



**Johannes Wilhelmus Theodorus Janssens**

**Een Ongekend Leven  
A Life Untold**



What are the names of your brothers and sisters? Whom did you spend the most of your time when growing up?

Their names from eldest to youngest:

1. Adrij – who is six years older than myself
2. Wim
3. Jo
4. Miems
5. Then me
6. Theo
7. Antony – the youngest.

I spent most of my time with my sisters Jo and Miems. They taught me how to sew, knit and darn socks amongst other things.

What were you like as a small child?

I was wild, always on the go.

What is the most pleasant memory from your childhood?

There are many: St Nicklaus, birthdays, school holidays, boy scouts, camping.

What sort of games did you play when growing up? What time did you need to be home?

We played games outside (weather permitting), hide and seek, a whole raft of typical Dutch street games, ball games etc. I used to play hockey, swimming and bike riding. We also used to play games inside the house mainly board games such as monopoly and puzzles. We always had to be home before dark and even as a teenager I was allowed to come home after dark but had to be home by 10pm.

What type of books did you read as a child?

My father or mother rarely read to us as they were very busy bringing up seven children. As a child I was a ferocious reader; I used to read hour-after-hour-after-hour to the point where my father told me to stop reading. The reason he gave was that you lose all your brains by too much reading.

What sort of songs did you sing during your youth?

The songs we sang were provincial songs, folk songs and popular songs. In the final year of primary school, the headmaster, a Christian brother, tested my singing ability and came to the conclusion that I could not carry a tune and that was the total extent of my musical career.

What were the most important events in the world when you were young?

The start of the war; the war years themselves and the liberation. We were liberated by the 101st parachute division of the American army who handed over the occupation of our town to the English 2-3 days after they landed.

What sort of work did your mother and father do?

My mother worked at home. She did most of the sewing, cooking, etc. with the assistance of my sisters.

My father was a police officer, part of the city police force. Prior to becoming a police officer, my father was a foreman of a leatherworks factory in the village where he grew up in Oosterhout. By all appearances he was very happy in his work there but was persuaded by my grandfather and mother to try and get into the police force in Eindhoven, which was then a fast growing city in the south of Holland where the Philips Industries had started. My father did enter the police force and completed further studies during his working life and finished up with the rank of Police Inspector, to the best of my knowledge.

What is the most pleasant memory of your father?

Working together with him and that about sums it up. When we worked together we got on extremely well but at other times it was a disciplinarian to a child.

What is the most pleasant memory of your mother?

Her spoiling me and teaching me things such as cooking or making things with wood.

## Growing up in Eindhoven



### Describe a typical day.

A typical day in our family was breakfast, going to school, coming home for lunch and returning to school again in the afternoon. We had a hot dinner in the middle of the day. Breakfast and dinner in the evening was mainly bread, etc. Each family member had a number of tasks. I remember, I used to have to bring in the coals to keep the fire going in the lounge and kitchen. I used to have to chop wood. I was always nominated to do whatever repairs were required in the house and was often sent to the shops to buy groceries.

### Was your family religious? How often did you go to church?

We were brought up as very strict Catholics, which meant attending church every Sunday and frequently we had mass during the week or devotion in the evening after dinner. I found it extremely difficult to adhere to the dictate of the Catholic church. Their influence was very oppressive and ruled our lives totally until I left for Australia.

### What was your favourite meal in the past?

I have always had a healthy appetite. The meals my mother prepared were restricted to what we could afford to buy but it was generally fresh food that was in season. Many of the meals were vegetarian and also fish played a large part in our diet. The Sunday dinner was always a family meal in the middle of the day and it was always the most pleasant meal of the week.

### What was the best day of the week?

Sunday was the best day of the week because I didn't have to go to school. I never liked going to school until after I started work and learnt subjects which I have mentioned in other parts of this story.

### Did your father participate as much in your upbringing as your mother?

My answer is yes mainly from a disciplinary point of view.

### What are the most important lessons in life which were taught by your parents?

Self discipline, performing your duties, assist your family and family members and other people and cleanliness.

### What was particularly pleasant in your household? Which memory still brings a smile to your face?

My father could tell good jokes and I still remember some of them. Also, the family get-togethers such as going for long walks on Sunday afternoons. The things we did together as a family are some of the most pleasant memories of my youth.

### What was your house like?

Our first house was a council house in part of the city with all the same style houses built in rows. We lived in a corner house and I shared my bedroom with my eldest brother. In 1943, we moved to a large three story house which had five bedrooms and a big attic area in a better part of the city than where we lived before. 1943 was during the war. The house we moved into had previously been occupied by a Jewish family. My father was very loathe to move to the new premises because of what ramifications might ensue after the war. My mother looked into the situation and found out that a second cousin of hers owned the house we were planning to rent so she went to see him and came to an agreement as to what would happen after the war.

### What are the nicest memories about your grandfather and grandmother?

I had two grandfathers and two grandmothers. I never met my father's mother and only met my mother's mother once. I knew both my grandfathers but not very well as they both lived in the village of Oosterhout and travel in those days was costly and we rarely met up with them.

### Was being part of a family important to you?

Yes. As a child you don't know any better.

Did you have family get-togethers? What did you discuss?

No specific meetings were ever scheduled but we were always together during mealtimes. We used to discuss all subjects – sex or matters such as that were never raised.

Did you have a favourite in the family?

My sister Jo was my favourite by a long shot as she assisted my mother in bringing me up and spent a great deal of time with me and was always patient.



How was your birthday celebrated in the past?

It meant we could choose the meal for the day. We used to get small presents.

How did you celebrate Christmas and New Year?

Christmas and New Year were both family festivities. We used to attend night mass on Christmas morning and had a big family breakfast. The house was decorated with a Christmas tree and other parts of the house were also decorated.

Did you ever go out for dinner to a restaurant as a family?

No, we never went to dinner as a family. However, on our afternoon walks we used to take our food with us and eat it in the park or wherever we were.

What did you do at home in the evenings?

Most of my time was spent on study, reading and family games.

Reflecting upon your past, what are the nicest memories during your growing up period?

Being spoilt by my mother.

What age were you when you started formal schooling?

I was five and half years old.

What was the name of the school and how did you get there?

