but less, made super 8 mm films, had lots of friends and enjoyed parties, films and the theatre. I started photographing for the Modern Dance Ensemble, which was based at the Melbourne University. Had good friends like Lindesay and Sandy, Aivars and Maureen, George Spartels, Franciscus Henri, the singer and his wife Elizabeth. They were all very creative people and they greatly inspired me to express myself. I did many record covers for various artists like Franciscus Henri and Brian Cadd and others for Fable Records.*



It's All Good...



Joe Bolza - mime artist.



Bob Thorneycroft - dancer performer.



Record cover for Brian Cadd's album

1970

*Finally my VW had the 'gong', and I traded it in for a new yellow MGB. That was an exciting time again. I was taking Cathy out more often. I took lots of photos of her and some of my photos were also published in photographic magazines.*

*Luckily I never gave up my "daytime" job at the College. I was scared to go out on my own. The Communists killed my capitalist instinct, but looking back, it was a good decision.*

*I met Cathy on the University grounds, where I worked, many times for coffee, talk, study in the library, etc. She was doing her degree in Social Work. Life was rolling on well.*

*Earlier that year Tony left for England and I felt this would be a good chance to go back to Europe and UK, which I was still longing to see. Seeing London and UK in films and TV programs, now I wanted to see, feel and get to know the place in real life. As I said before, I sold my Mirror sailing boat and bought the ticket to fly out to the UK in December. I left my MGB with John and Jan Matthews and Cathy looked after my flat.*





It's All Good...



*Tony in his own studio in London*



*Loved photographing Catherine...*

## *1971- 1972*

*Tony welcomed me in London. I was suffering with very bad jet lag, but his flat in Wimbledon was very comfortable and I recovered quickly. Tony was an excellent host.*

*Just like in Australia, he introduced me to all of his friends. His neighbour, Mike Popham who worked at the BBC Radio Studios, and his latest girl friend Sarah, whose father was a well known British actor (Laurie Lupino Lane). Mike interviewed me later on BBC Radio about my filmmaking career in Australia. I thought it was very cool...*

*Laurie invited us for Christmas dinner, where other well known family members were there. How lucky I was to meet such a famous family. (See Google)*

*Went to the first soccer match in UK with Laurie. We saw Chelsea football team play Manchester City. It was a great experience to be back in Europe and seeing my first soccer match since 1955... I was madly photographing everything.*

*Laurie was in a pantomime with Cila Black, which we also saw. That was the time that I realised that the Australian TV programs, like the Graham Kennedy Show, were deeply rooted in the English pantomime culture. Being in England, I could understand Australian culture better.*

It's All Good...



*Happy Graduation Day with Carmel and Jack in 1972*



*Best of friends.  
Barbara, Liz, Cathy and Heather*

*Tony and I decided to go skiing in Austria. That was another great experience, to ski in Europe...it was like a dream. Unfortunately he broke his ankle, but we got back to England safely, after I had some interesting experiences in the snow. Mainly the challenging slopes.*

*What I didn't know at the time is that my mother died in Budapest at the same time, in Hungary, only 250km away from me. I wonder if she felt that, I was so close by...?*

*I saw the film, Marathon Man in an English cinema, with everyone smoking around me. This was an important time, as I had the first big "vision", which told me that Cathy is the only girl for me. I never forgot it! I made that decision there and then. I was missing her.*

*When I arrived at Melbourne airport, she was there to meet me and I was happy. On the way to St Kilda, in the taxi, she told me that my flat was broken into and all my record collection and Hi-Fi was stolen. That, I never forgot either...*

*Soon after my return we decided to live together. We searched for a place and we found it right across from Luna Park and St Kilda Palais. The place is called Sur La Mer and it is still there today. It was a big empty flat, many rooms for my photographic work. We had to get all the furniture, so we just rented everything we needed. It was a new experience for both of us. We learnt about life and each other a lot...*

It's All Good...

*It was very handy to go to the Melbourne Film Festival, just across the road. We took advantage of that and attended every year.*

*I had a studio and took many studio photos of Cathy, and many well known artists for record covers.*

*We started to think about getting our own house now. I still had my MGB, we went up to Mt Buller to work on the chalet at summer, but I felt that a change was needed.*

*I arranged a transfer from the College to the AVEC Film Unit to get better at filmmaking and to work with professionals.*

*I sold my land in Glen Waverley and placed the money in the bank. It had to be held there for six months before they would give us a loan for buying a property. Now we had six thousand dollars in the bank, so we could look for a house we both liked.*

*I was now doing my teachers training course in Hawthorn, two years part time, and had to study a lot. Cathy and I went to the University's library to study together, which was a great bonding process for both of us.*

*After I finished my technical teachers training course, and soon after, Cathy got her degree in social work at Melbourne University. We were happy together apart from*

*a few arguments about small issues. Luckily we managed to get over them and stayed together.*

*Cathy's friends, Richard and Liz bought some land in Dereel, near Ballarat where he built a small house. We visited them a lot in my MGB. Sometime we stayed with them late, playing Monopoly and Canasta and about 10pm left for Melbourne. We enjoyed life.*

*I also made my first 16mm independent movie at Mt Buller and Lake Eildon, "All For the Love of It." My good friend at that time, Lindesay Dresdon, an ABC producer came and helped. It was fun making it and the film is still 'alive'...(ACMI Lending Collection)*

*I kept photographing weddings on Saturdays, to make extra money for the house we were planning to buy. Cathy got a good job with the Department of Human Services as a social worker. She was earning money at last...*

*Cathy's Mum and Dad were very kind and welcoming to me. I remember one time I took her Dad for a ride in my MGB and it was a bit scary for him, whipping around corners, etc.*

*I only found out about this later from Cathy's Mum.*



## *1973-1974*

*Started looking for a suitable house in St Kilda, Hawthorn and other suburbs near Camberwell, where I worked. We went to auctions, we checked out properties, but no luck. All were above the price we could afford. The bank would lend only three times the amount you had in the bank.*

*While Cathy was visiting her aunty in Brunswick, she found a house in Holden Street for private sale in a travel agent's window. The next Saturday we checked out the place and the rest as they say is history. I got the money from the bank and the ABC's Credit Union. The price was \$24,000. It was a thirty years settlement.*

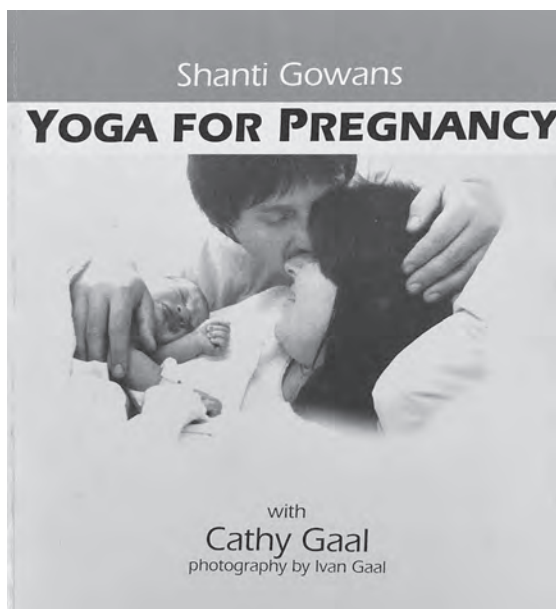
*The house was fairly run down. Two Italian families shared it, but luckily they didn't destroy too many original features. It was exciting, but also frightening to own your first house.*

*Cathy had a good job now, and started to earn decent money. I still had my MGB, but now we had to concentrate on the house not the car. Cathy also had a small car, an old Austin A30.*

*We managed to keep our jobs, slowly improved the house. I had a darkroom upstairs where I was developing and*

*printing the wedding photos, shots for the Pram Factory productions and dancing photos for the Modern Dance Ensemble from Melbourne University. Bought a 16mm professional camera for my future productions. We went to the Melbourne Film Festival every year and watched a lot of European art films. We always had dogs at home, as Cathy loves them.*

*We regularly attended Yoga classes with Shanti Gowans. She was a great spiritual help to both of us. Later, when Cathy was pregnant with Nicolas, she wrote a book about Cathy with my photos: Yoga For Pregnancy. It is still in publication.*



It's All Good...



*Our house in Fitzroy North in 1970s*



*Camberwell Junction 1975*

## *1975- 1976*

*I made another independent film with the help of Kevin Duff and Ros Lukies from my work at AVEC Film Unit, called "Camberwell Junction". It was the best 5 min. film I've ever made. I joined the Melbourne Filmmakers Cooperative and the film was an instant hit with the alternative film audiences. I felt that my independent filmmaking career, besides my real job, was taking off. The film is on YouTube still.*

*I became a board member of the Melbourne Filmmakers Coop and also I was the President of ATOM ( Australian Teachers of Media) for two years.*

*I was a very busy boy and without Cathy's help, I couldn't have done it. She was always very supportive and helped me with my English. Another teacher of media, Peter Hamilton, was also a great help. Peter was the editor of media magazine METRO. (Still published today) He commissioned me to express myself and write articles and reviews for his publication. I didn't make extra money, but my socialist upbringing told me that I should contribute towards the society that I was living in. That feeling never really left me...(See Metro Magazine publications)*

*Due to my contribution to the film scene in Melbourne I was selected as a Judge at the International Melbourne Film Festival in 1975. This was a huge honour for me and I*

It's All Good...

