

Dunera News

Issue No. 118
June 2024

ORT Boys Kitchener Camp Tatura



ORT-boys reunion, 29 January 1995. Photo courtesy of Edith Unger.

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.

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From the President

Dear Dunera family and friends,

On Sunday 14 April, we held our annual event at Tatura. The weather was beautiful and we had a marvellous day. David Baer, our guest speaker, delivered a powerful, moving address. This was followed by a delicious afternoon tea, and a stimulating visit to David Mallinder's property, where we toured the remains of Tatura Camp 1. My thanks to Sue Schmitke and her team at the Tatura Museum for their organisation and kind hospitality, and to David Baer and David Mallinder for their contributions to a special day. You can read about the event in Erica Chadderton's report, published in this issue of Dunera News.

The State Library of New South Wales is this year staging a major Dunera exhibition. The exhibition will open in August and run until May 2025. I encourage as many of you as possible

to visit the exhibition and dive into this display of Dunera history.

The Dunera Association is run by volunteers, and sometimes, as with most voluntary organisations, we find that our resources are stretched. I would be delighted to hear from people willing to become involved in the work of the Association. We always welcome new faces and ideas.



Dr Seumas Spark
President

SAVE THE DATES

84th Anniversary Events 2024

Sydney, NSW - Sunday 1 September

Hay, NSW - Saturday 7 September

Melbourne, VIC - Sunday 10 November

The ORT Connection

Henry Lippmann

Amongst all the migrants that came as refugees to Australia - or as internees like the DUNERA boys did - was hardly another, closer group than that of the ORT-boys.

During and since the period of migration various new associations were formed, of course. Yet, there was not a similar number of young people where each one had belonged to the very same school, the students who left the Berlin-ORT-school for England in August 1939.

Twenty-two of these fellows still live in Australia today. As a group they have no special ambitions, but occasionally they enjoy friendly get-togethers.

With the ORT, the organisation that acted as their guardian whilst they were without their parents and under age, they lost contact.

The boys were busy finding their own way in post-war Australia. ORT at the same time had their hands full as never before. ORT cared for the rehabilitation of masses of people in the aftermath of the war in Europe. Being thus occupied ORT had then somewhat neglected its interest in the Australian community.

Today in Australia hardly anyone even knows what ORT stands for, O for Organisation, R for Rehabilitation and T for Training. Since ORT was founded in Russia in 1880 it has taught people skills that enable them to earn their living. This purpose has not changed, but the technology, the methods of training and the variety of courses have changed greatly in recent years. ORT has some great modern programs which are operating in many countries. A new administration which constantly develops schemes of assistance where-ever these are most needed, invites interest in its activities and the contribution of funds.

Of all countries where vibrant Jewish communities exist today, Australia is the only one that has no active ORT support group. In the hope to establish such a group the World ORT Union sent their Director of Organisation, Mr Mel Galun from London to Australia.

As I happened to be one of the few contacts Mr Galun originally had in Sydney it was my pleasure to accompany him occasionally during the short time of his stay in this city. Mr Galun has a likeable personality and he is an eloquent speaker. As an ambassador of ORT he is well equipped to tell the story of ORT. He attended and spoke at a busy schedule of public and private meetings. Everywhere he was easily welcomed, received attention and good understanding.

At a few great communal functions that happened to be held during that week Mel Galun had the opportunity to meet a large number of communal personalities.

He had been invited to the induction ceremony of its new Rabbi at the Central Synagogue. This impressive ceremony took place in the presence of the whole Sydney clergy, the Chief Rabbi of the British commonwealth, the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, and a full house of well-known identities.

Mel Galun addressed the meeting of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies under whose umbrella all our organisations function.

Mel Galun attended the impressive Annual General Meeting of the Australian Jewish Welfare Society and to follow spoke to members about ORT.

I was proud of the display of the vibrant activities of our own Sydney community that presented itself. Equally, any visitor would be full of admiration for the fine work so many noble leaders perform in our city. It is not obvious from these meetings however how overburdened these comparatively small number of active workers are. A greater number of active participants from the wider community need to be involved.

At these public meetings as well as at the private gatherings which Mel Galun attended several people came forward who were keen to participate in the activities of an ORT support group. The World ORT Union at this stage can be pleased with the results of Mr Galun's first Australian visit. The first initiative has been taken. After our response and various other pointers have been sorted out London may advise a formula how next to effectively organise.

