



"Nurungi"

Remembered

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE CONCORD HERITAGE SOCIETY

email: chs@concordheritage.asn.au

www.concordheritage.asn.au

No.119

April 2006

EDITOR
LOIS MICHEL
9744-8528

PRESIDENT
JANN OGDEN
9809-5772

PUBLIC RELATIONS
TRISH SKEHAN
4369-4172

SECRETARY/TREASURER
LOIS MICHEL
3 Flavelle Street
(P.O. Box 152)
Concord 2137
Phone: 9744-8528
Fax: 9744-7591

MEETINGS

General Meetings

2nd Wednesday of month
at 7:30 pm in the
Concord Citizens' Centre
9 Wellbank Street, Concord
Phone: 8765-9155

Executive Meetings

4th Wednesday of
August, October, January,
March, May and July
at 7:30 pm in the
Concord Citizens' Centre

Walker Estates Committee

4th Wednesday of
September, November,
February, April and June
at 7:30 pm in the
Concord Citizens' Centre
Derek Williams, 9746-9649

Other Committees

As arranged
Watch the newsletter

Museum

Lorraine Holmes, 9743-2682

Archives/Local History

(Vacant)

Heritage

Bob Jones, 8765-9347

Oral/Family History

Lola Sharp, 8753-0659

*

**CONCORD
HERITAGE MUSEUM**
5 Wellbank Street

Open 2:00 - 4:00 pm
on 1st and 3rd
Wednesdays & Saturdays

Death in P.O.W. Camps

As the solemn dawn of another Anzac Day draws near, former P.O.W. in Korea, Mr. Tom Hollis, M.I.D., now a resident of Kingsgrove, presents a graphic account of conditions in the infamous Camp 5, in North Korea, after his capture on January 21, 1951.

Mr. Hollis also reveals the story of his meeting in North Korea with controversial journalist, Wilfred Burchett, who later wrote a book titled "This Monstrous War", which gave a distorted version of the North Korean Communist P.O.W. Camps.

Tom Hollis, first enlisted in the Second A.I.F. in 1944 and served with the 2/11 Aust. Commando Squadron until November 7, 1947. He returned to work in Sydney as a watchman with Macquarie Stevedoring Company until he re-enlisted for Korea on August 25, 1950. He served with A Company, 3rd Bn. R.A.R., until his return and discharge on November 27, 1953.

Married with five children, Tom Hollis (was) an active member of the Kingsgrove RSL Sub-Branch. He left no doubt about the traitorous activities of Burchett as he recounted his experiences in North Korea after his capture on January 21, 1951.

As a result of war privations and injuries, Mr. Hollis is unable to work. His collar bone was taken out. He has calcification of the joints, arthritis of the spine and other disabilities. Mr. Hollis, a big strapping man of 6ft3ins., was one of four Australians interrogated by Burchett when he visited the infamous Camp 5 early in 1953. Hollis had lost more than four stone and was reduced to a living skeleton after existing on a diet of millet seed, milk thistle, fat hen (a weed which when cooked "tasted alright") and sacaline seed.

It was in Camp 5 that 1,700 prisoners of war were buried within a period of eight weeks. Most died from malnutrition, lack of care and many illnesses including dysentery and mental breakdowns. Despite privations, torture, brainwashing and special indignities, Tom Hollis, in true Australian "Digger" tradition, never faltered or gave in. The Communists failed to indoctrinate him. He carried on and lived through the punishing ordeal finishing as the only Australian in an American P.O.W. camp.

Because of his courage and fortitude, he was Mentioned in Dispatches.

In recounting his meeting with Burchett, Tom Hollis said that when Burchett arrived and introduced himself as an Australian reporter, they all "woke up immediately." "We knew he was a phony, otherwise he wouldn't have walked in with Chinese camp officials". Hollis said that Burchett in his book failed to mention "Australians". Burchett did speak of visiting Camp 5 where he said he met American, British and "minority" prisoners, who included Turks, Puerto Ricans, French and others.

Hollis continued, "There were four Aussies interviewed by Burchett early in 1953 and the interview did not last longer than . . . (Ed. note: there is a small section missing here from the newspaper article) . . . and in the village also. We skirted round and found our hut full of sleeping Chinese. As we tried to get away we were confronted with a Chinese platoon with US tommy guns.