I went to a Christian Brothers school called St Paulis. I always walked to school, which was about 15 minutes from home. At lunch time, there was a two hour break for lunch and I always walked home during that period as the main meal of the day was at midday. When I was still very young my sisters used to take me to school.

How many children were there in each classroom on average?

About 42.

Who were your friends? Do you still have contact with any of them?

Toontje Shoenmakers and Piet Van Tuil – I lost contact with both of those a long time ago. Jos Bots is still my friend although we did not go to the same school we were friends from about age 13 to the present day, and we still meet on a weekly basis.

How was the decision made as to which school you would be enrolled in?

The selection of the school was determined by the location where you lived and the second criteria was, as catholics, it had to be a catholic school.

What was the nicest part of your to school.

Did you have a favourite teacher? Were you compelled to address the teacher formally?

I did not enjoy school at all. I don't recall having any favourite teachers. I do recall, though, having to address the teachers formally.

**What subjects were you taught which are not part of the curriculum now?**

A great deal of time was spent on teaching the catholic doctrine. This would average up to 2-3 hours per week.

**Did you ever make school trips?**

No – this never happened in those days. The government paid for most of my education except the later studies I did in accounting, commercial English and other private studies.

**What sort of music did you listen to when you were growing up?**

It was opera music, generally on the radio. The records we had at home were principally opera music.

**Did you ever go to a concert?**

Yes, we occasionally attended the Philips Performance Centre in Eindhoven

**If you think about the present, what do you think is particularly nice about growing up now?**

The freedom we have; the financial situation where we can afford to buy whatever is needed for the children, the grandchildren, and ourselves. There is money available for travel.

During my younger days, the main problems were the lack of money as we used to be short of many things, particularly compared to the present. However, most families were in the same situation. I have learned that my father's salary at the time was double the amount that most people in our area earned but because of the size of our family, there were severe restrictions on expenditure. The shortage of money caused frequent friction between my father and mother.



I attended the local primary school in our suburb of Woensel run by the Christian Brothers between mid 1936 – mid 1942. The school was known by the name of St Paulus. School hours in those days were from 9:00-12:00 in the morning and then from 2:00-4:00 in the afternoon. We all had our main meal in the middle of the day so I walked from school to home for lunch and then back during the two hour break. The school was approximately 1½ hours away and winter was particularly difficult as I used to suffer with the cold as the quality of our clothing was not up to the standard that clothing is today.

I found primary school very boring and reflect upon it as great waste of time mainly because of the way the education was structured. I can recall sitting waiting for each student in turn read out loud. As many had trouble reading, you could wait up to two hours listening to others trying to read before your turn. Religious instruction also made up a vast amount of time at primary school. Discipline was extremely strict as you were not allowed to talk, had to sit up straight and were discouraged from expressing your opinion or encouraged to develop in any way.

I attended high school from mid-1942 to mid-1946 and undertook the following subjects: languages (Dutch, French, German and English), religion, geography and history. Chemistry was not taught at that time. A lot of schooling was missed as the war disrupted normal schooling. In fact, for almost a whole year we only attended school for half days. When I completed high school, my standard was equivalent to the, then, intermediate standard in Australia.

Following high school, I attended commercial school between mid-1946 and mid-1948. The commercial school was a night school, similar to TAFE, where I attended for two evenings per week. The subjects were commercially oriented, consisting of bookkeeping, commercial arithmetic, economics and social laws relating to employment. I was taught how to set up and run a business. I undertook an elective of commercial English.

For the first year I attended, one night per week was for bookkeeping and I completed a Diploma in Bookkeeping. The second year of commercial school, one night per week was for commercial English. During the day I worked in an office of a building company commencing as a junior. During my second year at commercial school, I worked for an engineering company in the office.

At this stage, my level of education was somewhat equivalent to the HSC but with a defined commercial focus.

In mid 1948, I commenced at Philips Industries in Eindhoven and attended their technical college. The subjects taught were science, higher mathematics, electrical engineering, some mechanical engineering and circuit design. The course was principally theory with practical experience gained working for a number years in the x-ray department, with my final year in the light group. At the completion of these studies, it was more advanced than an apprenticeship. For example, it was not about electrical wiring of a house – however, I did subsequently learn this in Australia.

I also undertook further electrical engineering study in Australia in 1954 by correspondence, involving the powerhouse installations and main electrical supply lines.

I joined the British Tabulating Company (now ICL), a data processing company, now referred to as IT. During my employment, I undertook a five months full time education course in Melbourne learning how to install and maintain what was then called punchcard equipment. These machines had a simple form of programming using electrical wires plugged into a plug board.

When I was still with ICL, the first electronic data processing machines were imported into Australia and I undertook an education course in the maintenance and programming of these machines. This equipment was the forerunner of the present day computers with the main distinction being both have a stored program.

From 1963-1968 I worked for a market research company called The Survey Research Centre where I learned statistics, analysis, sampling techniques and questionnaire design. I also took private studies in psychology, principally as it formed a part of the market research work.

I completed an IQ test at the University of NSW gaining a score of 138 and the psychologist told me that as English was not my first language, he would have expected a higher score if English was my first language. I was personally very surprised at this score and I decided to look at the Mensa test but quickly realised that that was outside my reach!

In 1968 I completed my first programming course with the Bendix Corporation. This American company was the first to import a stored program computer into Australia. Programming was then made in machine language that was extremely difficult and

tedious. Over the next ten years, I undertook programming courses in IBM Assembler, Fortran, Cobal and PL1 as well as other courses in IT networking, systems analysis, IT management, project management and staff management.

During the period of working with Grace Bros as IT Manager, I averaged three courses in length of 1-3 weeks per year.

### OTHER SKILLS ACQUIRED

Out of necessity, I learned to repair cars. This was a required skill in those days otherwise you could not afford to own a car. This subsequently became one of my main hobbies in life, to the bane of Toos. I also learned carpentry from working for Jan Adema as well as learning from building our first house in North Balgowlah. Later, I took cooking courses at Manly High in Italian and, a few months later, Moroccan cooking. I also learnt about share trading in the stockmarket.





