

Dunera News

NO. 79

JUNE 2010

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.



Foundation Editor:

The late Henry Lippmann OAM

Editorial responsibility:

The Committee of the Dunera Association



Letters and articles for publication are welcome.

Please remember to supply your name and contact details with your story.

Write to: newsletter@duneraassociation.com

All correspondence to:

The Secretary – Dunera Association
PO Box 19194, Southbank, Victoria 3006, Australia

Email: secretary@duneraassociation.com

Next material closing date: 15 September, 2010

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Our thanks to all the contributors.**OBITUARIES:**

Kurt Arndt – Melbourne
29 December, 2009.

Ralph Boehm – Melbourne
23 March, 2010, age 88.

Our very sincerest sympathies to their families and friends.

From the President and Committee

HAY has been the catchword for the last few months and will keep us busy for the next 3 months.

All preparations for the anniversary celebrations at Hay are underway and you can find full details about the program on page 7 and how to register within this edition of the newsletter. There is also information about the coach transport from Melbourne to Hay and a list of accommodation, which is booking out quickly.

We look forward to seeing everyone in Hay in September!

Mike Sondheim

Dunera online

Are you a friend of Facebook?

The Dunera Association has established a special group on Facebook to stay in touch with family and friends of the Dunera Boys around the world.

Just type **Friends of the Dunera Boys** in the search box and you'll find the listing to join.

The Dunera Association has established a website. It is in its very initial phases and will evolve over time. If you have any information you would like to suggest adding to the website, please email the info and/or photos to –
info@duneraassociation.com

Cover image:

Courtesy of the National Library of Australia

Attributed to Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack
(1893–1965)

Hay Camp 1940-41, c.1941
woodcut, printed in black ink; 14.0 x 11.2 cm
Papers of Hans Lindau (1940–1943)
Manuscripts Collection, MS 5225

Sydney Dunera Reunion – 7 September 2010

The Sydney reunion will take place at the landing spot of the Dunera, Pyrmont Pier 21 at Darling Harbour (now called Jones Bay Wharf). On Tuesday, 7 September, exactly one day after the actual landing 70 years ago, events will begin in the early afternoon at the Dunera Museum in Pirrama Road, and refreshments will then be served at Doltone House.

Car parking is available nearby or the light rail is available from Central.

Overseas attendees:

- The three Stern brothers are planning to attend; Brian from the USA, Richard and Nicholas (renowned climate economist) from the UK.
- The Wyants from Canada also plan to attend.
- From Israel, Mary-Clare Adam, a descendant of the Dunera Boys, plans to come.

For more information, contact Peter Arnott in Sydney on (02) 9419 6355 or Peter Felder in Melbourne on (03) 9561 2834.

Attendees at last year's Sydney reunion



Renewing acquaintances

We have established contact with the following three Dunera Boys who have lost contact or have never been in our Association records.

ERNST LION

We established contact with Ernst through his nephew Peter Lion in Sydney. Ernst lives in London. He was interned as a 16-year-old. He went from the Dunera to Hay Camp 8, then returned on the ship Stirling Castle to the UK. He joined the British Army, was at Normandy and with the Occupation Forces in Germany. He was a regular at the London reunion luncheons until the UK Dunera Association folded.

BERNHARD BERGER

Bernhard was a long standing Dunera friend of Ernst Lion. They returned to UK together on the Stirling Castle (Oct 1941). He had a similar British Army career and established a business close to Ernst Lion's shop in London. Bernhard, now 87, came from Dortmund. He got married in England and in 1950 decided to try his luck back in Australia. Bernhard was an all-round sportsman. He participated in the sporting club, Bar Kochba,

specialising in boxing (trained in Hay) and travelled the world extensively over the years, usually meeting with Ernst in London, and once with late Dunera Boy, Eric Eckstein, while Eric was in Düsseldorf on a teaching assignment.

In Melbourne Bernhard got to know some Dunera people but never attended functions, so he remained unknown to our organisation.

HAROLD (Hellmut) STERN,

Harold left Frankfurt as a 16-year-old. On the Dunera, he was on the lower deck, deck 3 amongst 300 others. He was in Camp 8 in Hay, and went fruitpicking in Kyabram with Dunera Boy, Steven Strauss (later Judge Strauss). Harold served in the 8th Australian Employment Company. After being discharged, he spent another year in Melbourne employed at Charley's shoe store in Northcote which belonged to friends of Mike Sondheim's.

Harold went to the USA in 1947 to join his mother, who escaped on one of the last boats out of Lisbon three months before Pearl Harbor.

– Mike Sondheim

From the Treasurer

The Dunera Association has decided to no longer offer subscriptions; rather the Association will offer memberships, for which there will be an annual premium.

The membership fee will enable the Association to perpetuate the memories of the Dunera Boys for the Boys and their families and friends.

The membership fees will be used to fund the publication of the Dunera Newsletter, to develop and maintain a website for the Association, to subsidise relevant events, such as reunions, for members and to assist any urgent needs of the Dunera Boys.