Editor's Note: all previously published material is shown in its original form.

ORT-boys reunion, 29 January 1995. Photo courtesy of Edith Unger.



ORT Boy - Harry Unger

Harry Unger

In April 1939 I was accepted into a technical school in Berlin run by the Organisation for Reconstruction and Training (ORT), a Jewish organisation with headquarters in London, where I studied engineering. The fact that the school was considered British rather than Jewish is what saved it from destruction on the night of *Kristallnacht*, 9 November 1938. Himmler gave permission for 100 boys, including me and some teachers, to go to England, but it took a fight.

At the beginning of August 1939 permission had still not been given for us to leave Germany, so British ORT headquarters sent one of its leaders, Colonel Joseph Levey, to Berlin to expedite matters. He had been a colonel in the Scots Guards and went to SS HQ in Berlin wearing his full regimental uniform, which included the Scottish kilt. It seems he was sufficiently intimidating to get things moving and secured all the necessary permits.

Our passports had to be stamped by the British consulate in Berlin, but the staff there had already been evacuated. Colonel Levey located a local employee. They broke into the embassy and stamped all the passports, which enabled us to leave Germany on 29 August 1939.

We received very short notice and just had time to say goodbye. Some of the boys said later they felt they would never see their loved ones again. I didn't feel that way. I was sure we would be able to return, but they were proved right. We were only allowed to take the clothes we stood up in, plus a change of underwear, socks, toiletries and ten *Marks*.

We were split into small groups and made our way to the station by any means possible. No one was permitted to come and say goodbye. Berlin's Charlottenburg Station was crowded with hundreds of people, all pushing and shoving to get onto a train. They were mostly people with visas for other countries who saw this as their last chance to leave Germany. The only sense of order was that shown by us boys, who were all lined up. The train that was supposedly heading west was locked, but two of the smaller boys were lifted up and managed to open a window and then opened the doors from the inside. We were young fellows embarking on an adventure we believed would last for only a few months.

The journey took a long time and seemed even longer because German police and SS came through constantly to check up on us. We were shaking in our boots in case we were searched. One of our boys with more guts than brains had money strapped all over his body. We were concerned that if he were found out it would be the end for all of us. Fortunately, nothing happened.

In Cologne, we had a little time to look around the city until we met again at the station to catch our connecting train. To our horror, it had been cancelled and we were told that no more trains were leaving Germany. World War II was just about to start.

We hung around, not knowing what to do. Suddenly, there was an announcement that a special train had been given permission to travel, the last train to Holland. Once again, the SS and German police came through the train, checking on us continuously. When the Germans finally left the train at the border it was to boos and jeers from the Dutch people on their side.

On the other hand, the reception for us boys at Nijmegen was fabulous. The local people, including Dutch police and Dutch soldiers, cheered and applauded. They waved Dutch flags and welcomed us to freedom. A band was playing and people handed out refreshments.

We went by train to Vlissingen and waited there for one hour before boarding a Dutch ferry, the *Queen Emma*, a small ship that did not take too kindly to the rough seas. Most of us were seasick.

We crossed the channel and arrived in Harwich, England, on the day war was declared. In London no one knew we were coming and no arrangements had been made. We were lined up outside the station and marched to emergency accommodation, with Colonel Levey out in front of us. As we marched we sang German songs and wondered why people looked at us in a funny way. Word must have got around. Next morning, as we were about to board buses to take us to a holding camp, what seemed to be the whole Jewish population of Whitechapel came to see us off. These people were the poorest of the poor, but they showered us *Yiddish kinder* (Jewish children) with sandwiches, fruit, sweets and cigarettes. It was an outpouring of love and generosity none of us would ever forget.

We were then sent to the Kitchener Camp at Richborough in Kent, about ten minutes from the town of Sandwich on the coastal strip that includes Ramsgate, Margate and Dover. The camp housed 4,000 refugees, mainly Austrians and Germans, many of whom had been prisoners in concentration camps and most of whom were Jews. This was our first contact with other refugees.