When I applied to immigrate to Australia in early 1951, I had planned to travel with Robert Soepnel. We first applied for entry to the USA but their quota was full. We discussed Canada or Africa but I did not want to go to Canada as I never particularly liked the cold weather. Africa did not suit as I was aware of the racial problems. We then considered both Australia and New Zealand and we applied for New Zealand. Unfortunately, whilst I was accepted for New Zealand, Robert was not accepted as his medical history with his military service was made available to the New Zealand authorities. We then applied for Australia and, again, I was accepted but Robert was not accepted. It was then that I decided to travel on my own. I was twenty years of age.

It should be noted that Robert subsequently applied two years later for New Zealand and was accepted and he then immigrated to New Zealand.

One reason why I wanted to emigrate was that I felt the future in Holland did not seem bright at all but, looking back, the main reason was that I wanted to get away from home as there were not many possibilities of leaving home in those days.

It was on 18 October 1951 that I was notified of my scheduled flight to Australia on 26 October 1951. At that time I was working at Philips Industries and I had just finished technical college with a major in electrical engineering. It was quite a rush to get things organised as I only had ten days notice. In

those days, it was generally accepted that people who emigrated from the Netherlands would never return.

I left on 26 October 1951 on a KLM charter flight – a Constellation, a four engine propeller plane. The plane carried about 90 passengers and whilst some of the passengers were young married couples with children, the majority of passengers were predominately single men. The first section of the flight left Amsterdam for Cyprus, which was the longest distance they could fly in those days. The winter had already commenced in Holland when we left and we arrived in Cyprus late in the evening to a balmy tropical evening. We were accommodated in hotels, two to a room. We spent the night and all of the next day in Cyprus as the crew required their stipulated rest period – we had the same crew all the way to Australia.

The next afternoon, we left Cyprus for Bombay with a stop in the Arabian Gulf at an American army base airport in Dahrán for refueling,

When we arrived in Bangkok and were accommodated in five star hotel and the thing that stands out in my mind was during a walk for a short distance in the evening, there were so many people laying sleeping in the streets. I did not feel very comfortable with this so I returned to the safety of the hotel. It must also be remembered that this was the first time I had travelled overseas, apart from Belgium which we frequently did as it was

only a bike ride from where we lived in Eindhoven.

We then flew from Bangkok, with refueling stop in India, to Manila to the Philippines. Once again, we stayed in five-star hotel and some 20 hours later we left Manila for Sydney, via a refueling stop in Darwin. We finally arrived in Sydney on 31 October 1951. A number of passengers already had arrangements for accommodation and they were allowed to leave the airport but they required special permission for this. The balance of the passengers were taken to Kensington Race Course in Sydney (where the current University of New South Wales is located) and were housed in very primitive barrack-style accommodation for an overnight stay.

Commonwealth of Australia 18

**INCOMING PASSENGER CARD. (AIRCRAFT.)**

The information given hereon is required under the Authority of the Immigration Act and Regulations

Aircraft Registration SYDNEY

Port of Arrival SYDNEY

Date of Arrival 31.10.51

1. Point of Embarkation AMSTERDAM

2. Name in Full JANSSENS, Johannes Wilhelmus Theodorus

(Surname first. Print in Blockletters)

3. Nationality (As shown on Passport) DUTCH

4. Racial Origin EUR

(European, Asian, African, Polynesian)

5. Sex (Male or Female) M

6. Age last Birthday 20

7. Conjugal Condition S

(Married, Widowed, Single, Divorced)

8. Occupation laborer

9. Industry H O

10. Country of last Permanent Residence H O

(Permanent Residence means residence for 12 months or longer.)

11. Intended Address in Australia Bathurst

Near Sydney N.S.W. Australia

12. Purpose of Visit I M M

13. Length of Stay P E R

Signature of Passenger. [Signature]

That evening, I went into town together with one of the other chaps to have a look around with a plan to walk across the Harbour Bridge but gave up on that idea when I realised how far it was. During the walk, I asked for directions from a gentleman in the street and during our conversation he asked me a number of questions. I told him that I had just arrived to settle in Australia and he enquired as to what type of work I did. I answered that

I worked in electrical engineering. He advised that he had an electrical appliance business in Ultimo and asked if I was interested in applying for a job with him. I took his phone number and made arrangements to meet him the next day.

During the flight, a group of eight of us formed a friendship and I was the only one who spoke fluent English at that time. When I returned from the walk and told them I was planning to take a job, they reminded me that we had agreed to stick together for a while – all 8 of us. So the next day, I rang the factory owner to advise him of the reasons why I could not accept the job. And that was that.

One condition that was applied to subsidised emigrants at the time was that we were required to stay in Australia for two years. The subsidised migrants were also required to pay for part of the fare and this was dependent on your parents income and my own income. The subsidisation was as follows: Australian government paid one-third; the Dutch government paid one-third; and I paid one-third. However, my parents did not have any money; and I did not have any money either as whilst I worked, I handed my weekly income to my mother, but I was on good terms with the local priest and he loaned me the money. For the first half year in Australia, I hardly spent any money – did not even buy milkshakes – and I paid off the total amount of the loan which was quite substantial as flying, in those days, was extremely expensive.

We were still the responsibility of the Australian government and they arranged train transport to Bathurst where there was an immigration reception centre which consisted of an old army base with barracks and Nissan huts. We were picked up and taken to Central Railway and travelled by steam train to Bathurst, with a stop for lunch for an hour half-way between Sydney and Bathurst. When it was time to leave after lunch, a bell rang twice and we all re-boarded to complete our journey to Bathurst, which took about 6-7 hours in total.

It was still fairly cold in Bathurst when we arrived and we spent the next fortnight in Bathurst with the time spent on medical examinations, interviews, etc. Some of the married men were offered work for a few days harvesting asparagus but the single men were not nominated. Altogether I had 10 pounds.



After a fortnight of arrival in Sydney work was found for all eight of us with the Metropolitan Water Sewerage and Drainage board in Sydney. The government arranged accommodation in Sydney in the Quarantine Station at North Head in a section which used to be the seaman's hospital but had been converted to immigrants accommodation centre, located on Little Manly Beach right on the harbour, which is a magnificent spot.

Our working day started at the Water Board depot on Pittwater Road, Manly, where we all piled on the truck and were driven to Pittwater Road, Warriewood, where the golf driving range is now. The work involved re-lining the main water supply pipes which required removing the old cement lining and replacing with a new cement lining.

