

My Memories of Elspeth

Elspeth was a career woman in the Tasmanian Public Service when first I met her around 1954. She had been appointed the Supervisor of Pre-school Education across Tasmania, and that was a prestigious position for this feisty woman then. She set an example in Tasmania which put emphasis on the value of early childhood education.

Her position held many challenges including extensive travel around the entire State, over much poorer roads, in lesser transport than we expect to have available today. We met when Olegas was introducing me to his Hobart friends. She lived with her widowed mother and two sisters in one of Hobart's beautiful mansions in Sandy Bay.

Elspeth had befriended a solitary skier on the snowfields of Mt. Mawson; back then *New Australians* stood out differently to the style of the local Tasmanian people. That he was obviously a good skier probably helped the conversation. Later she introduced him to her sailing friends and the skipper of Hobart's much admired yacht "*Kintail*" during Hobart's Saturday afternoon sailing races. Later Olegas sailed his own yacht – a *Finn* – as he had in his home in Lithuania. The skier was Olegas Truchanas who became recognized for his exploration and photographic records of the magnificent South-West of Tasmania, and they shared a love of Tasmania's wild places.

Elspeth and many artists responded to something profound there. Others have written of their emotional responses which intensified later when they walked and visited the beautiful Lake Pedder ***the jewel in the crown of the Lake Pedder National Park.*** They recorded the drama and glory of views combining lake and mountains in their paintings and photography.

Elspeth and her artist-friends made many journeys to Lake Pedder, making combined camps on the dunes in the centre of the widely curving beach at the foot of the Frankland Range. Flying in by small aircraft and landing on the beach was a memorable and never-to-be-forgotten gift.

On the Lake Pedder website is a small interview made by Stephen Curtain with Elspeth speaking of Lake Pedder. It is a classic of our time telling of her love of the wilderness and the flora of the places she visited, which are now represented in her memorable paintings.

After the death of Olegas, Elspeth stood in the very demanding job of secretary to the Committee of friends which came together to publish the book ***The World of Olegas Truchanas,*** written by Max Angus, in 1975.

Melva Truchanas, 28.3.2020