

# In Memory of Hans Meier

(Eulogy written and delivered by Horst Pfuhl, Monday, 19 July 2010)

I have known Hans for about 50 years, since he arrived in Australia as a strapping young fellow, full of life and ready to start his journey in a new land. He got a job soon and I remember when on his pay days, he sorted his money into various little metal tins for different purposes, including a motor scooter and a house deposit, etc. He wanted the house badly, so he could bring Heidi, the love his life, out to Australia and get married. The motor scooter was needed to get him to work at odd hotel hours - and that worked really well, except on some occasions the damn thing would not start straight away when he was in a hurry. And then there was his 2 ½ year old nephew, Axel, who adored his Uncle Hans and mimicked lots of his uncle's doings and sayings. So one day, little Axel was playing under the house when Uncle Hans had to go to work and the scooter wouldn't start right away, and as Uncle Hans got a bit frustrated with that he used some colourful Australian language (which is usually the first English newcomers learn, the rest comes later). So later that day, little Axel was seen upstairs playing with a little footstool doubling as Uncle Hans's scooter, trying unsuccessfully to "start the damn thing", using the same colourful language as his role model uncle. That night, we had to whisper into Uncle Hans's ear to control the colour of his language a bit more (watch out for kids).

Hans got his house in Inala in relatively short time and Heidi arrived, they married and the Meier family began. In those days we were all full of life and had many, many parties, which were a bit difficult for Hans to attend because of his odd working hours as a chef. He often arrived later with his catch cry "keine Feier ohne Meier" (no celebration without Meier), and partying he did. He had another catch cry too when he thought the party was not lively enough, which was "die Musik hat Schlaf", which meant it's too quiet, the music must have fallen asleep (that's vogtländisch).

He worked harder than he partied through all his life, and I remember the days when we built his new house in Middle Park. I started around 7 am but he went to his job by about 5.30 am. Because he had broken shifts he came back by about 9 am, worked all day with me until around 3.30 pm and then back to his job until 10 pm plus - and that for several weeks. I always admired him for his stamina. And if you asked him what he was doing he would answer with another catch cry "schaffe, schaffe, Häusle baue" (working, working building my house) - and that's what he did! And despite some rather stressful times in that period we never had a word in anger between us, such was the measure of the man.

Then there was the kitchen in the German Club, which he ran for quite a while. One day he had to leave the kitchen for a short time, and so he hid the money from the till in the oven of the gas stove. As it happened, Heidi arrived in his absence and lit the stove, not knowing the money was in there. Hans returned just in time to rescue the smouldering money and the bank replace the damaged notes. Hans was also an expert in creating very tasty soups from leftovers etc., and they were selling like hot cakes. Sometimes when he seemed to run a bit short, he used another catch cry, "noch ein Eimer Wasser - die Kameraden sind hungrig" ("another bucket of water, the comrades are hungry"). Of course, that was not what he did, he always quickly found some more ingredients to make more soup. Another time at night when he left the Club after work, he drove the car out on to the street, put his cash box onto the roof and went to lock the gate, hopped back into the car and drove off. The cash box was never seen again... s--t happens...

Now we should not be too sad about his passing because I don't think he would have wanted that, and lets celebrate his life remembering the good bits and to use some of his catch cries. Instead of, "keine Feier ohne Meier", it should be "eine Feier about Meier". As the comrades have to cook their own soup now, no more "noch ein Eimer Wasser die Kameraden sind hungrig". Finally, "die Musik hat Schlaf". Farewell, Hans.

But here we must also pay tribute to Heidi for the dedication and care she has given to Hans in his last couple of years in great need, and under very difficult circumstances, and lots of worries and hard work, and it was sometimes quite trying and exhausting. And she did it. Thank you, Heidi.

