

THREDBO ALPINE MUSEUM

***Jerry Milan Krejzar – An Oral History & Memoir
Coming Full Circle***



Jerry Milan Krejzar 1944 -

**Thredbo Alpine Museum Inc.
PO Box 6
THREDBO NSW 2627**

Czech Refugees – starting a new life and coming full circle -

1950

I was born in September 1944 in Bubeneč, Prague, and throughout my life, Zdenka, my mother, would tell me that I was a 'nervous child' because of the bombing of Prague. Indeed, there was one inadvertent bombing by US bombers late in 1944 and two in early 1945; so, she may have had a point! In late 1950 my courageous mother escaped the communist totalitarian dictatorship (the former Czechoslovakia) and fled to Germany, (with a six-year-old kid in tow).

After a twelve-month stint in a Displaced Persons resettlement camp just outside Munich, we left from Rotterdam on the MS Skaubryn, a migrant ship, on the 5th of January 1952 bound for Australia. Her first port of call was Port Said, then through the Suez Canal, the MS Skaubryn continued to Aden and sailed directly to Fremantle, Australia, arriving at her destination in Melbourne on the 7th of February 1952.

From the ship, we were transported straight to another refugee resettlement camp: Bonegilla in Northern Victoria. A few months later, my father (Zdenka's former 1947 divorced husband) drove down from Sydney and sponsored our release. Zdenka and Ricci (my first stepfather) found ground-floor rooms in one of a row of Victorian conjoined two-story terraces on Kings Cross Road, Kings Cross.

In those days, Kings Cross was an exotic melting pot. A seedy and notorious, heady hotspot for European emigres from war torn Europe, drawn to 'The Cross' to forge a new life in their adopted homeland. There were exotic cafes, Polish and Czech delicatessens, Handel's stood out, with an assortment of small goods, pies, sausages, schnitzels, Viennese frankfurters, and black rye bread on offer. Just like in the former homeland, but amongst an Anglo-centric tundra of white Tip-Top bread, meat pies and lamingtons.

Ricci and Zdenka searched for work. Whilst I was unceremoniously plonked into class 2A at Saint Canice's, a Catholic school near home, where at seven I began to speak a bit of English. The strict nuns at the school whacked and wielded their rulers to try to tame this badly spoken, sullen unruly seven-year-old refugee kid. As a lonesome child with busy working parents, acceptance was important, but without a 'voice' and not understanding the culture, it was difficult to fit in. These days, you would describe me as an alienated kid, so I cannot tell you what made me thrash the strings of a classmate's tennis racket.

A girl who shrieked loudly and bawled, and this vile act turned out to be the last straw. So, expelled, I then attended Darlinghurst Public School, straight opposite St Vincent's Hospital. Coming home from school, my regular chore was to restock the refrigerator on the porch outside our terrace with solid blocks of ice. I cherished solitude, until I made one friend, Pesek, the son of Zdenka's friend, a fellow refugee. Pesek initiated me into the intrigues found in the back lanes of the Cross, to make mischief and scurry alongside the canals down by Rushcutters Bay seeking adventure and freedom.

And there was adventure aplenty, intrigue, and fisticuffs. Even brawls at times between rival gangs; usually between the Serbs and Croats. Their post-war political views clashed and often resurfaced. Just around the corner at the Monica Cafe on Darlinghurst Road, Zdenka would socialise with her fellow emigres, laughing and joking about life and past tough times, often with a fag, a Capstan or Lucky Strike smouldering away.



Saint Canice, Class 2A – 1952
Milan Krejzar the sullen kid, 2nd top row, 3rd from right

*Milan Krejzar, Poate Road,
Centennial Park -1953*

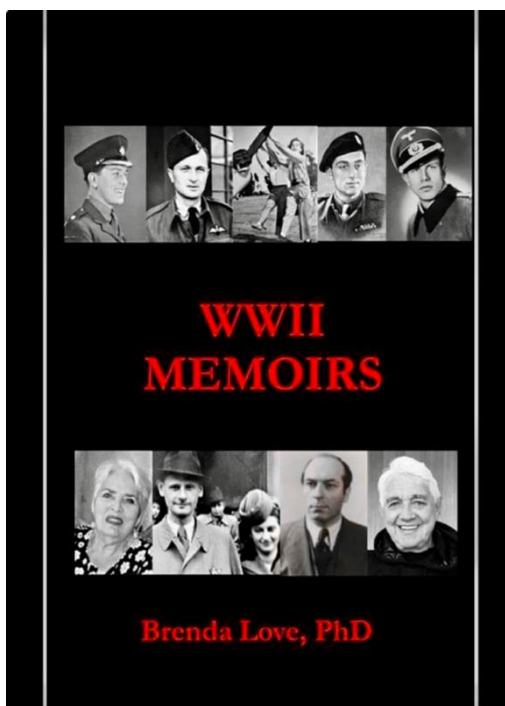
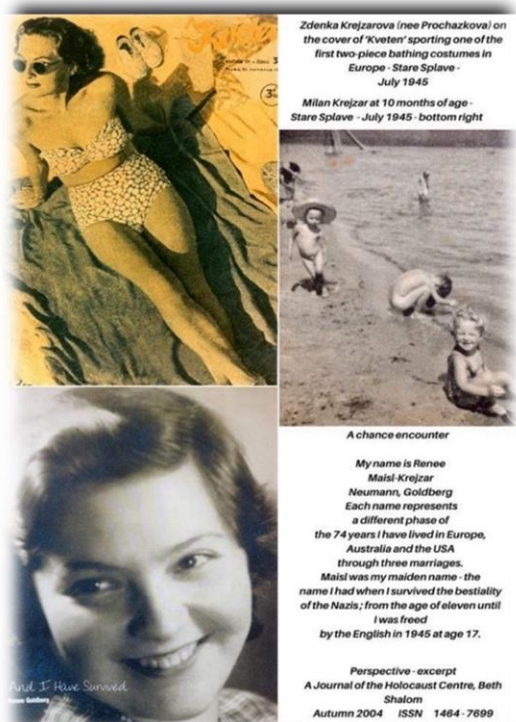


Tentatively a friendship developed with Renee, (my former baby-sitter at Stare Splavy, my father's 3rd wife) and on occasions I was allowed a special treat. To join them for tea or coffee and continental-cakes at Repin's - a fashionable European style cafe in Market Street in the city. And occasionally my father Pepik would treat me to Czech style roast duck served just down the road at the Adria restaurant. I reckoned it was a guilty peace offering of sorts, after having abandoned us back in Prague in 1948.