As I was one of the smallest of the eight, I was nominated to be the "billy boy" which entailed gathering firewood in the morning, filling the kerosene lamps and boiling the billy in the morning as well as boiling it again later for lunch. I was also responsible for placing the trestles over the holes. I was perfectly happy and between the eight of us, we had quite good fun and it paid reasonably well. After about two months I was promoted to digging which, being young and fit, was fine. I worked for the Water Board for 4-5 months when we were transferred to work in the Bellevue Hill area, but they did pay us for transport.

However, it was raining one day when we arrived at work and after an hour they sent us back home. The same thing happened the next day. In those days, all wages were paid fortnightly, however when I received my next pay, there was considerably less money than the previous fortnight. It was explained to me that they only paid appearance money when you were sent home in wet weather conditions. As I was still saving to pay off my loan, I decided to look for other work.



And that is how I became a tram conductor! I commenced at the Ultimo depot, which was the training venue for conductors. A uniform was provided and adequate training was provided. The best thing was that it paid rather well as they paid extra for working on the weekends or doing broken shifts, that is

where you work four hours in the morning and 4 hours later in the afternoon. I worked at the Neutral Bay tram depot and was sometimes allocated to the Brookvale depot. The Brookvale depot was a bus depot only which were much nicer to work on than the trams.

There were two types of trams in use in Sydney. Some were fully enclosed and the conductor walked inside to collect fares. The other type had footboards on each side of the tram and the conductor moved on the outside of the tram on the footboards whilst it was

moving and collected the fares by leaning inside. They were referred to as toast racks. I also worked on the trams from Wynyard to Chatswood, as well as from Wynyard to Mosman. I worked with the trams until mid 1952.

Towards the end of my time with the trams, Jos Bots, my friend from Holland, arrived in Sydney and after working in a few different places, he also joined the trams as a conductor. During this time, I bought a car - a Rochet-Schneider 1924 model. Prior to purchasing the car, I had bought a brand-new motor bike which was a velocette. I traded the motor bike to purchase the car.

In May 1953, Jos and I decided that we wanted to make big money and they only place that could where this could be achieved was either working in the Snowy Mountains or working on the building the rail tunnels between Wynyard and Kings Cross. We applied for both but were unsuccessful. The only other option to make good money was to work in the sugar cane areas so we left Sydney behind, taking three weeks to travel to Mackay in Northern Queensland.

We stayed in the council caravan park so that we could sleep in the back of the car. However, we had already purchased hammocks in Sydney which were made for the tropics – they had mosquito nets and in-built roofs – so we sometimes slept in the hammocks. Our money was running out and we were reluctant to pay our camping fees. We soon worked out exactly when the council collector was due to come and then ensured that we were never there when he arrived enabling us to stay for a month free of charge.

As the sugar cane season had not officially commenced, we went to the local employment office and I was given a casual job with a company called Mitchell Moores, an electrical supply company and also had a shop in Mackay. Jos got a job working for Mackay Council. After my casual job finished,

the employment agency found another job joining a contractor in Kungurri, about 15 kms inland from Mackay. The job consisted of transferring the cut cane from the farmers' trucks onto the railway truck transport. I lived at the time on the railway siding where the contractor had built a humpy with a metal roof and hessian bag walls. Nights were still fairly cold and I did most of the cooking. I spent a total of five months there and I made friends with the Italian farmers as well as some Maltese farmers.

I had promised my father that I would return to Holland at the end of the two years in Australia. As I was under 21 at the time of my departure from Holland, my father had to give permission for me to leave. He had refused permission claiming an old expression "Why seek the butter there whilst you have your bread here". I explained to my father that within a matter of months I would be 21 and I would leave for Australia then as bad friends whereas if he signed, at least I would depart on good terms. He then said that he only sign the permission on the condition that I would return after two years. I saved a great deal of money with the sugar cane work which was sufficient to pay for a return journey by boat to the Netherlands.

My weekends were spent at the cane farm which was owned by the parents of the contractor. The contractor was a young chap only 2-3 years older than I was so I used to spend the weekends on their farm, mainly rounding up the cattle. I learned to ride a horse and I also helped with small jobs on the farm. From time to time, I also spent some time with the Italians on their farms where I picked up a smattering of the Italian language and a liking for Italian food.

When it rained, the sugar harvesting stopped altogether so once or twice I went to Mackay during a rain period. For ten shillings I could sleep on the verandah of the pub in Mackay and the meals at the boarding houses were quite reasonably priced. On one visit to

Mackay, I met up with Jos who had moved to Proserpine to cut cane when I moved to Kungurri. I had tried cutting cane as it paid well but I was not strong enough for that.

It was totally by co-incidence that I met up again with Jos in Mackay. He had moved to South Molle Island and worked as a deckhand on the passenger boat and they were in Mackay Harbour for repairs, but were leaving that day for South Molle Island. Jos asked the skipper if I could come with them on the boat, which was okay, so I went to South Molle

Island. A few days later I returned to Kungurri, as the rain had stopped.

The sugar cane season finished in October/November and my boat trip back to Holland was booked for mid December 1953. I tried to get some work for three weeks or so in the area and the local farmers needed to have their church painted and asked me if I could paint and I explained to them that I was an excellent painter. I took on the contract of painting the church which took exactly three weeks to complete .



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Now, as a young man in Sydney, I was interested in girls but Australian girls were not interested in "foreigners" because their mothers told them to stay away from foreigners, often referred to as refugees or "reffos". I recall one incident when working as a tram conductor when I had words with a traveller who appeared a bit drunk. He got abusive to me. When he used the expression "you reffos can live off the smell of an oily rag", I killed myself laughing as I had never heard this expression. This promptly turned him to attack me. As conductors carried money, it is a serious offence to attack a conductor so the other passengers in the tram stopped him from assaulting me.

At this time I generally lived in boarding houses, also referred to as guest houses, which were generally full board. I also lived in private homes sharing a room with someone else. One day whilst working on a tram in the Mosman area, John Adema got on the tram with his toolkit on his shoulder. We had a bit of chat and he invited me over to the place he was then renting in Brookvale and I visited him regularly. I had also made friends with a few families in Manly.




Altogether, in Sydney, I lived in Manly, Collaroy Plateau, Dee Why West, Mosman and to the middle of 1953, Jos and I lived in a boarding house in North Sydney where the Warringah Expressway now runs.

