

Dunera News

Issue No. 113
October 2022

82nd Anniversary Events



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



Welcome to issue 113 of Dunera News. This has been an exciting few months since my last report. We have conducted two magnificent face-to-

face events, indicating that Dunera Association's activities are reverting to normal settings.

The Sydney event took place at Jones Bay Wharf, Pyrmont on 28th August 2022. This was a momentous event as it signified the opening of the Tribute Museum at that venue. Reports on this event are included in this issue.

On 4-6th September 2022, we conducted the Hay Dunera weekend events. I had not been back to Hay since 2018 so for me this was a very much anticipated event. There are reports on this event in this issue. I should explain that some years ago, when it became apparent that few if any Dunera Boys would be able to attend our events, it was decided that we would no longer name them 'reunions'.

The Australian National University, (ANU), held the 'Injustice, Survival, Memory 2022' conference on 6-8th September 2022. I attended the third day which was devoted to

Dunera histories. The content of all of the presenters was remarkable and from all accounts the other two days presentations were similarly fascinating. Reports on day three are in this issue.

Also included in this issue is an archival piece from Dunera Boy Peter Langstein written from Berlin in 1992.

In conjunction with the Hay Shire Council, we are beginning the process of the complete rebuilding and refurbishment of the third carriage of the Hay Museum at the Hay railway station. At the appropriate time, we will launch an appeal for funding both from private individuals and government sources.

For members in Australia, I hope you can join us in person for this year's Melbourne event on 6th November 2022.

I wish you all good health and for our Jewish readers a Happy New Year for 5783 and well over the Fast.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron Reichwald'.

Ron Reichwald

From the Archives

Dunera News No. 25 October 1992 (page 7)

Myrtle Kaczynsky, wife of Dunera Boy Gerhard Kaczynski, has given kind permission to reprint extracts of a letter from Peter Langstein in Berlin, Germany.

I visited my old home town of Parchim in Mecklenburg, to have a last look at my old birthplace. The house will probably be pulled down by a developer who buys it cheap from the administration, but we still hope to get some compensation, although the outcome is uncertain. We hear that the NZ Government is reducing the old age pension, but then they are putting the axe to social services everywhere, not least in the former Comecon countries. Of course we are better off (as yet) in wealthy Germany, though the recession is leaving its mark here also. Unemployment in the “new” states of Germany is around 20 per cent, but they continue to shut down old industries faster than new private ones can be created. Textile, machine tooling, shipbuilding, furnishing, optical industry and agriculture are going down the drain or have already vanished. The chemical industry, because of air and filter pollution, has almost disappeared.

The crime rate since the police force has been cut down has risen sharply. No longer is it safe to go out at night to the theatre, to friends or to entertainment and to come back safely by public transport in the early hours. But it is no good crying over it.

When I heard about the reunion of the old “Eighth” (Employment Company), it brought back a rush of old memories. I remember at the time taking the advice of Piepel and Heinz Z. not to go fruit picking, because they thought it unfair to the fruit workers in the orchards. So I went straight from Internment Camp 4 at Tatura to the horse boxes at Caulfield Racecourse, signed up, got uniforms, and later a leave pass. It was strange to be moving through the streets of Melbourne from “Under the Clocks” at Flinders Street Station after having been that morning still behind barbed wire. As a raw recruit, hardly speaking the language I felt very self-conscious to be posing as a soldier. After a few days we found the Dug Out (a services club), with an excellent Yankee jazz band and became swinging soldiers, sipping soft drinks and having Australian girls in our arms. With cash in our pockets we had our first experiences of milkshakes and ice-cream. Sergeant-major Stone taught us some basic drill, and the first working parties sent us to the wharfs. We learned to avoid both Yankee and Aussie military police, especially when we “exchanged” candies from the boxes, or when we “stored” our uniform shirts under our goggle suits.