Last year the Association collected more than \$3,000 in subscriptions and donations from members, for which we are extremely grateful.

I encourage you all to become members of the Dunera Association.

Ron Reichwald, Treasurer

Membership Payment Policy:

1. A fee of \$20 per annum will be payable by members (one fee per family/household).
2. Dunera Boys and their spouses or widows are automatically members; a membership fee does not apply.
3. Pensioners and those in genuine need of assistance will also be looked after. Any applications for fee relief should be addressed to the Association Treasurer, Ron Reichwald. Contact details below.
4. Donations have been the welcome practice over the years and contribute largely to our funds.



Annual Membership Fee and Donation for 2010-11

Name: _____

Address: _____

Membership (\$20 per household) _____

Membership: \$ _____

Donation: \$ _____

Total payment enclosed: \$ _____

Fees and donations can be remitted to:

UK: Anthony Field

c/o – 12 Bouverie Gardens, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 ORQ, England

USA: Steven Guttman

c/o – 359 Vernon Street, San Francisco, California 94132, USA

Australia: Ron Reichwald

c/o – 4 Callantina Court, Frankston, Victoria 3199, Australia

Dunera Boys commemorate 70 years in Australia in Hay

Why has Hay become so special to us

I am one of the more than 2500 internees on the HMT *Dunera* that arrived in Sydney after 8 weeks at sea in conditions that have become the subject of much writing and publication.

Australian troops exercised the usual rough and ready army routine but must have been amazed at our bedraggled look. Australian authorities were completely uninformed by the British of our status.

The guards on the train to Hay were curious to listen to our explanations, mostly given in broken English, and they tried to understand the circumstances. In traditional Aussie style they relaxed and became friendly, offering smokes (showing how to roll your own). At stops during the all-night journey, we received sandwiches and fruit, not having seen anything like that for months. It was a huge contrast to the treatment on the *Dunera*.

Arriving in Hay mid-morning in bright sunshine, we were faced with the same situation of complete ignorance of our status and what had been happening. We were marched under guard from the station to the campsite, the gates were shut, and this became our home, within the barbed wire fences and watchtowers with machine guns.

However, as it was sensed we were anything but enemies, their attitude relaxed.

We were given fresh sandwiches and fruit, hot tea and finally a hot meal. All that in a relatively friendly atmosphere created by the soldiers; it was our second experience of Aussie spirit.

Life in Hay became tolerable despite hot days, duststorms, downpours and lots of flies. Nine months in Hay was followed by a similar time in Tatura.

So much of our first experiences with Hay.

How and why did Hay become our focal place?

Following our release, was army service, studies, marriage etc. About 20 years later we had our first reunion in Melbourne in the 1960s. Approximately 200 people attended, and there was great rejoicing as many Dunera Boys had not seen each other for years. It became the forerunner of regular events.

The Dunera Association came into being in the late 1980s and we started to think of our approaching 50th anniversary.

My suggestion of commemorating our 50th in Hay, rather than arguing between Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne, was reluctantly accepted, with some doubts.

No one had any connections with Hay. My approach to the Hay Shire was met by an invitation to visit and discuss all the aspects of venue, accommodation, catering etc.

Starting early 1989, I received much help from Councillor Mike Beckwith (later Shire President) and

his Tourist Officer in making necessary arrangements for the first weekend in September 1990. The festivities were a tremendous success, attended by almost 100 Dunera Boys, families and friends, including 30 from overseas. Hay people spared no effort in making us welcome. Banners across the road greeted us on arrival. A guided tour to the campsite where a commemorative plaque was dedicated, was followed by a visit to the old goal (museum) then to the cemetery where one Dunera Boy was buried next to seven Jewish graves dating back to the 1870s.

The festivities culminated with an official dinner at the RSL club. The guests were handed a souvenir bag containing a piece of the original barbed wire, a Hay magazine, coloured copies of the Camp 7 banknotes designed by one of our artists and printed by the local newspaper. The originals of these banknotes had contravened the currency regulations and the Reserve Bank ordered their withdrawal and destruction. Many Boys souvenired a set for sentimental reasons, and so did the camp guards and the local bank people. Little did we know of the value of these notes increasing from a modest few hundred to a few thousand and today tens of thousands of dollars.

Other events were a barbecue lunch on a sheep station, and a final lunch on the showground which finished abruptly with a sandstorm followed by a heavy downpour, very similar to our experiences 50 years earlier.

One other important part of our Hay affiliation is the High School. On the final Sunday lunch, students interviewed many Dunera Boys. We initiated an annual competition for the year 9 history class students to write an essay with some Dunera content. The best was awarded a \$100 cheque. Later, we also met up with these year 9 students at the Jewish Museum in Melbourne, giving them a first glance into Jewish life.

Hay is continuing the September commemorations and has added a student re-enactment of our arrival at the old railway station.

Hay has also installed a Dunera Museum at the old station. Using some refurbished carriages to display Dunera memorabilia. They have received many visitors from home and overseas.