1954

Aged ten an opportunity to make easy money arose selling newspapers as a paper-boy. So, after school I would brandish and flout the late-edition Mirror paper, on the open-decker red-rattler-trams running on the busy Burton Street line, which in those days trundled straight past St Vincent's Hospital. Leaping from one open section of carriage to another whilst the tram was in motion, would most often ensure a rapid demand for papers. This manoeuvre often yielded the greatest sales-returns, it was a breeze. Then just before 6 o'clock I would hit the crowded pub, to take advantage of the '6 o'clock swill' when 'last drinks' would be announced. That pub in those days was situated on the site of the St Vincent's Hospital's first Casualty department. Long gone. At 6pm on the dot the punters would surge towards the bar to order foaming beer-on-tap, and many had had a few. In their mad scramble, some would often drop shillings and pence to the floor, easy money. And quite a few who bought their last round would buy a paper as well! Afterwards, I would promptly head straight to the local fish-shop for 'fish and chips' wrapped in newspaper which I took a fancy to straight after the work shift. This first opportunistic foray into entrepreneurship was destined to be the precursor: the foundation stone to my world in corporate business, my future.

Once Susan my half-sister was born in 1953, Pepik and Renee enjoyed many happy years together. A calamity hit in 1965 when Susan turned twelve, Renee absconded with her. Fled to New York USA to join Freddie Von Neumann, a Viennese born count and fashion photographer. Pepik was never to see Susan again. My wife Penny and I were skiing in Thredbo on the October long weekend in 1973 when he died, heartbroken at 58.



Renee - [Renee Goldberg - WW2 Memoirs.pdf](#) JMK family - [GOLDBERG Renee Jerry Susan.pdf](#)
(See WW2 Memoirs which is available in the Thredbo Alpine Museum)

Was it luck or mere happen-chance that a 17-year-old Auschwitz survivor (Renee, my half-sister's Susan's mother) just happened to spy a blond-haired infant on the Stare Splave Czechoslovakian holiday lakeshore during her lakeside rehabilitation? The encounter was to predestine my future, as an Australian. Our family history concerning our escape from behind the Czechoslovakian 'iron curtain' is a convoluted one. As this article aims to cover aspects of Thredbo history – should you be interested, please activate the link above: and the relevant chapter in: - Brenda Love's - World War 2 Memoirs (cover above).

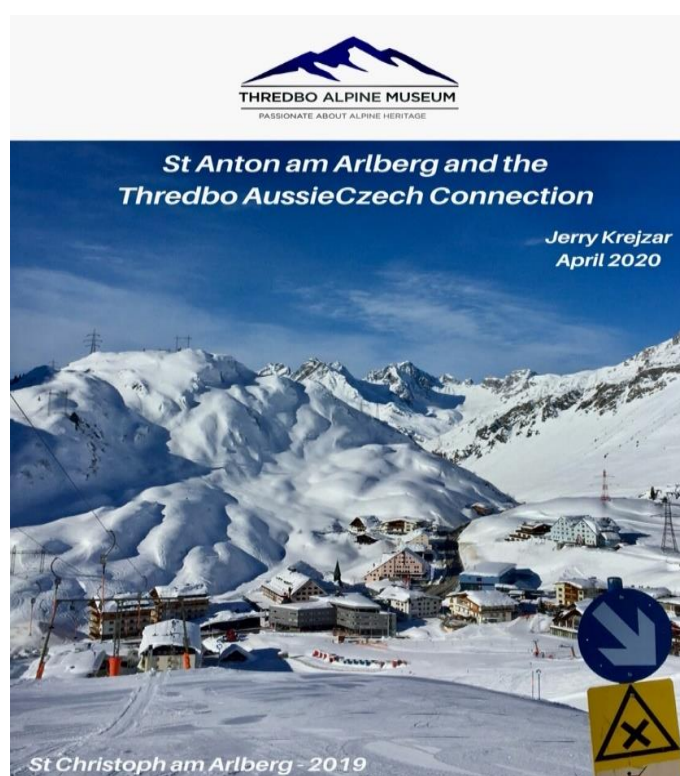
Thredbo - the early years

1958

In December 1958 over the Christmas holidays, released from boarding school (Knox Grammar - Gilmore House), Susan, my half-sister, and I sat in the backseat of Pepik's FX Holden, hurtling down the Hume Highway heading for Thredbo. When I first glimpsed the few lodges in the village, the Post Office situated in the Black Lodge, Leo's Lodge, and a few more, this sullen fourteen-year-old felt a liberating sense of freedom in the wild bush setting, the surrounding mountains, and the glittering, gurgling Thredbo River.

It was not long before a host of Czechs from the Czech émigré community heard about Tony Sponar's involvement in Thredbo's development, so they promptly flocked to Thredbo for summer holidays. Once ensconced there, our family met and befriended like-minded Sydney Czechs drawn like moths to a flame to Crackenback's rounded mountains, similar in topography to those of the Giant Mountains in Bohemia our former homeland.

St. Anton am Arlberg and the Thredbo Aussie/Czech Connection



Oral History Link - [St Anton am Alberg & the Aussie Czech Connection](#)

They came to simply relax, walk, socialise, and fish for trout. The group included the brothers Honza (Jan) and Polda (Leopold) Gilecak, the Pohl family, Borovicka, Behounek, whose daughter was Bozena, and Tonda (Tony) and Anna Ritter. And Stan as well, a Czech waiter. It was rumoured that Stan had lost his thumb after a gun was fired during an intense argument over a hand in a friendly poker game. The Lodge was the place to socialise, whether it was

lunch, dinner, or drinks. Fried trout and schnitzel were the go-to dishes. Tony Sponar charmed and seduced this fourteen-year-old when sitting with us one evening; Tony spun tales about his skiing life and times in St. Anton. Most likely the subconscious basis for the love affair with St. Anton and the Arlberg, a supernatural one, which arose in 1977.