Harry Unger



A Shimmering Thread Linking Dunera Families

Tatura Event, 14 April 2024

Erica Chadderton

Eldest daughter of Reinhold Eckfeld

Seldom do we consider the past. Life is too short! Yet, isn't it a strange phenomenon? A group of extremely diverse men, forcibly thrown together in a severe environment, managing to pull together and survive through strength and determination. Not all made it to the end of that struggle successfully which is a great shame; histories lost and not always happy endings. Not only did their horrific, life threatening experience bond them but it also did the same for their children and grandchildren. A truly unique thread binding families together. It draws them to Tatura, Hay, Sydney, Orange, afternoon teas and book launches.

Reinhold Eckfeld, a proud Dunera Boy, visited Tatura Museum with his wife Beryl, and occasionally some of his three children tagged along. Nowadays, getting his three children in the same place at the same time is a major achievement and yet on Sunday 14 April it happened!

Erica, Steven and Tonia (Reinhold's children), all in the same place at the same time despite their busy lives.

The question is, what can we agree on about this adventure in the "Wilds of Tatura"? The weather for a start! What a perfect autumn day. Sunshine, blue skies and dry under foot.

We could also agree that the museum continues to become more interesting and is constantly evolving and expanding thanks to the hard work of its custodians. The latest addition of a large doll's house, made in the camp, complete with delicate furniture and fittings was amazing to behold, considering the circumstances in which it was made.

I must mention the great hospitality turned on by the kind country ladies of Tatura. The three of us definitely agreed on that! Freshly baked delights and an assembly line of coffee and tea, delivered with precision for around 30 guests.

Excellent guest speakers, organised by the Dunera Association, are always an aspect to look forward to. They are so interesting and diverse. This day was no exception. David Baer, the son of Dunera Boy Herbert Baer, made his audience connect with the trauma of his father's early life before and after his Dunera experience through his talk called *The Lucky Survivor*. It was a thought provoking presentation which revealed the contrast between his father's early life in Germany and how it radically changed after.

Lining up to board the doomed Arandora Star, only to be turned away three places from the front of the queue because the ship was full, was one of many lucky experiences. Boarding the Dunera followed.

Herbert Baer, 17 years, and our father, Reinhold Eckfeld, 18 years, must have both been distraught and in a state of fear as to where the future (if they even had one) lay. At least Reinhold had his older brother Waldemar with him while Herbert was alone.

David Baer managed to conjure up those connections with the Dunera story when we all see the threads that run through our own lives and families. It is always quite a sentimental journey, and David was telling it publicly for the first time. A ripple of familiarity which runs through the stories and recollections which link us all.

A tour of a camp site was also part of the itinerary. *Follow the Leader Car* is always an interesting exercise, and through this method we arrived at Camp 1. Good weather and no visible snakes made for a great afternoon. Thanks must go to our host and owner of the property, David Mallinder, who took us across the land once inhabited by internees and their guards.

Some might ask the question, “What could one gain by going to a Dunera event?” Well, at least one person found out.

Karin, the daughter of a Dunera internee, asked a question of the group at Camp 1. “I wonder which camp my father was in?”



Tonia Eckfeld, standing nearby, asked for her father’s name and immediately responded with the fact that Rudi Laqueur was in Camp 8 in Hay with our father, Reinhold Eckfeld. They were then transferred to the Tatura Camps after the conditions were found to be too harsh in Hay. This was a revelation for Karin and a beginning to find answers about her father. And why did Tonia know the immediate answer? Because Reinhold was in the same camp as Rudi and he had drawn a portrait of him all those years ago. Karin had once seen a copy of the portrait but was unable to find it after her father passed away. The Eckfeld

Rudi Laqueur drawn by Reinhold Eckfeld (Hay)

family still has the original portrait drawing and so Karin was thrilled to now have the opportunity of seeing it again. Karin wrote, "I'm so glad we've met and I can finally have a copy of the beautiful portrait your father did of my father". There were a number of portraits Reinhold Eckfeld produced at that time in Hay so other families could potentially also discover a link with their past.

The fact that the Dunera Association exists and continues to grow is a reflection of the feeling amongst the following generations that the world must know about governments mistakes and prejudices and learn that those escaping evil should be treated with kindness and understanding so we can all live in a better world than we inherited.

