

Brunswick Stories



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## Prologue

My journey at the Salvation Army in Brunswick started as a volunteer. I helped with breakfast and joined the knitting club on Mondays. The community was so welcoming that when Monday came, I was looking forward to going back, listening to some amazing stories and sharing a good time with the rest of the people.

As I was finishing up my Diploma in Community Services the opportunity came to do my placement and I it only made sense for me to do it there. The place where I felt I could take care and be taken cared of within the community. That is how “Brunswick Stories” began. It all started with the encouragement, support and freedom of the team working at the Salvation Army in Brunswick and the need to share the amazing stories and voices of the people that make the Salvos their own.

This book is a compilation of those stories. Each person shared the most memorable treasures hidden among the neighbourhood streets. Through this journey, sitting down and writing this book with the Salvos community made me realize how special Brunswick is. How it can be a place of happiness, a place to find a home and a place where you can build friendships. Listening to these stories every Monday has been a deeply moving experience that made me live the neighbourhood in a much richer and more meaningful way. Thanks to the people the shared their hidden treasures and for the Salvation Army Brunswick that was nothing else but a second home, where you are invited to grow, learn and connect.

Eva Milman



## Train Motel Brunswick Beer Garden

Digitally enhanced television sports  
 Watching on sky legislation sorts  
 A scoop of gelati, a latte by the courts  
 Stringing a racquet whilst blubbering boughts  
 Flag protect flag protest back up sports  
 Reign on man containing number naughts  
 Pulling, Park it, "there man there"  
 Putting around the block near a park bench chair  
 Wash his hair or "lack thereof care"  
 A beanie is there, instead of a stare  
 Colour coded new one a camry with a dash board bear  
 Store mania left and in between  
 Right of the equator has a certain lean  
 Mr certain lean labouring Tram ride been  
 Public transport is optional for those who are keen  
 Don't drive limited car spaces are not and never knotted clean  
 Catch public transport it is entertainingly European

Cindy

## What are we?

Grandfather said his children were first, last and everywhere in the middle.

I used to say to Granddad, "what are we?" And he used to say, "I am the first Jew to take the pork chop out of Jerusalem."

He was very committed to girls being educated, because when you educate a woman, you educate a family.

Grandfather was very particular about educating his family, and he used to read a lot. I remember standing by a book that had a peculiar writing, this peculiar writing turned to be Hebrew.



Grandfather was studying Hebrew as a form of brain food. He used to read publications by the various parliaments in Australia, Federal and State (called Hansard). They were dry and without humour, but for me it made sense because he would then know what was happening in the various parts of the country.

Grandfather liked to start political discussions that ended up being very vocal and very loud.



He believed this was a way of teaching his family to think for themselves and not be influenced by others on their politics and worldviews. He was a fully paid-up member of the communist party for over 30 years.

Studying Hebrew, I think, gave him insight as to what it was that made him a Jew. He loved to tell me the stories of the Old Testament, the stories of Solomon, Daniel and the lions and he would compare these topics to the present.

One of the topics of discussion was my name. My parents had very vicious arguments as to what my name would be when I was first born, and I was without a name for the first four months of my life. My grandfather overheard an argument between my parents about my name and he decided my name would be Elisheva. And there was no arguments against that. So, I became Elishavet Anne. Because of this, I was always wondering why I had this strange non-English sounding name.

One Saturday morning grandfather decided that he was going to take me out. My mom was given instructions to put a dress on me as opposed to my usual overalls and I was taken into grandfather's truck. He told me today was the day I was going to learn something new, and we drove from Becket Street in Coburg to the synagogue in Brunswick.

Grandfather instructed me that I was to keep my mouth shut. That God has given me two ears and one mouth, and that mouth was to be kept closed so I could hear what was being said without comment.

The language that I've heard before we sat down was a mixture of English, German, and Hebrew. I was fascinated, but I didn't have a hat on while all the ladies had a hat.

Grandfather pulled out a clean white handkerchief and he folded it so it was a triangle and looked like a scarf that he put over my head and he said that whenever I came to a place before God I had to cover my head out of respect and deference.

And that is how I learnt I was a Jew.

Elizabeth

## **A good community where everybody is welcome**

I was young there; I didn't know anything about the community, only when I transferred to Brunswick

Something to do with your time. To meet people, you have to be involved with the community. I discovered that community is good for the mind and the soul. You know that there is someone there to listen, to give you a hand. I am grateful that they are there to listen. It doesn't matter what nationality anyone is, they are always there to listen, not racist, and you can rely on them. Everything comes within the heart.

I kept coming back to the community. And not only that, I learnt about the attitude of people around me. Before, I haven't been involved with these things, you are always on the go.

If you need anything, they are there for you, they will not go differently.