As a conductor I was allowed free interstate travel by train to the borders of NSW and I made a holiday trip to Melbourne for a week or so and also to Brisbane during this time.

I used to spend a lot of time swimming, snorkeling and ice skating. Jos and I used to also go on motor bike trips. Once, we climbed the Harbour Bridge which was, of course, illegal at the time. I sometimes wonder if my son got the idea of climbing the bridge

because of me! Jos and I also joined the Buffalo – the Antediluvian Order of the Buffalo Lodge. We only joined the Lodge because one could drink beer at the regular meetings when everything else was closed!

Whilst I was living in Queensland, I learnt to ride a horse quite well and I on weekends I often rounded up the horses for dipping to prevent them getting ticks.

2		CHANGES		3	
NEW ADDRESS		NOTIFIED TO	DATE	SIGNATURE OF COM. MIGRATION OFFICER OR POSTMASTER	
114 Htd Migration Hostel		CHS Ltd	2.4.51		
15 Ballingwood St. Manly		Am. Intl	13.6.52		
23 Bray St. Worema		Am. Intl	9.7.52		
15 Lantana Ave. Collaroy		Sydney	5.11.52		
Plattay					
104 Glend St. Cremorne		Sydney	9.3.53		
c/o: Adema (Redlands) Victor		Am. Intl	26.5.53		
Rd. Brookvale		Am. Intl	26.5.53		
Kangaroo Railway Siding		Am. Intl	2.3.53		
SAILED FROM SYDNEY 05 DEC 1953					
PER <u>Bronte</u>					
Signed <u>W. Brown</u>					

CANCELLED



In mid-December 1953, I travelled from North Queensland to Sydney and stayed with Jan and Riet Adema. Then, they lived in the first house that Jan had built in Pine Avenue, Brookvale.

Leaving Sydney, I travelled by boat, the Orient Liner named the Aurantis, via Melbourne, Adelaide, Fremantle, Ceylon, Suez Canal and Naples. I disembarked in Marseilles and travelled by train to Holland. It was a fabulous boat trip and the food was outstanding, especially considering I had been living the bush and doing my own cooking.

I made friends which quite a few other guys about the same age as me. In particular, George Russo, Allen Burton, and Barry Hooben. All three of them came and stayed with my family whilst I was in Holland. George Russo was studying for the priesthood at the seminary at North Head and he stayed for quite a while with us in Holland. My mother was really taken by him. George had virtually no money and his trip had been paid for by his elder brother, Ron, a market gardener in Sydney. As such, George had worn out clothes and shoes so my mother found some clothes and shoes as it was very cold in Holland at the time of the year.

Later when I was back in Australia, I made contact with him but it was very restrictive for him and he was not allowed much outside contact. However, I had contact with his mother and other Russo family members. My sister, Miems, arrived in Australia approximately three months after I returned and George Russo's brother picked them up from the boat and provided them with accommodation. To this day, they are still close family friends.

I also met up again with Allen Burton and his family who lived in the Sydney suburb of Hurstville and we became close friends, regularly visiting the families.

Before I left Holland, I had a girlfriend and when I returned to Holland, I was going to contact her because about nine months after I was in Australia, I asked her to come to Australia but she refused and that was the end. Looking back now, it is obvious as to why she declined. First of all her parents would not allow her and she was only 17 years old then. When we met I was 20 and she was 16. I was going to contact her when I returned to Holland but her sister, who by that time had become my sister-in-law by marrying my eldest brother, informed me that she was engaged to be married so that stopped me from contacting her.

During my stay with Jan and Riet Adema in Sydney prior to my departure, Jan asked me to visit his family as his mother was very sick with cancer. He also told me that he had three unmarried sisters and showed me their photos. Towards the end of my stay in Holland, I decided to visit the Adema family in Leeuwarden.

I met up with Jan's parents as well as his brothers and sisters. I met my future wife, Toos Adema – Catharina – and we got on like a house on fire. We visited Riet's mother who lived in the province of Groningen so we had a break there. Shortly after my return to my family in Eindhoven, Toos visited and met my parents, spending a week with us. My mother and father were both very taken with Toos and it stayed like that always.

I asked Toos if she would like to come to Australia and after giving it some consideration, she agreed. I then had to formally ask her father for permission. Toos's father was quite an imposing figure - a solid man, prominent in his town as a meat wholesaler. I was seated across from him and asked his permission, explaining my plans. He indicated to me that Toos was his favourite daughter. He also mentioned the reports from his son in Australia that did not speak

too well of me. However, in spite of that, and if it was what his daughter wanted, he would not stop her. He then added a little rider and said, "I have another daughter who is in

England. As I know you are going to England, before you decide on Toos, please meet up with her. When I did go to England we did meet, but we both decided.....no!



I returned to Australia in March 1954 by boat, the Oronsay, and again, it was a very good trip. The journey commenced in England via Gibraltar and Naples back to Sydney. There was a lot of entertainment on the boat and I made friends with quite a number of people – three of them were girls. One a married lady and her husband and her sister named Moira. They were from Scotland and went to live in Newport. I maintained contact with them for a number of years after my return.

Back in Sydney, I stayed for two days with Jan Adema before I found a board and private lodging in North Sydney. I immediately found work with an electrical engineering company in North Sydney. At that time, knowing Toos was coming to Australia, I decided that I wanted to save a lot of money and therefore, accepted a job making tyres at the Dunlop factory in the area now called Birkenhead, near Drummoyne.

George Russo's mother found accommodation for me in Abbotsford which was closer to Drummoyne in a private home with full board.

Working at Dunlop was like working in hell. There was a great stench, a lot of heat and hard work. I worked alternate weeks on day or night shifts. I did, indeed, save a lot of money and bought a motor bike. However, I needed to find a decent job.

I applied, and was accepted, for a job with a data processing engineering firm, British Tabulating Machine Company - a punch card company. The work involved the installation and maintenance of data processing equipment which was non-electronic. I enjoyed the work immensely and although I had been out of the electrical engineering field for over two years, it did not take long to pick up the thread again.

In July 1954, my sister Miems and her husband Justin van Nierop arrived in Sydney. Miems was pregnant at the time and they lived in Five Dock. Prior to their arrival, I had lined up an interview for Justin with an optical

company in the centre of Sydney. They engaged him the day after he arrived in Australia because of his qualifications and he worked there for four years until he commenced his own business.

