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Journey to New Zealand – 45 years ago



On January 26th 1969 I left my motherland with my Kiwi husband and our six month old daughter for Down Under.

The trip was organized through a travel agent in London. Husband and child, the "Ausländer", travelled on their NZ passport, I on my Swiss one.

We left Basel by train in the morning and arrived in Genoa towards evening. The first night away was thus spent in Italy. The next morning we went to the shipping agent to get our tickets in order to board the "Galileo Galilei" later in the day. But whoops, there we encountered a hurdle. Father and child's documents were okay. Mother however could not board as she was missing the required transit visa for Australia. A call to the Swiss Consulate in Genoa proved very

helpful. They liaised with the Australian Embassy in Rome. It was decided that the easiest solution to the problem was for father and child to embark without me whilst I had to travel by night train to Rome. My husband was able to book a sleeping compartment for me and I arrived in Rome the next morning well-rested. On arrival, I purchased a map and had some breakfast. With the confidence of a professional and very little Italian I caught a bus to the Embassy, where I was expected. I was then chauffeur-driven, in a black limo, to the Immigration Office. Everybody was ever so helpful and within a short wait I had my visa and could explore this unique city for the day.

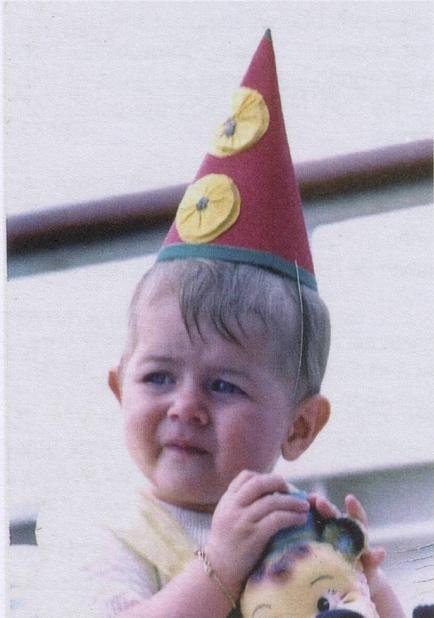
Towards evening I was back at the station to take a train to Naples. The environment in and around the station was a bit rough and I was frightened

until I found a hotel for the night. The next morning, after having picked up my definitive ticket, I was at last able to board and reunite with my loved ones. Relief all around!

I had never before been on an Ocean cruise ship before. The Galileo had five decks. A deck housed a bar, two huge rooms, the library and a card room as well as the promenade. On B deck was the foyer, part of the kitchen, the dining room and our cabin which contained two bunk beds plus a basket for baby, two cupboards, a sideboard and a washbasin including a separate shower and WC, all very comfortable. Decks C, D and E held mainly cabins for sleeping. In total there were approximately 1800 passengers and 400 crew. The food was excellent, life was easy.

Our next port of call was Messina. The majority of the new passengers were Italians with lots of children. The women wore black skirts and their heads were covered in black shawls. The men, not dressed in Armani suits. It looked as if many of them were probably not even used to wearing shoes. One of the prize possessions quite a few brought on board were boxes containing, under cellophane lids, a rather large doll.

Sailing through the wintry Mediterranean towards Gibraltar was rather uneventful. Once we passed the straight, we were looking forward to our next port of call, Las Palmas. On approaching the Island on the 2nd of February it looked more like a mini Manhattan than a romantic holiday resort. Mass tourism gone mad! After a short stopover we were



glad to continue our voyage down the West Coast of Africa. The weather got warmer, the sea a bit rougher. Our baby's basket had to be tied to the bottom bunk during the night. Time passed pleasantly as there was always plenty of entertainment. Alcohol was cheap. Every night we could go dancing or to the cinema. A steward kept an eye on the baby. He also made sure that she had only the finest of food and she rewarded him by always scoffing the lot. Father and daughter also started to have a swim together in the pool every day.

On the 6th of February we crossed the equator and got baptised by Neptune. A great event! Another day the little Miss

was invited to a party for the children. There were approximately 500 of them and you can imagine the noise. It was certainly never boring.

We rounded the Cape of Good Hope on the evening of February 11th. The coast with Cape Town, Table Mountain and the so called Apostles was ever so impressive. Durban was the only port of call in Africa. I was glad to get off the boat, feel soil under my feet again and escape the plague of kids for a while. The city was then still under apartheid and I did not like it one little bit.

It took ten days from Africa to Australia. In Fremantle I could finally produce

my hard to get Transit Visa for the first time. We took the train to Perth which looked to me then a bit like a scene from a cowboy movie. Adelaide followed, where a friend visited us on board as we could not get to shore. Melbourne was next, then Sydney where we left the boat, spent three days with an aunt of my husband's before finally flying to our destination – Auckland on March 12th 1969.

It was such a wonderful journey!

By Irene Knowles



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chuderwälsch

by Tanja Latham-Zurbrügg

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Pfiife | a smoking pipe, whistle |
| 2. Pfiifeli | straight ahead |
| 3. Pflotsch | a willy |
| 4. Pfunzlä | water splashing, slush (from snow) |
| 5. Pfuttere | a torch |
| 6. Pfüderi | to complain |
| 7. Plaaggeischt | a little naughty boy |
| 8. Plegäär | an annoying person |
| 9. Puggel | to be lazy |
| 10. Puff | the back |
| | a mess, to have stress |

Consigli della Nonna

Old paintbrushes can set solid. If you want to restore suppleness to the bristles, soak them in white distilled vinegar overnight. If they are still stiff, warm the vinegar gently and simmer for approximately 20 minutes in a pan on the hob.

By Ursula Nixon