*was selected again in 1977.*

*For the first time I asked for a government grant to make my other popular short film "Applause Please", inspired by the lyrics of Frank Zappa. It was about our daily commercial "television diet" performed with Max Gillies, and "Bob and Joe Show" from the Pram Factory. It was a finalist in the Sydney Film Festival in 1975 and my certificate was presented by David Stratton... That film also became a popular film in the Melbourne and Sydney Co-ops. It is still 'alive' today on YouTube.*

*Visited Hungary for the first time since I left in 1956. Met my family and it was a very emotional time for all of us. It was great to see and experience my old country and the city of Budapest again. My sister's cooking of Hungarian food was unforgettable. Visited all the old places I grew up in and all my relatives were very nice to me. I said I'll be back...*

*After Hungary I flew to London and stayed with Tony in Surrey. Loved the London theatre scene, especially Maggie Smith in Sleuth. Cathy still didn't come with me...fear of flying...*



*“Applause Please” with Max Gillies, Joe Bolza and Bob Thorneycroft*



*Joe Bolza as Pierrot from the film “Soft Soap”*



It's All Good...



*Gaal family in 1980s*



*My half brother Frici, Margit and my half sister Ildiko*



*Aunty Olga on her birthday...*



*Etelka and Gyula Gaal*



*Gyöngyi and Zoli ( Dr Gaal)*

## *1977 - 1979*

*These years were very productive years for both of us. Cathy was still doing further studies and promoted to a higher position. I was doing less still photography and more filming. I got a Government Grant (\$18,000) to make a sequel to Applause Please with the same cast including Max Gillies, Joe Bolza and Bob Thorneycroft titled Soft Soap. It was a much harder production. More locations and more cast. A big learning curve for me, just before I enrolled to Swinburne Film and Television School.*

*I was brought up on Communist propaganda, so I wanted to make a film about the excessive propaganda we are all exposed to here in Australia: commercial propaganda, meaning advertising. Not many people understood my line of thinking, but I had some success with the film. It was blown up from 16 mm to 35 mm and was advertised and shown in cinemas around Melbourne. After that, it went to America and went on the College circuits. I received not one cent from the royalties. The distributor, United Artists didn't pay.*

*Produced and directed more short films for the Department of Education, at the AVEC Film Unit and independently as well, financed by myself. (See Appendix)*

*Cathy and I also bought a 20 acre block near Ballarat*

*in Dereel. We had fallen in love with the place and now we became neighbours with our friends Liz and Richard. It was an interesting experiment for me. I wanted to feel the Australian bush by living in it and to work on the land.*

*They say when you get into your forties you have the desire to 'turn the soil over'. Well I did a lot of that. It kept me fit and I gave up smoking as well, at last. We also bought a large caravan and Richard built a shed for it. We had a few German Shepherd dogs as well, Russ and Sally, during that time.*

*Finally Cathy convinced me to tie the knot and get married. At first I wasn't all that keen, but there was no option. So we got married in a little Warrandyte church on 21st December 1979. Cathy's father's cousin married us and the reception was in Olinda in the Wiener Wald restaurant. We had the family and a few friends there, but unfortunately both of us became sick with the flu afterwards. After seeing and experiencing my own family's bad marriages I was somewhat nervous.*

*As it turned out, I was wrong. Being together for over forty years and still loving each other, is not a bad achievement. Soon after the wedding Cathy got pregnant and we had our first son Nicolas, born on 16th December 1980. It was a good end to the decade.*

It's All Good...



*Cathy, Anne, Chris and Barbara (hippy stage)*



*On our wedding day 21st December 1979*



## 1980-1985

*Nicolas was a good child. No problems at all. First, it was a strange feeling for me to be a father, but soon I got used to it. Nicolas and Tomas ( born in February 1985) also spent many happy times with their grandmother, who made a big contribution to their lives, and many fun times with their aunties and uncles and cousins. Some of our friends also had children at the same time, and we spent many happy times with Barbara and Danny Chable and their boys, Matt and Luke.*

*I was making many docos and short films at that time, and with Cathy's help and hard work as a mother we managed. We used to travel to the land at Dereel a lot. The caravan was a great place for us to get away from the city. Cathy had a VW Passat and I had a Mini Minor now, because the MGB blew up on the way to Dereel one day, so I had to trade it in. The VW gave us a lot of trouble but the Mini was great.*

*We travelled to the snow a lot. We made friends with an Italian family from Bright, the De Coppies and their daughter Priscilla. They sold us chestnut trees which we planted in Dereel. I don't know why, but I fell in love with chestnuts, so the dream lived on...I thought it will be a success, but I found out later that it wasn't meant to be... Anyway the hard work maintaining the trees and the land*



It's All Good...

*kept me fit. The only sport I was pursuing now was tennis. I really loved it. Belonged to the Princes Hill Tennis Club. Met friends Roger and Judy, who is now deceased. We are still good friends with Roger.*

*Nicolas turned into a lively child. Very active, but manageable. He went to Melbourne University Family Cooperative Childcare Centre and gave us no trouble, so we both could work during the day.*

*We decided one day that we would build a small house in Dereel. Luckily we met Lajos Grubel, a Hungarian builder, who took on the job. He had to travel from Malmesbury every day so it took longer than we thought. Finally it was finished just in time for the birth of our next son, Tomas. He was born on 14th February 1985, St Valentine's Day. A lovely child, who cried a lot as a baby as he preferred "party time" to sleep.*

*He was a night owl from the start. Sleeping did not hold much interest for him ! He always loved music and books, attending live theatre and films, and these passions have continued into his adult life. He could read before he started school, and was always engaging, asking a lot of searching questions. He gave Little Athletics a try and was a good swimmer, but he did not follow in my footsteps in terms of interest in sport.*

*Being a parent is challenging but I can say it has brought me such joy and broadened my world.*



*Baby Nicolas*

It's All Good...



*View from our house in Dereel 1980s*



*The house we built in Dereel*

## *1986-2006*

*It was my most productive time at the AVEC Film Unit. For the first time I won two major film awards with the film "Ibrahim". Dr Deborah Towns OAM from the Department of Education was instrumental in obtaining funding from Victoria's 150th Anniversary fund, and provided ongoing support. I put a lot of my own experience into this project, about the time I arrived here in Australia. It paid off. The major awards were in the Australian Teachers of Media competition. (ATOM Awards) The film was also shown at overseas festivals and in the Adelaide Fringe Festival.*

*Other awards and acknowledgments followed. Many of my films were shown in the International Melbourne Film Festival and the St Kilda Film Festival. (See Appendix)*



*At cross country meeting*



*Winning two ATOM Awards in 1986*

It's All Good...

*Building was progressing well on the land at Dereel. Lajos Grubel and his brother-in-law finished it at last. We were very happy with the result. The boys loved it there, with 20 acres to play on, plus the neighbours farm, with tractor rides, horses, lambs and dogs. Nicolas rode our motor bike, often with Tomas on board, played tennis on our home made court, practiced running and both loved the trampoline. Such memorable times.*

*I visited Hungary and London in 1991 and again in 1996. Caught up with my lovely and always helpful aunty Olga and the rest of my family. Visited Tony and Mike Popham (ex BBC announcer and presenter) and had a good time with them. I still loved London.*

*In 1996 I flew into Hungary and from Budapest I caught the Orient Express to Geneva to visit Philippe Luder's parents. (owner of Tivoli Hi-Fi) They were very friendly and accommodating. We went skiing in France with his sister Marianne and her husband. I was happy to see and experience Switzerland, the country I always admired.*

*I missed the kids and they missed me while I was away. Sometimes I feel guilty now for going away on my own, but it would have been very difficult travelling overseas with them...they were a handful...*

*The AVEC Film Unit closed down and all the staff moved to the Television Unit in Carlton.*

*I made more documentaries now, not on film, but on video. (See Appendix and Wikipedia)*

*"No More Secrets" won a major (PATER Award), as did "It's Not All Rubbish", with Channel 9 weather presenter, Rob Gell, and with kids from various state schools. The then Premier Ms Joan Kirner attended the premiere in a school in Brunswick.*

*Family life kept rolling on and with the help of my mother in law, Carmel, we managed.*

*The Television Unit also closed down, but luckily I was engaged to make a few short documentaries for Jerry Tickell at the Institute of Educational Administration (IEA) Geelong with comedian Rod Quantock. That meant I had to travel a lot at that time. After making many programs with them, I decided to take the package and leave the Department of Education. I was only 55 years old and full of energy for more work.*

*As always in my life, luck came my way again. Ian Maddison, who was in charge of Schools Sports at the time, contacted me and offered freelance work which included promoting schools sports with photographs, video productions and organizing presentations at award nights. I had to create my own company, Triple A Productions, so I could work for the Department. My filmmaking friend, Jerome Pelletier, helped with much of the camera work and editing of the promos.*



It's All Good...