Summing up why Hay has become such a prominent part in Dunera history, I can only state my personal opinion which is shared by many, "Hay displays its hospitality and friendship to us like long-lost sons having returned home".

– Mike Sondheim

Recollections

Michael Gordon – son of Siegfried Grossbard

In the previous Dunera News mailout, we made a request for people to send in their stories about their relationship with the Dunera Boys.

Here are some recollections from Michael Gordon from the UK. If you have any information to add about any of the items here, please contact us.

DUNERA BOY – SIEGFRIED GROSSBARD

My father, Siegfried (Sigi) Grossbard and his two brothers Jonny and Julius, along with a cousin Bernhard (Hardy) Cinader, were all interned and sent to Australia on the Dunera. Unfortunately, all these men died a long time ago, and my father did not tell me that much.

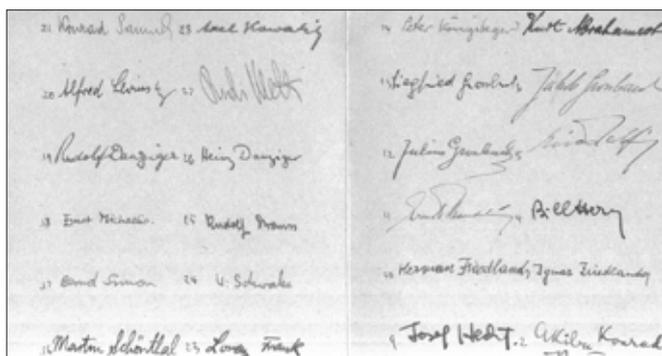
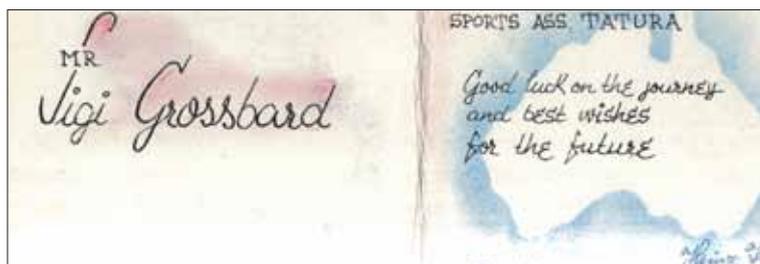
I possess a copy of the *Dunera Statement*. I gather my father was taken off the Dunera on a stretcher, but apparently thrived in Hay and Tatura, as he was mad on handball and such sports.

I do recall him telling me that he had a top bunk (I don't know if it was in Hay or Tatura), and that,

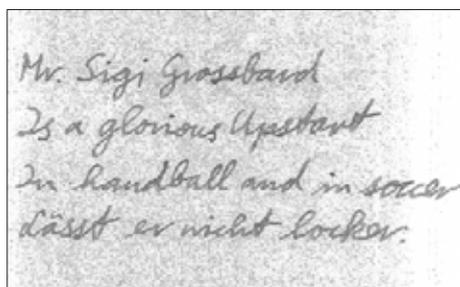
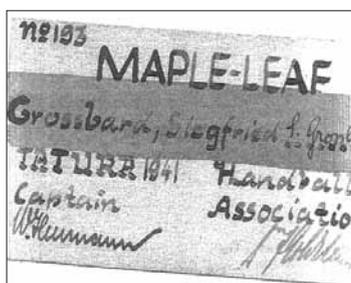
because it was so hot he would often lie there bare-chested. It appears that very large, hairy spiders congregated on the ceiling and periodically fell off, landing with a splat on his chest! I don't think my father appreciated that very much!

My father was able to return to London relatively quickly, thanks to the efforts of Major Layton. He and a few others would start a little club (I think it was called the "Kangaroos") for ex-Dunerites, with its own membership card (!), but I don't think it lasted very long.

My father was a tailor (the family had owned a clothes shop [selling Hubertusmaentel] in the Mariahilferstrasse in Vienna before the Nazis), and tried to find work in London (although he had a visa for Shanghai – not sure how he managed to stay in London), which he eventually did after a lot of heartache and frustration. He met (actually, re-met) my mother in London, and they married in 1946. More or less, happy-ever-after thenceforward.



The Grasshoppers football team – who spell "Grossbard" wrongly – were Martin Schoenthal, Hans Reinemann, Schaeffer, Max Cohen, E. Balbierer (?), Fritz Lenz, R. N Weber (?), Heinz Koppel & Henry Lehman (?). Hut 20 – No. 7 Camp. Sept. 1940 – May 1941 has been badly truncated. The names, as well as I can read them, are (with bunk number, I suppose): 21 Konrad Samuel, 20 Alfred Lewinsky, 19 Rudolf Danziger, 18 Ernst Michaelis, 17 Bernd Simon, 16 Martin Schoenthal, 15 (?) Brenner, 28 Axel Kowalik, 27 Rudi Meth (?), 26 Heinz Danziger, 25 Rudolf Strauss, 24 U. Schwabe, 23 Lorenz Frank, 14 Peter Koenigsberger, 13 Siegfried Grossbard, 12 Julius Grossbard, 11 Ernst (?), 10 Herman Friedlander, 9 Josef Hecht, 8 Fritz Eichner, 7 Kurt Abrahamson, 6 Jakob Grossbard, 5 Erich (?) Delfiner, 4 Bill Herz, 3 Ignaz Friedlander, 2 Akiba Konrad Rothenberg, 1 Hans Eichner.