It's partly our job to educate the world, person by person, against prejudice and fear of those who are "different". I like to imagine that the Dunera Boys, in most instances, were defiant in their desire to live as long and as well as they could. It's moving to see just how many of them achieved this by taking up the Aussie philosophy to "dig deep".

All in all, I think it is safe to say that the Dunera Association and Tatura Museum really know how to entertain and inform a crowd and I would thoroughly recommend such an adventure with as many family members as you can tolerate in one car! You might just learn something new and exciting.

Tonia Eckfeld, Steven Eckfeld, Erica Chadderton



From the Archives

Dunera News, June 1994

The Editor

Dunera News

NOTES ON THE NOTES

3 Stirling Cres.

Glen Waverley, 3150

I'd like to make some comments on the article "The Hay Internment Camp Notes", in the Dunera News of February, 1994.

My cousin George, like myself, spelled his name Teltscher. He subsequently changed his name to his mother's maiden name Adams (as related in the article); she was a descendant of America's second president, George Adams.

George was a trained artist, who was reasonably prominent in the 1930s Bauhaus movement. He did design the Austrian one Schilling coin. Actually, his cousin Gudrun Baudisch had been commissioned to submit the design. The night before she was supposed to hand in her design she confessed to George that she hadn't got around to doing anything about it; could he help her? So, he set to and but because it had to fit into a circular format the stalk was sharply bent, The coin became known later as "die gebrochene Ehre" generally understood to mean "die gebrochene Ehre"; i.e. the broken honour rather than the broken stalk. (gebrochen • broken; Ahre • car of wheat; Ehre • Honour; end Ahre and Ehre arc pronounced identically). George died in 1982.

Bullus says: "It is Mick Vort-Ronald's opinion that these numbers (of the bank notes) correspond to the internees' numbers".

Well, Mick Vort-Ronald got this information from me; indeed, the serial numbers were our internment numbers. Richard Stahl had the only acquire the notes with their numbers. This actually happened and the camp administration made a sheer "profit". I could still kick myself that I was either too poverty-stricken and/or lousy still treasure.

The names of his friends. He never told his friends, which these names were; people had to discover this for themselves. In fact, most of the people immemorialised on the notes were from Roebuck hut (hut 26, Camp 7), where he and I lived.

The potential value of the notes was recognised quite early. In 1941, in the Orange camp, some of the camp guards carried out an unannounced "security check" of the camp, It was widely believed the object was to confiscate (and "souvenir") the "illegal" Hay bank notes.

My 6d note (E 40801) is signed A. Mendel (Abraham Arno Mendel) and R Stahl
From Henry Teltscher

Editor's Note: all archival material is shown in its original form.

Diary: Christopher Wolkenstein (1922-2011)

Submitted by daughter Anne Wolkenstein, Winnipeg, Canada

What was it like for a 19 year old boy and his younger brother Oswald (Ossie) from Austria? Here are the last 12 days of internment in Hay then Tatura after The Dunera Voyage and a few days following release in Melbourne. I have typed out his diary entries for easier reading.

31 December 1941

“Went to Holy Communion, it was sultry and I could get done only work in shorthand. Was quasi on holiday. At 8-11pm I saw “Snow White Joins Us” a big success, the best show in internment. Wonderful make-up and women. 42 scenes in all, absolutely marvelous. O.H. Meyer Queen, Schuster, ?Almas, ?Timonach. Laughed much, in addition I had a wonderful coffee and 2 ?xropfen in the interval, then went for a walk with Oswald. (his younger brother). It was a most wonderful silvester, very successful for me. Cool night. So we passed without excitement into The New Year. Summer: clocks one hour to be put forward. Midnight is only an imaginary line. So without fuss, thinking of Papa, Oma, Tante Grete, and brothers etc. we passed into.....

1 January 1942

I went to bed at 1:30, it was cool and I slept til 8 o'clock summer time. High mass, no sermon, Fr. Koenig on religious exercises. Quite pleasant day. After a short rehearsal of a choir for the Confirmation of 3 comrades tomorrow, there came the much talked of and with excitement awaited game of Austria versus Germany. Both Oswald and I did our best to play for our country but we lost 4 to 3. It was a nice game and cake and tea followed.

Malayan advances Manila and Philippines almost lost Libya fighting 100 miles south of Benghazi. Churchill in Canada.

