

In Melbourne

In Melbourne Mum and Dad became members of the Slovenian church community and later members of the Slovenian Association in Parkville, where mum and the family were heavily involved. I remember the many rehearsals for Slovenian plays at our house as a young girl. Years later we played many plays like ***Pri belem konjičku***, with Betty Belec, Božo Lončar and Ivan Mihel. I recall full well the fun we had rehearsing, laughing and drinking coffee either at home or at the church chapel in Kew.

Father Basil Valentin was a frequent visitor for Sunday lunch. I remember having to practise my curtsy before his first visit. We performed countless performances with poems, songs and dancing at different venues such as St. Frances Melbourne and Brunswick. No car meant we caught public transport for "Miklavž" and concerts. While walking, mum would relate stories about Slovenia, the green countryside and hills. She would capitulate on the beauty of nature, history and Slovenian language.

Then Father Basil Valentin approached our family to take new Slovenian migrants, as Kew had little room for the coming boys. He thought it a good idea to give them a home environment. Many of the boys came and left but Niko Pridic, stayed the longest. He was a loner who although had family come later, preferred to be on his own. Martin Zedonner took me each week for years to the city for my ballet classes. In the meantime mum persuaded dad to try cooking school in Melbourne, which he loved and graduated from finally being able to get a job at Royal Park Parkville.

Then after eleven years of washing and cleaning mum decided she wanted to own a movie camera. Therefore she needed to go to work! Also in 1964 my grandfather Ivan Grabner came to Australia on the ship I believe was called *The Princess* at South Melbourne. He became my best friend and lived with us at Moonee Ponds. Soon he became homesick and asked mum to sponsor his wife Anna and her youngest son Mirko. So mum and her brother Ivan (who had come out earlier with his wife Srebra) bought a house opposite Clarinda Park in Essendon.