

The Gijsbers Family - Millicent

**by Tina Gijsbers - van der Sangen,
born and raised in Dinther, Noord Brabant.**

When I was 18, I had a dream in which I saw lots of water and an island. But I did not know what it meant. So I forgot about it and went on with my life.

When I was 20, I met a nice young man. His name was Jos Gijsbers and in 1953 when I was 22, we got married. But there was a shortage of houses, so we moved in with Jos's brother in Velp near Grave. We had two small rooms and a bathroom, where I had to do the cooking, shower and washing.

On 15 October 1954 our daughter Annette was born. Two years later, on 10 July 1956, we had a son, Peter. So here we were, with four people in two small rooms.

We were on a waiting list for a house. Then in 1957 I became pregnant again and they had to give us a house. So we moved to Pater Johan Steinstraat in Velp, where our second son, Henny, was born on 14 August 1958.

Jos's brother Frans, later called Jack, and his wife Nelly and family went to Australia in 1954 and lived in Millicent. They kept writing letters to us, what it was like over there - lots of room, forests, trees and no snow, most of the time sunny weather. So I said to Jos *there is no future here in Holland for the children* and we decided to go to Australia.



Velp 1959, from left to right: Jos's brother Aloys, Jos's father and mother, Jos's brother Frans, Anette, baby Henny, Jos's brother Anton behind Tina, Peter in front of Jos, Jos's sister Betsie, Anton's wife Dina and Jos's brother Adrian

We passed our health check with the emigration doctor and on 16 October 1959 we went by taxi to Rotterdam where the ship the SS *Zuiderkruis* was ready to go. We set off on the same day. After a few days on the water the sea was so rough, we all got seasick. After ten days we saw land, The Azores -

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and so my dream came true □ the water was the sea and the island was The Azores. We then went on to the Dutch Antilles, where we stayed for two days and then through the Panama Canal to Tahiti, Wellington New Zealand, Sydney and Melbourne.

From there we went by train to Woodside, South Australia, where a bus was waiting to bring us to the place where we were going to stay. It was an old Army camp. The date was 22 November 1959. It was very hot □ 43 degrees.

We had two rooms with wooden floors, a few chairs and a table. The beds were old Army beds, very hard to sleep on. The buildings were of galvanised iron, very hot □ no air conditioning in those days □ and there were a lot of flies.

In the camp there was a kitchen and a room where we had our meals, but the food was not the same as what we were used to. It was lamb and the butter was very salty. We had to get used to it.

The toilets and showers were separate from our rooms, so we had to walk there. And there were wash rooms with coppers and troughs. We had to get the wood for the copper from the shed. There were no washing machines, only a washboard. It was good to meet lots of people, speaking many languages.

We lived with three families in one barrack. In the camp there was a supervisor. If we needed anything, we had to see him. Once a week we were given clean sheets and towels.

After two weeks, Jos got a job at the Woollen Mill in Lobethal. He was very happy and his salary was £20 a week. So he bought a motorbike and rode to work every day.

We liked it in the Hills and were looking for a house, but his brother kept writing to us to come and live in Millicent. He said he was looking for work and a house for us, but I didn't want to go. Jos (Josh) had a good job and there was plenty of work in the Hills □ picking fruit was one of them □ and we were close to Adelaide.

After three months his brother said he had found work for Jos and a house. So we went on the train and he met us at the Kalangadoo Railway Station. When we got there he took us to the house. It was nice to see them all. We had dinner together and there was a lot of talking. Then we found out that there was no house and that we had to move in with them.

They had four children and we had three. Jos's brother was staying there as well, so that was twelve people in the one house. I did not like this at all and wished that we had stayed in Woodside.

But Jack got a job for Jos. It was at the Cellulose Paper Factory and he had to start by shifting wood. That was the rule; you started from the bottom and worked your way up. But after a week Jos had lots of trouble with his back and was in a lot of pain. He was not used to doing this kind of work. He was so sorry that he had left his job at the Woollen Mill in Lobethal, but it was too late now.

After a week at home his back got better and the paper mill got him a new job. So things got a bit better. At that time they were building Trust homes in Millicent and after a few months we were able to move into a house of our own. Our furniture, which we had brought from Holland, was still in a container in Melbourne. This arrived in a few days and we made ourselves a home. For the first time we were a happy family. The address was 18 McMorrison Street, Millicent.