The first day of the next year I spent in idleness and holiday mood. Went to mass, school resumed operation, after lunch, we started preparing a little chapel in hut, 3A after waiting 1.5 hours for Bishop Mac Arthur of Bendigo. At 83 he was marvelously fit and a proud night. (Choir and ceremony and confirmation of two Kaufmann and Pistori made it a very worthy hour). In the afternoon at 6:45 I played football for the first time since my birthday, then bridge. (Birthday Aug 19)

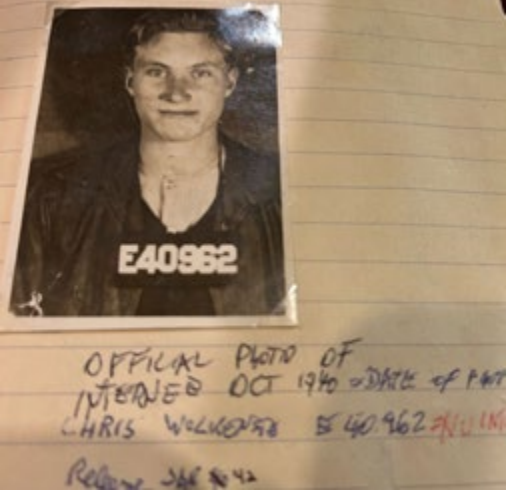
3 January 1942

Worked but got my wage, did shorthand, Latin, and letter writing but nothing else since it was very hot indeed and extra unpleasant.

4 January 1942

Sunday, High Mass, ?Mirra recitará, very hot and sultry. Drank 19 pints of water, everybody could not do anything the whole day.

Official photo of Internee Christopher Wolkenstein



5 January 1942

First less hot day for days, used it as much as possible for work. No exciting war news at all, no mail.

6 January 1942

Epiphany had high mass and singing. No news, went again to the ?show. Friend George Kauffman became of age. Oswald started on lavatory work with me. Kitchen trouble, no staff that's the question. Very

sultry dust storm all afternoon. Major Layton came, signed and acknowledged that the British Govt. paid me "ex gratis" 3 pounds 18 for loss sustained on Dunera. (Small suitcase)

8 January 1940

Went to Holy Mass, Layton in camp. Gathered people for next transport. Much excitement, not hopeless for anybody, everybody in the "leave mood". Nice cool day.

9 January 1940

Went to mass, 22 seats with a ?sand soup, cool day, went to school. 120 people made last preparation for leaving for England, Layton left again.

10 January 1942

Just after Dr ?Rechwitz Latin Class, at 12:17, my release was at last told to me and my brother.

RELEASE NEWS I almost went off my head. Packed, closed my account at bank.

11 January 1942

Final High Mass, packing, lists, signatures, everything went too quick.

Having been interned 87 weeks - 610 days.

In Australia 70 weeks - 491 days or 80 percent.

12 January 1942

FIRST DAY OF FREEDOM IN MELBOURNE

Now the bell rang for The Angelus, a reminder of the atmosphere in Kalksburg, Austria. Unbelievable things happen! I am a free man, the sun has just set and it's getting very dark. For the first time since exactly 20 months of internment, I am sitting at Verandah, Melbourne down on the seaside down, doth look and you are free again a kindly people, friends stepped in, friends of Christ. I am alone it's quiet. It has not been quiet since I was interned on 12th May 1940. The first lights can just be seen, lights from freedom and indeed, the one night time change from animal to human being is quicker, almost unnoticeable. I cannot express my thoughts and thanks well, but..... It's the greatest day of my life, redemption has been made too real to me and love of your neighbor, too.

RELEASE. 7am 12th January 1942

We got up at 5:30, took a cold shower, packed with difficulty, ate our last meal with excitement, took leave from dear friends, with shared fate. Left camp, took leave from officers. Train of Tatura late 10 minutes, train going down like hell from Seymour, arrived 50 minutes late at 1pm Spencer St., Melbourne. HQ lunch and beer at Saint Patrick's College the first decent meal the HQ S.J. introduced to our temporary abode at Burke Hall, (Fr. Alan, Fr. ?Fisch). At 7 most impressive interview with Archbishop Mannix. Nice, tall, homely. Now, my dear friends, good night. First time in a decent bed again, I am tired.