*This work lasted ten years, at Treasury Place, Melbourne. What a 'life saver' it was...*

*If I didn't get it, I don't know what I would have done...*

*Cathy kept working, kids went to school and Nicolas excelled in sport. He had 'springs' in his toes, which helped him in long jump and triple jump. At winter he was very good at cross country running. He was involved in these activities at Collingwood Little Athletics and at school. He achieved in tennis and especially basketball, which became a passion which stayed with him into adulthood.*

*Nicolas and I went to the Sydney Olympics in 2000, and Cathy joined us for a few days as well. It was a great bonding experience, to see the best athletes in the world competing at the highest level.*

*Nicolas was also a very modest sports person, never bragged about his achievements. (Not like me...)*

*In 1998 I had an offer from producer Ian Lang to go back to Hungary and film a documentary for a young Hungarian filmmaker's thesis, Peter Hegedus. His grandfather was the Prime Minister of Hungary during the 1956 uprising. He called the Soviets into Hungary to crush the revolution. It was a challenging project with an emotional roller coaster ride for me. The final production was "Grandfathers and Revolutions" and the documentary received many awards around the world's film festivals. I*

*was happy to be part of the mentoring process as well. As it happened, I got on really well with Mr Andras Hegedus, the man who was ultimately responsible for me leaving Hungary in 1956...*

*On a visit to Ballarat High School, as part of the schools sports project, I discovered a poster for the Masters Games to be held in Melbourne in 2002. I suddenly got inspired and decided to be part of it. It wasn't easy, but I managed to get my old competitor from the 1950s, Jonathan Mayne from the Fairfield Canoe Club, to be my partner in the double canadian canoe race on flat water. We trained hard on the Yarra River and I even bought a racing canoe left over from the Sydney Olympic Games. It was a very tippy boat and we found it very hard to handle. In looking back we should have persisted with the wider but more stable canoe. We won some medals at Nagambie Lake, but we should have done better...*

*In 2002 I went back to London for a few weeks then flew to Geneva to go skiing in France, Megeve, with Marianne and her husband Pascal. Surprisingly to me the runs were a few kilometres long and hard to ski on. I tried to keep up with him, he was a very good skier, but during the last run I had a bad fall and dislocated my right shoulder. Painful, unpleasant and very inconvenient it was at the time, considering where I was...Marianne looked after me. I was very grateful to them both. Sadly, they are both now deceased.*

It's All Good...

*I flew back to Australia after I visited Hungary again. I had to have an operation on my shoulder to fix the 'hole' on the capsule. Luckily I had a good surgeon and I recovered quickly.*

*Jonathan and I decided to go to Canada in three years time to compete at the Masters Games in Edmonton. We kept up training and I was doing my gym work to get stronger. I was 65 years old at that time.*

*I kept working promoting schools sports with Ian Maddison, Dennis Torpy, Alan Black and Evelyn Paton.*

*Had a very happy time. Ian was a great manager and we all became friends, and we still are.*

*2004 was a big year. We finally realised that the land at Dereel was a lot of work to maintain and travelling was too long each time. Although we loved Dereel and Ballarat and the kids had lots of fun while growing up but, we had to make a decision with heavy hearts.*

*Sold Dereel and we bought a small house with a beautiful view of Mt Victoria in Warburton. Now, we have a well established garden...which keeps Cathy busy with the cutter...*

*In 2004 I was lucky, with Ian's nomination, to be selected to carry the Olympic torch for the Athens Olympic Games. I ran in front of the National Tennis Centre. What a great honour.*



*Carrying the Olympic Torch for the Athens Olympics in 2004 Melbourne*

It's All Good...

*After that, Cathy and I travelled to London. We stayed with Tony Todd at Wendover in Bucks.*

*Cathy enjoyed her first overseas trip and loved the experience. We explored London and the English countryside and went to Paris on the Eurostar for a day trip. From London we flew into Budapest.*

*The first night we stayed at the Hotel Hilton in Castle Hill. I wanted to show Cathy the place where I grew up after the war. In the morning from our window we saw Fisherman's Bastion, where I used to roller-skate. It was a great experience for both of us.*

*When we arrived to the hotel at night, I invited aunty Olga, my cousin Gyula and his wife Etelka for dinner.*

*This was the first time aunty Olga met up with Cathy. She was very impressed with her...she kept saying how 'modest' she was. I was very happy that she liked my wife. We had a few more great days together.*

*On the way home we flew to Tokyo and stayed a few days. That was a magic experience.*

*In 2005 Jonathan and I arrived in Edmonton Canada and competed in many C2 events. We won our own 'age class' and we became World Champions. It was a good feeling to be appreciated again in the sport of canoeing. Had a great time mixing with the old canoeists from around the world who hadn't given up their sport after all those years. It was terrific to see the Canadian Rockies and the city of Edmonton. I was sorry I had decided not to take Cathy.*



It's All Good...

*My trip involved flying around the world. I left Melbourne for LA, than flew to Edmonton. From there I went to New York where I stayed with my friend Peter Hamilton for a week. The City was extremely hot, big and unfriendly. In other words I didn't like New York at all. Although I liked to go out to jazz clubs to hear the blues, like B.B. King.*

*Peter and his wife Ellen were very warm and inviting and gave me accommodation in Brooklyn where they lived and are still living.*

*From New York I flew to London and then to Budapest where I spent time with my family and stayed with my cousin Gyula and his wife Etelka. It was the last time I saw aunty Olga, who was very sick and had to be moved to an old people's home. I was very sad about her situation, but I couldn't do anything. Everything was arranged for her by my cousin Gyula. I wish I could have done more for her, but it was impossible...She died the following year at the age of 90. I still miss her. Her concern and prayers for me in all my life is something I will never forget. Bless you Olga!*

*I brought back my grandfather's 100 years old clock and some valuable Herend porcelains. The clock is still ticking in my room to remind me of Olga and my deceased family.*

*On the way home I met up with Cathy at Hong Kong. She flew there by herself. We had a wonderful week or so in*



*Hong Kong. Lots of things to do, we had a full program. All very memorable experiences.*

*2006 was the 50th anniversary of the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. While I was involved in schools sports I did lots of photographic work for the Victorian Olympic Council. I was asked to photograph the many events and celebrations of the anniversary. I had the chance to meet many Hungarian canoeists from 1956 and made friends with Ferenc Mohacsi who won bronze in C2 at the Olympics on the lake in Ballarat. In 1960, Pipper and I won the Australian championship on the same lake. Our time then would have given us the bronze medal as well in Rome... I was very happy to be involved in the Olympic movement many years after.*

*For not being supported to go to the Olympics in Rome in 1960, and for my volunteering work for the VOC, I received the "Victorian Olympic Merit Award" in 2012. It was a great feeling to be appreciated. I received it at the ceremony as part of the AGM in 2012.*

It's All Good...



*With 1956 Olympic champion gymnast Agnes Keleti  
2006 Melbourne*



*With Pipper. A reunion fifty years on...*



*With my two C2 partners Jonathan and Adrian*



*Receiving the Merit Award from Nick Green (Oarsome Foursome rower)*



*With Nicolas and Cathy*

It's All Good...



*On the fitness ball*



*With Jonathan Mayne*



*On Lake Nagambie with Jonathan Mayne*



*Ian Maddison (Maddo) on his birthday at Waiters Restaurant*



It's All Good...



*Cathy in Sydney*



*Happy Tomas*



## 2007 - 2021

*I gave up C2 Canadian flat water canoeing and tried my skills at Chinese Dragon Boat racing.*

*It was a different experience. I was stroking at the front and I had to be very fast. We won many championships in the over 50 class, but I realised that this sport was very taxing on the heart. During an unfortunate accident while doing gym work in the Club I broke my supraspinatus on my left shoulder. That was the end of my canoeing forever. Later, I had to have an operation to repair it and I took a long time to recover. Luckily my place in the boat was filled by Gordon Tribbick. He is married to my Czech friend Stania. He is totally committed and travels the world to compete in many events.*



Talking to Cathy from Stonehenge



On the red carpet of Cannes

It's All Good...

*With that broken shoulder now I had to travel to London and to Nice to the Nice Jazz Festival. I already had the tickets, there was no way out. It was worth it. Seeing all the art galleries , enjoying jazz and the mediterraeaan summer, going by train to San Remo, all reinforced my love for Europe.*



*Stroking in the Dragon boat*



*Gordon who replaced me in the boat*



*The Cup*

*A few years later I celebrated my 70th birthday at Warburton with many friends. Even Tony from England was here in Australia to join the party.*



Tony Todd in Melbourne

*I regularly attended the gym and swam lots of laps as well. I was keeping fit but I was missing the competitive elements from my activities. One day I had the chance to do barefoot lawn bowling, at the Richmond Union Bowling Club. I was hooked and I joined them on the spot. Lots of people were helping me so I improved to the point where I could play pennant on Saturdays. I was doing OK until I started playing in the singles championship. Suddenly my competitive spirit kicked in and I won the Open Frank O'Connor Trophy, beating better players than myself.*



It's All Good...



*Princes Park Carlton Bowls Club*



*With the trophy*



*Tip's folio*

*After a while I joined a club closer to home, Princes Park Carlton Bowls Club. I had a great time there. Met many friends and won the pairs championship twice in 2014 and 2016. Fabricio, my friend in the Club wrote a very positive article about my bowling in the bowling magazine The Shot. It was very good for my 'bowling ego...'*

*Nicolas met his future wife, Tip, when they both worked at a city hotel.*

*In January 2010, Tip and Nicolas were married at a civil ceremony and the reception was at Parliament House dining room. It was a very happy time. They continued residency upstairs' at our house in Holden Street. We travelled with them to Thailand in April to have a bigger wedding celebration with Tip's family. Cathy and I took the opportunity to have a long holiday travelling to many wonderful places in Thailand.*



*The wedding day in Melbourne and Bangkok*





It's All Good...