Our Australian Digger hats were soon belted into individual shapes - not quite regulation. Next it was off to Albury, with Herbert Mainzer and Freddy Broch, attached to 6th Australian Employment Company. We shared a tent with three Italians, one elderly man (probably in his thirties). We didn't trust them, and thought they might pinch our belongings. We were certainly wrong: we had fallen for the same xenophobia we had experienced in Germany. Of the local people we met, I remember George Eames (an engine cleaner), due to retire soon, and his family. Also a railway porter who had a nice wife and a very good-looking daughter, who was of course "out of bounds" for us young rascals. In Main Street I bought a handsome Swiss wristwatch after the first payday, and it is still in working order.

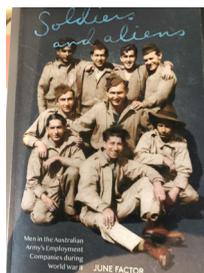
Sometime in 1943 I got to know the Eureka Youth Club, where I felt very much at home. I remember Audrey Blake and Harry Stein being in charge. We had formed as the "German Boys", performing anti-fascist recitals, working class and folk songs. We moved to Tocumwal with the whole company, transshipping at the break of gauge, and I recall loading some bottled beer in paper bags, of which some found its way back to camp, in spite of vigilant military police. Another time, some wine casks had sprung a leak and one of the boys had to be carried home, soaked like a sponge, having fallen out of the transport, luckily on top of a bale of wool. This is but a small selection of my adventures in the "Eighth".

See also www.dunerastories.monash.edu/dunera-stories/158-searching-for-jack-kaczynski.html

Publications

Art Captured

Drawings, cartoons and caricatures from detention by Dunera internee Hans Wolter von Gruenwald. Booklet available from Kay Ball Murchison & District Historical Society. Email: murchison-historical-society@hotmail.com



Soldiers and Aliens

Men in the Australian Army's Employment Companies during WWII, by Ruth Factor, Melbourne University Press 2022. This book is a most interesting account of all the so-called alien Employment Companies. The Eighth Employment Company is mentioned in various parts of the book including references to educational activities, religious/synagogue services and musical activities.

82nd Anniversary Event - Sydney

On 4 September 2022 a most successful event was held in Sydney, the first for three years. The location at Doltone House, Jones Bay Wharf, was very fitting and the generosity of Paul Signorelli, venue owner much appreciated. 120 attendees enjoyed lunch and an afternoon of remembrance and celebration of the arrival of HMT Dunera at Jones Bay Wharf on 6 September 1940.

Some of the highlights included:

Ed Lippmann (son of DB Henry Lipmann) reminding attendees of how his father began the Dunera reunions in Sydney and the start of a newsletter over 50 years ago.

Bern Brent, last Dunera Boy in Australia unveiling, virtually, a plaque to the memory of the arrival of the Dunera. This plaque in bronze will take pride of place in the Tribute Museum.

HMT Dunera Model: Tom Wolf explaining the labour of love that became the scale model of HMT Dunera which Tom has generously donated to the Dunera Association for display at the Tribute Museum. The model was unveiled by Muriel Barber (widow of Herbert Barber) and Leah James (widow of Henry James).

Guest speaker, Louise Anemaat, Executive Director Library and Information Services, State Library of NSW. Louise spoke about the work at the State Library to refine the Dunera collection. She made the point that items like diaries, postcards, art works, and letters told stories about the internees in important and most personal ways. Louise encouraged family members who are looking for a home for original material to consider the State Library of NSW.

From top left, clockwise: Ron Reichwald, Ed Lippmann and Pul Signorelli; Tom Wolf with HMT Dunera model; Muriel Barber and Leah James; and Bern Brent on screen



82nd Anniversary Tribute - Sydney

Paula James

The 28th August 2022 between 2pm and 4pm exuded such “naches” that one could feel the essence of joy in the air.

The diverse descendants were as one, sharing a special historic commonality – there was a sense that we were all mishpachah. I lost count of the sparkles in eyes, the smiles and acknowledgements of each other sharing a simcha.