This birthday card (for 3.8.1941) was from Henry Teltscher. (Brother of George Teltscher?)

2010 DUNERA DAY AT HAY

ON SATURDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 1940, 1,984 DUNERA BOYS ARRIVED AT HAY RAILWAY STATION IN 48 CARRIAGES OF FOUR STEAM TRAINS. THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE DUNERA BOYS AT THE HAY INTERNMENT AND POW CAMPS 7 AND 8 WILL BE HELD
3-5 SEPTEMBER 2010

FRIDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER

9am-6pm Hay Railway Station – Dunera Museum displays open to public.

6pm **Dinner**

A la carte meal at the Jolly Jumbuck Bistro (reserved for the group).

Meet some Dunera Boys and other participants. Details for the weekend to be addressed.

Drinks and meals to be ordered and paid for individually.

SATURDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER

8.30am **Symbolic Re-enactment at Hay Railway Station**

Siren & Sounds of four steam trains, 48 carriages, arriving at Hay Railway Station.

Hay Dunera Museum displays open.

8.45am **Symbolic march from the carriage to the platform**

Brief excerpts from several Dunera boys stories.

For those unable to attend in the morning, the brief re-enactment will be repeated at 6pm, prior to a short play at 6.20pm.

9.00am **Visit to the Camp Site**

Depart in coach and car convoys from Hay Railway Station, and follow the route marched by the Dunera Boys from the station to Camp 7 and Camp 8 and to the showground Camp Garrison areas.

Stop at Dunera Commemorative Obelisk in Dunera Way; unveiled at 50th anniversary in 1990. Also, see the original Garrison Entrance Gates and three original buildings remaining from 1940.

10.15am **Welcome Reception and Morning Tea**

The Hay Shire Council Mayor will welcome the group at the new Hay Library, adjacent to the former Military Supply Depot (1940-46), now the War Memorial Hall.

10.45am **Hay War Cemetery, General Cemetery and Camp “River Farm”**

On the way, stop at riverside beach, where Jewish boy Theodore Tartakover (born in Hay 1880), first trained to compete in swimming at the 1908 London and 1912 Stockholm Olympic Games. He competed in the 100m, 400m and 4 x 200m relay in London and 100m and 400m in Stockholm.

Visit the grave of Menasche Bodner, the only Dunera Boy buried in the Jewish section of the Hay General Cemetery.

Noon Lunch at “Bidgee Bend” a very large riverside garden.

Lunch to be booked and prepaid. Refer to Registration form for details.

2010 DUNERA DAY AT HAY PROGRAM

SATURDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER

2.00pm Choice of three museums to visit: Admittance fees may apply.

Hay Gaol Museum

Site of first Military Hospital, where sick Dunera Boys were attended to until the camp hospital was completed.

Shear Outback Museum

A history of the Australian shearing, sheep and wool industry. Shearing demo at 3.30pm. The museum has a cafe, and souvenirs are available at the retail shop.

Bishop's Lodge

1890 Historic House and Garden, open Saturdays 2.00pm to 4.30pm.

6.00pm Repeat of Siren & Sounds

Re-enactment of the steam trains arriving and symbolic march.

6.20pm "Dunera Boys" – short play

By Hay High school students on Hay Railway Station platform stage.

7.00pm Dunera Day Dinner

Location: Waradgery Club, cnr of Pine and Water Streets, Hay.

Hear from guest speakers and the Dunera Boys.

Dinner to be booked and prepaid. Refer to Registration form for details.

SUNDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER – OPTIONAL EVENT

10.00am Morning Tea at David and Coleen Houston's property

David and Coleen are close friends of the Dunera community. David is the president of Hay Dunera Museum. They have a 7,300 ha property at Budgewah, Maude Road, just 21 km from Hay.

Morning tea to be booked and prepaid. Refer to Registration form for details.

COMPLETION OF ORGANISED EVENTS

Noon Lunch at your own arrangement

Before leaving for home you may want to have lunch at one of the restaurants in Hay, such as the Riverine Bistro, one of the Club Bistros or at the Shear Outback Cafe.

Drive to: Melbourne: 5 hours

Canberra: 6 hours

Adelaide: 7 hours

Sydney: 8 hours

PLEASE NOTE It is essential we know numbers by Monday, 16 August, 2010 for catering and space purposes. Please register now. **See separate Registration Form.**

For further information and registration forms, contact:

Peter Felder – events@duneraassociation.com Phone: 0418 382 062 or 03 9561 2834.