Summer trout fishing at 14

The Gilecak brothers and Behounek were well renowned. Fanatical in fact for their quest - for trout- they would drive throughout the snowies and walk for countless miles to land wily trout. When the trout were fickle an opportunity arose to make some easy money. A mate, David Pohl, (Dr David Pohl honorary consultant to Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Sydney, retired 2025), aged eight, would help me to catch grasshoppers which we two mates would conspire to sell to the brothers and Behounek, at a shilling per matchbox.



THREDBO LODGE – 1958
 by Professor. Stanislavski
 Children: Louise Sponar (red jumper)
 Bozena Behounek (green jumper)
 Dogs: Sponar's Tanya & Mishka, Josie (adopted kangaroo);
 Sasha Nekvapil's Peanuts & Honey;
 Joe Plangger's Senta
 Artist: N.B.G. (No Bloody Good) Painter – Prof. "Stan"
 Professor of Fine Arts, Prague University, Professor "Stan" migrated to Australia following the Russian invasion. Broken physically and emotionally by war and bureaucracy, he painted buildings and murals in Thredbo until the early 1960s. He lived with his dogs, his beer and a bottle of whisky in the carpenter's shop beside The Lodge hotel. This painting used to hang in the bar of The Lodge hotel.
 On loan from Bozena Bertinetti (nee Behounek)

THREDBO BLACK LODGE – 1958.

The painting of The Black Lodge hanging in TAM

Over time a family tradition arose, when we would go to Thredbo at the Christmas and Easter holiday breaks, each year, up until I took up skiing in 1964 – that's when I began to come in winter as well. The Pohl family usually stayed at Alpenrose, and they befriended Brigit, and Ludwig Rabina once they arrived in the village in 1961. Back then Leo Pockl and Behounek were my two trout fishing mentors. When the trout were not biting Leo would drive to the 'Little Thredbo' river, walk upstream, dangle a grasshopper from a high rock-shelf into an inviting looking pond, and bang, would always bring home at least one trout. One summer sitting in Leo's passenger seat, and Leo driving his Holden station wagon down the Alpine Way, tail sliding out on many a dirt corner, we drove to visit the Mitchell's at their beautiful homestead, Towong Hill Station situated in the Murray Valley.

Really it was just a social visit. Apart from Leo, Elyne had many other friends in Thredbo, including Sasha and Karel Nekvapil and Sasha's brother Frank Prihoda.

I was not destined to meet the Mitchell daughters Honor and Indi on that occasion, though some years later we met at Leo's Lodge one winter. When I was busy chasing trout, Susan my half-sister would join Jean Finlayson's horse-riding camp. She soon became quite accomplished at a very tender age.



Leo's Lodge summer late 1950's

In Susan's own words: -

'Well, we used to go to Thredbo.

Right, and you would have been about – when he had that FJ Holden, you would have been about ---

It looks to me like about 18 months to 2 years old.

Well, we first went to Thredbo in 1958 so you would have been a little older than that.
I would have been five.

Well, we were in the same car, so you take it from there. What do you recall about that car and the trip?

Well, I remember that he had to pack the car just his way, and we would leave in the middle of the night so that we would drive at night, and we would not hit Traffic. And he drove like a maniac normally, and I would be wrapped up in my pyjamas, and off we would go to Thredbo and have a nice holiday up there.



*Susan, Renee & Josef Krejzar 1953
Poate Road, Centennial Park, Sydney*

So, we went there, as you would recall, most Easters, holidays in Easter and Christmas, what do you recall about what happened during those times we went there in the summer?

In the summer, I remember learning how to horseback ride. I remember actually going trout fishing with you, which I really didn't like, and I do remember also one time you guys were in the water – and you were all fishing, knee-deep or whatever, and all of a sudden, I remember Mum, Renee, yelling loudly at our father because suddenly a snake was actually coming up on me, and it was a poisonous snake, and she was just yelling at the top of her lungs – you've got to get Susie, get Susie because she's going to get bitten. Miraculously, you know, Tata saved me or something, and I was not bitten by this poisonous snake; so, I remember that.

Do you recall any of the people we socialised with?

Well, we went with, oh God, the guy that had the Mercedes car. His daughter's name was Bozena ---

Behounek.

Behounek, yes, and I remember she was older than I was, and she took me under her wing, spent a lot of time with me, babysat me, and was like a companion to me.

Do you recall when we used to go down to the old lodge for meals?

I do remember going down to the old lodge for meals, and it was always like we had to get dressed and we all had to be well-behaved; and I remember the lodge where we stayed was – Leo's Lodge, so there were bunk beds, and we used to stay in the bunk beds, and there was a swimming pool there, and I actually swam in the freezing water because I had to do my laps because of Ron Casey, even though we were on holiday, I still had to be training.

I am not sure when they got the swimming pool because our first year, we were there would have been 1958 and it might have been years later, but I remember Maria and Leo.

I remember the names.

There were a lot of fun times there.

Yeah, yeah, I mean I only have a few pictures. I remember taking the chairlift up in the summertime and going to the top, and Mom and Dad would really relax in the chairs. I mean I competed up in Thredbo on horseback riding; I went to the stables all the time.

With Jean Finlayson.

Yes, that is right, and I got great ribbons they were long ribbons.

What was the competition?

It was equitation and small jumps at the time, and it was a lot of fun. I mean, it wasn't like that formal kind of horseback riding show there, but I certainly had jodhpurs and my little boots, and there was always some kind of competition I had to be in. I can remember that even when we were not up at Thredbo, I would go riding with Tata in the gardens in Centennial Park; he would ride a white horse, and I would ride some kind of chestnut.

Excerpts from: -

SUSAN FILINGERI (nee Krejzar, nee Von Neumann)

Oral history Link - [Susan Filingeri](#)

Skiing and the Thredbo Ski Patrol **1964**

When did you start skiing

I started skiing in 1964, the year I joined Cartex Pty Ltd, a leading ski importer at the time. John Curtis an emigre from Augsburg had amassed some of the most well-known brands - Tyrolia and Marker bindings, Kneissl and Fischer skis, and Koflach boots, as well as a variety of ski clothing and ski goggles. The firm traded out of 75 King Street, Sydney, where I worked as a sales representative and in a general capacity or dogsbody. My job was to drive the company Chrysler Valiant station wagon in and around the city, dropping off skis and other skiing-related items when stock ran out and checking on stock for reorders. In this way, I became acquainted with the likes of Tommy Tomasi, Paul Reader, Larry Adler, Barry May, and Joe Steiner, as well as fellow ski importers Vince Coles, Bob Jansen, and other colourful characters who populated the ski-industry in those heady early days.