The Dunera Boys, no longer with us, would have been so proud of all their descendants as they acknowledged and celebrated together their unique life journeys. I know, as the daughter of Heinz Jacobius/Henry James, this tribute would have brought tears of joy to Dad’s eyes. He would have been “kvelling” in conjunction with Bern Brent (a dear friend and the last living Dunera boy in Australia), Muriel Barber from Melbourne and especially Leah, Henry’s wife, when they unveiled the Dunera plaque. This was such a momentous honour!

As Mum (Leah) and I were waiting on the footpath for a ride home, a number of descendants walked by us and stopped for a few words – “wasn’t this just so amazing”, “so special”, “just wonderful”, “they did a fantastic job” all smiling, including us, with a sparkle in our eyes and full of joie de vivre.

Thank you so much to the Dunera team and Doltone House for presenting a perfect two hours of memories, celebrations, reunions with descendants, a superb replica model of the HMT Dunera and a very precious well-designed, well-worded plaque in honour of our “Dunera Boys”.

From top left, clockwise: The Sydney Event; Louise Anemaat; Tribute Museum sign



82nd Anniversary Event in Hay Historic Concert and Video

Ron Reichwald

This 82nd anniversary event will forever be remembered as the occasion at which a remarkable concert was presented to us by two world class musicians. This concert named 'Messages Through the Wire' was made possible by the Hay Shire Council and we thank them sincerely for this gift to our commemoration.

The compositions played were all written during war and imprisonment. As the musicians Christopher Latham OAM and Dr Edward Neeman explained, these works showed, 'how prisoners and internees created music to help them cope'. The highlight for me was the composition by Boaz Bischofswerder, who wrote 'Phantasia Judaica' on board HMT Dunera and in the Hay and Tatura internment camps. I found this work to be hauntingly evocative. This work enabled me, in a limited way, to visualise the camp experiences of my late father.

Boaz's son Felix Werder (also a Dunera Boy), became an Australian composer as well as being the long-time choir master of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. As a child I recall seeing Felix in action at this synagogue both as the choir master and as a singer.

From top left, clockwise: Christopher Latham and Dr Edward Neeman; Guests at lunch and concert; Hay Railway Station re-enactment; Attendees at 70th Anniversary plaque



The other composers were Erwin Schulhoff, the most significant of the composers presented, Pavel Haas and Viktor Ullmann, all of whom perished in concentration camps, as well as Ignaz Friedman and Erich Korngold all of whom fled the Holocaust and survived.

It was most appropriate if not ironic that this concert was performed at the Hay Services Club. The audience was spell-bound and even though there were local members of the community not directly connected with the Dunera family, everyone appeared to be emotionally involved in this magnificent event.

Kate Garrett, our assistant secretary, in collaboration with Dr Seumas Spark, produced a most meaningful video preceding the above concert. As Kate described, 'The video was a look at the Dunera history from an art history/artist perspective. It covered a general outline of the Dunera story...' The video also showed our true friend and Hay stalwart David Houston recalling his childhood memories of the arrival of the Dunera Boys by train, and thereafter meeting with many of them. Dr Seumas Spark then discussed with Professor Andrew McNamara the art emanating from the camps, particularly Hay and the various types of art.

This video will eventually be shown in the form of a continuous replay on a TV monitor inside a carriage of the Dunera Museum at Hay railway station, meaning that it will become another part of the Dunera story shown to thousands of Museum visitors each year; yet another historic occasion in our midst.

Attendees at Bishopsgate



Conference: Injustice, Survival, Memory 2022

Australian National University Day 3 – 8th September 2022

Ron Reichwald

I had the pleasure and honour to attend the third day of this conference which was mainly devoted to Dunera history. Most of the presenters on this day were members of the Dunera Association and our own Seumas Spark and Kate Garrett had major roles in making this event possible. We thank the ANU Humanities Research Centre, College of Arts and Social Sciences for making this event possible. There was a lot of emotion invested in this event and the expertise and information given by the speakers was so significant. The whole day was heart-warming. Below are my observations of the presentations:

Justin Zobel Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Melbourne

Reflections on Dunera Boy Werner Pelz – 1921-2006

Justin presented a fascinating insight into his step-father's life and character. From a child living in abject poverty, to becoming a communist, finding himself on a farm in Britain in 1939, Werner found himself interned after he reported a farmer for opening his mail.