A few months after their arrival they found accommodation in Eastwood; a Sydney suburb where they had a small house and a garden of a large property. Miems had to clean the house and Justin had to look after the garden in return for the rent. In those days a rental accommodation was very expensive and difficult to get in Sydney so they were very fortunate to get the house. After Toos arrived in Australia, we often used to visit them in Eastwood.

Once I knew that Toos was coming to Australia, I decided to take a second job as a waiter with the people who Justin and Miems worked for, part time. They were a well-to-do Hungarian family who had just opened a restaurant in Elizabeth Bay. Once again, I moved into private accommodation in Elizabeth Bay which was close to both the office and the restaurant. I learned a great deal from the owners because, working as a waiter, they ensured I knew how the food on the menu was prepared. Whenever a new menu item was ordered, which I had not served, I stood beside the chef who explained its ingredients and how it was prepared. I always remembered that the husband and wife team that ran the restaurant had learnt their restaurant skills by attending East Sydney Technical College where they completed a catering course. They then travelled the world and visited a number of very well known restaurants to learn about how to run a restaurant business.

The owner always worked the cash register himself and every customer was asked the question "Was the food to your satisfaction?". If ever a customer made the smallest remark or expressed dissatisfaction, the customer was told not to pay for the meal this time but he hoped they would return again. I worked in the restaurant until Toos arrived in Australia.

Toos arrived in Sydney via a KLM plan in March 1955. I rented a car for the day to pick her up from the airport. She stayed with her brother for about a week and I helped her find a job as a nanny for some well-to-do people in Mosman. I used to meet up with her practically every day of the week and, invariably, we used to go out for hamburgers. I must have she gained about two stone in about the first six months in Australia!

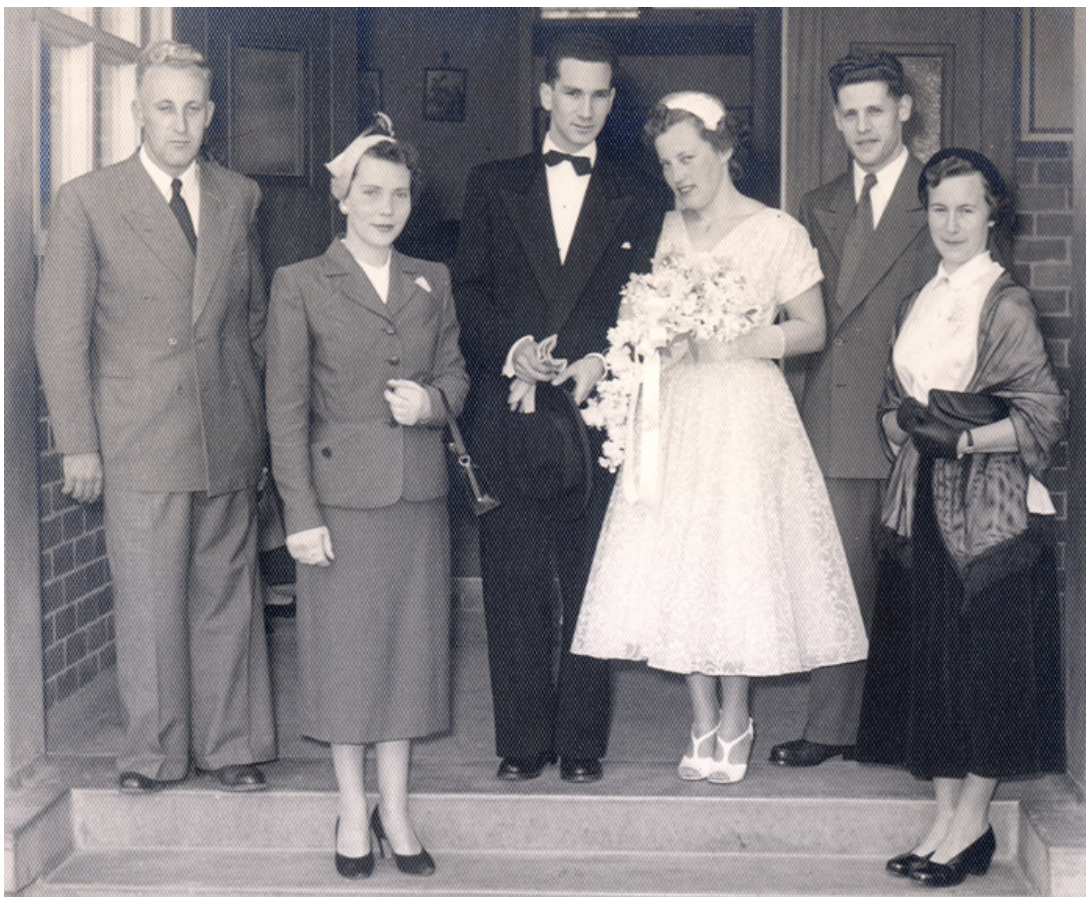
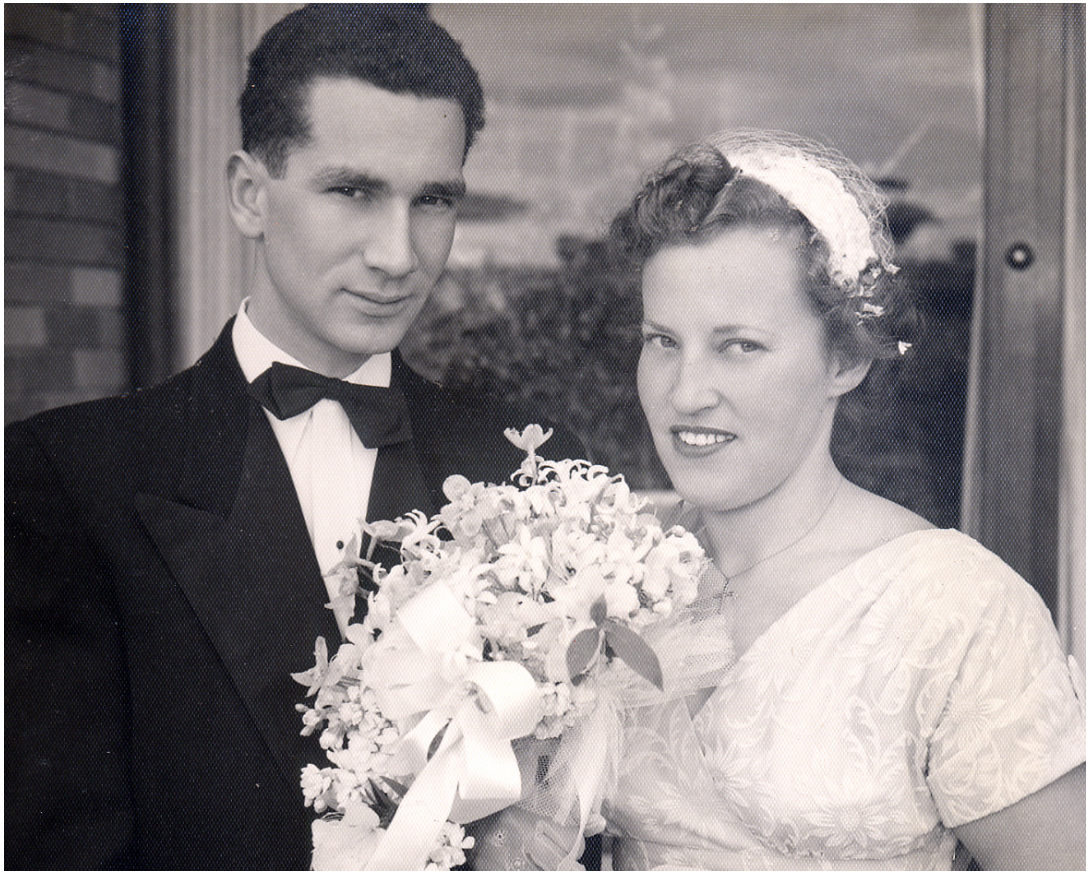
Her work involved looking after two small children who, by all descriptions, appeared to be very unpleasant. She was expected to work six days per week with evenings off. Even though she was employed as the children's nanny, in her spare time she was expected to polish the silver and other household tasks. She was very unhappy there so I suggested she resign. She was reluctant to do so, so I indicated that if she didn't resign, I would do it for her! She had only worked there for two weeks. When she did resign, the family were very upset and asking why. But it was all too late.

