

Dunera News



A publication for former refugees from Nazi and Fascist persecution (mistakenly shipped to and interned in Australia at Hay and Tatura, many later serving with the Allied Forces), their relatives and their friends.

No. 94 June 2015

A vintage poster with a yellow background. At the top left is a blue globe icon. The text 'DEPT. OF SCIENCE' is in bold black letters. Below it, 'IM RAHMEN DER JUGENDGRUPPE' is written. The central illustration shows a yellow horse-drawn carriage on a dirt path, with a person and a dog. Above the carriage, a white airplane flies in a blue sky with white clouds. The text 'SPRUCHT HARRY JEIDELS ÜBER' is above the main title 'Die Wunder der Post' in large, bold, blue letters. Below the title, it says 'DIE ENTWICKLUNG DES POSTWESENS VON DER POSTKUTSCHE BIS HEUTE'. At the bottom, a dark blue banner contains the text 'MITTWOCH, 26. FEB.' and below that, '8 UHR · MESSHUT 4'.

DEPT. OF SCIENCE

IM RAHMEN DER **JUGENDGRUPPE**

SPRUCHT HARRY JEIDELS ÜBER

Die Wunder der Post

DIE ENTWICKLUNG DES POSTWESENS
VON DER POSTKUTSCHE BIS HEUTE

MITTWOCH, 26. FEB.

8 UHR · MESSHUT 4

Foundation Editor:

The late Henry Lippmann OAM

Editorial responsibility:

The Committee of the Dunera Association

Letters and articles for publication are welcome.

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The Wonder of the Mail

Courtesy of Jewish Museum of Australia

Story on page 9

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Many thanks to all the contributors.

Conversations on facebook

We invite you to take a look at our facebook page to see news from the Dunera community around the globe.

From: Harry Wengier

This is the sewing kit of John Oppenheimer (Oliver) who was a Dunera Boy. The sewing kit is from when he was recruited to the Australian Army from the internment camp. On the main photo he has written "2nd World War 1939-1946" and on the right "Corporal J Oliver". ... Pa Oliver is the maternal great grandfather of my children.



From: Sarah Mason

Thank you for allowing me to be a member of this group. I have been doing family research for many years now and thought that I had most of the details about my father Arthur Wish's (Wisch) experience during the war, first as a refugee from Nazi oppression and then as a 17 year old internee. ... just on impulse I put his name into google and found a sketch of him playing chess with Hans Pasch in a pencil drawing by Fred Lowen. It is among many others that I have never discovered before in the State Library of Victoria. I am now wondering what else I may still discover. ...



 **Friends of the Dunera Boys**



Rebecca Silk
President
Dunera Association

From the President

Welcome to our winter edition of the Dunera News for 2015.

In April, we had a very successful trip to Tatura to visit the Wartime Camps Museum and the site of one of the internment camps. The visit was especially meaningful for families of two Singapore Group internees who had not visited before.

This edition is your chance to preview our 75th anniversary reunion events. Accompanying this newsletter is the registration form and payment details to book for the program in Hay on 5–6 September 2015. I recommend that you book as soon as possible to assure your place. All members of the committee, along with our friends in Hay look forward to welcoming you to this major gathering and commemoration.

The annual reunion in Sydney will be held on 9 September and the reunion lunch in Melbourne on 10 November.

As part of the 75th anniversary celebrations, we are most grateful to the Jewish Museum of Australia in Melbourne for holding a Dunera Exhibition. It will include works from their collection and pieces from the Duldig Studio. There will be a preview on 10 September 2015 and the exhibition will run until January 2016. I urge you to find time to see the exhibition.

Also in this edition you will find contributions from the indefatigable Bern Brent. If you would like to share thoughts, pictures, reminiscences or questions about Dunera matters just send them to duneraboys@gmail.com or join our Facebook group, Friends of the Dunera Boys.

Sadly we report on the deaths of Dunera Boys in Australia and overseas. You will read memorable tributes to Walter Benedikt and George Strauss written by family members.

I wish you well.



Werner and Paul Haarbarger at Tatura internment camps.

Tatura Visit

19 April 2015

It was a highly successful visit to Tatura this year. About 35 Dunera Association members and friends gathered on a fine and windy autumn day, at the Tatura World War II Wartime Camps Museum with Dunera Boys, Bernhard Rothschild and Werner Haarburger. While enjoying the country hospitality we perused the many artefacts, reconstructions of huts, art works, letters, memorabilia and other items in the immense collection that is overseen by the local historical society.

It was a pleasure to welcome some first-time visitors to Tatura, including Singapore group descendant Reg Hilton, Dunera descendants Stephen Lewinsky and Bob Jacobs, and their respective families. Brothers Tom and Walter Firestone, sons of Frank Firestone (Feuerstein), as well as Melinda Mockridge (from the Duldig Studio) were also making their first visits.

Rebecca Silk spoke about the 544 internees who went directly from Port Melbourne to the camps at Tatura, and then the gradual move in 1941 of the remaining (approx. 2000) internees from Hay to Tatura. She talked about the goodwill between the Australian garrison and the internees and how this contributed to the overall experience, despite the captivity, that many Dunera Boys recalled. The exhibits in the museum and the extensive records show us that the internees occupied themselves by educational classes, teaching children from the family camp, musical performances, sport, arts and crafts, religious observance and study.

Arthur Knee spoke about the diverse range of internees and descendants he has met and guided around the campsites. They have included relatives of refugees and prisoners of war. However, Arthur finds that the Dunera and Singapore group people seem to be the most interested in the local internment history.