Justin painted a picture of a man who blocked out the resentment of other internees after arrival in Hay and mixed with intellectuals in camp. Werner had a complicated character, studying theology, yet was not a practising Christian. He returned to Australia in 1973, and visited Hay in 1974.

Werner continued to challenge middle class intellectual thought and argued vociferously with his contemporaries. His German culture dominated his thoughts and Justin believes that all of Werner's life was driven by his camp experiences.

Pauline Lyle-Smith Lawyer, Legal activist, writer, publisher

Remembering Professor Mayer: A personal Tribute to Henry Mayer and a Record of his Lasting Legacy

Henry Mayer was Pauline's lecturer. He was born in 1919 and later moved to London and worked for the BBC. After internment, he harvested fruit in Ardmona Victoria and was discharged from the army in 1946.

He welcomed internment and resented those who were critical of it. Henry achieved BA Honours and an MA at the University of Melbourne, later assuming lecturer roles in USA. His pivotal work was in the study and writing on Australian politics. He was also critical of those who objected to their internment and thought it fortunate that he came to Australia as an internee.

Pauline's presentation showed the immense pride she has in having been associated with Dunera Boy Henry Mayer.

Ian Maxwell Associate Professor Theatre and Performance Studies University of Sydney

Joseph Tolz Associate Jewish Studies and Research Support Manager Faculties of Arts & Social Sciences University of Sydney

Sounds of Europe: Subversive Expression in ‘Sergeant Snow White’

This was an amazing presentation illustrating the uniqueness and speculating on the raison d’etre of this 1943 performance by Dunera Boys at the Union Theatre in Carlton Melbourne. We were informed that this performance was the final iteration of earlier presentations and was written, directed and produced by Manfred Kurt. The presentation of slides showing scenes of the performance added to the fascination.

Both Ian and Joseph brought up the contemporary conundrum surrounding the issue of representing historical events in an ethical manner. What amazed them was that following this unique performance there was no progress for decades in the development of Australian theatre.

I had moments of personal involvement in this item when the presenters showed us a slide depicting a scene including the seven dwarfs; I knew this picture from books and it includes my late father as one of the dwarfs. I mentioned this to Joseph and Ian and they were amazed. They are hopeful that a podcast of this production will be possible and maybe later a theatrical performance. The original script is incomplete making a rewrite for a full production necessary.

Janet Arndt Entertainer, tour guide

Janet is one of our committee members, a most effervescent personality. She is the daughter of Queen Mary internees and was interned at Tatura, Victoria.

Janet described her father’s trauma at being arrested, particularly after living an idyllic earlier life in Germany. Her father was a monumental mason in Germany and was released from concentration camp in 1938 on condition that he left Germany. Her parents were able to secure a passage on a Japanese ship from Germany to Shanghai, but disembarked at Singapore as they had family there. Thereafter they were interned and sailed on the Queen Mary to Melbourne. Janet highlighted the contract in sailing conditions between the Queen Mary and HMT Dunera.

Camp life was a lovely life for the children of Queen Mary internees. At Tatura they also met Dunera Boys who joined them after being re located from Hay. Janet’s family later became friends with Dunera Boys and their families. Although her mother suffered from PTSD as a result of experiences in Germany, in Australia her parents had a wonderful social life.

Janet ended her presentation with a rendition of “Wish me Luck as You Wave me Good bye” - a most appropriately ebullient ending.

Kate Garrett German translator

Displacement and the Written Word: Translating the Poetry of Franz Philipp

Kate is Assistant Secretary of The Dunera Association. Hers was partly a technical presentation interspersed with the history of Franz Philipp. It was fascinating to hear Kate speak passionately of the need for the voices of translators to be made more visible and to be acknowledged.