David Houston, President Hay Dunera Museum – davidhouston23@bigpond.com

Phone: 02 6993 2161.

Map of Hay



Accommodation guide for Hay 2010

MOTELS:

Bidgee Motor Inn ★★★ 74 Lachlan St. (South end)
bidgeemotorinn@westnet.com
Ph 02 6993 2260. Fax 02 6993 2261

Cobb Inlander ★★★ budget; 83 Lachlan St. (South end)
cobbinlandermotel@bigpond.com.au
Ph 02 6993 1901. Fax 02 6993 3406

Highway Inn Motel, ★★★☆ 394 Murray St.
(Mid-Western Hwy) highway.inn.motel@bigpond.com
Ph 02 6993 2102. Fax 02 6993 4299

Nicholas Royal Motel, ★★★☆ 152 Lachlan St.
(town centre) info@nicholasroyalmotel.com.au
Ph 02 6993 1603. Fax 02 6993 1737

Saltbush Motor Inn, ★★★☆ 193 Lachlan St.
(town centre) saltbmi@bigpond.net.au
Ph 02 6993 4555. Fax 02 6993 4188

Outback Quarters Cnr Cobb and Sturt Hwys near roundabout. Outback_quarters@bigpond.com
Ph 02 6993 1804. Fax 02 6993 4696

HOTELS & CARAVAN PARKS:

New Crown Hotel-Motel 117 Lachlan St.
Ph 02 6993 1600. Fax 02 6993 4419

Hay Plains Holiday Park 4 Nailor St.
Ph 02 6993 1875. Fax 02 6993 3013

Hay Caravan Park Sturt Hwy.
Ph 02 6993 1415. Fax 02 6993 1066

Riverina Hotel 148 Lachlan St.
Ph 02 6993 1137. Fax 02 6993 2131
Home of the Jolly Jumbuck Restaurant

Several Bed & Breakfast/Farmstays available
All rates quoted are indicative prices only.

Dunera Boys – Exhibition at the National Library of Australia

12 February – 26 September 2010



Left: **Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack** (1893–1965)
Orange, July 1941
woodcut, printed in black ink; 21.4 x 13.5cm
Collection of Chris Bell (grandson)

Below: **Henry Talbot** (1920–1999)
The first Dunera Boys reunion 1963
gelatin silver print; 19.7 x 24.7cm
Pictures Collection, nla.pic-vn4668152



The Dunera Boys: Seventy Years On

This National Library collection-in-focus display coincides with the 70th anniversary year of the arrival from Britain of HMT *Dunera* in September 1940. This ship carried over 2,500 German and Austrian internees.

The so-called 'Dunera Boys', were escaping the horrors of Nazi Germany but were interned as 'Enemy Aliens' in camps in rural New South Wales and Victoria. The internees story is one of individual survival and of considerable achievement. Over 800 'Dunera Boys' stayed in Australia after the war, making significant contributions to Australian society in many different fields.

This exhibition tells the story of the Dunera Boys, through their letters, their art and their music, with most of these items drawn from the National Library's collection, including oral histories.

National Library of Australia

Parkes Place, Parkes, Canberra

Where: Visitor Centre (Ground Floor)

From: 12 February – 26 September 2010

Open: 9am–5pm. Free entry

Enquiries: 02 6262 1111

Right: **Ternes**
Your Country needs YOU! Join the A.I.F. NOW!
1940–1942
lithograph on paper; 75.5 x 50.3 cm
Pictures Collection, nla.cat-vn4702420



Memories flood back with ship exhibition

By Sally Pryor – *The Canberra Times*

A new exhibition at the National Library has brought many memories to the surface, not all of them pleasant.

The Dunera Boys: Seventy Years On tells the story of an overloaded passenger ship filled with more than 2500 German, Austrian and Italian men, which landed in Sydney in September, 1940.

The men had all been interned in Britain as enemy aliens. Many were of Jewish heritage, and had escaped from Nazi Germany in the 1930s, only to be arrested and deported to Australia.

The boat had left Liverpool even as Britain's internment policy was under review, and new laws had come into force that would have exempted most of the Dunera Boys from internment.

Conditions on the Dunera were atrocious, it was crowded and unsanitary, the ship was at risk of enemy attack, and many of the prisoners were mistreated and traumatised by the time the eight-week journey to Australia was complete.

But life in the camps in Australia was far more bearable. The internees, many educated professionals and artists, came from all walks of life.

They set up an unofficial university while interned, to help pass the time, and held concerts, painted, read and wrote.

The exhibition draws on the library's rich collection of papers and objects relating to the Dunera's journey and life in the camps in NSW and Victoria.

Survivor Bern Brent, who at 17 was one of the youngest internees on the Dunera, said seeing the exhibition had brought memories to the surface.

"I must confess, it's not very pleasant memories," he said yesterday.