13 January 1942

Woke up at 8 am after a lovely night in decent beds. After a substantial breakfast, we drove to Victoria barracks and saw Mr. Forde at 11 am. He proved to be well informed and one of the nicest men I met. Then we went around the city, took a tram to Kew, visited Xavier College, had good lunch, saw the wonderful school, and went to bed. Wrote first letters in freedom.

14 January 1942

Played tennis, table tennis, and billiards almost all the time.

15 January 1942

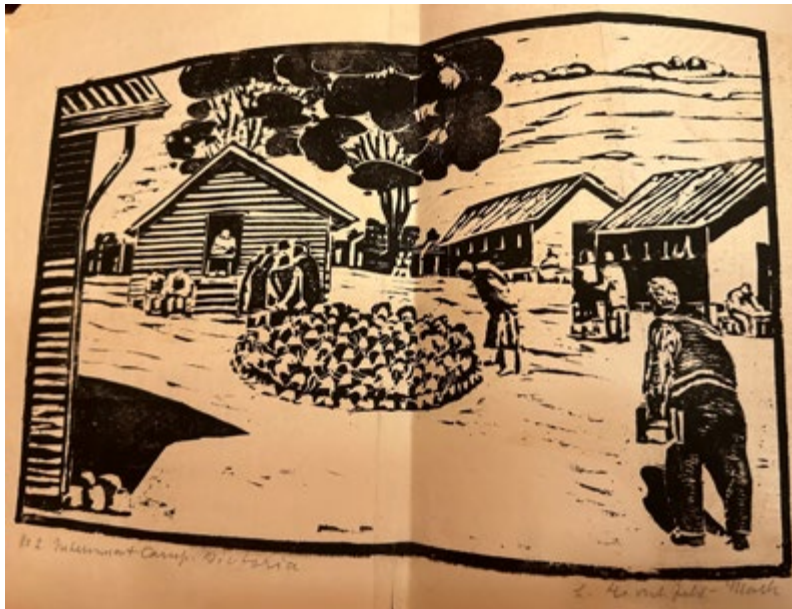
Nothing particular happened, just leisure. Fine days. Tennis, table tennis, billiards and Angus and Gordon ?Troun of Ceylon.

15 May 1942 (skipped forward a few pages!)

24 hours ago I finished my first term at the University of Melbourne as a first year medical student.

Internment Camp Victoria
signed by
Prof Hirschfeld-Mack.

Birthday present for dad
on 19th birthday,
19 August 1941



It was not until a month ago that I realized that I had entered a new stage in my life which can be well commemorated by a new book. What the consequences of this entering on a new stage will be, I cannot foresee but it definitely opened a new stage.

School days are past and I am now an undergraduate: the highest form of intellectual activity of a young man. I say young man, because I have entered upon a career which will well decide all my future activities in life. It was only quite recently that I made up my mind, but sincere thanks to all my dear friends who made the impossible possible for me. Thus I enter a new stage. I can do whatever I like. School rules and fixed study times are passed, and the education from parents and school, one's common sense, character, and interpretation of life, all come to a test in a human being who has passed childhood and has to solve the various problems of life.

In short, I am a free man and it is up to me to show my worth, to live as maior angloriam dei, to show that the greatest happiness is to live with the One who made us and loves us above ordinary human limits: God, and to help others in all ways, last not least, in finding the way to our Creator by means of the wonderful graces of the religion I set up by Himself, to find their way back to God.

Editor's Note: original spelling and grammar have been left true to the writings and question marks have been used to note illegible handwriting.

Australia Day Honour - Peter Lewinsky

We belatedly congratulate our member Mr Peter John LEWINSKY, son of Dunera Boy Alfred Lewinsky, who was appointed to the Order of Australia (AM) for significant service to the community, to public administration and to business.

VALE INGE RUBEN

It is with much regret that we record the recent passing of Inga Ruben, wife of Dunera Boy Rudolph Ruben, in Melbourne. She was a regular attendee at our annual Melbourne events and a valued supporter of the Dunera Association. Our sincere condolences go to Inge's children and wider family.

British camp which saved thousands of Jews from the Holocaust to be commemorated

Reprinted with permission from an article in The Jewish Chronicle.