"With Lieut. Angus McDonald, of Queensland in charge, our party consisted of Cpl. Laurie Buckland of Sydney, Cpl. Don Buck of Sydney, Pte. Ted Light of Townsville and myself. We were taken to Chinese Div. Headquarters where we were kept in the front line in a mud hut for three weeks and then they moved McDonald, Buckland and Light away, leaving me with Cpl. Buck. We moved around for about three months to various camps and then to Suan, known as the 'bean camp'. We were fed twice daily, before daylight and after sunset, with a ball of millet canary seed impregnated with soya bean about 3.5 inches in diameter."

The water well in the centre of the camp was full of germs. After two months they accumulated about 800 prisoners. "We had a lot of sick men and buried 30-40 daily for a period in graves we had to dig about 2 ft. deep. There were no medical orderlies or medicine and the men died like flies.



Bulletin Board

12th April - Bob Mitchell, Memory Man
- "101 Ways to Trigger Memory"
and "That's Funny, I'd Forgotten That".

"After another six weeks they took about 700 of us who could stand up and sent us out at night chopping wood for fires and we rarely came back before 3am. This is also how a lot died because in June 1951, and later, there were no fires or warmth and only 140 survived out of the 700. Cpl. Buck was then left behind as we moved to Chong San, where we met up with 200 US Marine P.O.W.'s."

Hollis said that after six months as a P.O.W., he hadn't had a bath, shave or change of clothes and his hair was long, rotten with body lice and his weight had dropped from 12 stone to nine stone. He said he used to break the ice to try and wash his face and stand in a stream to remove the calluses on his feet and body from lying on mud floors. He said he tried to scrub the filth or 'crud' off with sand. They used to empty the toilets in the stream and then draw the water off for cooking and drinking.

He was later moved to Camp 5 where more brainwashing started every day from 7.30am – 12 noon and from 1pm – 5pm where educated Chinese speaking English tried to tell us how the Communist system was best. Hollis said in Camp 5 two rooms were set aside outside the camp for North Korean Intelligence (equivalent to Japan's 'Kemperi Tai'). The rooms were 10ft x 10ft with platforms two feet high off the ground built of pine trees with small limbs sticking into a P.O.W.'s back, where he had to sit Japanese style from 6am to 10pm with one toilet visit a day and then use the same spot for a bed.

Food was pushed through a sliding panel and smoking was forbidden. If a man was caught smoking he would have a peg six inches long driven down his mouth and throat. Tong, the Provost Marshall, was educated in the U.S.A., and every Friday he would beat up the Yanks with a baseball bat.

Hollis escaped from Camp 5 with Pte. Keith Gwyther of Moe, Vic., after making a compass out of a piece of fencing wire, a broken needle and a piece of wood. The wire was magnetised through heat treatment and pointed magnetic north about 5 degrees short of true north, and they made small folders in Korean, Japanese and Chinese to help in the escape, but they were recaptured and punished.

Hollis, previously escaped twice while on the marches, but never got far. He also told of the Chinese efforts in the winter of 1953 to get him to read to the United Nations Company of P.O.W.'s their Communist propaganda and was threatened with shooting and tortured

on his refusal. Hollis was able to smuggle out valuable information in the back end of a fountain pen when released.

Hollis said, "I am lucky to be alive. Burchett was well aware of the Chinese conditions but he never did a thing to help and still works for the Communist ideals".

The above is an article found in The Western Suburbs Courier, 14th April, 1971 and is printed with permission.

I managed to contact Mr. Hollis through Kingsgrove RSL, to request his permission to reprint the article and learned that he is now 80 (having put his age up by 9 months to enlist in the AIF), and has recently recovered from a gall bladder operation. He had never seen the original article and I promised him a copy.

Coincidentally, in "Spectrum" S.M.H. January 28/29, 2006, I discovered a book review "Memoirs of a Rebel Journalist - the Autobiography of Wilfred Burchett". For the information of those who may remember the controversy surrounding Burchett, a small extract of this review is printed below, as I believe it adds weight to Tom Hollis' comments.