We saved up money to buy a small car. Soon Jos got his driver's licence and now we could go shopping and take the children to the beach. There was only one grocery shop, Eudunda Farmers.

the Gijsbers family

We went to English classes to learn the language. It was very hard at first, but we got there. We also learnt about the Australian currency of pounds, shillings, pence and half pence.

The baker and milkman went from door to door, so that was easy. Annette started school in 1960 at St Anthony's Catholic School. In 1962 Peter also started.

On 18 February 1964 our daughter Dianne was born. So now we had four children. That same year Henny also started school. Now I had time to learn to drive the car. I did it in the backyard, up and back, to learn the gears. It didn't take long and after two lessons I got my driver's licence.

Jos was working hard and did a lot of overtime, so we were saving money and when we had one third saved up, along with a bank loan, we bought a house at 48 Fifth Street in 1965. We had it paid off in a few years. We had a lot of fruit trees and chooks and grew our own vegetables. Jos worked hard so we could do some renovations to the house. I did a lot of sewing and knitting.

In 1966 we got our Certificates of Naturalisation as Australian Citizens. Two years later Annette started High School and on 10 March 1969 our fifth child, Joanne, was born. But after a year I got very sick and had two operations. For the second one, I was in hospital in Adelaide for three weeks. I was there all on my own. It was very hard. Jos had to look after the family, so he could not come to see me. But we kept in contact by phone.

When I got home I thought everything would be alright again, but I was very weak and had lost a lot of weight and Jos said I needed a holiday. So, in 1973 I went to Holland with Dianne and Joanne, who were nine and four years of age then. We were there for ten weeks. It was nice but we wanted to go back to Australia and be a family again so that everything would be back to normal.

In 1978 Annette was getting married and before that she wanted to go to Holland where she had been born and wanted to buy her wedding dress over there. She talked Jos into going, so that he could see his family there. And so Jos, Annette, Joanne and I made the trip.

Annette married Trevor Robinson in 1979, Peter married Karen Fallas in 1981 and Henny married Margie Agnew in 1982.

In 1983 the Cellulose Paper Factory closed down, so Jos no longer had a job. He was paid out and also got his super. We then bought another house at 5 Seventh Street and also our first new car. Jos was looking for a new job. We found one in the paper. They wanted a bus driver at Apcel and he got the job because he had a bus licence. He had to drive the shift workers and also pick up school children.

In 1984 Dianne married and by August 1985 we had four grandchildren.

In 1986 Jos was diagnosed with cancer. For three months we travelled up and down between Millicent and Adelaide for his treatment. We stayed at Martin House, a special place for cancer patients. But there was no cure and Jos died in the Royal Adelaide Hospital on 27 June 1986. He is buried at the Millicent Cemetery.

Joanne was in her last year in High School at that stage. The following year she continued her studies in Warrnambool and I sold our house in Millicent and moved to Mount Gambier.

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In Mount Gambier there was a lot more to do. I started ten pin bowling and volunteered with Meals on Wheels for ten years. We had a nice group of ladies and went out to dances and listened to music. In 1995 someone got me into indoor bowling and there I met Colin. We became good friends. I had never seen much of Australia before and now we travelled all over the country.

In 2003 Joanne married and the following year I moved to Goolwa. Colin also rented a house there and we did lots of trips around the Hills and Adelaide. He died in August 2009.



From left to right: Jos, Tina, Dianne, Darren, Joanne, Henny, Annette Peter (1984)

The village where I live has its own bus and we do lots of trips. I still drive the car, read a lot and spend a lot of time in my garden.

Postscript □ *Tina celebrated her 80th birthday on 28th July, 2011. She visited The Netherlands in 2013 and in 2014. She has ten grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.*

Strangers Help Widowed Dutch Mother and Her Family

A Dutch migrant family, Reiner and Johanna Teuns and four children, were on their way to a new job and a family home in Glencoe on 16 October 1954 when, 14 miles out of Naracoorte, they were in a fatal collision with another car. Reiner (36) was killed. A few hours later Johanna gave birth to a daughter in the Naracoorte Hospital. The children were not injured.

DUTCH WIDOW EXPRESSES SINCERE THANKS

To the Editor "The Herald"
Sir,—May I, with your permission, take this opportunity of sincerely thanking everyone for their tangible expressions of sympathy and financial assistance following the loss of my dear husband in a recent car accident.