A plaque is to be unveiled at the site of the Kitchener camp in Kent next week - at the same time as an exhibition will open at the Jewish Museum.

A little-known operation that brought thousands of Jewish men from Germany and Austria to England in the final months before the Second World War will be commemorated next week by the unveiling of a plaque at the site of the camp they were first brought to.

Descendants of survivors of the Kitchener Camp rescue will unveil the plaque in a special ceremony next Monday just outside the town of Sandwich, in Kent.

In December 1938, as the first Kindertransport refugee children began to arrive in England, an organisation called the Council for German Jewry - now better known as World Jewish Relief - held a meeting of its executive council in London.

The meeting's minutes noted: "In a very short space of time, the German government would take such steps as would lead to the practical extinction of Jews in Germany".

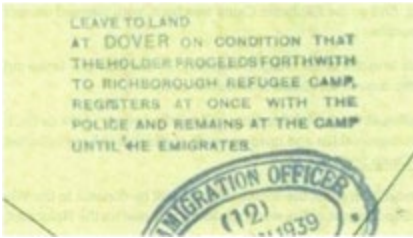
It was decided that all possible steps had to be taken to facilitate the transport of Jews from anywhere in the Reich (then Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia) out of Nazi territory.

Although the British government was unwilling to accept the establishment of a refugee camp in Britain, by January they had accepted the concept of a transit camp.

People with the chance of "migration [elsewhere] within a reasonable period" - 12 months to two years - were to be allowed to come to England, on the strict understanding that they could not work in the country and had no rights of British citizenship. And so the Kitchener Camp was born, with planned accommodation for 5,000 people.

Jews began to arrive in the camp in February. By the time war broke out seven months later, around 4,000 had reached the camp.

Both the exhibition and the plaque are being sponsored by the AJR (Association of Jewish Refugees). Frank Harding, an AJR trustee, described the "great pleasure" the organisation had in being able to recognise "one of the lesser known acts of rescue of Britain's Second World War history, the remarkable story of the Kitchener Camp through which 4,000 lives were saved. It is recognition too of all those who were involved in its conception and establishment and of those refugees who came here, many of whom went on to serve in the Pioneer Corps.



Top: Kitchener Camp - September 1939

Left: A pass for one of those who was able to leave Nazi territory for the Kitchener camp (Photo: Jewish Museum)

Right: Kitchener Camp 60th Anniversary Dinner Invitation

Sergeant Snow White - A Revival

Geoff Winter, with Ed. Lippmann

First performed as pantomimes in the internment camps, then opening commercially as a revue at Melbourne's Union Theatre on 17 April 1943, exactly to the day, after 81 years, the revue *Sergeant Snow White* has been revived! After nine weeks of rehearsals, and as the graduating performance by the Tier 6 Acting Troupe of the JMC Academy, this revue opened in Sydney's Belvoir St Theatre on 17 April this year.

Originally produced by 'Sergeant' Doc. Kurt Sternberg, with music by Ray Martin (not the current one!), and performed by the men of the 8th Employment Company, originally as *Snow White S2838* in December 1940, then as *Snow White Joins Up* in Christmas/New Year 1941-42, and in February 1942 as a gala *Snow White and the Seven Hay Days*, this latest production, created by Director Associate Professor Ian Maxwell with musical direction by Dr Joseph Toltz, both of the University of Sydney, follows the original script, held in the Jewish Museum of Australia, in the main, with additional material, including from Bertold Brecht's *The Jewish Wife*, Lysistrata and some of Franz Lehar's music.

The performance at the Belvoir St Theatre was a riotous, absurdist pantomime, full of Python-esque absurdity and slapstick comedy as Kurt Sternberg, no doubt, intended and Ian Maxwell has amplified, and with the 8th EnJOYment! company *Always Look(ing) on the Bright Side of Life!* *Sergeant Snow White* was originally a three-act revue reflecting the 1937 Walt Disney production of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. The first scene is in the court of Queen Columbia (originally Queen Columina the 5th, i.e. fifth columnists!), jealous of Snow White and preparing for the banquet. Deep in the forest the evil witch has conjured up a wolf tasking him with the disruption of the banquet and securing the Queen's alliance for his evil deeds. At the banquet, all hell breaks loose as the Wolf takes control of the Court, including the good fairies, and casts them into prison. The satire included such skits as in the wharfs scene with the seven dwarfs unloading crates of 'Kosher Spam' from the ship only having to load them back on again because they 'got it wrong'!