Barry May was a silent partner with Ron Harding. They owned Surf Dive and Ski, a ski and sports store in Manly, and a wetsuit manufacturing business. Barry, together with a ski patrol friend, Bruce Trotter, managed to rent what is known today as Crackenback Cottage from the Berridale farmer Jim Southern - who owned the land. For Barry, this move created an excellent opportunity to patrol every weekend, as the trip to the farm was in part subsidised by low-cost charges for transport and lodging by the hardy skiers who came on the trip each weekend from Manly and the Northern Beaches. Barry introduced a swathe of first-time skiers to the slopes of Thredbo! So, in 1964 as a first-time passenger in Barry's converted Ford truck, full of skiing wannabes, mostly young and female, I joined him on the trip down to Crackenback Farm. No two-lane highways

1969

Finding the accommodation a bit too spartan, Marius Rauch and I would stay at Berghutte Ski Club and later at Leo's Lodge for a season or two until we both joined the Thredbo Ski Patrol. Tommy Tomasi had been pushing me to join for a long time, so in 1969 I took the plunge.

Was patrolling any different in those days?

In those days, there were no radios, and at sweep time at the end of the day, patrollers would try to stay in line and in sight, and shout, and some would yodel. One day in 1969, still a trainee, Danny Collman saw me skiing by at the exit of the catwalk. With a patient already strapped in the Akja, Danny shouted, 'Get on the back!' Before I knew what was happening, we were in a tuck and schuss and in a minute or two appeared at the Medical Centre! Well before TSPA's strict safety procedural Akja handling protocols. In 1970 I was honoured with the 'Patroller of the Year' award.

Where did patrollers stay in those days?

Well, the dormitory in the Valley Terminal had about twelve two-decker bunk beds for the guys, and a small room next door with three bunk beds for the small number of female patrollers. When the three bunks in the female dorm were occupied, Penny would usually bed down just opposite, in the broom cupboard. Tommy Tomasi was renowned for his snoring; sonorous and relentless it was in its pitch. The doors of the dormitory opened out onto a communal breakfast and dining section, which we shared with a mix of Austrian ski instructors. Their rooms were situated at the southern end of Valley Terminal. It was always a rowdy place with jokes and banter at mealtimes, usually with a scramble for the few gas burners at breakfast and dinner time. A melting pot of Aussie and Austrian fare was on offer. Some afternoons, it was fascinating to watch Ferdl Nobl simmer apple together with stale bread and milk in a pot until a pudding-like amalgamation would form the basis of a traditional Austrian meal.



The Newlyweds – Wayside Chapel, Kings Cross, August 8th, 1969

1969 was a watershed year as I married my lifelong partner, Diane (Penny) Kelly, and that winter we honeymooned in Thredbo, in Jerry Kucera's Karoonda apartment.

Can you tell me how patrolling in those days compared to today?

Well let us start with 1971. That particular year, the Patrol Manager was Jerry Shirley from June Mountain in the Sierras, California. Bill Yaouk was his deputy, also from the USA. Jerry was not particularly fond of the volunteers (he thought some were there mainly for the skiing), he wanted to 'professionalize' the patrol by importing professionals from the USA to get rid of the 'Vollie's.' Well Jerry was not aware that George Freuden, who had the support of Wayne Kirkpatrick, the CEO at the time, was a force to be reckoned with, and the coup proved to be a dismal failure. Hugh Smythe, a Canadian pro patroller, was also patrolling on exchange for just one season. A remarkable sight when Hugh, a brilliant technical skier,

would fly out of Crackenback top station 10 meters airborne, hands behind him trailing an akja! On one occasion, Hugh may have saved Bill Yaouk's life.

It was a fine bluebird morning, and Bill and Jerry were jumping to great heights off that season's huge cornice above Merritt's Falls. After one of his jumps, Jerry took off without realising that Bill had fallen,

sprawled in a heap at the bottom of the cornice. When Jerry landed, sporting his newly sharpened Nishizawa skis, he sliced straight through Bill's femoral artery. Hugh turned up with an akja within a minute or two, rapidly applied a tourniquet, and took off in a schuss that would match our Thredbo Downhill's fastest top-to-bottom racers. Hugh made it to the Medical Centre in a couple of minutes, and despite an akja full of blood, Bill survived. Later that year, I bought that very pair of Nishizawa's as Jerry felt the skis were cursed. And the nightlife! In the Schuss Bar, Dennis Waddingham, another Canadian, a ski instructor friend of Hugh's, and Jackie Sergeant, a skiing mate of ours from Canberra, would down fluffy-ducks or brave-bulls: the favoured cocktails in those days. We caught up with Hugh again in May 1973 following a season of pro-patrolling at Kirkwood Meadows, their inaugural season. Hugh kindly granted us free accommodation in a company condominium in Whistler for a week of free skiing (see 1972 to 1974). Many decades later, Hugh became the CEO of Whistler, having instigated the planning and development of Blackcomb; he ended his career as Whistler's President. Dennis Waddingham ended up ski-guiding Pierre Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister of the day. Sometime later, Dennis unfortunately lost a leg in a freak helicopter accident.

The Thredbo Mountain staff not only worked in the village but also lived in the village: this meant the village had a certain vibrancy that has been lost today. Mainly because of the social interaction between 'Vollie's' and the staff - which these days is hard to replicate. A small hardcore of 'Vollie's' put in at least 30 days of patrolling each year and more, driving down on most winter weekends to patrol.

How long were the patrol able to live in Valley Terminal?

In 1971 and 1972 Penny and I were commuting from Canberra to Thredbo every weekend. Our respective companies had seconded us there. Penny worked as an accountant for Cooper Brothers (PricewaterhouseCoopers), and I worked for Roussell Pharmaceuticals. My territory was extensive, covering the Riverina, the NSW South Coast, Cooma, and the Snowies, and included Canberra as well. What a joy it was to call on Dr. John Shedden at his Berridale GP practice during my business travels. John was a genial Scot, a real gentleman who had a great grasp of emergency medicine, loved to trout fish, and excelled in his medical work throughout the Snowies. John was instrumental in setting up and founding the original Thredbo Medical Centre.