"I wanted to forget about all this and I did. I'm glad that it's behind me." But he said being interned in Australia had been a good thing, as he had not finished school in Germany, and would have ended up working in a factory somewhere. Being in the camps among people from all walks of life, he was encouraged to read and broaden his horizons, and eventually obtained a degree in teaching.

Another survivor, Michael Brent (no relation to Bern Brent), was also there to see the exhibition yesterday. From a Jewish family and born in Berlin, Mr Brent had studied in England and was working as a technical draughtsman when he was interned as an enemy alien. Like Bern Brent, he said he held no animosity towards the British government. "I'm not bitter about it, it was a mistake," he said. "They were expecting an invasion and they just panicked." He celebrated his 21st birthday in the camps, and said he had found the journey and internment exciting. "I was young and fit. To me, the whole thing was something of an adventure," he said.

The Dunera Boys: Seventy Years On is now at the National Library of Australia. Admission is free.

— Published in *The Canberra Times*
13 February, 2010

My “War Career”

By Vernon Dwelly (Werner Goldschmidt)

My “war career” was an interesting one. Once out of the Pioneer Corps, I attempted to join the RAF. However, there was an abundance of volunteers against a shortage of planes. Winston Churchill and Lord Mountbatten were considering the use of German and other foreign refugees in Britain to serve the cause in specialised units. Their language abilities and generally high standard of education should prove productive.

I interviewed for the Special Services/Commandos, wherein an international Commando (#10 Inter-Allied Commando) was created with special “troop” units – French, Dutch, Norwegian, Belgian, Polish, etc., and #3 Inter-Allied Commando, primarily German/Austrian, largely Jewish, and partly political refugees. Once approved, a very severe training and testing process followed and only a relatively small percentage of the group “survived” to form #3.

We had to change our personal identities in order to have the best chance of survival. I still have a copy of a document signed by Hitler, which commanded any Commando or Special Services member captured to be shot on sight.

To quote from the internet:

“The largest, but least-known of all Britain’s elite wartime Commando raiding units, No.10 (Inter-Allied) was recruited from volunteers of many nations who had fled to Britain to carry on the fight after their own countries fell to the Nazis. Alongside Poles, Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Belgians, Norwegians and patriots from even further afield, the unit even included a small number of remarkably brave German and Austrian refugees from Nazism. These commandos took part in daring raids, intelligence missions and conventional infantry battles in North-West Europe and in the Mediterranean theatre. They earned many decorations and several battlefield commissions for gallantry and leadership; and after the war, some national contingents formed the nucleus of the new special forces of their liberated nations.”

Training included, close combat, weapons

use, parachuting, cliff climbing and abseiling, intelligence work, interpreting, interrogating, night landings from submarines and dinghies and more. We were told that we were about the most highly trained unit in the armed forces.

Once qualified we had privileges such as not living in barracks but in “private digs” where families had been asked to help the war effort. They had no idea who we were but many turned into long time friends. I had a lovely family in Eastbourne, Sussex where I shared digs with Peter Wells. He and I became very close friends.

The concept was that we kept up the training, but were then called from there into action – attached to other army units as intelligence, interrogators or experts in night landings and enemy area penetrations. My friend Peter was the first to be called to action, a landing into Italy. He never returned, he was hit by a sniper. That was my first exposure to the shocks of war. There would be many more. Our casualty rate was high. I missed D-Day through a mistake by the RAF. We knew quite a lot about the V-1 (Buzz-Bomb) – I remember when on leave in London, we dove into the nearest cellar when the noise of the motor cut out. That is when it would stop moving forward and drop. However, we knew little about the V-2 which was an actual rocket – both created by Wernher von Braun and “Hitlers’ Last Hope”.

A few of us were trained intensively for D-Day to be dropped in France behind the German lines, investigate a battery of V-2s and communicate certain information back to circling planes. Our communications were almost childish, compared to today’s technology. We would then try and rejoin our invading armies.

We were up in a remote corner of Scotland when the operation was cancelled because the RAF had accidentally bombed our target. There were some tears on D-Day, as we saw waves of bombers and fighters fly over us into the invasion areas. The cancellation probably saved my life! A number of our #3 troop and of the other foreign Commando troops were

My “War Career”

By Vernon Dwelly (Werner Goldschmidt)

killed or injured in the invasion.

I went from trainee to Captain, being awarded a Battlefield Commission and was also involved in training some of the other countries' Commando units.

My last action was in the invasion of the Island of Walcheren to clear the Port of Antwerp. It was late in 1944 and turned into a hard-fought battle. I was attached, with a few of my troop to a Marine Commando unit serving with the Canadian Army. My landing craft was blown up by a mine, I landed in the water, and though wet through, was miraculously not injured. The following fighting days, wet and cold, gave me a double dose of pneumonia so I was evacuated to Knocke, Belgium for medical care.

These are just a few highlights of my war. I stayed on to do Intelligence work and

commanded a small unit on the Dutch border. We tracked Nazis but actually spent most of our time tracking Russians infiltrating into the West. It was the time when Churchill recognised the Russian danger, as he had recognised the Hitler menace long before the start of the war.