Franz's poems were deeply private. He was also an art historian, expelled from German university in 1938. He was imprisoned in Dachau concentration camp, from where he escaped. Franz found himself in the North of England as a farm labourer in 1939 then interned and shipped to Australia. His poetry reflected his attempt in making sense of the world. He was a deeply empathetic man.

Kate's appeal on behalf of translators made even more sense as she illustrated through her translations the evocation of Franz's character from his intensely personal poetry.

Carol Bunyan Independent scholar, researcher, historian

The Other Dunera and Queen Mary Internees

Carol is an important part of the Dunera Association's work and has worked tirelessly in researching every Dunera Boy. She outlined the profiles of various internees and stressed that many internees are not included in known histories.

The internees' stories are complex, and their backgrounds varied and diverse. Carol made an important point in that research should also include the Dunera internees who had fascist sympathies as well as those who were non enemy aliens. This led to the formation of different groups within the camps, which featured loyalties, personalities and the presence of anti-Semitism.

Dr Seumas Spark Dean of Arts Research Monash University, author, co author Dunera Lives

Wife Dead: Son OK: The Story of Georg Chodziesner and his Son

Seumas is Vice-President of the Dunera Association and his work is invaluable to the Dunera family. He outlined the tragedy of a family torn apart by the Holocaust, from the death of Georg's father Ludwig in a concentration camp in 1943, to Georg's escape to Britain in 1939, to the family finding themselves marooned on opposite sides of the world.

Georg came from a literary family. He wrote an account of life on board HMT Dunera, which was translated. His sister Gertrud became a renowned poet. In her writings, death, terror and declarations of resistance were common themes.

Georg's son Ben became an active member of the Dunera Association, attending many reunions. In fact, during his lifetime, on every occasion of our Melbourne reunions, Ben was the first person who booked.

Professor Jay Winter Professor of History Emeritus, Yale University, author

An Intimate History of Survival – The Mir Yeshiva from Vilna to Shanghai and Beyond

Professor Winter has been an invaluable contributor to the Dunera Story, particularly having collaborated with the late Ken Inglis, Seumas Spark and Carol Bunyan in writing the two volumes of Dunera Lives.

His account of the survival against all odds of the Mir Yeshivah was fascinating. This was the only Talmudic Yeshiva to survive World War II and has since been reconstructed in New York and Jerusalem. It was only because of one yeshiva's refusal to follow a rabbinic ruling to remain in Lithuania, escaping to Japan and then Shanghai that led to the survival of the Mir Yeshiva. In so doing, the preservation of the Talmud was made possible.

Professor Winter, in raising questions post presentations, also made an impassioned plea that future research and literary contributions must emanate from the families of Dunera Boys. He said this is even more vital now an era without these beacons of history is upon us. He stressed that we should not just rely on the history professionals but also on the authentic contributions from family members.

SAVE THE DATES

Dunera Association Events

Tatura, VIC on 16 April 2023

Sydney, NSW Sunday 27 August 2023

Hay, NSW on weekend of 1-3 September 2023

Melbourne, VIC on Sunday 12 November 2023

The Arndts' Long Journey to Freedom

Janet Arndt

Kurt Arndt met Wally Winterfeld in the Arndt household when Wally boarded with the Arndt family. Wally was a friend of Kurt's sister Lolo having met at a Jewish youth camp. Kurt and Wally (my parents) were both born in 1912 and probably met some time after 1930.

On 9 November 1938, Kristallnacht, soldiers came to the Arndt household demanding the men. Kurt and his father Max were not there, but were later arrested and taken to Sachsenhausen camp. After six weeks they were released on the proviso they left the country.

Kurt came home and told Wally they had to leave. She said, "Only if we're married" so they found a rabbi who married them on 22 December 1938. They packed whatever they could, including two wooden crates with items such as bed linen and tablecloths. Wally passed away in 2003 and Kurt some years later at age 97. When I cleared their house in Gardenvale in 2010 the crates of bed linen were still there.