*In 2013 my ex-canoe partner, Gyuri's, son Attila, from Hungary, sent me an email telling me that his father has been searching for me since I left Hungary in 1956. Very soon I got in touch with him over the phone. Janos Zoltan, a Hungarian born filmmaker, who worked at SBS radio, recorded our first conversation on the phone. That led to an idea to make a documentary about our first meeting in over 50 years in Budapest. I travelled to Hungary and Janos filmed the whole story, here in Melbourne and in Hungary. The film was edited in Melbourne by Gabor Marinkas, and Duna World TV transmitted the 28 min. film around the world three times in two years. It was a great experience for me, as well as for my old canoe partner, Gyuri Molnar. The title was "No Escape From the Old Canoe". (It can be viewed on Wikipedia under my name)*



*Watching our film on Duna World TV in Warburton.  
"No Escape from the Old Canoe"*



*At the Princes Park Carlton Bowls Club I met an interesting person, Denis Evans. I listened to his life story and got inspired to make a short film about him. I joined a partnership with Janos Zoltan and made the 8 minute film together. It won an award at Show Us Your Shorts film competition in Warburton. I considered it my last film...I am very happy with it. It was shown at the Melbourne Documentary Film Festival as well.  
Titled: "A Man From the Other Side"*



*The star, Denis Evans on the Mic*



*János Zoltán, Denis and me filming "The Man from the Other Side"*



Bruce Pascoe

*I took interest in portrait photography again. During a filming session I met up with an old student/friend of mine from the past, author Bruce Pascoe. When I knew him in the 1960s he was a 19 year old Aussie boy who was training to be a secondary teacher. Later he became a writer and he also discovered his Aboriginal heritage. I asked Bruce to sit for me for a portrait for the National Photographic Portrait Prize in 2013. He did, and the picture was a finalist out of 2500 entries in the Canberra Portrait Gallery. Cathy and I went to the opening ceremony. We met up with my old work mate from the past, who lives in Canberra, Alex Turner. Julia Gillard, the then Prime Minister, attended the opening ceremony. She delivered a very knowledgeable and interesting speech.*

*We also managed to get a good photo with her.*



*With Prime Minister Julia Gillard in the Gallery*

*I kept up with my bowling and started bowling for Warburton Bowls Club. Now I spent more time in our house in Warburton at weekends.*

*I took a portrait of a local Warburton personality, the 98 year old Ronnie Howard, which also made the final's list out of more than 2500 entries in Canberra in 2014. Cathy and I went again to Canberra and enjoyed the limelight...*



*At Portrait Gallery in Canberra with photo of Bruce Pascoe (finalist 2013)*



*Winning photo of Ronnie Howard in Warburton*

*I also entered another photo of Ronnie in the Warburton Portrait Competition and won first prize. We were all looking forward for Ronnie's 100th birthday, even the Mechanics Hall was booked for the event in February 2016. Unfortunately Ronnie died six months before his 100th.*

*One of my photos of Warburton won the Bendigo Bank photo competition in Warburton and appeared in their 2015 calendar in the same year.*

*After many years of pursuing different sports my hips started wearing out and gave me problems. Finally I had the right hip replaced in 2016 and the left in 2018. Now I have two "top shelf" hips. Physically I am not the*

*same man as I was before, but the alternative would be a wheelchair...*

*In 2015 I entered a portrait of my old friend, actor, George Spartels into a competition. That photo made the finals in the Duo Percival Photographic Portrait Prize in Townsville. Cathy and I flew up, stayed a week. We also visited many interesting places and islands around Townsville. Learned a lot about the local history as well.*

*The same photo of George was entered into the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra but did not make the final. However, they accepted another photo of a young George for their permanent collection.*



*George Spartels in 1970s*



*...George at the age of 66*

*The National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra also has most of my films from the past in their collection.*

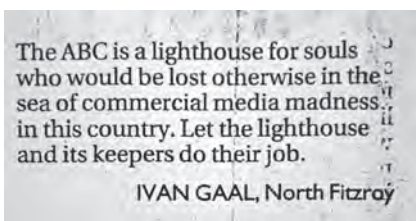
*In 2017 I decided to collect my best photos from the past and organised an exhibition at the Warburton Arts Centre. With the help of many people, including my wife Cathy,*

It's All Good...

*I managed to complete the project. It had a successful opening day with many friends and Cathy's relatives, attending. From the notes in the comments book it was obvious that people enjoyed the exhibition. It was titled: "People, Stories and Dance". It had a very positive critical response in the local media as well.*

*After the exhibition I managed to publish a book under the same title. This book is now in the National Library in Canberra, in the Adelaide and Melbourne State Libraries as well in the Szecsenyi National Library in Budapest, Hungary. I am very pleased with the result and with the feedback I am getting from various people. I am glad I've created the book.*

*Another hobby I have, is to write short letters to The Age newspaper on topics that interest me. So far I've had almost 70 letters published in the last 20 years.*



Some of my contributions to The Age newspaper

*In the bowling scene I had some success. My new team, the Warburton Kookaburras, managed to move up from division four to three by winning the Saturday Pennant. I would like to think that I helped them. I also managed to win the Open Minor Championship by beating a few division one players. As a result I was promoted to division*



*one a few times, but this didn't help me to get a permanent position in the top team. I was slightly disappointed and started to look for a new club closer to my home in Fitzroy North.*



Winning the trophy at Warburton Bowls Club

*I tried Ivanhoe and Fitzroy. After playing social in both clubs, I decided to join Fitzroy...I don't know why... but I made the right choice. I started playing in the very bottom team, but worked myself up to the second side, in division three. I was 'leading' for them (which is my normal position) and the team made the semi final in 2019. In the singles I made the final in the 100 up, but lost it due to injury and illness.*

*A major milestone was turning 80 in March 2018! I celebrated with a joint birthday party with filmmaker Nigel Buesst, and other independent filmmakers at the local pub and it was a wonderful and emotional night. My friend Bill Mousoulis organised this event.*

*The biggest present Cathy and I had is the birth of our*

It's All Good...

*first grand child, Jett (Asher), on 21st October 2018. At the time of writing, he is doing well and growing. Mother and Father are very happy...Cathy is also very happy!*

*In 2019 Janos Zoltan, a friend and also a filmmaker, decided to organize a film festival of works created by Hungarian born Australian filmmakers working in Australia to be shown in Budapest Hungary, titled Australian Films-Hungarian Spirit. Back to Budapest!*

*After the hard work of getting the films together, getting sponsors and organising the venue in Budapest, the show went on in June 2019. The films were screened in an art house cinema in the CBD. It was well attended and I even had an interview on Duna TV as part of the Five Continents program. Janos and I also were interviewed on two radio stations, one of them was the popular Klub Radio. The whole program can be view on the internet at [cinemigrants.com](http://cinemigrants.com)*

*Cathy also came with me and had a great time enjoying what Budapest can offer.*



*On top of Janos Hegy Budapest in 2019*

*We met up with my family and we packed in a big program for the three weeks we were there. She wrote a diary which is included below.*



3 June to 25 June 2019

*Monday 3/06*

- *Depart Melbourne 9.30pm on Qatar airlines, direct to Budapest, stopping at Doha for a few hours. First leg is about 14 hours, which passed OK with a smooth flight, lots of food and entertainment. Very attentive crew. A380 aircraft, with 2 nice seats upstairs. Final leg to Budapest is about 6 hours, and we arrived Tuesday morning, tired but OK.*

- *The reason for the trip was Ivan's involvement in the film festival "Australian Films-Hungarian Spirit", <https://cinemigrants.com>, at the Art+Cinema, Budapest on 13 and 14 June 2019. He was to be a featured film maker, with several of his films shown.*

*Tuesday 4/06.*

- *Arrive Budapest about 9am, picked up by Tamas, Jano's father and his friend. Have coffee at a lovely small coffee shop in a leafy Budapest suburb. It was quite hot when we arrived. I think the cafe was in Mexikói út ( ut means road).*

- *Check into our apartment. Vagabond Gozsdu, at 12-14 Hollo utca (street) a small street in Pest, close to transport and lots of night life. Nice place with comfy bed, windows over the roof which you can open, kitchen and lounge, and bathroom with washing machine/dryer. Our place was not noisy, and we did not need the ear plugs provided as it looked out onto a quiet area.*

- *Dinner with Ivan at Frici Papa, on Kiraly Utca., an old favourite near our apartment. Home-style tasty food, at a good price. I had chicken paprikas and Ivan had rakott krumppli ( potato casserole). We had a few meals here later on.*
- *Went to supermarket for essentials. Cheap!*

*Wednesday 5/06*

- *Ivan and Jano had two radio interviews, so we sped about in Jano's father's car. The first one was at Klub Radio 95.3 on the dial, which was in Obuda, an old part of Budapest. I had a chance to see the Roman ruins (Budapest was once part of the Roman empire, and was called Pannonia) and some lovely cobbled streets with cafes, shops etc. The second interview was at Besz radio, an internet radio, in a gorgeous old building in a leafy street in downtown Pest.*
- *Late lunch with Jano, Authentic Hungarian food. Noticed smokers allowed to smoke in outdoor areas even when people are eating.*
- *In the evening we caught up with our friend Barbara's niece, Michelle and Bruce, who happened to be in Budapest! Had a drink at a bar downstairs from our apartment. Great atmosphere, conversation and drinks.*
- *Ivan went to meet Jano to see a play, "Caligula", with an actor, Janos Degi who was involved in the film screenings.*
- *While Ivan was away, I was brave and went down to the bustling street to get a takeaway Kebab from one of*

It's All Good...