The great kindness and generosity which has been shown to me and my family during the past few weeks is sincerely appreciated, and makes me feel very much at home, though a stranger in a strange land, and has been very helpful and uplifting to me, more than words can express.
Thank you, sir, yours, etc.

J. TEUNS
Naracoorte, November 18, 1954

They had been in Australia for 18 months and living in a one-roomed shack in Renmark. Completely uninsured, Johanna had only enough money to maintain her family for about two weeks. The response to the family's plight was immediate and generous.

A carpenter, as Reiner Teuns was himself, Mr. Toby Bradley of Naracoorte launched a fund to help the family and on the first day had collected £58/18/- when the appeal was taken over by the Naracoorte branch of the Good Neighbour Council. It would continue to receive a generous response locally and also from Renmark.

The Dutch Migrant Officer in South Australia, Mr. J. Teekens, travelled over from Adelaide and Father R. Beerepoot, Catholic Chaplain to the Dutch community in South Australia, said

that Johanna must and would be helped by the Dutch community.

The family received accommodation, clothing and baby parcels from people far and wide and by mid November £1430 had been donated. By December the Trustees of the Teuns fund had bought a home in Naracoorte for the family.

Johanna planned to set up a laundry business in her home and the Country Women's Association contributed £100 towards the purchase of a washing machine and an electric press-ironer. In a letter to The Naracoorte Herald she thanked everyone for their tangible expressions of sympathy and financial assistance. *The great kindness and generosity which has been shown to me and my family during the past few weeks is sincerely appreciated and makes me feel very much at home, though a stranger in a strange land, and has been very helpful and uplifting to me, more than words can express.*

Reiner Teuns was buried by an assistant parish priest, Father Jordan, in the Roman Catholic section of the Naracoorte Cemetery. Many Naracoorte people attended the simple ceremony. The baby girl, born on the day that her father died, received the name of Rein in his memory. She was a prize winner in a baby competition in Naracoorte on 27 November, for being the youngest girl present at the age of just one month and 11 days.

Sources: *The News and The Naracoorte Herald*

MIGRANTS' APPRECIATION

To the Editor "The Herald"
Sir,—Would you please grant me some space in your paper. On behalf of many Dutch families I want to thank everybody who has been so generous and helpful in coming to the aid of our fellow-citizens in distress.

We appreciate this, and feel that in this country, people are prepared to jump to the assistance of those in need, irrespective of nationality.

I want to point out that this is an important fact, because it has proved to the Dutch migrants that they have taken a step in the right direction by migrating to Australia. Although I still have my Dutch national feelings (I am just over three years in this country), I can assure you that I am an Australian.—
Very truly,
yours,

G. VAN LEUVEN
Naracoorte, November 18, 1954.

The Suiker Family

Tonni and John Suiker flew to Australia from The Netherlands in the early 1960s. John was a Master Butcher and worked for a couple of years in Adelaide. He came to Mount Gambier to work for Jim Maney, a wholesale butcher. They had five children.

John later opened a shop on Bay Road (near the Italian Club), then moved to a shop on Shepherdson Road (near Bond Street). He was a keen artist in his spare time and was able to fulfil his hobby when they retired to Queensland.

With thanks to The Bikkel of Aldgate

Blue Birds of Happiness for Mrs de Vos

When Dutch builder Gerard de Vos erected a family home in West Lane, Mount Gambier, in January 1954, his wife was in her element. When a Border Watch reporter came calling Mrs. de Vos was busily planning a garden and curtains and furniture for her lounge and the reporter wrote: *Her spotless kitchen is a dream and says "Welcome" the moment you step inside. It is bright and pretty with red and white check curtains, with a matching frill along the mantelpiece over the cream enamel stove. Mrs. de Vos is very proud of her stove, and her modern new refrigerator. About the house, are pieces of delightful Dutch china.*

Mr and Mrs. de Vos came from The Netherlands to Australia in 1950 and lived in Sydney before settling in Mount Gambier. Their son-in-law, John Bijleveldt, helped build the family home, along with one also for himself and his family.