Zena



## **Ninety Seconds**

The orchestra have packed up their instruments  
Trombones lie next to saxophones  
Violins converse with oboes  
The conductor has hailed down

A passing taxi-cab  
Joe, the janitor, sweeps the science lab  
Afterwards, strolling down the Boulevard

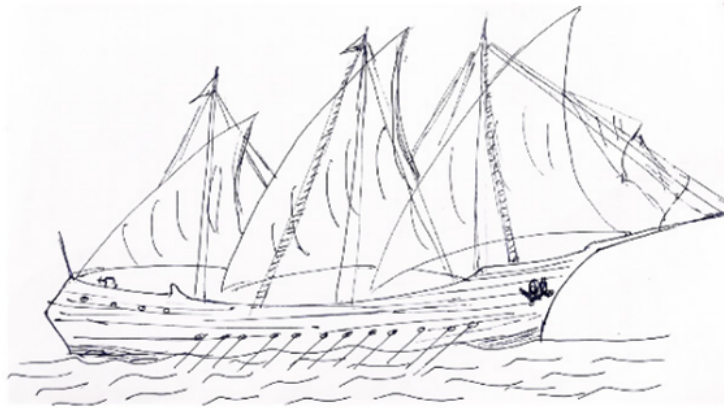
I glimpse the town clock  
It is ninety seconds to midnight  
Russia loves India, loves China  
Loves Israel, loves the good old USA  
(and don't forget east and west Pakistan)  
All the intercontinental ballistic missiles  
Have been neutered  
All the steel and metal  
Now pounded into ploughs

A runaway train  
Heads towards central station  
A finger lingers.  
Above the nuclear button  
Now is the time for hesitation  
Down along Sydney Road Trams  
Cruise past amber to green lights

Giovanni



## A Brunswick Story



A ship is a symbol of salvation and freedom.

After the detention centre, in August 2002, they offered me a house for free in Williamstown, but I chose to pay rent in Brunswick. Here, everything is at your fingertips.

Anything is available, you don't have to make pollution, just ride your bike.

Brunswick is very multicultural, restaurants, shops. You can find every food from around the world on Sydney Road.

Food, culture, art, the festivals from every corner of the earth. You can see art from everywhere, African, Middle Eastern, Scottish.

I travelled around the world as a sailor, and every time I would go to a historical building.

Brunswick is one of the oldest suburbs. The working class was here. In an old suburb, we have heritage for humanity.

I wasn't born here, but when I see the buildings, the streets, I feel that my roots are in this place.

It is very easy to get along with people, everyone is so friendly. This is very important because I travelled for 25 years around the world and there is something special in Brunswick, I find Brunswick to be in my top ten places to live.

Another thing is trust. Sometimes I go to a shop and I don't have money to finish paying for my groceries, but they are always happy for me to go and pay later.

In Brunswick, kids have a place to play, like Don Bosco.

Anonymous

## Runaway Greyhound

On Saturday morning, we walked to the library with our greyhound. I didn't know then that my pet greyhound is good at chewing leashes. He is, and he did.

While we're at the library, I check and find that my greyhound is bolting away. There's no point chasing a greyhound, "I can't catch up to my greyhound, what do I do?" I thought to myself.

A car pulls over and screeches to a halt. "Is that your dog? Jump in, we will go after it," said the stranger. He doesn't have a booster seat so the kids can't come. Don't do what Mummy's doing, I told them and got in the car. The stranger speeds up and drives erratically. We came to a dead end and then we saw my greyhound in the side street. So the stranger-driver pulled over erratically onto the footpath. I was so happy that I saw my dog. He then went into someone's yard. I tried to approach him in the driveway calmly.

To my relief, he came to my arms. I had to lead him back to the library by his collar because his leash had been chewed off. My daughter had been crying the whole time. But her brother had read her a book to calm her down.

Coincidentally it was about a dog that runs away.

Liz



Photo by Juan Gomez on Unsplash



## One weekend at Sunbury

I was 16 years old and went with two older friends to the Sunbury Pop Festival in 1974. It was the Australia day holiday so it was Friday, Saturday and Sunday. My mother was very upset that I left Brunswick but I had to go to this festival. It was the time of Woodstock, the time of people young revolting about the older generation.

When I arrived at the festival, people were enjoying the music and there were people selling watermelons or other goods.

My story revolves around an overseas band. This band did not know about daylight savings and were waiting for the night for their light show. The crowd was upset, we needed to be entertained. The the lead singer, upon hearing the boos from the crowd said, "We are never coming back to this country until we are the number one band in the world!

Who is this band?! "QUEEN!"

Bohemian Rhapsody came out 6 months later. They were the number one band in the world.

## I fell in love with Brunswick

I moved from Caulfield to Brunswick. Caulfield was a very different place to Brunswick. It was quiet and very orderly.

The community was mainly Jewish, and I had been working as a nanny for Jewish families. Brunswick was loud, exciting and multicultural. I decided the best way to adapt to my new home in Brunswick was to hop on buses and trams and ride to the end of the line to explore. I walked up and down Sydney Road, between Victoria Street and Barkly Square.