Geoff Reed then guided people to his property "Dunera", formerly Camp 2. There the group walked among the remains of the concrete slabs and drains from bathroom and kitchen blocks as well as brickwork from the garrison structures. Geoff pointed out the locations of the timber internee huts, the perimeter fences and the telephone lines which had not long been laid in the area. The group ended their tour on a hill overlooking the Warranga Basin Reservoir which gave an idea of the scale of the wartime camps – 7 camps covering 30 square kilometres.

One visitor remarked that the masses of barbed wire, wind and isolation of the area really brought home how remarkable it was that the internees remained as positive as they did!

We are once again grateful to Mignon Campbell, Lurline and Arthur Knee, the president, committee and volunteers from the Tatura and District Historical Society for their hospitality and kindness.

—Rebecca Silk



The Dunera Scandal

The circumstances surrounding the Dunera story are usually referred to as an 'Oy vey' event, a downbeat happening. I suspect that the media is partly responsible for this. Bad news sells. It paid them to listen primarily to the angriest amongst us, usually older fellow internees who were separated from families, businesses and careers.

I was young. While I was as unhappy behind barbed wire as anyone, it dawned on me not that many years after the war, I was lucky to have been interned and shipped to the antipodes. Little by little my original resentment evaporated.

Had I remained in Britain a free man or had I been released from internment after a few months as some were, I would have joined the army as I did here and transferred from the Pioneer Corps to a more active unit when this became possible. My friend Fritz Becker, another kindertransport child who lived in the same refugee hostel and was interned a few days after I was, was not sent to Canada or Australia. Released after a few months, he eventually joined the army and fell in Holland after D-Day.

When I arrived in Harwich I was fifteen. Interned at seventeen, I was then working in a Lambeth factory. On compulsory overtime after the war began, I left the Sutton



hostel at 6.30am to return at 6pm. My take-home pay was sixteen shillings a week. Letters to my parents in Germany record that I tried to attend evening classes – I had left school three years early – but I was just too tired.

If I had survived the war in the British Army, how would I have earned a living? Would I have returned to my factory? I don't know. I had no marketable skills.

As a Dunera Boy, I had plenty of time during the 16 months of Australian internment to improve my English language skills – Agatha Christie and her fellow novelists are responsible for this – and to upgrade my educational qualifications via the 'Collegium Taturense'. Thanks to Army Education correspondence courses while serving in the 8th Australian Employment Company, I had matriculated by the end of the war. As a young ex-serviceman, I was able to apply for training under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme.

Australia, unlike Europe, recovered quickly and became the mecca of immigration from many lands. The country grew rapidly and we grew with it. Our population today is more than threefold the population of 75 years ago.

Also, it seems to me that if one is going to be an immigrant, one might as well be one in a 'new' country where everybody is either a newcomer or the offspring of one. Even the aborigines came from elsewhere.

Thus, I am convinced that we who found ourselves on this far-away continent due to the vicissitudes of war, have drawn not the short straw but the longest straw available.

One cannot escape problems, setbacks and difficulties wherever one is. But it is my belief that most of us are likely to have had a better deal here than anywhere else. So I can tell my children and grandchildren that I hit the jackpot in the dim distant past when I was interned and forcibly 'transported' to Australia like the convicts of old.

— Bern Brent

Otto, 'One of Our Boys'

That's how Captain Broughton used to refer to men of his flock, 'One of Our Boys'. I read with interest the stories of some in the last Dunera News. But we were not all citizens of note. In Hay or Tatura, we were a multi-faceted bunch. Here is the story of my encounters with Otto, ex-8th Australian Employment Company.

One evening, perhaps a year after the war, I mounted the narrow stairs of a St. Kilda coffee lounge in Barkly Street, just around the corner from Acland Street. Tables and chairs ringed the minute dance floor where couples swayed to the hits of the time coming from a corner pick-up. I noticed Otto on his own at a small table. As I sat down next to him I ordered a cup of tea from a passing waitress.

We had both been one of Broughton's 'Boys'. I remembered Otto as a loner, a bit of an oddball, and I have always been interested in oddballs. A waiter by profession, from one of the Austrian backblocks, he was slight and small, in his mid-thirties and probably over 10 years older than I was. He told me he was working in his old trade again, dealing them off the arm at one of the posh Italian eateries in Russell Street.

My tea arrived and I let out a curse as I grabbed the el-cheapo glass cup without handles. It was piping hot and I had to use my paper napkin to wrap the glass in



Captain Edward Broughton

Otto, 'One of Our Boys'

order to drink from it. I think I danced with two or three of the ladies, taking them back to their tables after each dance as was the custom at the time. After about an hour I bade Otto good-night.

In 1949 I left Melbourne, lived in Sydney and several NSW country towns, spent a year at sea visiting Asian, African and European ports, taking leave in my native Germany. Eventually I returned to Sydney and got married. Then we spent nine years in South-East Asia. Eventually, we returned home and I accepted a position with the International Education Branch of the Department of Education and Science in Canberra.

It must have been in the mid '70s – I was then a family man with three children and a mortgage – when I dropped into a Sydney Kings Cross bar for a midi and I ran into Otto again, leaning against the bar.

Otto told me, almost as a badge of honour, that he had 'done time' in Pentridge and said, in response to my query, that he was now working as a plumber. I had not been particularly scandalised about his having 'done time' but I could not see him behind a spanner. He must have noticed my astonishment for he added, "It's alright, Bernie, I work as a plumber's mate. It's a union racket. I carry his bag." Otto had not changed all that much since I last saw him. He was a regular at one of the illegal baccarat schools around the Cross. After half an hour I went on my way.