As a Major, I was offered a military career but declined. I was also interviewed by the “Foreign Service”, the British version of the State Department. The “Internationality image” intrigued me. A friend gave me good advice, asking me if I was financially independent. I answered “Hell No”. He said that if that is the case, “you’ll just become a ‘Yes, man’, owned by the government”. That led, through indirect routes, to my international career with American Express!

Seeking Information

Felix A Behrend

Dr. Felix A Behrend was already a published and qualified mathematician when he came to Australia on the Dunera in 1940. He was interned in camps at Hay (camp 7), Orange and Tatura. He was released in March 1942 and employed at Melbourne University Department of Mathematics, subsequently becoming a prominent mathematician and publishing a novel prior to his death.

He was known to those in the camps as an inspiring lecturer (Pure Mathematics and Physics) and teacher at the camp school. He remained in touch with many Dunera Boys here and overseas until his death.

Dr. Behrend was not only a highly regarded pure mathematician, he was also a writer and musician. His wide interest in all the creative arts was the subject of correspondence with many internees who were repatriated to England in 1943. Internees, who studied or had jobs in other areas but found true expression in their creative abilities.

Dr. Felix Behrend typed out excerpts of the

correspondence with those in England from about 1943 to 1945. Some names include: Friedrich Mautner, Kurt Henley, Fritz Eichner, Martin Loeb, Walter Adamson, Peter Stadlen and his wife Hanni Petoe, Kurt Ostberg, Henry Nowotny, Renate A (who lived in Adelaide and was introduced by letter to Dr. Behrend by Walter Adamson). Another name may be Heini(?) Poto. Dr. Behrend's daughter, Katherine, hopes to decipher signatures and find further names when she completes reading the 90 closely typed pages.

Dr. Behrend's daughters, Katherine and Monica, were very young when he died and only now, after their mother's death, have discovered a lot of material related to their father's internment, including artworks, memorabilia, cards for various occasions, poems dedicated to him, amongst other things.

Katherine and Monica are seeking copies of letters and art related to their father. If you have anything you are willing to share, please contact: info@dunerassociation.com

In Sunny Riverina

By Peter Lehner

A.E.* of Seven Camp is head
and we are really very glad
to have as leader this bright lad
He makes our stay not quite so bad
In Sunny Riverina.

Our Tucky dreams of maidens fair,
with bright blue eyes and golden hair.
There is none here his bed to share
which drives him nearly to despair
In Sunny Riverina.

Young Willi is farmer gay
He goes out farming every day.
He so much loves the soil and clay
that he would really love to stay
In Sunny Riverina.

Kurt Baier with his swarm of boys
believes in intellectual joys.
To state with a great deal of noise
his views, his stay here he employs
In Sunny Riverina

George Teltscher you can always find
before, below, beside, behind
The hut. His pictures to my mind
are quite the best of all their kind
In Sunny Riverina.

Long Willi sits and mopes all day.
Life seems to him so very grey.
His gloom not even can allay
the beauty of the month of May
In Sunny Riverina.

G.Hony wields an axe so strong,
he chops the logs the whole day long,
and only leaves off when the gong
calls him away to lunch-e-on (sorry!)
In Sunny Riverina.

Our Ziba, not exactly tame
when playing at that noble game
called handball, added to his fame
when to his "shop" a "Kosher" came
In Sunny Riverina.

Hans R's in charge of our mails
and every day each man assails
him with a thousand cries and wails
to know when the next Clipper sails
In Sunny Riverina.

Young Werner in the handball goal
is quite a sight to cheer your soul.
As nimble as the youthful soul
he stops the balls short of his hole
In Sunny Riverina.

All animals of every sort
provide our Eli with his sport
when others come and him exhort,
he sneers and answers with a snort
In Sunny Riverina.

When dusk falls and the curfew knells,
and stars exhort with magic spells,
Mike Sondheim at this game excells
and mighty T.T. champion fells
In Sunny Riverina.

A useful man is Rudi Mohr
He supervises our store.
He thinks internment is a bore.
Restrictions always make him sore
In Sunny Riverina.

And Richard Otto Eppenstein
thinks cleanliness is quite divine.
His bunk is pure as any shrine,
his blankets you'll find on the line
In Sunny Riverina.

Young Stanley goes to U.S.A.
today, tomorrow, any day,
and we can only hope and pray
that there won't be too much delay
In Sunny Riverina.

And P.C.L. works for his bread
by adding figures in the shed
known as the Bank. Where he does add
our cash, and errors make him mad
In Sunny Riverina.

H.W. is not very thin.
The suffering hut that he lives in
is filled all day long with his din;
one hears him in Deniliquin
In Sunny Riverina.

Ian Weber with the stubborn jaw
upholds the honor of the law.
His language is at times quite raw
as once the H.C. meeting saw
In Sunny Riverina.

Of braces, jackets, socks and rags,
of towels, handkerchiefs and bags,
of ancient boots with holes and cracks
Paul Loebel has got stacks and stacks
In Sunny Riverina.