A fellow ski patroller, Dr. John Hales, always busy and often on call as a paediatric registrar at Canberra Hospital, had entrusted us with the management of Wombiana Lodge each weekend. John's mother had won a windfall profit from the sale of her Poseidon shares and had purchased Wombiana for John and his brother David. The Victa Lawnmower founder, the original owner, had it built to his exacting and luxurious specifications, heated floors, and all, though it only had sixteen beds. This luxurious and affordable management

arrangement ended in 1972 when John left Australia for Canada to take up practice as a paediatrician.

1972 also saw us off overseas – we set out to see the world.

1972 – 1974 – Kirkwood Meadows, USA, and Europe ‘Rites of Passage’



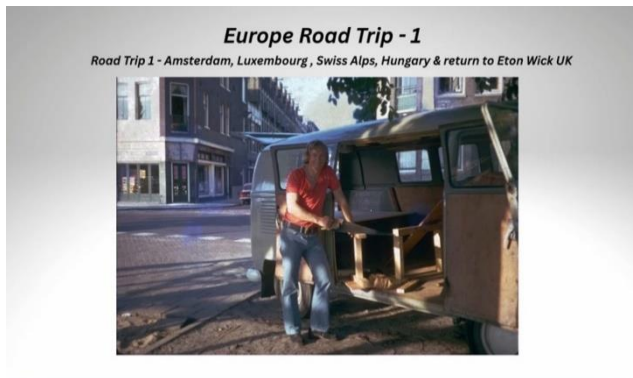
Kirkwood Meadows 1972-1974

Eton Wick, UK, May 1972

Leaving New York sometime in late May of 1972 we flew to London, to the village of Eton Wick situated close to Windsor Castle in the United Kingdom. Peter Caney, Penny's work colleague from Cooper Brothers back in Sydney, had been appointed a director at Leyland Brothers. Peter graciously allowed us to use a spare room in his townhouse as our European base for our travels.

A pictorial journal of our grand 18-month escape from the corporate world - the four European road trips.

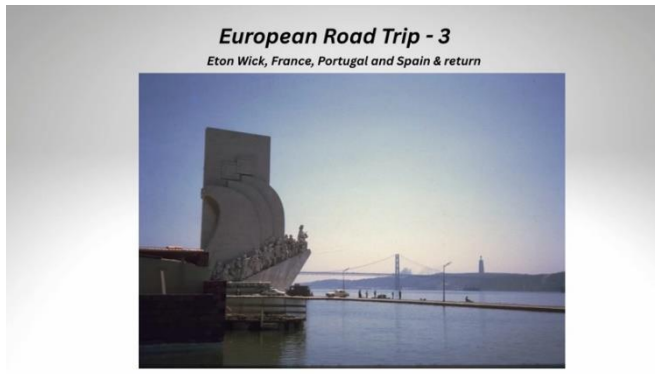
Once they were young (and adventurous)



[Europe Road Trip #1](#)



[Europe Road Trip #2](#)



[Europe Road Trip #3](#)



[Europe Road Trip #4](#)



L to R – Jerry Krejzar, George Freuden, The NSW Hon. Minister for Lands, Thomas Lewis, Tommy Tomasi, Bruce Trotter, Paul Abeles, Ludwig Rabina, Peter Jeffery, and George Weiss - Crackenback Top Station -Thredbo 1970's

1974 to 1983 – TSPA and the Rainbow Years

Once we returned from our overseas stint, we moved back to Valley Terminal. When the company closed the dorm in the late 1970's we moved in with fellow patrollers to the spartan confines of Rainbow Lodge.

History of Rainbow.

31st September 2024 - Interview

A visit to Peter and Anne Jeffery's home - 76 Boundary Road, Cowra.

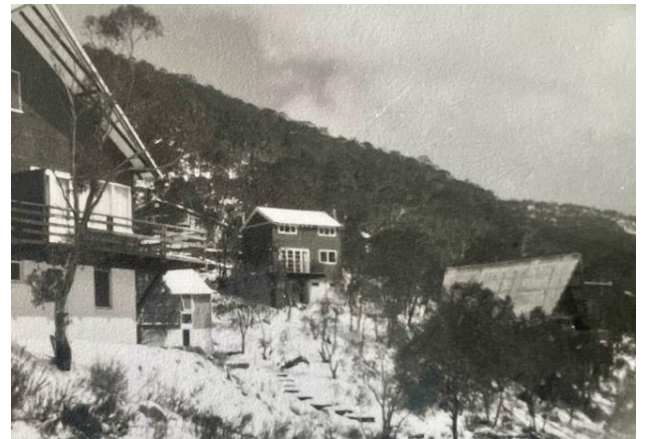
Anne and Peter, will you allow this Oral History to be included in my memoir and for Thredbo Alpine Museum to own the rights to share with the public?

Yes, and yes

When and why was Rainbow built and by whom?

Anne

Tony and Quinton Stanham built it, in I think in 57 and we skied in 58, or it was built in 56 and we skied in 57. I just cannot work out which. And the idea was that you had to be a club lodge, and to be a member of Rainbow you had to be a non-skier. The family created it, and you could go there in summer and fish - and the family had it for winter.



***Rainbow Lodge – 1970's
(Jeffery family collection)***

Who were the patrollers that banded together and stayed there, and for how long?

Anne

There were usually 6 x people - so PJ and Annie, the Duval's, (Peter, Geraldine, Emma, Camille & Elke), you, (Jerry & Penny Krejzar), Robyn Dyke, Paul Abeles and Ken Bartle, no Ken was after Paul I think, and Juan. Certainly, I remember one day returning from skiing and the place had been turned over.

So, what were the years all of us stayed there.

Ann

You said 74 to 83. We got together in 76 so it would have been 77.

I thought it was when we were chucked out of the dormitory at Valley Terminal.

Anne

They moved us from one end to the other end, and we did not like the other end.



***Robin Dyke & Peter Jeffery - 1978
(Jeffery family collection)***

So, you reckon 76, well we then left in 83 because we then bought into Happy Jacks with Robyn Dyke and Jane Coleman.