About 15 years down the track, I was in the same area walking south down Darlinghurst Road when I noticed shuffling ahead of me a little old man clad in a felt hat, cotton cardigan and slippers. He looked like Otto. I overtook him and looked around. It WAS Otto. I stopped and said, "Otto, how are you?" Otto stopped, inhaled the fag in his lips, coughed a smoker's cough, and replied po-faced "alright". I said, "Otto, come and have a cuppa." Otto shook his head again expressionless. Puzzled, I asked, "Otto, do you know who I am?" He coughed again and replied, "Yes, I do, you don't like hot tea in glass cups." I said, "Otto, you shouldn't smoke so much. It doesn't do you any good." Otto replied, again po-faced, in a monotone, "So what. Living isn't everything." I turned around and went on my way.

Some years later Henry Lipmann, to whom I had mentioned this encounter, told me that he had seen Otto's death notice in the Sydney Morning Herald.

—Bern Brent



Bern Brent

New Dunera exhibition at the Jewish Museum of Australia

In September 2015, the Jewish Museum of Australia will launch a temporary exhibition to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the landing of HMT Dunera in Australia.

Drawing predominantly on the Museum's own collection, we will be exploring the creative and intellectual output of the internees from the Hay and Tatura internment camps.

The show is likely to include examples of art and memorabilia carefully selected to help illustrate the role that painting, theatre, sport and music played in the lives of the prisoners. The creative and intellectual life of the camp is well represented within this unique collection. It includes paintings, sketches, sculptures, music scores, posters, programs and pamphlets.

While the Museum will only be able to put a small amount of material on display in this exhibition, much of the work has never been seen before!

The Museum continues to conduct research into this fascinating Collection on a daily basis and is working with a number of researchers to help enhance knowledge about the internees and everyday life in the camps.

The exhibition will run from Sunday 6 September until Sunday 29 November 2015.

Dunera Association members and friends are invited to a special viewing on Thursday 10 September at 6.30pm, at the Jewish Museum of Australia, 26 Alma Road, St. Kilda.



The Wonder of the Mail

The development of the postal service, from mail coach to today.

Lecture by Harry Jeidels (Jay)

Wednesday 26 February, 8pm, Mess Hut 4

Donated by Mrs Cassia Jay, 3355

Artwork by Harry Jeidels

DULDIG STUDIO

Discoveries of Art *Behind the Wire*

In September 1940, three weeks after the Dunera arrived in Sydney Harbour, another boat – the elegant Queen Mary sailed in, carrying its cargo of interned ‘enemy aliens’, this time from Singapore. The 60 families, of German, Austrian or Italian background were taken directly to Tatura, in country Victoria, most staying there until 1942.

Polish born Viennese sculptor, Karl Duldig, was one of these. Like the others, he and his family were confined in the internment camp for 18 months. Now on display in the Duldig Studio’s current exhibition, *Art Behind the Wire*, Karl’s sketches, drawings and sculptures of this period document his feelings and give an unusual insight into this time – the first time that refugee children had been placed behind barbed wire in Australia.

The exhibition has also given the Studio an opportunity to delve deeper into what life must have been like for these families. Interviews with adult and child internees and research into their collections have uncovered some remarkable material. Karl’s sketches show daily life – the chores that were allocated, the communication through barbed wire between Compound C, where single men, including some Dunera men, were placed in 1941 and Compound D, the family Compound.

As early as two months after arrival, an entertainment, ‘Tatura Melody’ with dancing and musical interludes, was produced under the guidance of Hans Blair (Blau). This cover, now in the collection of Tatura Museum, and another remarkable hand coloured one for the ‘Laugh and Forget’ concert were drawn with wit, by architectural engineer Ludwig Meilich. In this finely drawn image laughing soldiers stand on guard, and nursing ‘angels’ float above the camp. This cover is from the collection of Ilse Blair. Sadly Meilich died shortly after this in the camp. Karl also drew posters for the soccer matches organised, such as ‘Football Sensation – Rheumatism vs Gallstones’! Again, a good sense of humour is in evidence, necessary for life, “far from habitation on a lonely hill” as one appeal described it.

Another collection, that of Ruth Simon (Gottlieb) has revealed a photograph of the wedding of Hans Fischer and Lotte Calm, permission for which was given, after some initial resistance by authorities, in 1941.

“Life was what we made of it” as internee Kurt Arndt described it. As a result of this exhibition, the third in a series tracing the Duldig family’s journey from Vienna, via Singapore to Australia, we have been able to gain further insight into the life these ‘enemy aliens’ lived, behind barbed wire in country Victoria during the Second World War.

—Melinda Mockridge, The Duldig Studio

IMAGES COURTESY OF THE DULDIG STUDIO



Unknown photographer. Wedding of Lotte Calm and Hans Fischer, 1941



Karl Duldig.
Communication through barbed wire (2)c. 1941
pen and ink, coloured pencil, pastel. 30 x 21cm
© The Duldig Studio



Karl Duldig.
Football sensation. 1941
pen and ink. 19.8 x 10cm
© The Duldig Studio



Ludwig Meilich. Concert cover, Tatura Melody 1940. (Meilich collection, Tatura Museum)



Ludwig Meilich. Concert cover, Laugh and Forget 1941. (Collection I. Blair)

Henry Mayer

By Ken Inglis

Extracts from *In search of Henry Mayer*
– *Australian Journal of Political Science*, VOL 50, No 1 7-24



Henry Mayer was born on 4 December 1919 to well-off parents in the southwestern German city of Mannheim, in the traditionally liberal region of Baden. They named him Helmut. Earlier generations of the family had been wheat merchants and brewers, with English connections and a distaste for Prussian authoritarianism. His father Oscar was a prominent lawyer. Helmut had a half-sister, Liselotte, known as Lilo, whose father, an Austrian army officer, had been killed in the Great War. His mother, Rosemarie, was Czech by birth and Catholic by upbringing. Oscar's father was Jewish, though not observant. Oscar was an atheist, a freethinking citizen of the Weimar republic, intellectually inclined and with a club foot. His mother was gregarious, rode horses and had a lover.