Another Dutchman, Dirk Bikkel, who also lived in the de Vos home, applied his interior decorating talents to the interior. *The way he has decorated the ceiling of Mrs. de Vos's lounge is most unusual. Four blue birds of happiness are flying in softly grooved yellow rays touched with blue stars in a raised pattern.* The Border Watch reported.

The van den Hoogen Family

by Betsie van der Veen – van den Hoogen



Volkel, Noord Brabant, 1960

From right to left: Anton and Anna, Betsie, Henk, Anton Jnr and Gary. They are seated on the blade of the family's former windmill, which was damaged during a bombing in World War II and later removed.

Hi, I'm Betsie van der Veen-van den Hoogen. I arrived in Australia from The Netherlands with my parents Anton and Anna van den Hoogen and three brothers on 12 October 1960. I was the oldest and only daughter and then there were Henk, Anton Jnr and Gary.

Our hometown was Volkel in Noord Brabant. Whilst my mother's family were also Volkel people, my paternal grandfather had moved there from Amsterdam. He was a cooper by trade and established a pub in the town □ across the road from the church.

Later he owned a windmill in Volkel and

my father became the miller.

As a matter of interest, this mill was unique for our province, being what they called an eight-sided □poldermolen□ from the province of Friesland. It was bombed during World War II and unfortunately it did not qualify for restoration under the auspices of the Dutch Windmill Association as it had already been restored once - just before the War. A single blade was eventually the only part to survive intact and this was later used in the restoration of another windmill in the nearby village of Zeeland.

We came to Nangwarry as our father had a brother, Gerrit, living there and he had arranged a job and a family home for us. My uncle and aunty had come to Nangwarry four years earlier and had seven children. My mother also had a



*On board the SS Waterman: Learning English
(Anton and Anna right)*

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niece in Melbourne, who had migrated one year before us. I remember our trip on the boat the SS *Waterman* with fun, as it was our first real holiday.

When we docked in Melbourne, it was Melbourne Cup Day and we could not get off the boat as everything was closed because it was a public holiday.

My uncle and aunty were there to pick us up. It was a long trip home to Nangwarry by car and everything was so strange. We could not speak English so did not understand it. My mother had a big shock when she discovered that the toilet was in the back of the garden, but that, as they say, is another story.



*Top row, left to right: Henk, Betsie, Dad, Gary
Bottom row: Anton Jnr and Mum*



Arrival in Melbourne

My father had work right away. And the people were very kind. Our boxes came late but in no time we had beds, a table, chairs and an old fridge from local people and that was all returned when our own stuff finally came. We kids thought it was great camping inside.

We went to school in the New Year and learned English fast. All went well for us. Within two years we had a car and then on the weekends we would go out exploring, which was great fun.

Then there was a big surprise for my mother. She found herself with another baby on the way, so my youngest brother, Peter, was born in May 1963. Life was good.

We all completed primary school and high school and one brother went to university.

When we first came to Nangwarry there were up to 40 Dutch families living in the town but over the years many moved away.

Nangwarry's housing was designated only for those employed in the timber industry. Its operation was taken over by the Housing Trust in the 1970s and families were given the option of either continuing to rent or to purchase their homes, which is what my family did. It was our family home until 1995.

My parents have now passed away, but my youngest brother and I still live very happily in Nangwarry. Australia has been very good to us all.

van den Hoogen family



Anton, Mum with baby Peter, Dad with Gary, Betsie and Henk standing

Nangwarry was established in 1941 to accommodate workers in the local pine forests and timber mill. Migrants made up the biggest percentage of the population in what became a multicultural community. During the first three decades all males worked for the Woods and Forests Department.

The earliest migrants were single men from the Baltic States and later families from Italy and The Netherlands were welcomed into the community. Nangwarry in the 1950s and 1960s is remembered as being a very vibrant township with a large variety of activities from 'Mothers and Babies' and 'Girl Guides' to netball, football, cricket and fund raising for a swimming pool. It had an annual show and garden fair and gymkhanas on the oval. The locals built a community hall and an RSL Hall and there was a lot of fund raising to build the local Catholic Church and School.

State Primary School began with Years 1 and 2 and by 1953 education was provided up to Year 7.

The town has a Forestry and Logging Museum in Krichauf Avenue.

(With thanks to Allan and Jan Dowling, whose memories of 33 years in Nangwarry were drawn on for this information about the township)



Nangwarry, February 1962