Anne

Robyn came in because of Peter and they could stay there if Peter were not - we only had 6 x beds but often we slept 8 or 10

Over those years the Patrol went through a period of upheaval, as Tony Weaver, the first locally appointed Pro Patrol Manager was learning on the job. Were the 'Rainbow Patrollers' virtually running on-mountain operations in those days?

Peter

I recall meeting with Tony on Saturday to discuss the events that happened over the weekend.

No, it was before that when there was a fractious period.....

Anne

The Canadians were gone by then - the Americans and Canadians started in '71..... they were there in '71, 72, possibly '73... and that might be why Tony was floundering, as he wasn't quite ready; he had just gotten through volunteer patrol, and he was probably appointed by the company to give him a year-round job.

Peter

I remember we used to draft his reports; I personally did not, but George did.

Because he was inexperienced, he did not know how to manage people, and that all hit the fan simply because he was new to management.

Peter, which years did you captain the patrol?

Peter

We didn't have probationers in those days, but I came in and used to help Adrian Studley in the office.

Anne

You might have been captain in 1974 because you were patroller of the year. (The TSPA records show '79, 80 & 81).

Peter, were you the captain of the patrol at the time when the first of the Canadian exchange patrollers arrived? How did the induction to our local operations compare to Canadian ones?

Anne

It was 1975. We learned a lot from the Canadians, and they learned a lot from us.



***Building Boali, Thredbo – 1980's
(Jeffery family collection)***

When and why did we all have to vacate?

Anne

85. I have some photos of it (Rainbow) being pulled down.

We vacated in '83 because that is the year we bought into Happy Jacks with Robin Dyke and Jane Coleman.

Any other points of interest to raise?

Peter

There was an enormous difference in what we knew at once then and what we ended up knowing in later years. We were no better than a basic St. John's.

Anne

We were better than a basic St. John's, but that is what we did until Nick came along (Dr Nick Crombie).



***Tony Weaver & Peter Jeffery - 1978
(Jeffery family collection)***

But that started to come about in the Freuden years when Steve Breathour came along - he was a trainee at the time.

Anne

It was 86 - he used to come along to the Medical Centre and check out the files.

I thought ASPA was way before then.

Anne

it was, it was Nick Crombie and John Zelcer who were involved in the first book.

Anne and Peter, thanks for all that; it was great to catch up.

Happy Jacks history – built in 1965.

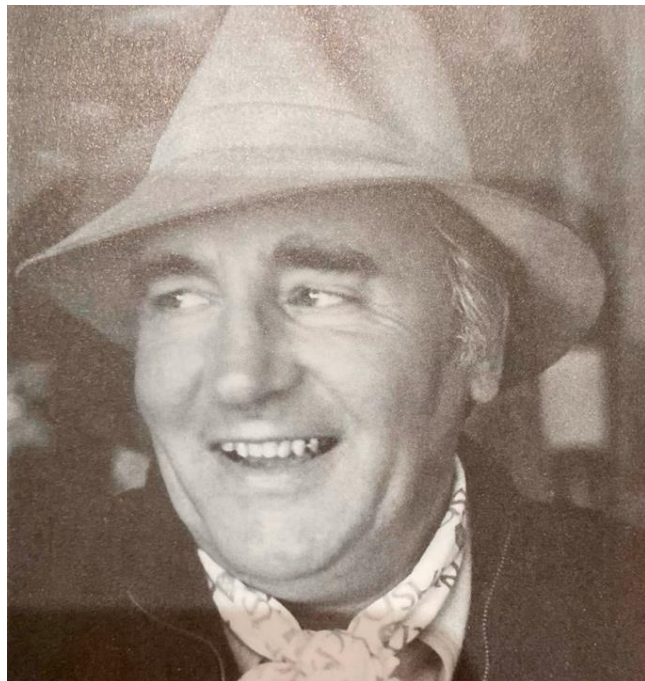
Pharmaceutical Industry Executive - 1969 to 2000

(Please refer to LinkedIn business profile).

[Jerry Krejzar - LinkedIn Profile](#)

I first met Peter Pickup in 1975 when working my way up the corporate ladder at Protea Pharmaceuticals. Peter was the export manager responsible for Southeast Asia. In 1982 Fisons Pharmaceuticals bought Protea, and ironically in 1990 many years later, I was promoted to the position Peter had previously held, as, the Fisons Pharmaceuticals export manager

***Peter Pickup – Thredbo
1970's
Peter Pickup's vast
collection of headgear never
failed to interest his Thredbo
friends. Peter bought hats as
souvenirs of his
widespread travels.
(Paul Reader)***



Throughout the 70's Peter had acquired a flamboyant 'man about town' vibe, often a glass of champagne or chardonnay on hand, an established Thredbo character, a real 'personality.' Generous to a fault, we would socialise after work at times, and when away on export business, Peter would generously let us stay in unit no7.

In the early 80's with his real estate investments in Noosa (together with other Thredbo identities), the 'bottom of the harbour' crash came along, and Peter was forced to sell. The timing was fortunate for us, as we could no longer stay at Rainbow, so together the four of us (Robin Dyke and Jane Coleman), bought Peter's unit at a very favourable price.

Considering no7 was just a studio, with sleeping arrangements in a double bed above the living room, the four of us made do and shared a lot of laughs and fun times together over eleven years. We would do weekends about, but when the snow really dumped, Robin and Jane would drive down and bunk down on the floor. In May 1994 we bought Robin and Jane's shareholding as KT hired Robin for consultancy architectural work, and 'The Cabins' were Robin's first development project: building lower-cost apartments in the village; his

inspiration was based on the fit-out in Happy Jacks. We declined Robin and Jane's kind offer of a half share in a cabin, which came about after Robin's work on the development.

Hilary Freuden coffee meeting, 4th April 2025, Double Bay, Sydney.

Great to catch up, Hilary. Thanks for your kind contribution to my OH about Happy Jacks' history and for allowing your story to be shared with TAM.