Henry would say later that he never knew he was Jewish until the Nazis shot his headmaster. That was in 1933, Hitler's first year as Chancellor, when Henry was 14. In 1934, Oscar Mayer left Mannheim for Nice, where he would spend the remaining 10 years of his life, taking his son and leaving Rosemarie and Lilo in Germany; by 1939 they were living in Switzerland.

Helmut Mayer had attended a private school in Mannheim and in the next five years enrolled at schools in Switzerland, Italy and England, where he lived from 1936, having been registered as an alien on 17 September of that year. He would boast later that he had been expelled from several schools – the number varied in the telling – but recalled the name only of Millfield, a progressive school in Somerset established in 1935, which he found more congenial than any of its continental predecessors. In 1937, he qualified for the University of Oxford's School Certificate, having passed with credit in History, French, German and General Science. Helmut had become, informally, Henry, and he was on the way to being anglicised.

After Millfield, Henry lived in London at his uncle's expense and worked for him. Late in 1939 they became estranged after quarrelling over politics. Until arrested in mid-1940 Henry lived in a refugee hostel in London.

Henry was intermittently employed, according to his later accounts, in a variety of hand-to-mouth jobs on the fringes of literature, journalism, bohemia and show business: short stories for pulp magazines, scripts for the BBC, interpreting, fortune-telling and displays of magic, part-ownership of a night club and publicist for a jazz band.

He also started an involvement with the nascent Socialist Party of Great Britain using the name Henry Holmes, a name he had chosen because 'he did not like the

German name of Mayer'. As Holmes he had become a supporter in 1939 of the tiny Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB) after hearing one of its members, Tony Turner, speak in Hyde Park.

He became an enemy alien on 3 September 1939, as did some 70,000 Germans and Austrians living in the UK. Summoned to appear before tribunals established to assess their likely loyalty, they were placed in one of three categories. Category A people, those who could be expected to favour the enemy, were to be arrested immediately. Category B people, those doubtful cases, were to remain free but subject to certain restrictions. Category C people, those who were anti-Nazi, either refugees or long-term residents, were to remain unconditionally at liberty, exempt from both internment and restrictions. The tribunals put 569 enemy aliens in Category A, around 6700 in Category B and the vast majority, some 66,000, among them Henry Mayer, in Category C. On the advice of the Home Office, tribunals categorised most Category C aliens as 'Refugees from Nazi oppression', a designation now officially applied to Henry.

By 1940, the internment of enemy aliens was no longer described officially as temporary. Henry was ordered to leave his London hostel on 27 June. He gave his occupation as journalist and his religion as 'none (Jewish origin)' and other details; height six feet, weight 140 pounds, complexion fair, hair black and eyes grey.

After a few days Henry was among internees packed into trains for another camp at Huyton, an unfinished housing estate on the edge of Liverpool (UK). Conditions there too would be condemned after official investigation. On 9 July he was removed from Huyton, and from England, to begin the still more arduous experience of 59 days and nights aboard the Hired Military Transport *Dunera*, bound, though he and his shipmates did not know it, for Australia.

In later years Henry was reluctant to talk about the voyage. In 1980, reviewing Ben Zion Patkin's book *The Dunera internees*, he offered this summary recollection:

Alleged destination: Canada. The eight weeks' trip was extremely unpleasant. The Dunera was attacked, though the torpedos missed. Food was scanty, water even more so. We were crammed below. When allowed upon deck we were forced to run round it while the British Army guards amused themselves by shooting at bottles to see how successfully we, barefooted, could avoid the shattered glass. The soldiers stole all they could – wedding rings, watches, documents, clothes. We were horrified to discover we had been lied to – our real destination was Australia, to us the arse of the globe.

Henry was among the internees who were sent to Hay, where he was in Camp 8. In the laconic idiom of the Australian soldiers who guarded them, Camp 7 was Kosher and Camp 8 Communist. Inmates were more apt to describe the inhabitants of Camp 8, who included Henry, as 'Political's'.

The authorities left the internees to govern themselves. Henry observed the

process with a sardonic eye: ‘an increasingly complex and absurd structure of hut captains, camp spokesmen and camp parliament emerged under the astonished and friendly eyes of the Australian army. Lawyers and ideologues vented their boredom on ever more complex “camp constitutions”’. The arrangements reminded him of Weimar just before Hitler, and so were bound to attract the scorn of a young revolutionary who had been a child under that hapless regime. His own English was fluent and flawless, spoken with a slight German accent. He enlarged his vocabulary by copying words from a dictionary on to pieces of toilet paper. His classes given to fellow internees were recorded as being very well received.

Along with the other Hay internees, Henry was moved to Tatura and in April 1942 joined the 8th Employment Company. Henry spent the next four years in the 8th Employment Company, a unit composed principally of *Dunera* internees. The 8th Employment Company had an unusual commanding officer. Captain Edward Renata Muhunga Broughton was a New Zealander of mixed Maori and European ancestry and Catholic upbringing. Broughton was proud and protective of his men, who respected and even revered him, above all for his sympathetic understanding of the customs and convictions of the Jews among them.