Kurt and Wally were able to get ship's tickets from Hamburg due to a relative who was working at the shipping office. They boarded the Sushimi Maru in February 1939 bound for Shanghai, stopping at ports including Singapore. The rest of the Arndt family were dispersed to South Africa, Bolivia and Palestine. Sister Lolo and husband Hellmuth had managed to make their way to Singapore.

Kurt and Wally disembarked the ship in Singapore, the only ones, I was told, as brother in law Hellmuth Jacobowitz (later Jackson) came aboard and said "I've got a job for Kurt Arndt." So they got off and went with Hellmuth to Paya Lebar, where they were to live with them. I believe Kurt was given a job as supervisor on a building site: I imagine there would have been a lot of sign language from Kurt as he spoke no Malay and little English!

In 1940, the curtains came down when the British Government declared them "enemy aliens". They had to pack up once again as they were told they were to be "transported" to Australia. So began the next chapter of their lives on board the Queen Mary along with over 280 fellow "enemy aliens". The Queen Mary arrived at Jones Bay Wharf, Sydney on 28 September 1940. From there they were taken to internment at Tatura, Victoria. What a shock! After living in cultured Germany and Singapore to a hot dusty place with long sheds and tin roofs.

In the family camp at Tatura were families including the Arndts, Jacobowitzs, Seefelds, Blaus, Duldigs and Baers amongst many others. Single men including Helmut Neustaedter (Newton) and George Dreyfus, who later became well known, were in the compound next to the families.

Kurt, being good with his hands, did handyman jobs around the camp, Hellmuth made scuffs from tyres and bits of material, Lolo and Wally helped



Kurt and Wally on board Japanese ship to Singapore 1939

with the children and Karl Duldig (among other works) made busts of officers once the men were “drafted” into The 8th Employment Company” in 1942.

While in the army for three years Kurt served as batman (butler). He would go to the ordinary soldiers mess with saucepans, fill them up from their kitchen and serve the food to his officer, getting compliments for his cooking! He had lots of stories to tell and had a great sense of humour which I think kept him going under trying times. I believe he was the strength for Wally, who I believe suffered from PTSD due to the losses of her own family in Europe. On entering the army, the families of soldiers were released from internment and accommodated in private homes.

I was born on 6 June 1944, D Day! in a Catholic hospital, an ecumenical beginning! Kurt and Wally both worked, Kurt as a monumental mason (with tools brought from the family business in Germany) and continued at his trade till he was age 74. Wally worked as a secretary/stenographer first in the Myer office and later for Jewish Welfare.

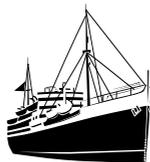
Needless to say, there are so many more stories to tell. My early life with the wider Arndt family and the Jacksons, Seefelds, Felders etc. was rich and full of social get-togethers for birthdays and other celebrations. Good fortune had it that my uncles Ernst, Paul and the Martin (Margulius) families were also so much part of my upbringing. One more interesting fact. One of the children of the Seefelds, Valerie, became my parents’ carer in their later years - a lovely situation never to be forgotten.

I am now a choir member of Etz Chayim synagogue having had my Jewish upbringing in Temple Beth Israel. Paul Arndt was musical director at both congregations so I’m trying to keep up the musical link.



The Duldig Studio is a house museum at 92 Burke Road Malvern East, Victoria. You can find out more about the experiences of the Queen Mary Internees and in particular the families by doing a tour of the museum, where I am a guide. The open hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays and the second Sunday each month 1.30-4pm. Group tours are by appointment. See website www.duldig.org.au

Top left: Sydney Morning Herald, September 28, 1940
 Top right: Kurt and Wally, Singapore, c1940
 Bottom left: Kurt in his 8th Employment Co. uniform with Wally, Melbourne c1943
 Bottom right: Arndt family at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Melbourne c1948



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.

If you have any questions about your families' connections to this subject then this is the place to post your query; the group members have an unequalled knowledge between them.

Useful contact and links

Dunera Museum at Hay

Carol Bunyan (Canberra)
Volunteer Researcher
lcb@bigpond.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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