Toos quickly found another position as a nanny for some Jewish people in Northbridge who treated her as part of the family. She ate with the family, even when they had guests and they were very proud to have a Dutch lady as a nanny. In those days Toos played the piano and she taught the children Dutch songs and played the piano for them. She was very happy working with them and she stayed with them until we were married.

Shortly before the end of her employment, the lady of the house offered baby clothes, a bassinet, etc. as she presumed Toos was pregnant because of her weight gain! This was not the case.

During this time, Toos attended English lessons provided free by the Australian government for new immigrants. I sometimes accompanied her and we made friends with quite a few students in the class. I still have some photos of a trip we made to the Blue Mountains with a group of them. One of those friends, I believe, became the founder of Transfield, a large power line installation company in Sydney.





Wedding day , 3 September 1955 | L-R Jan + Riet Adema, John + Toos Janssens, Justin + Miems Van Nierop



When we returned from our trip to Holland in 1979, I started working at Computer Accounting Services (CAS) as a systems auditor. The company provided accounting and stock control systems access to their mainframes in Sydney. The network consisted of the mainframe at head office and server computers in Adelaide, Melbourne and Brisbane.

They, generally, dealt with medium sized companies such as H Soul Pattison, Volvo, Saab, Massey Ferguson Tractors, etc.

I had been out of data processing for about five years and it took me quite a while to get up-to-date again. I had to learn their systems by talking to customers as documentation was virtually non-existent. The first audit I undertook was at H Soul Pattison where my manager introduced me their manager and then disappeared. I spent the week there and at the end wrote a fairly lengthy report listing the shortcomings in the way the system was being used. I specialised mainly on the stock control systems and wrote a detailed user guide. Both the cash management and the H Soul Management were very pleased with my efforts. I used to make regular trips to Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide (occasionally) to audit the CAS customers' in those cities.

After about three months, I recruited another auditor which I was not very pleased about because I was perfectly happy working on my own. Over time I finished having three staff reporting to me. I also engaged contract programmers and document writing specialists from time to time. After about four years at CAS, Mayne Nickless, a large Melbourne company, bought CAS.

Half year after being taken over, I was given the position of Project Manager. One of the projects I undertook was the company move from Camperdown, where the mainframe and all the staff were located, to Waterloo. CAS was not doing well at all at the time, mainly because they did not develop their systems further.

In 1987 I was assigned as Project Manager to the NSW Fire Brigade to set up their IT department in Head Office Sydney. I became very close friends with the Secretary of the Fire Brigade who, at that time, was the second-in-charge. The equipment installed at the Fire Brigade was digital equipment which at that time was the third largest IT company in Australia.

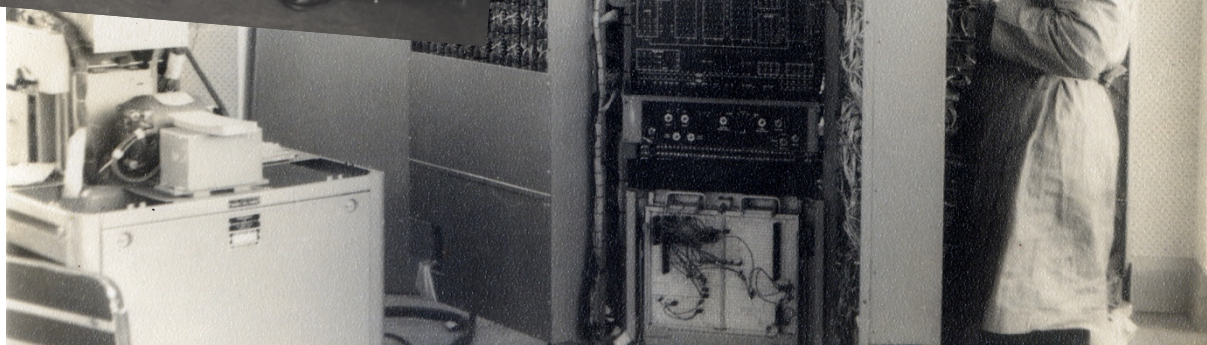
After two years of work, I completed the installation with eight staff working in the department. At the completion of the contract, I was asked to engage an IT manager to replace my role. I engaged an IT manager who was working for the ABC who was very experienced in digital equipment, programs, etc. On the morning she was due to commence, the Secretary received a phone call to advise that she had changed her mind and would not take the position. After some discussions, the Secretary and the Director General of the Fire Brigade offered me the position as IT Manager on a contract basis.