Henry’s quick tongue, and his defiance of the petty tyrannies of army life, provoked many entries on his service record. He was fined or confined for refusing to obey lawful commands, for being absent without leave, for failing to attend parades and for being incorrectly dressed. Proficiency pay was awarded, and then withdrawn for breach of conduct. This list of peccadilloes appeared not to have troubled Broughton or the officers who succeeded him later in the war.

In 1943 Henry began an association with the Socialist Party of Australia which was known to government authorities. Henry’s sheer love of argument about political and philosophical causes seems to have been a main attraction for him.

As the war dragged on, *Dunera* internees in and out of uniform waited with hope and dread for news of their families’ fate. Henry knew that his father Oscar had been living in Nice, which was successively under Vichy French, then Italian, then German occupation, and that his mother Rosemarie and sister Lilo were safe in Switzerland where they would stay after the war. Henry’s father had died of a heart attack on 5 June 1944, the eve of D-Day. As his father had hoped, Henry would resume in Australia the life of a student. On 11 February 1944, along with other members of the 8th Employment Company, he was granted the status of a refugee alien by the Australian government, and in 1949 he became an Australian citizen.

Members of the 8th Employment Company were offered a benefit unseen at the time of their enlistment, when they were deemed eligible for the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS), a program launched in 1945 for the higher

education of people who had served in the armed forces. Many of Henry’s army comrades were already studying at the University of Melbourne under the scheme, and some had already graduated when he enrolled there. Kurt Baier from Vienna and Peter Herbst from Heidelberg had been attracted to the philosophy department, the Viennese Franz Philipp to history and then to fine arts, the Berlin born Hugo Wolfsohn to the new department of political science. In 1947, the year Henry embarked on an Honours degree in political science, Wolfsohn became a tutor and the two men began a close friendship and intellectual alliance.

Henry perhaps contributed more to the education of his classmates than any of their academic mentors did. They remembered him vividly. To T.H. (Harry) Rigby, encountering him after a high school education and three years in the army, he was: decidedly ‘continental’ in appearance, dauntingly erudite – he had not only read those books we encountered for the first time in our reading guides, but already knew what was wrong with them; a fabled Don Juan, flagrantly irreverent towards our several sacred cows, he was our one true cosmopolite, and as such an object variously of pride, awe, delight, annoyance and bemusement.

Year after year Henry topped the honours lists and displayed his flair for rough and tumble argument at meetings of student societies around the Arts building and the Union, often abetted by Wolfsohn.

The *Melbourne University Magazine (MUM)* had been published annually since 1907 by the Students’ Representative Council. In 1949, *MUM* was edited by two refugees, Henry Mayer and Max Corden, a son of German Jews, who had left Breslau at the age of 10 in 1938. They were not the first refugees to edit the magazine. In 1944 it had been co-edited, and in 1946 edited, by Paul Edwards, formerly Eisenstein, born in Vienna. The choice of Edwards, Mayer and Corden was quiet testimony to the University of Melbourne’s hospitality towards the alien newcomers.

Beyond the classroom Henry could be encountered at meetings of the Andersonian Free Thought Society, the club which attracted Sydney’s brightest and best, as the Labor Club drew Melbourne’s. He was also a presence in gatherings of the Libertarian Society either on campus or in one of the group’s favourite pubs. The Libertarians – the Push – were a group fluid in membership, hostile to ideologies of right or left, anarchistically convinced that the institutions of all societies were repressive and prone to argue – wrongly, the master insisted – that a principled attachment to sexual promiscuity followed logically from Anderson’s system of free thought. Their historian Anne Coombs records that Henry was a donor to short-lived Push magazines. He was evidently delighted to come across a philosophy so in harmony with his own inclinations.

After completing his studies Henry began an academic career. Henry had been quickly promoted from teaching fellow to tenured lecturer, and in November 1956, 16 years after being transported from England as a prisoner on the *Dunera*, he was

returning in Orient Line comfort on the Orcades for his first sabbatical leave. Also on board was Elaine Smith. They married in London and Henry became devoted to her.

In his academic career, promotions followed and by 1970 Henry was Professor of Political Theory at ANU. His publications were incredibly well researched and numerous.

His appetite for hard work was legendary. A colleague received a note headed 'Christmas Day', and Henry confessed that he did take off one day a year, Boxing Day. He was now writing prolifically in a variety of modes. When his former pupil Murray Goot compiled a descriptive bibliography on the occasion of Henry's retirement, he gave it a title suggested by the author himself: *Henry Mayer's 'Immortal works': Scholarly, semi-scholarly and not very scholarly at all.*

It ran to more than 700 items. There were five edited and co-edited volumes entitled *Australian politics: A reader (Second reader etc.)*, primers for undergraduates and their teachers all over the country. There were two co-authored editions of *A research guide to Australian politics*. There were introductions to *Sydney Studies in Politics*, monographs in a series founded by Henry and Spann. There were many items for *A.P.S.A. News* and *Politics*, organs of the Australian Political Studies Association which he largely created and nurtured.

There were scores of book reviews in professional journals and newspapers. There was much else, including contributions to *Media Information Australia*, the commodious journal he had founded in 1976 and edited for the rest of his life, contributing a vast number of 'Media Briefs' to each issue.

'There is, quite simply', wrote the author of this survey, John Tulloch, 'no other media academic in the world who would begin to approach this range of competence'.

Between his retirement from the Sydney chair in 1984 and his death in 1991 Henry held visiting professorships at the University of New South Wales and Macquarie, the former in sociology and the latter in mass communication: 'political science' and 'political theory' were notions too narrow to contain him.