If monetary problems claim
attention, Stahl, of banking fame
is ready to resolve the same –
to him it only is a game
In Sunny Riverina.

The language of the Portuguese
for George does hold no mysteries.
And even with the Japanese
he can converse quite at his ease
In Sunny Riverina.

Our Fabian paints pictures strange.
At least, unless seen at long range
they look like dogs diseased with mange
but with the time even that may change
In Sunny Riverina.

Max Meth, although he lies in bed
for hours, is not really mad.
The thought of work just makes him sad.
I'm sorry for the poor, dear lad
In Sunny Riverina.

If you hear sounds as of a cat
intently chasing a poor rat
you are quite safe to bet your hat
Fachon's the author of all that
In Sunny Riverina.

Young Henry is a harmless bloke
he does not drink, he does not smoke.
He wields the brush with nimble stroke:
That boy is definitely "oke".
In Sunny Riverina.

Young Ernie must not be forgot.
In weather cold, in weather hot,
he sells his fruit and despaireth not.
He patiently does bear his lot
In Sunny Riverina.

The Author knows his little rhyme
is altogether not sublime.
He begs forgiveness for his crime
for, after all, he's lived some time
In Sunny Riverina.
(Which should excuse a lot.)

17 May 1941

Here ends what was Peter Lehner's
(the author) contribution to the
farewell and break-up party of the
Roebuck hut – Hut 26, Camp 7 in Hay.
The following morning 400 volunteers
for re-transport to the United Kingdom
left the camp in the early hours.
For many it was a goodbye for ever.

On the same day the rest of the
camp, about 600, prepared for
transport to other camps – 200 to
Orange and the rest to Tatura, which
was not quite completed at that time.
The Orange camp was reunited with
the Tatura camp about two months
later.

Hut 26 was named "Hut Roebuck"
by a small group of its inhabitants,
after the famous pub 'Roebuck' in
Richmond, near London. Most of the
others had never heard of, let alone
visited, the place. The inhabitants
of Hut 26 were a group of highly
individualistic, pronounced Anglophiles,
and the German language – though
not forbidden – was never heard within
its walls. A Roebuck handball team
was also organised and put in the field
which, although very ambitious, never
reached the greatness of the team of
Hut 23 or the "Perunjies" team from
the "Eat End".

– George Lederer

* A.E. – Andrew Eppenstein
Prominent D Deck leader and
Hay Camp 7 spokesman.
His name is hidden in the illustration
on the Hay Camp currency, designed
by George Teltscher

Recollections

Frankie Blei – niece of Emil Wittenberg

I am Frankie Blei, niece by marriage of the late Emil Wittenberg, a Dunera Boy and I have a story for you of how my relationship to Emil got me a job in Haifa, Israel in 1969.

I wanted to move from Tel Aviv to Haifa and applied for the only job advertised in an office which did not require Hebrew skills but good English typing. I was told later that I was the only applicant who did not have Hebrew as well as English.

The man who interviewed me was Manfred Heli, a Dunera Boy who had chosen to go back to England when everyone was released. Fortunately his ship made it and he went to live in then Palestine. He was a departmental manager at Ihud Insurance in downtown Haifa and he gave me the job because he had been a Dunera Boy and remembered, however vaguely, the theatre performances put on in the Camp in Hay and the stage work done by my uncle! He also gave me a fantastic (though seriously exaggerated) reference when I left there to come home.

I returned to Israel in 1983 and the people at Ihud Insurance then had sadly never heard of Manfred Heli – but I will never forget him for his kindness.

About Emil Wittenberg, who later dropped the “berg” to Witten:

He fell in love with my mother’s sister, Gerty Ronai, nee Frank, who went to visit him and take provisions for him when he was first in Hay. They had been friends in Vienna (where they were both born). So he stayed in Australia and joined the army. They got married and started up a successful business – Luxury Upholstery and also ran, with Gerty, Witten’s Interiors in Chapel Street, South Yarra. He specialised in designing and making “built in” furniture for people’s homes. He also designed his unique home in Toorak, built on a curve, without one corner at 90 degree angle. He retired in the mid 1960s and sadly passed away from a sudden heart attack at the end of 1966. He is still much missed.

Just one little coincidence – the date the “Boys” arrived was 6 September which was Gerty’s birthday!



In the Australian Army. Emil Wittenberg is on the left. Anyone with information as to the other man in the photo, please contact us.

Dunera Committee 2009–10

President – Mike Sondheim	Dunera Boy	president@dunerassociation.com
Treasurer – Ron Reichwald	Son of the late Martin Reichwald	treasurer@dunerassociation.com
Secretary – Rebecca Silk	Daughter of the late Peter Huppert	secretary@dunerassociation.com
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Hay 70th Convenor – Peter Felder	Son of the late Henry Felder	events@dunerassociation.com
Public Relations – Michelle Frenkel	Granddaughter of the late Erwin Frenkel	info@dunerassociation.com