*the many Turkish places, and found my way back. Tasty and cheap.*

*Thursday 6/06*

- *Budapest central market, to stock up on food and eat some Langos ( a real Hungarian dish, fried bread sort of like a pizza, but with sour cream on top, or you can layer on lots of other stuff as the mainly tourists do), look at arts and crafts, souvenirs, etc. It's a big place, in a beautiful building, and we did some shopping there.*

- *We went by tram, and the market tram stop is near the Liberty Bridge, one of the wonderful bridges which span the magnificent Danube River.*

*Across the road from the market is a square, leading to Vaci Utca, a long beautiful street closed to traffic with a range of food and up market retail shops.*

- *Dinner was again at Frici Papa, with Ivan's cousins Gulya and Zoli, and Gulya's wife Etelka, and their son also Gulya and his girlfriend Greta. The food was good but there was obvious tension between the cousins. Most of it was lost on me as I can't understand Hungarian!*

*Friday 7/06*

- *Spent some time at Art+Cinema where the film screenings were to be held. It is on the very busy Erszebet Korut (road). Planning meeting with all those involved.*

*Saturday 8/06*

- *Train to Lake Balaton, a 2 hour journey. Trains*



*going to Balaton seem not to be air conditioned, but the windows were open and we got a nice breeze as we sped along. Beautiful flat countryside. This is the largest lake in central Europe, like an inland sea really, over 500 sq km. We were met by a friend of János and stayed at her mother's quaint old house on the Tihany peninsula.*

- *She was going to an event at St Michael's Cathedral at Veszprem, so we went there with her, visited this famous church, and spent 3 hours exploring this beautiful historic town, with cobbled streets and medieval and baroque architecture, and glorious views from the top of the town.*

- *Had a nice meal in the square, while a bridal party took photos nearby.*

- *In the early evening, we had a wander along the Lake Balaton, watched the sunset, and had pizza and wine at a lakeside restaurant. Families were swimming and there were yachts on the lake, but we decided not to swim.*

*Sunday 9/06*

- *After breakfast in the garden, we were taken to the village of Tihany, a gorgeous place, with its Baroque Abby Church, built in the 18 century on the site of an earlier church consecrated in 1060 but destroyed in 1702. Beautiful frescoes adorn the ceiling. There was a special mass as it was Pentacost Sunday.*

- *The Tihany Peninsula is a conservation area, very beautiful, with marvelous views of the lake all around. We wandered around the small streets, browsed at the market*

It's All Good...

*stalls, and enjoyed icecream and cool drinks.*

- *We spent the rest of the afternoon at Balatonfüred, called the "grandest resort on the lake". It's very busy with many local and foreign tourists, restaurants and shops.*

- *Finally, in early evening, we boarded our train for the return to Budapest.*

*Monday 10/06*

- *Met Hedy and Madeleine, Melbourne friends (Hedy is my friends daughter and Madeline is his granddaughter) who happened to be in Budapest. We caught the bus to Zugliget, which is an outer part of Buda, very green and with camping grounds and outdoor activities, especially for families.*

- *Went to the Libego, a chairlift in the Buda hills. It is a two-way chairlift system between Zugliget and the lookout, the Elisabeth Tower, on János Hill (the highest peak in the city), providing a beautiful panorama along the way. It was a very long walk to the tower from the chairlift, but Ivan found a man in a vehicle who drove us up! Then it's 500 steps to the top of the tower, which was built in 1911 and was named after Empress Elisabeth wife of Emperor Franz Joseph.*

- *Afterwards, we went to look at the New York Coffee House, but the queues were too long, so we took photos instead and planned to return another day.*

- *It was a public holiday so the large shopping centers were closed. After saying goodbye to our friends, we went to the West End City Centre, a bit like Chadstone but*

*a bit smaller. We found a coffee shop and whiled away a few hours using their wifi.*

- *Can't remember what we did for the rest of the day or dinner.*

*Tuesday 11/06*

- *Went to the Lukacs thermal bath and swimming pool, for a good soak, sauna (for Ivan) and massage. Once we found our way around and located where to get towels etc, it was a wonderful experience. There have been baths in the same location from Turkish times, although the current building dates from the late 1800s. All sorts of medical treatments are also available.*

- *Budapest is called the spa capitol of the world, with continuous hot bubbling healing water under the city. The hot pools at Lucacs are indoors with two large swimming pools outside. It is mandatory to wear a cap while swimming, and no T shirts etc are allowed, just normal bathers.*

- *The building is also very beautiful with a lovely garden and roof top area.*

- *Ivan had a film screening meeting in the evening.*

*Wednesday 12/06*

- *Budapest Central market again, to get supplies to make chicken soup, and fresh fruit etc.*

- *As it was very hot and we had done a lot of walking and travelling here and there, we rested this afternoon.. exhausted!*

It's All Good...

- *In between the main events detailed here, we walked all over the place, met people, ate and had coffee, shopped etc.*

*Thursday 13/06*

- *Art + Cinema theater. First night of the film screening was at 5pm. We went earlier to the theatre to prepare, putting up posters, copies of articles, etc on the walls.*

- *Ivan's films were very well received, the event was a success and I am told he spoke well in Hungarian.*

- *After the screening, we went to Margaret Island (Margitsziget) by tram, stopping on the Margit bridge to take in the panoramic view over the Danube river. It was just cool enough to stroll about without sweating. Margaret Island is a 225-acre island in the middle of the Danube River in the middle of Budapest. There are gardens, a swimming pool, bicycle tracks etc and a Musical Fountain which is illuminated at night. Music is played and there were holograms projected. It's very spectacular. We heard a variety of music from Brahms to Bocelli, from Simon and Garfunkel to Vivaldi. Unfortunately there were a few mosquitoes or some sort of biting insects which descended on me from the trees so we had to move on, for a walk along the river. It was moving very fast and looked very strong. I can't imagine how Ivan paddled his Canadian canoe here as a teenager, but he did!*

*Friday 14/06*

- *The second and final day of screenings. I was feeling*

*unwell, maybe dehydrated and sunstroke! I stayed home until 7pm, when I made my way to the theatre to see Janos film. The theatre was almost full, and the program was well received.*

#### *Saturday 15/06*

- *Lunch at Ivan's cousin and family, Gyula, Etelka, their son Gyula and Greta his girlfriend. They have a large apartment in the suburbs, we went by bus. took about 30 minutes. We called into the local shopping centre to get wine and a potted plant for Etelka, and I bought a skirt as it was too hot in my pants! Unfortunately I chose a shop with Toorak prices.*

- *We had a delicious lunch, with wild boar goulash, and all the typical Hungarian trimmings. A very pleasant afternoon. I tried the cold fruit soup which I had always avoided, and it was delicious, refreshing, but a bit like have sweets as first course.*

#### *Sunday 16/06*

- *Went to the station to buy the train tickets to Vienna. The stations are very grand indeed. One had a Macdonalds downstairs, it looked glorious!*

- *Breakfast at the New York Coffee House, "the most beautiful cafe in the world"..it really is. It was originally an American insurance building ( hence the name), and went through ups and downs over time, but was restored and reborn in 2006 in its current glory.*

- *Returned to our apartment to be picked up by*

It's All Good...

*Gyula and Etelka to go to cousin Zoli's place.*

- *Late lunch at Zoli's place at Ocsa. We had our meal on the verandah of his daughter and son in law's house which they built at the front of his house. Ocsa is about 34 km from Budapest and has a rural feel. It became a large family gathering as Zoli's son and family also joined us. It was a bit messy and confusing, with people speaking across each other, coming and going, and general disorder! Ivan was not happy with their behaviour.*

*Monday 17/06*

- *A day at Castle Hill, in Buda. Buda, unlike Pest which is flat, is hilly and therefore has many lovely vistas. An easy trip by tram and bus. Very busy with tourists and tour groups. We first went to the national archives, another glorious building, to try to find information about Ivan's mother, but we were directed to another location, which we will try later.*

- *So much to see and experience here, Fisherman's Bastian, St Matthias (Matyas) Church where Ivan's aunty Olgi was married, statues, monuments, fountains, a lovely square, amazing views of the parliament etc. Ivan spent some of his childhood near here, and used to roller skate where the tourists wander. We had coffee and cakes at a famous small cafe called Ruswurm, and chatted to some English visitors from a tour ship. As a boy, Ivan used to come here with his father after mass.*

- *We found a homely place for goulash soup for lunch.*



- *We met a friend at the Szecseny National Library, where Ivan's book is available, and saw the Budapest History Museum, the National Gallery, the Sandor Palace and the changing of the guard there. I photographed some old crumbling walls from earlier times.*
- *In the evening, after a very busy day, we attended a stirring performance at the Danube Palace by the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble. Thrilling traditional music and dancing, very professional and skilled.*
- *We walked home down wide lovely streets with restaurants, where the rich overseas tourists go ( so Ivan tells me) and past the magnificent St Stephen's Basilica, which was beautifully lit up.*

*Tuesday 18/06/19*

- *Train to Vienna, a two hour trip in an air conditioned train. It was quite crowded as it was the start of the long summer school holidays and many families and groups were travelling. We passed through Komarom and saw the bridge which Ivan's step mother crossed when she brought him back to Budapest, after the war. Ivan remembers she smuggled him over the border for a packet of cigarettes. He had had a very happy few years with his aunty Peppi in what is now Slovakia, and did not want to leave.*
- *Vienna was even hotter than Budapest! A very beautiful city, although the Danube River doesn't actually flow through the city. Instead there is a "channel" which is not very impressive.*
- *We boarded a Hop on Hop off bus and our first*

It's All Good...