In his last years, as earlier, Henry had no inclination to speak or write about his own past. Colleagues and friends learned little of the boy in Europe, the youth in England, the young man on the *Dunera* and in the camps at Hay and Tatura and the army. In their tribute on his retirement, Curnow and Turner expressed their 'regret that we were given only occasional glimpses of his colourful past'. The entry he supplied for *Who's Who in Australia* made no reference to his internment. He did not attend reunions of *Dunera* internees.

Henry Mayer read and critiqued the books on the *Dunera* as they were published. Henry praised Pearl for not offering that stereotype, but reproached him for calling

the *Dunera* a floating concentration camp: 'treatment was brutal and outrageous but nowhere near that of any concentration camp – Nazi, Russian or other – I know about'. To suffer for 59 days, Henry wrote, 'is an option many of the permanently deprived of the world would love to have'. He commended Pearl for careful research, while wondering whether he or any other author would have taken up the story as a case study in injustice 'had many *Dunera* people been (say) average businessmen or trade unionists instead of professionals and academics'. He noted his own presence in the book, on the 'by now inevitable list of people who made a "contribution" in which I do very well indeed'.

He liked to describe himself as an atheist, but whether he liked it or not, Australians perceived him as Jewish. Brett, surveying the history of political studies in Australia, places him among 'Jewish émigré intellectuals', and Coleman sees him as among 'great Jewish exiles'.

His legacy is rich. *Politics*, of which he was the founding editor, continues as the *Australian Journal of Political Science*. An annual lecture is delivered in his name. The Australian Political Studies Association awards a bi-annual Henry Mayer prize for an outstanding book on Australian politics. MIA continues under changing editorships, the second initial now standing for International. The Mitchell Library, which forms part of the State Library of New South Wales, houses a collection of his papers. A massive literature on communications, assembled and annotated by Henry, is held at RMIT University in Melbourne. There is material in plenty for anybody bold enough to examine thoroughly his contribution (that word he disliked) to intellectual and cultural history. I suspect that he will remain inscrutable.

For full story and references – *In search of Henry Mayer*
– *Australian Journal of Political Science*, VOL 50, No 1 7-24.

Prof. Henry Mayer died in 1991, at his home in Lane Cove, Sydney, he was 71.

The leading lecturer worked until his death. He was a visiting professor of sociology at the University of NSW and a visiting professor in mass communication at Macquarie University. He also had a 34-year association with Sydney University.

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.			
REPORT ON PRISONER OF WAR			
1. Identification No. <i>E40212 (95718) 75219</i>	Surname <i>MAYER</i>	Other Names <i>HENRY</i>	Nationality <i>GERMAN</i>
2. Date of Birth <i>7-12-1919</i>	Private Address <i>112 Westbourne Dr</i>	Place of Birth <i>MANHEIM, GERMANY</i>	Business Address <i>London, W.2.</i>
Occupation <i>JOURNALIST</i>	If registered, State Place		
Religion <i>None (Jewish origin)</i>	Registration No.		
3. Place of Capture <i>LONDON</i>	Date of Internment <i>27-6-1940</i>	From whom received <i>British Army</i>	
Date of Capture <i>27.6.40</i>	Place of Internment <i>Hay Camp</i>	From whom received <i>British Army</i>	
Height <i>6 feet 11 1/2 in.</i>	Weight <i>140 lbs.</i>	Complexion <i>Fair</i>	Hair <i>Black Grey</i>
			Eyes <i>None.</i>
4. Reason for Internment: <i>"ENEMY ALIEN"</i> <i>(Refugee from Nazi Oppression)</i>			
5. If medically examined? <i>No.</i>	6. Personal Effects: <i>nil</i>		
Medical Report No. <i>1/2</i>			

Walter Benedikt

Eisenstaedt 17 Nov 1923 – Melbourne 19 Apr 2015

Walter Benedikt was born on the 17 November 1923 in Eisenstaedt, a small country town in Austria not far from Vienna. Walter was the middle child of Helene and Joseph Benedikt and had an older brother Eugene and younger brother Frederick. The boys were all close in age. Walter's father was a fruitmonger who collected and sold local produce at the Vienna market. Walter finished school early to help his father in the business due to the father's continued poor health. Walter's father had a massive heart attack and passed away when Walter was 13 years of age. Walter's mother taught at the local Jewish school.

Prior to the outbreak of World War II England took 10,000 predominantly Jewish children on what were known as Kindertransport rescues. At the age of 14, Walter was smuggled out of Eisenstaedt on a Kindertransport and eventually arrived at Stockport, England. He was placed into a foster family (unknown whether the family was Jewish or non-Jewish) for a period of two years, during which he completed a toolmakers qualification.

In 1940, Walter, along with other "enemy aliens" was on the HMT Dunera after declining Canada as an option, because, he said, it was too cold. The 59-day trip was a harsh environment until they finally arrived in Sydney on 6 September 1940. Walter was initially interned in Hay, then moved to Orange and finally onto Tatura on 19 April 1941. Walter, as did others, joined the 8th Australian Employment Company and became a true Aussie. Walter became Wally and he loved his years in the Australian Army, considering them the best years of his life. Wally later thoroughly enjoyed the annual Dunera reunions as he saw army friends there.

Wally loved his mother and father with all his heart, and adored his baby brother Frederick and older brother Eugene. Tragically, his mother and younger brother were murdered at Auschwitz.

Wally was reunited with his older brother Eugene in 1996 after 60 years of being apart. Both had thought they were the only survivor. Wally and Eugene then kept in regular contact, writing many letters and spending holidays together in Austria and Australia. Wally always said he had no family until he was reunited with his brother Eugene.