I saw the sign on the corner of Albert Street and Sydney Road pointing to the Salvation Army, and I thought to myself, "If anyone knows what's going on around Brunswick it will be the Sallies." So I followed the sign and walked into the building to get information about what was available.

I started attending the Women's Group on Tuesdays. I made lots of friends while we did arts and crafts, visited places, went fruit picking and enjoyed shared community lunches.

We would laugh and share our stories, and Women's Group became very important in my life.



Walking into Brunswick Salvos was the best introduction to my new home. It helped me to fall in love with Brunswick, and I still am. I often think "I've come to the most awesome place in Melbourne."

I love the food, the restaurants and the complex community that it is. I love to just watch people, and Brunswick is always interesting.

Beris

## **My evolving thoughts of Brunswick**

Brunswick was never a place I wanted to live. I grew up in the inner city suburbs but I always thought Brunswick was too “busy” and too “cluttered”.

Sydney Road was a nightmare to drive down. As a child, I remember my mother’s excitement when Barkly Square opened. We would travel from Clifton Hill to Brunswick every week to shop.

My thoughts about Brunswick changed in 1997 when I met the love of my life. He was by his admission, “A Brunswick Boy.” He spoke about his teenage years hanging out at the local parks. His parents owned a milk bar on Sydney Road and he would boast about how he would steal the doughnuts before they were sold.

We married and settled in Brunswick. His parents still live on Brunswick Road. I’ve grown to love Brunswick for all that it offers. I see it in a completely different light now.

Georgette

## **This is a good place to come when you're sad...**

The first time I walked through the doors of Brunswick Salvos, it was to arrange a funeral. My ex-husband, had been a part of this community, and the people here had helped him turn his life around. I didn't really know what happened here. All I knew was that he had managed to get help with some the problems he had experienced in his life, and that he had some friends here.

Before he died, he had been in hospital for a long time. I got to know his corps officer as we both waited outside his ward for the doctors to let us in to see him. He was in hospital for nearly six months, mostly the intensive care ward. The support from that corps officer was a great help to me at a traumatic time, so when my ex-husband passed away, it was comforting to know that his funeral would be done by someone who had known him well.

The funeral was held at the corps. I don't remember much about it, but I met some of his friends from here, and I remember driving home thinking how nice they were. It was a comfort to know how much he had meant to his friends.

The Sunday after the funeral, I decided to go to the service at Brunswick, just once, to say thank you. I sat in the back row of the church, hoping that no one would notice me there, and I cried. At the end of the service, I did as I had planned and thanked the officer for a lovely funeral, and I left. I thought that I would never come back again. I didn't see why I would return – this had been my ex-husband's community and I wasn't really a part of it.

As the saying goes, famous last words.

The next Sunday morning, for some reason I woke up very early. I felt restless and couldn't figure out why. I decided to come back for the church service again. This time, as I sat in the back row crying, a man came and sat beside me. He was dressed in old, tatty clothes and he was unshaven. After a while, during one of the songs, he leaned over, patted my hand and said, "Don't worry, it will all be ok. This is a good place to come when you're sad. Lots of people cry here."



Of course, that made me cry even more. Here was I, with a job, a house and car, being comforted by a man who was struggling with every part of his life. I had come for emotional help, he had come because he was hungry. He was encouraging and kind and he made me feel welcome. He was right, this was a good place to come when I was feeling sad. Over time it became a good place for me to come when I was feeling happy too. From that Sunday on, I found myself coming every Sunday. I got to know people in the Brunswick Salvos community, I enjoyed having lunch with the people here, and they always made me feel welcome.

I never imagined that first day that I walked through the doors here that I would become a Salvation Army Officer, and I certainly never imagined that I would be serving here at Brunswick. The reason I am here is because of the welcome and community that I found, and I want to be able to continue to offer that to anyone who walks through our doors today.

Alison

# Sydney Road

There is nothing  
Arty farty  
Regards the Sydney road  
Street party  
On the first Sunday  
In march  
The one day of the year  
All the guys dress  
In their best gear  
Ladies apply red lipstick  
And all their rainbow colours  
No one ever looks tarty  
At the Sydney road  
Street party  
Vibrant music  
On every street corner  
Rock n roll, folk, reggae  
But my favourite is jazz  
We all feel the razzamatazz  
Everyone feels sexy  
When we hear that  
solo saxy  
People dance in the street  
For one sacred hour  
We can forget  
The war in the Ukraine  
While we dance  
In the rain

By Giovanni

Thank you

**The community members who have shared their stories are just some of the vibrant and inspiring people we meet at Brunswick Salvos. They have generously shared their experiences, creativity and humour to make this book a reality.**

**This book would not have been possible without the vision and effort of Eva Milman. She has collected the stories of our community with great care and love.**

**Brunswick Salvos is a community of hope. We hope you have enjoyed reading some of our stories.**