*stop was Schönbrunn Palace, a truly stunning place, with over 1000 rooms, and the summer residence of the Hapsburg monarchy. The queues to tour the palace were too long so we did a trip on a little cart around the enormous grounds, which include a zoo, green houses, gardens, a maze etc. I believe the grounds are about the size of Monaco.*

- *Back on the bus and we continued our tour of Vienna. We sat up the top of the bus and endured the heat to get the best view of the beautiful city, its museums, churches, gardens, wide and narrow streets. We got off at the opera house but it was closed for a performance.*

- *We therefore walked to St Stephens Cathedral, a giant gothic structure founded in the 12th century. After mandatory photos, we found a café and enjoyed enormous wiener schnitzel for dinner. We passed the Naschmarkt, Vienna's most popular food market, twice but didn't have time to go back to eat there!*

- *The Vienna railway station is new and very impressive, and we enjoyed a rest in a sweet café before boarding the train.*

- *We had our own carriage for the journey back to Budapest, once the trusty Viennese ticket inspector helped a friendly drunk back to his seat in another part of the train.*

*Wednesday 19/06/19*

- *Ivan recorded his interview with Duna TV, at a large, brand new performance venue at Millenaris Park. This was a very different physical environment, with all*

*new buildings. It had been an industrial site in Buda, turned into a modern cultural complex with exhibition halls, a large park with a pond and custom-built playgrounds. I wandered about while Ivan was interviewed. The interview was aired a few days later and we watched it in our apartment.*

- *We went by Taxi from our apartment in Pest, and again this was fun as we passed many monuments and interesting buildings along the way.*

- *Afterwards, we went to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registry, to seek information about Ivan's mother, and any surviving family on his mother's side. However, they could not find any records! Ivan has some copies of records, eg marriage certificate, but even having these did not help. Very frustrating.*

- *Cannot remember what we did for the evening! Every walk was a discovery, with cobbled streets, wide avenues, beautiful buildings, little parks, interesting shops and cafes...*

*Thursday 20/06/19*

- *Another hot springs, This time Gellert Thermal baths and Swimming Pool, which opened in 1918, and renovated since. It is very beautiful art nouveau building, and the pools are a delight. It is a part of the Gellert Hotel complex. The outside swimming pool is also a wave pool, and they are mighty big waves..knocked me right over! Ivan too! But fun. All this soaking and pounding makes one very tired, but we had a lunch date.*

It's All Good...

- *Lunch with Ivan's nephew Kis Gyuszi, at a large cafeteria attached to his work place. A large range of typical Hungarian fare, all delicious.*
- *Visited the Budapest Synagogue, known as the Great Synagogue, the second largest in the world, and a tourist attraction. It was just around the corner from our apartment. The Jewish museum is also there. I had never been inside a synagogue before. This one is glorious but with a tragic history of the holocaust.*
- *Dinner at the Blue Rose (Kek Rozsa), just outside the Synagogue. Serves "authentic Hungarian food", very delicious, especially the Gundel Palacsinta (crepes), which are filled with ground walnuts, raisins, and rum filling, served flambéed in a dark chocolate sauce made with egg yolks, heavy cream and cocoa. The original recipe is a secret maintained by the famous Gundel restaurant.*

*Friday 21/06/19*

- *Not such a busy day, included a trip to the post office (Posta) as Ivan had a parcel to post. This required queuing up at three different windows, but he enjoyed chatting to the very helpful staff, and the parcel arrived safely a few days later. Can't remember about the rest of the day..*
- *Dinner back at Frici Papa restaurant, with all the people involved in the film festival. A very happy gathering, and quite a few spoke English. It was pouring rain when we left, and we arrived home totally soaked but happy! The washer/dryer was very handy that night!*

*Saturday 22/06/19*

- *Lunch with Ivan's sister, Ildiko and her husband Gulya, at their daughter's (Hajnalka or Dawn in English) place. Hajnalka's husband Tamas, and three strapping sons, and gorgeous dog were there. They have a lovely three storey home, and we were served a marvelous lunch, including chicken paprika (Paprikash Csirke), nokedli (mini dumplings), salads, and Chestnut Puree, absolutely delicious, for sweets. Gesztenyepure is a mixture of pureed chestnuts flavored with rum and vanilla and pressed through a potato ricer to make thin chestnut "noodles" that get topped with whipped cream. Wines were "Bulls Blood" or Egri Bikaver, but not a very good one, and Rose. This was a long lunch, and we didn't leave until well after 5pm. An emotional time for Ivan. He tried to speak to his sister about past issues, but it didn't work.*

- *We met Tamas, Jano's father, for drinks in the Franz Listz (the composer) square, which is a very nice space with an impressive statue of Franz Listz, along with the Academy of Music, and many restaurants, and a small park in the middle.*

- *It's a short walk to Andrassy Avenue, a world heritage site, completed in 1885 and named after the Prime Minister of the day. Its Eclectic Neo-Renaissance palaces and houses are impressive. Rich and noble families lived there and also the State Opera House, and now many upscale boutiques, including Louis Vuitton, Ermenegildo Zegna, Burberry and Gucci are there.*

- *Budapest Jazz Club, one of Ivan's favorite places, for*

It's All Good...

*a wonderful performance of Bossa Nova by a local group. A very pleasant evening. Home late on the very efficient tram system, and we even found a 24 hour shop to buy milk for breakfast, although everyone else was buying alcohol.*

*Sunday 23/06/19.*

- *Our last full day in Hungary with sorting and packing the main activity.*
- *Visited 2 galleries, the first being the Robert Capa Contemporary Photography Centre, to see an extensive collection of his work. Robert Capa was a Hungarian war photographer and photojournalist, considered by some to be the greatest combat and adventure photographer in history. He recorded five wars, including an iconic photo of the death of a soldier in the Spanish Civil war, and his images of the Normandy Invasion on D-Day redefined photojournalism. He died in Indochina in 1954 aged just 41.*
- *Our next stop was the Hungarian House of Photography (Mai Mano Haz) , a multistory house built in 1894 by the royal photographer to exhibit Hungarian photography. A beautiful building with interesting, sometimes experimental photography, and a lovely book shop.*
- *Next was lunch (my favorite Gulyas soup again!). Later we walked to Vaci Utca (Street) for some last minute shopping. Váci Street is known as one of the top shopping streets with many good restaurants and bars, upmarket hotels and exclusive shops.*

*Monday 24/06/19*

- *Our taxi arrived at 6am to take us to the airport,*



*for the long trip home. As usual the taxi driver was Hungarian and very helpful and friendly. It turned out that he lived in Ocsa where Ivan's cousin Zoli and family live.*

### *End of Cathy's diary*



*On the opening night. Me, Gabor Marinkas, János Zoltan and Tamara Tokaji*



*Interviewed on Duna World TV about the Festival with Andrea Kalocsai*

*During the film festival in Budapest, one emotional experience stood out for me. In my opening speech when I mentioned that 63 years ago I was building barracades against the Russian tanks, in front of this very cinema. It*

It's All Good...

*was well received by the audience.*

*We returned to Australia uplifted and happy. Life went on, little Jett was growing and I was very impressed about his nature, his power of concentration always impressed me then, and even now in 2021. I am sure he will continue to develop in this positive way.*

*I kept on playing bowls. While I was playing in the semi final in the heat for three hours, I felt that my left knee and my whole body became painful.*

*Didn't pay much attention to it at the time...I should have. Things got worse. I had to have the Duralane injection in my left knee, at last.*

*Following the injection I got a viral or bacterial infection. (I don't know which) It took its toll.*

*My blood composition changed and I ended up in hospital. They told me I had Polymyalgia Rheumatica. It took three weeks to cure me to 50% efficiency. Other complications followed and even in August 2020 I wasn't 100%.*

*In the meantime Coronavirus was spreading in the community. Luckily I missed out on lots of issues associated with that pandemic while concentrating on my own problems...*



*The Festival poster*



*Still talking...*



*In front of my favourite cafe  
on Castle Hill*



*My nephew kis Gyuszi Gaal*

It's All Good...