I have already mentioned that we occasionally stayed in apartment no7 prior to 1983 - because of my friendship with Peter Pickup. When we bought our shareholding in 1983 from Peter, together with Robin Dyke and Jane Coleman, the main shareholders were Joanne Jackson, Arnold Glass, Barry May, George Weiss, Louis Hopfau, and yourselves, the Freuden's. At the time, Happy Jacks was one of the few company titles in the village and still is to this day.



***George & Hilary, Thredbo -1980's.
(Freuden family collection)***

Happy Jacks was built by John Aho in 1965 and a number of these were some of the original shareholders. Can you tell me when you bought your share? What do you remember about the other shareholders before we came along

Right, well, we bought our share in '65 along with the original group. We were approached by John Aho, asking if we wanted to join in; very excitedly, we said yes. So, George (Freuden) and George Weiss bought and shared unit no2, and we were very excited about that. Arnold Glass had unit no1, he had a car sales business on Paramatta Road and was a lot of fun. And unit no3 was Allan Penay, who played the piano in the Piano Bar at the hotel for three years and he was an excellent pianist. A lady called Heli Sauer had unit no4. I do not remember much about her, but she was not there for very long, and I do not really remember to whom she sold to at the time. Norman and Jocelyn McLeod were in unit no6 with a little boy Rory, and the daughter was Dell. It was a very 'clubby' atmosphere, and being so small, it was very cozy, so everything had to be ship-shape and always put away.

What about Louis Hupfau, when did he come along?

He came along after Arnold moved to Monaco, and he bought from John Aho who was downstairs for a while, unit no9. And there was Peter Pickup in no7 who shared with his brother Roger.

Yes, Peter used to generously let us stay in his unit prior to our purchase in 1983 with Robin Dyke and Jane Coleman.

So, moving along, in the 1980's none of us were invited to Louis's (the Austrian Consul) poker games downstairs apart from Heinzl (Reichinger).

There was Bernti, from Bernti's lodge, and several Austrian ski instructors.

Of the nine units, Barry May was one of the original shareholders in no4, and thus we were four ski patrol families in those days, which meant we were one big family, wouldn't you agree?

***Naomi & David Freuden –
Thredbo 1980's
(Freuden family collection)***



Yes, yes, and they talked a lot of shop with alcoholic beverages to keep them happy! (Both laugh).

Your kids, Daniel, David, and Naomi, made many friends with the locals, friendships that endure to this day.

You could even look at Trish's and Bernti's daughters, Natasha, and Christina, now in St. Anton, still friendly with them and the Reichinger boys. There is a whole string of them, all originally village kids' friends to this day. There are really a lot of good friendships there.

Well, what else would you like to say?

When we bought no3.

Back in 1971 my George and George Weiss were going to do ski patrolling on that June long weekend, and the Weiss family and the Freuden family only had unit no2 at that time, which would have been overcrowded if we all went on that long weekend.



***Daniel Freuden –
1980's.
(Freuden family collection)***

So, the two Georges said to us girls, "See you later, we are off to the opening of the mountain."

We were a bit pissed off about this, so we decided to try to rent out no3 from Allan Penay if it was available. So, I phoned Allan and asked if it was available, and he said, "Sure, not a problem." Before finishing our conversation, I said, "Allan, would you be interested in selling your unit?" And he surprisingly said, 'yes' because he was going to move to Sun Valley because he got a job playing piano in the hotel there. So, we bought Allan's unit, and the Freuden's had no3 and the Weiss's had no2 and we put in an adjoining door so that we could go through to each other's apartments if we needed to. And it worked out very well; we had many many happy years there, and that is all I can say.

Well, that was 1971, and then you stayed on until?

As the children grew, the size of their boots and the size of their clothes made it very difficult, and the number of skis we had made it very difficult for us to stay there, so we thought we wanted to move to somewhere larger. So, we moved to Ironmongie down in Riverview Terrace, Woodridge.

Well Hilary, thank you very much for sharing this history in my memoir and allowing us to share it with the Thredbo Alpine Museum.

It has been my pleasure.

Skiing and the Thredbo Ski Patrol (continued) - 1975 to 1994

1975

Death in Thredbo – 26th July 1975

It was around sweep-time at Merritt's on the 26th of July 1975 which saw me on duty as the Area Leader for Merritt's. I was standing stock still on my skis about two hundred yards from the top of Merritt's Spur, overseeing the sweep. Our Merritt's patrollers were sweeping the mountain, checking for stragglers when patrol base radioed in a missing girl. She had not returned to her bus tour group. Standard practice in such circumstances is to send two patrollers along the area boundary rope line to look for tracks or, hopefully, to find the missing person. It turned out that the two patrollers sent along Stanley's Gorge rope line indeed had found tracks leading down the steep gorge. Shouting out produced no response. It was getting dark, so base operations decided that our patrollers complete the sweep, return to the bottom, and join a search party with the essential and appropriate equipment which included headlamps. Ludwig Rabina, the Mountain Manager oversaw the search from the Valley Terminal. Our search party consisted of about ten patrollers who made our way down Stanley's Gorge down to the bottom of the valley. The girl, disoriented by that stage, in the first stages of hypothermia, would have presumed that the best way was to go downhill. Unfortunately, on the wrong side, outside the area boundary. Our search party, most of whom were on 200cm skis, cranked slow turns following her tracks through the trees and undergrowth to the bottom of the gorge, to the creek bed. Where her body was found. She had taken off her skis and boots, fell through a snow bridge in the creek, and couldn't get out. Andy Tupalski found her body and had to plod through the snow cover and wade in the water to get her out. Always carrying a bowie knife, he and Bruce Trotter strapped her body to a sapling gumtree, and our search party struggled with her body through the undergrowth alongside the river. All of us were dog-tired, reaching the village around one am in the morning. Later we found out that she was epileptic. A tragic misadventure.