This performance was dynamic, energetic and exciting, with the young performers clearly enthusiastic and enjoying the whole experience, and this rubbed off on to the audience with spontaneous laughter continually. While maintaining much of the cross-dressing etc. of the original, this production included females in some of the roles which only added to the sparkle. The singing was of a high standard, appropriate to the situations depicted.

The 1943 production played for four performances to full houses, and this 2024 production similarly for five performances to packed houses. It ran for close to 2.5 hours and would be a great hit in Melbourne, with the production team wanting to add more material for a much larger audience. Sadly, the logistics of mounting such a production in Melbourne makes this highly unlikely at the present time. Let's hope, however, that it is not another 81 years before it is performed again!

They Also Prospered (Walter Heymann-Emden)

Bill Pell

Not all the Dunera Boys who remained in Australia became famous, but most went on to lead successful lives in their new country.

Walter Heymann-Emden, who changed his name by deed poll to Walter Harold Emden and was known to the non-Dunera world as Harold rather than Walter, is a case in point.

He was older than most of the Dunera Boys, a businessman rather than a creative, and became a Sergeant in the Employment Corps. He had been an officer in the German Cavalry in the First World War, wounded, and with an Iron Cross. Whether he thought that that service would save him from Hitler I don't know.

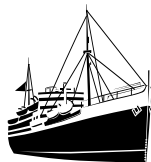
He had been relatively wealthy, an early Mercedes Benz owner, and represented the Hamburg family company from time to time in England and India. It is not clear to me whether he was in England when the Nazis struck and was thus separated from his mother, but it was a matter of great sadness in his life. All was taken away by the Nazis.

After demobilisation and opting to stay in Australia (his only relative remaining in the world was an ancient aunt who lived in South Africa), he decided to start importing items needed in Australia, mostly from Germany. Despite the Nazis, he always believed that German goods were superior and, as well, still had some useful business contacts over there. Eventually he established contact with a couple of the major tile manufacturers, and this became his main business interest which eventually made him comparatively wealthy. (He supplied the tiles for the St Kilda Junction/Dandenong Road underpass, which I suppose is still there).

But this did not happen overnight. When I first met him in the mid-50s he didn't own a car and had to hawk his samples around the bathroom and tiling emporiums on foot carrying his wares in a suitcase. There was a residual antagonism towards 'reffos' as well which didn't help.

He became my stepfather when he married my mother in 1956. As a result, I met a number of Dunera Boys who were the friends he kept in touch with. He followed the exploits of others who were successful such as Franz Stampfl and the actor Max Bruch. He and my mother went often to Germany on business/holiday trips.

He treated me and my brother well, but never seemed to us to be completely content; often a little 'nervy'. Doubtless the Dunera experience added to this. And after he died I found a letter from the International Red Cross confirming after the war that his beloved mother had perished at Thierienstadt.



Dunera News

First published in 1984 this is a unique resource of information relating to the internment of refugees from Nazi oppression deported to Australia from Britain and Singapore in 1940.

PDFs of all back issues can be found on the Dunera Association website.

The association welcomes contributions of letters or articles for future issues of Dunera News: Please email duneraboys@gmail.com or visit www.duneraassociation.com

Find us on 

Friends of the Dunera Boys Public Group

Admin and Moderators:
Nathan Oppy & Michelle Frenkel

This group is an international forum for discussing all things Dunera. The group would love to hear your stories or associations with the Dunera or Queen Mary internees.

In order for your membership to be confirmed applicants must answer two security questions.

Useful contact and links

Dunera Museum at Hay

Carol Bunyan (Canberra)
Volunteer Researcher
carolbunyan1940@gmail.com

Dunera Hay Tours

David Houston (Hay)
davidhouston23@bigpond.com

Duldig Studio

www.duldig.org.au

Tatura Irrigation & Wartime Camps Museum

www.taturamuseum.com
taturamuseum@gmail.com

Dunera Stories

Online resource for stories and artwork of Dunera and Queen Mary Internees
www.dunerastories.monash.edu

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