Wally never really spoke about his time in England, the trip to Australia or being interned. However, he did share many stories of his time in the Army. These



Michelle and Tori with Walter Benedikt

included tales of chasing women, locating smokes and stockings, and generally getting up to no good.

Whilst in the Army and visiting the Russian club he meet his wife Grace (Grace was serving in the Australian Air Force). His pick-up line was, "I have some free tickets to Luna Park, how about it love!"

After getting married, Wally and Grace lived in Prahran above a butcher's shop, and then at 77 Gower Street, Kensington where Noel was born. They then rented 14 Churchill Avenue, Maidstone where Michelle, Rodney, Terry and Victoria (Vicki Tori) were born.

Wally and Grace made some lifelong friends and there were plenty of loud and late night parties with the Vicarys, Evans and the Scotts.

Wally worked at Borthwick's meatworks and was never out of a job. One of his proudest achievements was buying a home for the family. He was dedicated to his workmates, became a union delegate and once called a strike.

Wally loved Grace beyond what could ever be imagined, and after she passed away in 1985, he said "no one would ever replace my Grace".

I believe he taught all his children and grandchildren what Love really means.

Walter was immensely proud of his ever growing family – two surviving children, fifteen grandchildren, seven great grandchildren, and three more on the way. He was also thrilled when he was reunited with his brother, and his family, after so many years apart.

He never stopped loving his wife, children and grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by them all.

—Vicki Tori Tilley

George Hermann Strauss

Vienna 23 Dec 1923 – Melbourne 20 Aug 2014

George Strauss's parents were well into their forties at the time of his birth. His sister Lili had died in her teens shortly before George came along, which made him the extra special apple of his parents' eyes.

Although his immediate family was not wealthy his extended family was, and this gave him an understanding of what it was like to live on "both sides of the river". His pre-war experiences included alpine holidays in the Tyrolean village of Kals, boxing lessons, music lessons and scouting, while his toys included a spud gun and anything else he might want, provided he asked for it in his paternal grandmother's presence, as he knew she would over-rule his father and give him all he wished for.

This all changed however, with the rise of Nazism.

With the rise of fascism, George became a refugee, fleeing to England on a Kindertransport. To get onto the Kindertransport he needed a particular document which involved standing in an impossibly long queue. Young George solved this problem by climbing the drain pipe at the rear of the building to the first floor and entering via the toilet window. Such was his instinct for survival!

On his arrival in England at the age of 15, he found work in a kitchen and later in a tannery. He always claimed that he was well treated in England, where he met his first love – his landlady's daughter. Her family encouraged the relationship and he stayed in contact with her well after leaving England for Australia on the Dunera.

George made the most of his time as an internee in Hay, completing his secondary schooling in pursuit of his ambition of becoming a secondary school teacher (he had seen the ups and downs of his father's small book binding business and decided early on to seek secure employment with a consistent income). While at Hay he was exposed to the influences of the other internees. Some taught him about Judaism, others the arts and education and many became his friends. It was during this time that he first came into contact with The Australian Students Christian Movement which helped him with the acquisition of textbooks. He was always very appreciative of the Movement's efforts, and more particularly of the support of its Secretary Miss Margaret Holmes, not only during his internment but afterwards as well. He also very much appreciated the support of the Croll family who were associated with Miss Holmes.



George Strauss, aged 15, just before he left Vienna.

At the end of the war George enrolled at Melbourne University. He took a position in a factory in Carlton making socks and he juggled his time between work and study commitments to make ends meet.

After completing his teacher training George married Val and took up a position in Bairnsdale in rural Victoria. Although a city boy by nature, he felt that if his marriage was to blossom, he needed to distance himself from his mother-in-law.

Upon arriving in Bairnsdale, George announced to his new wife that he was going to build a house.

She, coming from a background of skilled wood-working tradesmen, was astonished. She knew of the time, effort, knowledge and skills that would be needed for such a task and she also knew, given his middle class Viennese background, that he had little concept of the challenge he had just given himself.

However, she soon found that the man she had chosen to spend her life with had extraordinary energy, intelligence and resolve and the house he built still stands in the main street of Bairnsdale today, some 65 or so years later and nobody would suspect it to be the work of an untrained refugee. He built his house, while writing his Master's thesis and teaching full-time: an extraordinary effort by any measure!

After five years in Bairnsdale, George and wife Val returned to Melbourne with two infant children and settled in Frank Street in Box Hill South. While living there he worked in various teaching positions in various schools as he ambitiously and successfully sought promotions.

Always a man to pursue what interested him rather than take the easy route, George preferred teaching French to teaching German. His great passion was French literature and the Victorian Education Department awarded him a doctoral scholarship which allowed him to take his family to France for the year of 1968. Upon his return he took a position as Head of the English Department in the Teachers' Training College in Bathurst in NSW. After three years in Bathurst, George returned to Melbourne where he established the interpreter's course at RMIT before retiring in 1984.

In retirement he continued to pursue his interests in literature and in woodworking – writing for his own pleasure and making furniture. The family all have examples of his work which includes tables, chairs, beds and even clock cases.

As a man he had complete devotion to his family and was his wife's carer until his death. He also had "common sense" wisdom, for example, "... if they (government officials, sales people, superannuation companies, etc.) offer you something, the deal is very likely better for them than it is for you". His energy and intellect



George Strauss with Valda, 50 years after they met.

George Hermann Strauss

guaranteed that his family was always well provided for. He maintained a healthy dislike of Fascists everywhere and said recently that he had “never digested the fact that they had taken my mother” but he harboured no dislike for Germans or German goods. He had German friends and for most of his life, his preferred car was the air-cooled Volkswagen. He always had a policy of protecting his family from the horrors he had known in Europe and he refused to dine out on his past misery. He also had a policy of fitting in to his new country while remaining proudly, yet unobtrusively, Jewish.