*Hajnalka, Cathy and Ildiko in  
Budapest*



*Dinner with my cousin Gyula, Etelka and Grèta,  
kis Gyuszi's girlfriend with Cathy in 2019*



*Cathy had a great time in Budapest*



*...and in Vienna*



## 2021

*This year didn't start well. I developed a very sharp pain in my right foot. The physiotherapist recommended exercises, but they didn't help, they made it worse.*

*They pain sometimes subsided and I was still playing lawn balls. That is the time when I had an electric shock to my heart to make it regular. It was a success. After that I felt terrific for a few days. I won the Club's Triple championship with Emmett and Angelo. The competition was tough, it was a great honour.*

*The pain returned a few days later. I was desperate to stop it. I couldn't sleep at night. I felt terrible.*

*I went to the Olympic Park Medical Centre where I had an MRI and then a steroid injection in my lower back, where the pain was allegedly coming from. Nothing helped.*

*Finally, with Cathy's help, I admitted myself to Epworth Hospital. They provided me with four specialists, including my kidney specialist, Doctor Ana, who saved my life before... None of them knew what to do with me. I had another steroid injection in my back. That didn't help either. Nothing took away the pain, and I was not able to take anti inflammatory medication because of reduced kidney function. The general consensus was that I had sciatica with pinched nerves, with the pain referred to my feet. Surgery was an option, but risky because of my age. After three weeks I left the hospital with pain. I went in with pain and came out with pain.*



*Instead of referring me to out-patient rehab, I was referred to a pain management specialist, and had to wait three months for an appointment. Although I wasn't happy about the wait, I finally had some help from a nice doctor. The most effective treatment for a while was the cannabis oil, which I ordered through the right channels. Not cheap... The process continues, the pain in my foot comes and goes and I see a number of specialists, without any lasting resolution. After a long wait, I started a comprehensive rehabilitation program, so am feeling fitter and stronger, and can look forward to increasing improvement... hopefully.*

*There will always be challenges and joys in my life, and still, at age 83, I am optimistic about the future, especially when I can spend more time at Warburton.*

*It will be all good!!*

*On May 1st at the Awards Night, at Fitzroy BC, I received the beautiful glass trophy. I think it will be my last one...*



It's All Good...

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GALLERY

*"Work like you don't need money  
Love like you've never been hurt  
and dance like no one is looking"*

*Satchel Paige*



*Tomas at Dereel*



*Carmel Burnett's 80th birthday, with her grandchildren*

It's All Good...



*Friend Harry Blutstein at his book signing*



*Sandor Mokos, my teacher in Hungary, still friends*



*Nigel Buesst, filmmaker and mentor at our joint 80th birthday*



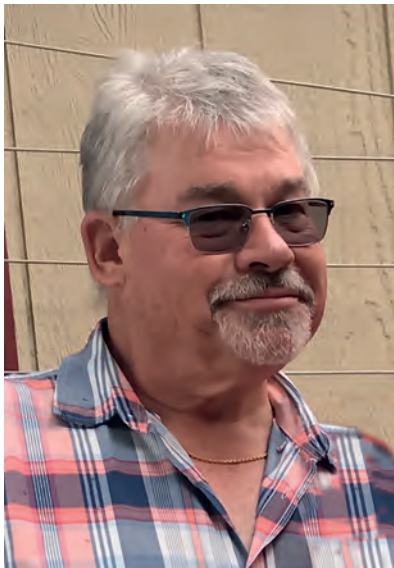
*With Sandor and Cathy*



It's All Good...



*Megan Wallens, friend in Warburton*



*Long time friend from Little Athletics days, Ingar*





*Phil and Veronika, good friends*



*I have known Philip Morgan, photographer/artist, for 50 years*

It's All Good...



*My happy accountant and friend, Gianna Rosica*



*Photo Deborah Towns*

*Dr Deborah Towns OAM, long time friend and collaborator*



*Friends for over 40 years, Judy (now deceased) and Roger Auton*



*Photo Kate Popham*

*BBC journalist and friend, Mike Popham in London*

It's All Good...



*50 year reunion with Gloria Willis*



*Elaine said that 'Tony always made me laugh'*





*Barbara and Cathy, friends for over 50 years*



*With my sister Ildiko in Budapest 2019*

It's All Good...



*With Tony in London, at Portobello Road*



*Kis Gyuszi and Grèta at 'Frici Papa' (my favourite restaurant in Budapest)*





*With Madeline and Hedy at János Hegy*



*1956 medal winning Olympic canoeist and friend,  
Ferenc Mohácsi with his medals*



*Dori, my niece with koalas in Hungary*



*Szabolcs, my nephew with his wife Zsuzsi at Ócsa, Hungary*



*My favourite “junk food” in Budapest, langos*



*Tomas at his first share house, with Stu*

It's All Good...



*My late mother-in-law Carmel in Warburton*



*My happy father-in-law Jack Burnett*





*Cathy's birthday 2021*



*Meeting Cathy at the second family wedding changed my life*

It's All Good...



*With my sister Ildiko in Budapest*



*Ildiko's daughter Hajnalka*



*Cathy always loved the snow...*





*Lovely Jett with his Thai grandfather at Bangkok*



*Cathy, Jett and his mother Tip, 2021*

It's All Good...



*Nicolas running in cross country*



*The winning team at Princes Park Carlton Bowls Club*



*Nicolas*



*Cathy with Tomas*



*Cathy with her siblings; John, Anne, Mary, Peter and Raymond*

# Appendix

## Awards

*Applause Please* was a finalist in the 22nd Sydney International Film Festival in 1975 in the General Category.

*Tandberg On Page One* was a finalist in the Australian Film Institute Awards in 1983.

*The Age of Change* was a finalist in the ATOM Awards 1984.

*Children With Special Abilities* was a finalist in the American Film Festival in New York City 1984.

Received two Australian Teachers of Media Awards (ATOM) for the film *Ibrahim* in 1986 and voted by children as the best Australian educational film of the year.

*Ibrahim* was also a finalist at the Birmingham (Alabama, USA) Educational Film Festival in 1987.

Received PATERS Award (Humanitarian Services, Australian Academy of Broadcast Arts & Sciences) for the film *No More Secrets* in 1988.

Final nominee in 1989 for Australian Television Awards for the film *It's Not All Rubbish*.

*Grandfathers and Revolutions* received many international awards around the world in 2000s (cameraman and mentoring young director Peter Hegedus)

Certificate in appreciation for the support and contribution to the *Physical and Sport Education of Victorian Students*. 1999

Certificate of Recognition for participating in the *World Masters Games* in 2002.

Recognition for the Outstanding Contribution to the seventh *Pacific School Games*. 2005.

Certificate of Appreciation for contribution to the *Golden Anniversary* of the Melbourne Olympic Games in 2006.

Certificate of Appreciation for *judging* the ATOM Awards in 2009.

*Award of Merit* for the Olympic Movement and Sport in Victoria from the Victorian Olympic Council in 2012.

Senior Commendation Award for *A Man From the Other Side* at Warburton Film Festival 2016



### Extra Activities and Acknowledgements received as a Photographer and Filmmaker

President of *Australian Teachers of Media* {ATOM} 1975

Coordinator of the *Melbourne Filmmakers Cooperative* 1976-1977

Committee member of the Association of Independent Filmmakers 1978

Providing services with photography and filmmaking for the Melbourne University Modern Dance Ensemble. Late 1960s until early 70s.

Volunteer photographer for the “*Pram Factory*” (theatre group) in Melbourne. 1970s

Provided photographs to “Shanti Yoga” for the book *Yoga in Pregnancy* in 1979

Judge at the 23<sup>rd</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> *International Melbourne Film Festival*. 1974 & 1977

Four of my films shown in the *Melbourne International Film Festival* in the 1970s & 1980s

All of my films were broadcast on Channel 7 & SBS as part of the then TvEd programs in the 1980s.

Written articles for Australian Teachers of Media magazine *Metro*, 1970s & 1980s.

Member of the *Australian Film Institute's Educational Advisory Board* in the 1980s

Started *Media Moves* with Lee Burton on Melbourne radio station 3CR with other independent filmmakers and presented regular programs in 1990s

Started the Australian Teachers of Media Awards, *ATOM Awards* in 1982 with Peter Hamilton, Lee Burton and Helen Kon.

Executive Committee member of the Producers & Directors Guild of Victoria from 1987 till 1993.

Judge at the *St Kilda Film Festival*, Melbourne in 1990.

Judge in the documentary and educational categories of the Australian Television Awards (Penguin Awards) 1983-1989.

Several of my films were shown in the St Kilda Film Festival in the 1980s.

Foundation member of the Children's Books on Screen Committee in 1993

Committee member of the Melbourne Documentary Group from 1995 till 1996.

## It's All Good...

Consumer representative on the *ADHD Working Party* of the National Health and Medical Research Council.- 1996

Served on several school councils, primary and secondary, in the 1990s

Promoted *Schools Sports in Victoria* with filmmaking and photography in 1990s & 2000s

Volunteer photographer for the *Victorian Olympic Council*. From 2006-2014.

Volunteer photographer for the *International Dragon Boat Federation* 2007-2008.

Volunteer media works for the *Yarra Ranges Film Society* from 2004

Voluntary film work for the *Australian Hungarian Magazine* TV in Melbourne for Channel 31 in 2006-09.