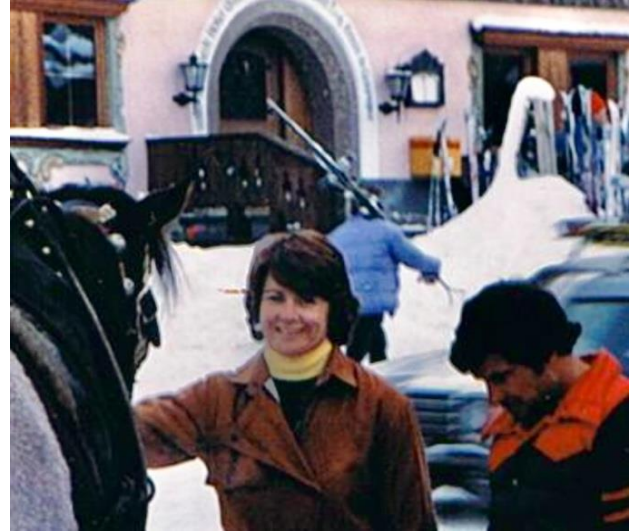
1983

In 1983 the year we bought a shareholding in Happy Jacks, our friend and neighbour and fellow patroller George Freuden, had organised another FIPS Congress in Meribel, in the European winter of that year. George, together with Canadian patroller Mark Labow, founded FIPS (*Federation Internationale Patrolle de Ski*) back in 1979. And to ensure that Thredbo was well represented, he strong-armed quite a few Thredbo patrollers to attend. Having gained some experience in St. Anton over a couple of seasons, we persuaded a few fellow patrollers to join us for a week of skiing there, once the FIPS Congress officially closed. There was Marius Rauch, Gerry and Peter Duval, Tony Weaver, Vic Dalziel, and Tommy Tomasi: although Tommy had to leave after just a few days, needing to meet up

with his tour group in Zurs. Soon a standing joke spread among us about the 'wog Austrian food' Tony and Vic would not touch, in favour of chips with tomato sauce!



***Jerry & Penny Krejzar, Marius Rauch,
Geraldine Duval & Tommy Tomasi.
Zug am Arlberg, 1983***



***Penny Krejzar & Tony Weaver
Lech am Arlberg, 1983***

1985 to 2022 – Penny Krejzar - 37 years' service as Happy Jack's, Company Secretary

In 1985 Penny Krejzar took on the role of company secretary for Happy Jacks, which she held for thirty-seven years until 2022. Penny had previously held the position of honorary treasurer for the Thredbo Ski Patrol Association from 1979 to 1985.

Penny's long-standing experience as a company accountant made neither role too onerous. Although extracting the KT company bed levies from our neighbours, Happy Jacks shareholders, with certainty and on time was often the most onerous and perplexing task she faced.

A review of the Thredbo Ski Patrol 60th anniversary

TSPA – 60th year - 2018



[Thredbo Ski Patrol Association - 60th Anniversary](#)

Two decades of patrolling – JK retired in 1991

I retired from TSPA (Thredbo Ski Patrol Association) in 1991 after patrolling for twenty winters. Though I was not done with Thredbo just yet, in 1995 I joined the Thredbo Historical Society.

TAM - (Thredbo Alpine Museum)

Over the years my interest in 'alpine history' had grown, so in 2008 I took up the position of an interviewer of Oral History - George Freuden was my first subject. And in 2014 I worked on a companion brand for the Thredbo Historical Society, 'Friends of Thredbo' (previously known as 'The Thredbo Ski Museum'), however the brand was not to last for too long. In 2017 the year I joined the committee, the committee felt that it was timely and imperative to interview, record, and document the first generation of key 'Thredbo Legends'. So, the position of 'Oral History Manager' was created to undertake this work. As the first incumbent, and heading up a small team of interviewers, I was tasked in selecting Thredbo's most important pioneers and legends and to record their interviews for posterity. Currently, there stands thirty-five completed oral histories at TAM to date, and I was pleased to have contributed with twelve of these. Including articles about TSPA (Thredbo Ski Patrol Association), various Alpine History articles, and Newsletters to do with Czech Legends. Currently, I remain on the committee for 'Faces of Thredbo' and projects to do with Czech Affairs.

Coming Full Circle

What a blessed wild ride we both have shared. We are so fortunate to have experienced living in two separate cultures: two stable democracies with some of the most socially advanced living standards in the world. Mind you, far from the case when we arrived in Prague in 1986 for the first time. We saw a cheerless dismal scene, with miserable people. It was a bleak, grey, soulless communist Czechoslovakia. It was nothing like the vibrant prosperous country we saw transformed. The weight of history always lingered. The cobblestone streets whispering stories of perseverance, and the quiet dignity of a people who endured and rebuilt. Unquestionably, my life was made much easier through the sacrifices made by my parents, as first-generation immigrants. Arriving in a new land with nothing and securing our future, creating a feeling of belonging yet knowing there was always another world beyond. Having come full circle in quiet moments of reflection, I have often found myself torn between the two - Czechia and Australia are a blend of nostalgia, resilience, and gratitude. Somewhere along the way, the tug of both places became a part of you - neither one fully able to claim you, yet both deeply etched in your heart and soul.

Jerry Milan Krejzar 2025

Postscript - 2026

Final Thoughts to "Coming Full Circle" - 2026



Year-end 2025 saw us pilgrimage to the 'Bonegilla Migrant Experience' to connect and commemorate our family's internment: 8th February 1952. The Bonegilla Migrant Experience was set up in December 2007, Bonegilla Migrant Reception and Training Centre - Block 19 was recognised as a place with powerful connections for many people in Australia and a symbol of post-war migration which transformed Australia's economy, society and culture under the National Heritage List. Following the tour of the refurbished barracks, memorial sculptures, and memorial wall, we concluded that the facility truly portrays the living conditions we and our early migrants faced, and the history displayed within, is an excellent example.

In January 2026, we reached a milestone. Forty seasons skiing in St Anton and the Arlberg, and Penny decided it was time to hang up the skis and boots and retire. Penny listed several personal reasons, the increasing numbers of skiers and the likelihood of injury caused by out-of-control skiers, one of the main ones. Our gracious hosts Marcella and Herbert Rofner, through the auspices of the St Anton Tourism Bureau, presented us with a plaque to mark the closing of a chapter. Personally, I wish to reach fifty seasons or thereabouts. Hopefully!



As I reflect on the chronicled journey in "Coming Full Circle," whether as fellow travelers or as quiet observers, I offer my gratitude. In drawing this circle to a close, I realize how much of the journey was about my sense of self, in rediscovering the values, relationships, and aspirations that were always present, waiting to be acknowledged with greater clarity. With lessons learned along the way - about resilience, forgiveness, and the power of hope. Thank you for sharing this journey. The story continues, ever unfolding.