In 2015 the AGWS celebrates the contribution of the German migrants and expatriates to the Australian Society with a Travelling Exhibition. The Exhibition Launch is on 19 December at the former Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre and in February at the Goethe Institut Melbourne. After that we will be at different venues around Melbourne.

What motivates people to pack their cases and bags – pack up their lives even, and move to a foreign country? Why do we leave behind all that is known to us – our home, our families and friends, to start anew . . . and what happens then? How does the new country welcome us, how do we integrate and get used to a new set of rules, a different political and judicial system, a country where the cars drive on the “wrong” side of the road and where they speak a different language?

And what is our contribution to this “multicultural” society, how much of our culture and our traditions do we introduce to our host nation – and how does it all fit together and become our experience?

It started with a book: Ein bisschen Heimat im Gepäck (ihleo verlag, Husum, 2014) by Sabine Nielsen, telling the life stories of migrants who arrived here between 1935 and 1956 – refugees, displaced or persecuted people, adventurers and those who sought to start a new life. Even today, their stories resonate in the minds of those recently arrived – or they help those, who feel overwhelmed by a tide of refugees, asylum seekers and new migrants, to understand better.

The book will be published in English at the end of November: Memories in my Luggage (ihleo verlag, Husum, 2014).


The German photographer Eva Maria Rugel took the portraits of the migrants represented in the book. These portraits were so impressive, it seemed a shame to “hide” them between the pages of a book, and Sabine Nielsen and Eva Maria Rugel decided to work together with the designer, David Wong, and prepare an exhibition under the auspice of the AGWS and the sponsorship of Henkell Brothers Australia. The exhibition will show photographs and texts, a digital presentation, information about organisations that assist migrants and memorabilia, which highlight the experience of migration. Together with the exhibitions, we offer a series of talks, lectures, forums, musical and culinary events.

Exhibition Dates and Venues:

19 December 2014 to 25 January 2015 – Bonegilla Migrant Experience, Official Launch

6 to 25 February 2015 – Goethe Institut Melbourne, Melbourne Launch
5 to 26 March 2015 – Brighton Library
April 2015 – Glen Waverley Library
11 to 24 June 2015 – Chapel on Station, Box Hill
Juli 2015 – Tabulam and Templer Homes, Bayswater
August 2015 – Westvale Community Centre, St Albans
September 2015 – Diversitat, Geelong
October 2015 – German Club Tivoli

You will receive information and updates to the exhibitions. And remember: If you cannot attend the launch at Bonegilla (near Albury/Wodonga), a visit to the former Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre – Bonegilla Migrant Experience – is a worthwhile experience. The displays and the sites are fascinating.

Bonegilla Rd, Bonegilla, VIC 3691 | PO Box 923, Wodonga, VIC 3689
Phone: (02) 6020 6912 | Fax: (02) 6022 9322 www.bonegilla.org.au
A Project of the Australian-German Welfare Society