In closing it is worth noting that, by any standard, this man’s contribution and commitment to Australia went well beyond that of the average person – migrant or otherwise: he was very much Austria’s loss and Australia’s gain.

Written by George’s son Philip, on behalf of the family.

IN MEMORY

Martin Merzbach

2 Mar 2015, New Milford, USA. Aged 97
Predeceased by Trudy, his beloved and adoring wife of 61 years. Devoted mother of Frances Howell and Ralph (Joan) Merzbach, and father-in-heart to Richard, Debbie, Donald and Ruth. Cherished grandfather of Diane, Debbie (Colt), Judy and Shelby (Evan), and grandfather-in-heart to Meredith and Amelia. Their lives and accomplishments gave him boundless joy and were well-known to anyone who would listen.

Interned by Britain where he had sought refuge from his native Germany during World War II, he was transported on the infamous ship Dunera to a camp in the Australian desert, from which he eventually made his way via another internment in Panama and a wartime stay in Ecuador, to the United States, of which he proudly became a citizen.

After a long career as a manufacturer’s representative he returned to the chamber music that had been his passion in earlier years, playing enthusiastically and often with his many like-minded friends. Trudy and his children and grandchildren lit up his life. After Trudy’s death he lived independently until his last weeks. He was known for his long walks through the neighborhood in almost any weather, often to The New Milford Senior Activity Center where he enjoyed good company, exercise and coffee, well into his 97th year.

Source: www.legacy.com

Harold H Stern

20 Jan 2015, Ambler, Pennsylvania, USA
Husband of Ellen (nee Norman), father of Lawrence (Marlyn) and Michael (Amy); Grandfather of Lauren, Alex, Rachel and Samantha.

Source: www.legacy.com

Werner Phillip

28 Jan 1921
– 12 Mar 2015,
Melbourne
Husband, father,
grandfather,
great-grandfather.
Died peacefully,
aged 94. One of the
last Dunera Boys.



Source: Tributes – *The Age*

George Strauss

23 Dec 1923, Vienna – 20 Aug 2014 Melbourne
Loved husband of Val. Father of Elsa, Philip, Margaret and Peter. Grandfather of Freyja, Konrad, Mitzi, Tekla, Cathy, Steven, Peter, Shelley, Michaela and Lara. Father-in-law to Loy (dec) and Aea. Grandfather-in-law to Miles, Lindsay, David, Marcel and Hannah. Great-grandfather to Harriet, Luca and Lachlan. A fine man.

Source: Tributes – *The Age*

Walter Benedikt

17 Nov 1923, Vienna – 19 Apr 2015, Melbourne
Reunited with his wife Grace, three sons and two grand-children. Passed away peacefully at home. Beloved Father and Poppy Wally to fifteen grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren with three more on the way. Poppy Wally was loved by all who met him.

Source: Tributes – *Herald Sun*

John (Klaus Werner) Kaufmann

16 May 2014, New York, USA
Born in Heidelberg, Germany on March 9, 1923, anti-Semitism forced him out of school in fifth grade and into a jewelry apprenticeship. He emigrated to England in 1939 and following the Nazi invasion

of Poland, was shipped to Australia as a prisoner of war. When Japan declared war, he fought in the Australian Army. After the war, he joined his parents in the US and worked as a jeweler on 47th street until 2011. In 1955, he married Janet Goldfarb. They were partners at home and work, until her death in 1998. They had two sons, Robert and David. As a family, they vacationed throughout the lower 48 states. He is survived by his two sons, daughter-in-law Shauna, David’s partner Janice, and granddaughters, Rachel and Eve.

Source: www.legacy.com

Fred S. Hochberg

18 Feb 2015, Delray Beach, Florida USA
Fred is survived by his wife of 67 years, Adele, son Mark, daughter Carolyn, and grandchildren, Rachel and Sarah. He served as president at the Congregation Agudath Achim for 26 years. World traveler, generous and compassionate, beloved by everyone who knew him.

Source: www.legacy.com

Amirah Inglis (wife of historian Ken Inglis) 2 May 2015, Melbourne

Died peacefully on May 2 at the age of 88. Loving wife of Ken Inglis for 50 years. Devoted mother of Deb, Judy and John Turner and stepmother of Jamie, Kate and Louise Inglis. Adored grandmother of Daniel, Alex, Kate and Amira Turner; of Tom, Gus and Bec Rigby; Nic and Duccio Nazari; and Rose and Eve Inglis. Admired mother-in-law, aunt, great-aunt and cousin of too many to mention. More than a sister and sister-in-law to Ian and Di.

Source: Tributes – *The Age*

Our very sincerest sympathies to all their families and friends.

SAVE THE DATES 2015

Hay Reunion and 75th Anniversary

Commemoration: September 5 and 6

Sydney Reunion and 75th Anniversary

Commemoration: September 9

Melbourne Reunion Luncheon:

November 10

News and information on events will be updated on our Dunera Association facebook page.

Friends of the Dunera Boys

Dunera Museum at Hay

Carol Bunyan – Volunteer Researcher
lcb5@bigpond.com

(NOTE: the first letter is a lowercase “L”)

Dunera Hay tours

David Houston
davidhouston23@bigpond.com

Committee members 2014–15

Rebecca Silk – President
rebeccasilk@bigpond.com

Peter Felder – Vice President
peter@felder.com.au

Selma Seknow – Secretary
duneraboys@gmail.com

Ron Reichwald – Treasurer
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