After some consideration, and never having worked for the public service nor having too much respect for them, I decided to accept the position. I remained with the Fire Brigade until 1992. The best part of the job was that I had total freedom to do what I wanted to do. I set up a network linking the district offices in NSW to our mainframe in Sydney; we installed a system called "All-in-One" which was used to give all employees access to the mainframe for typing and access for information.

The Fire Brigade had a system where after each fire an incident report was completed. There was a special department within the Fire Brigade who analysis and prepare reports on the basis of this information. There was a backlog of data entry of about 1½ years. I was asked to see what could be done to overcome this problem. My initial thought was to engage outside contractors but I decided to complete the data entry as close to the source as possible, which meant the district offices and fire stations.

One of the last jobs I completed at the Fire Brigade was to analyse the overtime worked in the metropolitan area of Sydney, mainly, but also in the fire brigade districts. I managed to reduce the overtime costs by \$1M per annum with scope of building it up

further over time. As mentioned earlier I finished my time in the Fire Brigade in 1992 but eased into retirement by working two days per week. However, after about a month I found that this didn't suit me as it was disruptive to my life, so I quit altogether.



What advice could you give?

- Live frugally.
- Maintain strong family connections.
- Help each other when in need.
- Be frugal also with the use of Earth's resources to ensure people who come after us still have resources left.

What aspect of your present family pleases you most?

The most beautiful contact we have with all the members of our family.

Do you feel many things have changed in the way family members relate to one another nowadays?

Children become independent sooner and when both parents work, it is more difficult to maintain regular contact..

In your opinion what has improved most?

Material possessions and sufficient funds make life easier and more enjoyable. Also, better houses, clothing, health care, the opportunity to travel and study.

What has been lost?

The innocence of youth.

What is the nicest part of being an Opa?

Having grandchildren and trying to keep up with the new things they learn and use. They really motivate you to "stay with it".

Is there a great deal of difference being an Opa now and in the past?

Yes, grandfathers generally have more time to be involved with the children and grandchildren because of the smaller sized families.

What, in your opinion, is the greatest difference in daily life between now and in the past?

A great variation in the choice and quality of food and clothing; the use of electronics and equipment; and being able to afford and make use of all these resources.

In retrospect what do you miss most in your daily life today that you had in the past?

Brothers and sisters who have passed on.

What advice would you give to the present generation in respect of important aspects of how daily life is now conducted?

One primary thing, don't allow all resources to be exploited - leave most for the next generation.

Are you religious?

I came to the conclusion when I was about twenty years old that religion, as such, would not be part of my life. I undertook some studies in comparative religion and this convinced me not to be involved in any religion. On my FaceBook I list myself as atheist.

Did you have a specific occupation in mind for yourself?

No – I had no specific job in mind. As explained elsewhere, I started off working in an office doing accounting and only later got into the engineering field.

Did you do your military service?

I was tested and assigned to the military police. During the medical examination, it was discovered that I had perforated eardrums. On this basis, I was exempted from military service.



Did men and women apply for the same sort of jobs or were there clearly defined occupations?

There were clear distinctions between male and female jobs and it was rare to find a female engaging in a male occupation.

If the present possibilities, in respect of following a career, had been available in your youth, what occupation would you have chosen?

I would have gone into electrical engineering in computers, as I had done.

Do you think military service or another form of social service duties should be reintroduced?

In principal, I am against militarism, particularly compulsory. However, I do believe a form of service to society by young people, in a similar form to military service, would be an excellent idea, similar to voluntary service abroad to help under developed countries, etc.

What is the best advice you could give in relation to work that may assist in the future?

I have a very simple answer to this. When working for an employer, provide more than what you get paid for.

Can you remember back to the time when your family bought their first television set?

I was in Australia before television became commercially available in Holland. I do remember seeing television receivers displayed in shop windows where Philips provided test programs only. We bought our first television set here in Australia when we lived in Rangers Retreat Road, Frenchs Forest, which must have been in 1959. My favourite program was "I Love Lucy".

When was the first electronic appliance introduced in your home?

This was a Philips radio in 1938.

What did you do in spare time?

I worked on cars, mainly VW Beetles. I used to buy them at auctions, renovate and re-sold them. Generally, I made some money on it but it was basically a hobby.

What sort of hobbies did you have?

Squash, cooking, travel and carpentry.

Were you a member of a sports club?

Which sports did you do?

We were only allowed to be a member of one club. In my case it was boy scouts. I was, however, involved in swimming, bike riding and playing hockey.

Did you make things using tools?

I built two houses – one in North Balgowlah and one in Killarney Heights. I used to make our own furniture and also made a high chair for Allen.

Do you remember the first car you bought and what it cost?

My first car was a Rochet-Schneider which was owned by Jos Bots and myself.

Did you go out in those days? What did you do in the evenings?

We did go out to visit families but our main outings with the boys were to the drive-in theatres.

Do you still remember the first picture you ever saw in a cinema?

Yes – "Wat and Half Wat".

Where and which way did you get to know girls in your younger days?

At dancing lessons.

Did you have many girlfriends before you married Oma.

Yes, a few.

Which moments or parts of your life would you like to relive

All of it!

Which are the three most important things in your life?

- Growing up in the Netherlands.
- Getting married, having children and bringing them up.
- The relationship with our children and grandchildren as we have it now.

Which dreams of your younger days have come true?

The outlook on life in my younger days was very limited which, in turn, limited the scope of my dreams.

What is one of the best decisions you ever made in your life?

Marrying Catharina (Toos) Adema.

To which people in your life are you most thankful?

My parents and the people that have taught me the things I know.

What is one of the most beautiful things you have achieved?

Learning to get along with other people in life.

What is the greatest gift anyone has ever given you?

My parents who gave me life.



# Janssens Family Tree