Judge of film entries for the *ATOM Awards*. 2008-2011

Elected as *ATOM Awards Ambassador* for three years 2008-2010

Regular commentator on *SBS Hungarian Radio* program about films 2010-2012

Finalist in the National Photographic Portrait Prize competitions in 2013 & 2015 in Canberra

Solo photo exhibition in Warburton in 2017 "*People, Stories and Dance*"

Martin, Adrian (2013). "Comment, Think, Analyse, Experience and Learn: The Neglected Film Work of Ivan Gaal". *Metro Magazine*.

In June 2019, I participated in a film festival entitled "Australian Films - Hungarian Spirit", presented in Budapest, Hungary. I was a guest at the festival, screening several of my films, and gave a couple of speeches. When I was there, I was interviewed on Duna World TV, on the show "Ot-kontinent", on June 22, 2019. It was transmitted on Duna World TV worldwide, on three occasions.

### Films Produced and Directed Independently

All for the Love of It. 1968

Thursday's Children 1970

Camberwell Junction 1974

We, the Proclaimers 1975

Applause Please 1974.

Soft Soap 1976

The Punter 1978

Autism Who Cares 1979

Concerto for Ads and Heads 1979

Man of the Earth 1981

No Turning Back 1984

Grandfathers and Revolutions 1999

(Filming and assisting young director for the above)

Grey Paddle Power 2006

Icing on the Cake 2009

A Man From the Other Side 2015

My films are available to the public from the *ACMI Lending Library* in Melbourne or from the *National Film and Sound Archive* in Canberra.



## *Ivan Gaal*

*From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

*Ivan Gaal (born 23 March, 1938) is an Australian filmmaker. He primarily makes documentary films. He has also worked as a professional photographer, and also gained recognition as a canoeist.*

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- 1 Biography*
- 2 Film career*
- 3 Selected filmography*
- 4 Bibliography*
- 5 Personal life*
- 6 References*
- 7 External links*

### *Biography*

*Gaal was born in Budapest, Hungary, on 23 March, 1938, and was educated in the Communist system until his departure to Australia at the age of 18.[1] At his school in Budapest, the historic Toldy Ferenc Gimnázium, he excelled in the sport of Olympic wrestling and was the junior champion of Budapest in 1954. He also excelled in canoeing.[2]*

*He emigrated to Australia as a refugee in 1957, following the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.[3][4][5] Settling in Melbourne, he won the Australian Canoe Championship (held by the Australian Canoe Federation, now Paddle Australia) in Canadian Pairs class in 1960, which led to his selection to the Australian canoeing team for the Rome Olympics in 1960.[6] Due to a lack of funds, he was unable to attend the games.[5]*

## It's All Good...

*He worked for the Australian Broadcasting Commission from 1959 to 1969 as a audio technician,[7] and then worked for the Department of Education Victoria from 1970[3] in the Audio-Visual Education Centre (AVEC) film unit, where he stayed for almost 30 years, directing various docu-drama and documentary films.[8] At the same time, he made independently-produced films, with government grants. He also completed the Graduate Diploma in Applied Film and Television from the Swinburne Film and Television School (now Victorian College of the Arts) in 1978.[9]*

*He has been involved in many organisations over the years, including the Melbourne Filmmakers' Co-Op,[8] the Pram Factory,[8] the Australian Teachers of Media,[8] Metro Magazine[10] and the Yarra Ranges Film Society.[11]*

*While working as a filmmaker, Gaal also worked in still photography. He took photos of various musical artists working for Fable Records in the 1970s, including Francisus Henri[12] and for the Department of Education, promoting physical and sport education for Victorian students in the 1990s and 2000s,[5] and for the Victorian Olympic Council from 2006-2014, where he was awarded an Order of Merit in 2012.[13] He won the Visage Portrait Competition in Photography (Yarra Ranges) in 2014[14] and also made the finals in the National Photographic Portrait Prize in 2013 & 2015 in Canberra,[15] and Duo Magazine Percival Photographic Portrait Prize 2016 in Townsville,[16] and one of his photographs (of George Spartels) was accepted into the permanent collection of the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra in 2019.[17] He staged a solo photo exhibition at Art Centre, Warburton, Victoria, in 2017.[15] He has published a book of his photographs called *People, Stories and Dance* in 2018.[18]*

## *Film career*

*Gaal's film career started in 1970 with the film *All for the Love of It**

*(8 mins, 16mm).[1]*

*His work in the 1970s gained recognition at film festivals and won awards. Applause Please was a finalist at the Sydney Film Festival short film awards in 1975;[19] Eclipse, Getting the Message, The Punter, and Tandberg on Page One were all selected for the Melbourne Film Festival;[20] Tandberg On Page One was a finalist in the Australian Film Institute Awards in 1983; Ibrahim received two ATOM Awards in 1986 and was voted by children as the best Australian educational film of the year, and was also a finalist at the Birmingham (Alabama, USA) Educational Film Festival awards in 1987;[1] The Punter, Ibrahim and Jubilee and Beyond were selected for the St.Kilda Film Festival.[21] Also, Soft Soap in 1977 was distributed in commercial cinemas as a short film supporting feature films.[3] Recently, his film Applause, Please screened in a special retrospective program at Melbourne Cinematheque in 2017.[22]*

*After a period of working for the Department of Education promoting school sports with video and photographs in the 1990s, Ivan returned to directing his own films in 2006 with Grey Paddle Power, and then Icing on the Cake in 2009, and A Man From the Other Side in 2015, which was Awarded at the Yarra Ranges Film Festival at Warburton in 2016.[1]*

*In June 2019, Ivan participated in a film festival entitled "Australian Films - Hungarian Spirit", presented in Budapest, Hungary. He was a guest at the festival, screening several of his films, and giving a couple of speeches.[23] When he was there, he was interviewed on Duna World TV, on the show "Ot-kontinens", on June 22, 2019.[24]*

*The film critic Adrian Martin has said of Gaal: "Ivan Gaal is clearly a thoughtful filmmaker who has reflected long and hard, over his lifetime, on the ways and means of educational cinema"[8]*

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*The Age* newspaper (in the column *Buff's Choice* on July 20, 1984), called Gaal a "local stalwart" for his films.[25]

Gaal's films and videos are available from ACMI (Australian Centre for the Moving Image) Lending Collection and NFSA (National Film and Sound Archive) Screen Lending Collection.

### *Selected filmography*

*All For The love Of it* (1970, 8 mins, 16mm)

*Thursday's Children* (1970, 25 mins, 16 mm)

*Camberwell Junction* (1974, 5 mins, 16mm)

*Applause Please* (1974, 22 mins, 16mm)

*Circus Nomads* (1975, 22 mins, 16mm)

*We the Proclaimers* (1975, 25 mins, 16mm)

*Soft Soap* (1976, 35 mins, 16mm, & blown up to 35mm)

*Jubilee and Beyond* (1977, 15 mins, 16mm)

*The Punter* (1978, 9 mins, 16mm)

*Concerto for Ads and Heads* (1979, 5 mins, 16mm)

*Eclipse* (1979, 5 mins, 16mm)

*Autism, Who Cares* (1979, 22 mins, 16mm)

*Getting the Message* (1979, 30 mins, 16mm)

*Celebrations* (1980, 30 mins, 16mm)

*Men of the Earth* (1981, 25 mins, 16mm)

*Tandberg on Page One* (1982, 30 mins, 16mm)

*The Age of Change* (1983, 25 mins, 16mm)

*Not Only to Save Our Jobs...* (1983, 36 mins, 1" video)

*No Turning Back* (1984, 25 mins, 16mm)

*Children with Special Abilities* (1984, 29 mins, 16mm)

*Ibrahim* (1985, 30 mins, 16mm)

*Peace in Action* (1986, 20 mins, SP Video)

*Meeting of Minds* (1986, 25 mins, 16mm)

*Give Us Space* (1987, 25 mins, SP Video)

*No More Secrets* (1988, 25 mins, SP Video)

*It's Not All Rubbish* (1989, 20 mins, SP Video)

*Grey Paddle Power* (2006, 22 mins, DVD)  
*Icing on the Cake* (2009, 10 mins, DVD)  
*A Man From the Other Side* (2016, 9 mins, DVD)

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*Personal life[edit]*

*He remained athletically competitive until his later years, winning the World Masters Championship in double Canadian canoe class in 2006 in Edmonton, Canada,[5]*

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*My 70th birthday*

*and finally...  
I appreciate the help of:*

*Catherine Gaal, for so many years of love and support  
my sons, Nicolas and Tomas, who taught me so much  
about myself*

*Paul Colcheedas for art work and support  
Kunyatip Reungsri for providing photographs of my  
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*Bill Mousoulis for arranging to place my professional  
life's history on Google and Wikipedia  
and, everyone who helped me in my life's journey, to  
overcome the challenges my past and present have  
thrown up. I am grateful for your place in my life.*

*Thank you all*

*It's All Good...*

*Ivan Gaal  
@2021*



*“Meeting” the members of my deceased family, including  
my father, István, in Budapest*

## *Post Script*

*In 2022 a photograph of David Menadue OAM was selected as one of the 50 finalists out of 2500 entries in the National Photographic Portrait Prize in Canberra. Cathy and I attended the launch on 1st July.*



*Feature documentary about the Melbourne and Sydney Filmmakers Cooperative, titled 'Sences of Cinema', was featured at the 70th Melbourne International Film Festival in August 2022. I was one of the participants in the program.*





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