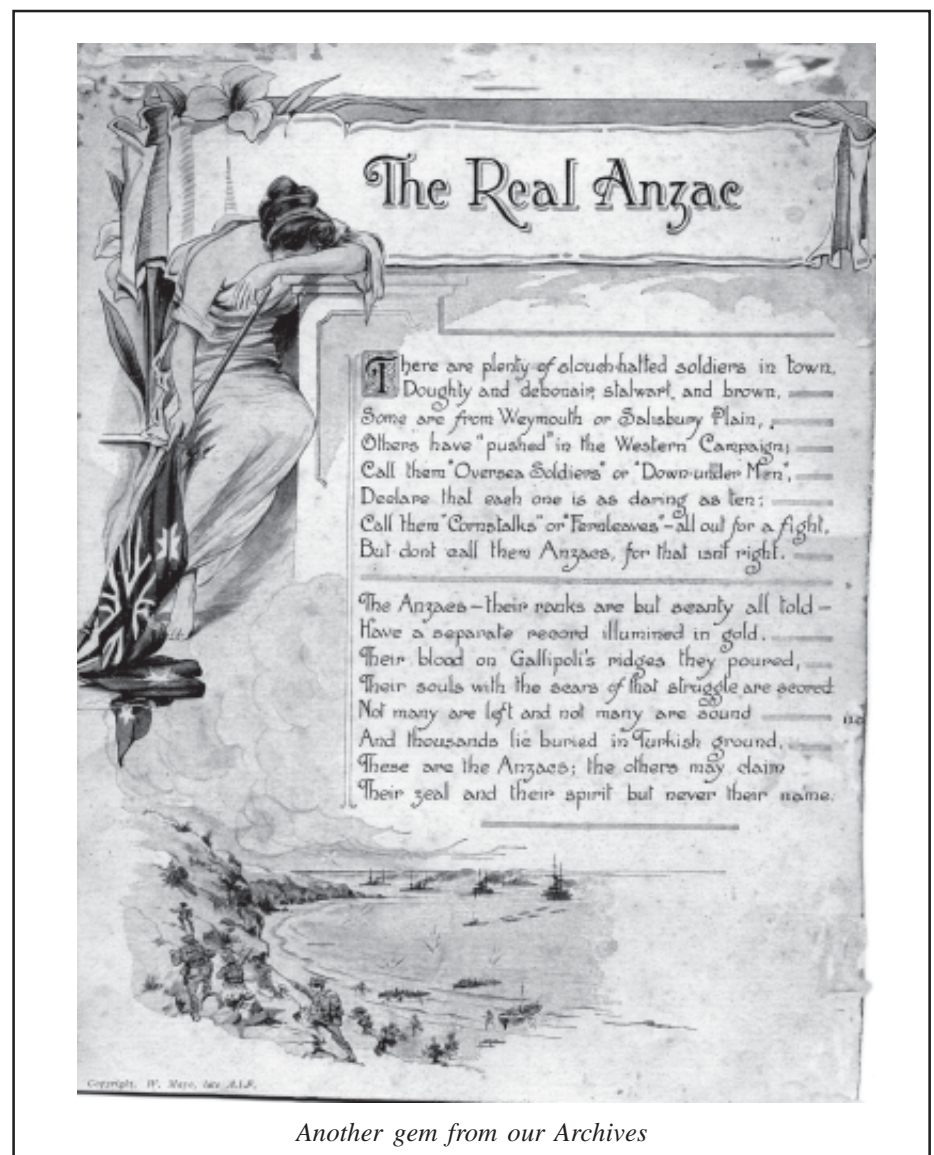
I sometimes feel the Korean War is the forgotten war and Anzac Day this year is a good time for us all to remember and re-

flect on it and salute the service people involved. Lola Sharp

Selected extract of review of "Memoirs of a Rebel Journalist" by Ian Hicks, a former Herald literary editor.

The most likely buyers of this book doubtless already have their own opinion of Burchett. Some, perhaps a minority, would agree with Nick Shimmin in his preface that Wilfred Burchett was the greatest journalist Australia has ever produced. Others, perhaps a majority, would lean to the view of Walker Mahurin, a United States Air Force Colonel and a Korean War veteran, that Burchett was a petty, conniving communist propaganda hack – a despicable individual.

The bulk of the book is a particularly detailed, if blinkered, view of his years in the Soviet Union, communist Europe, China and Indo-China. He is savage in his condemnation of Western journalists as blind consumers of their own governments' lies. It never seems to dawn on him that he drank just as eagerly and foolishly at communist wells from Moscow to Peking and all points in between.



Another gem from our Archives

“101 Ways to Trigger Memories” and “That’s Funny, I’d Forgotten That”

These are the themes for our guest speaker on Wednesday, 12th April.

Bob Mitchell, the Memory Man, is a professional Oral Historian. His career began with his first interview in 1996 – a very personal one which captured the memories of a dying father. This led to a book “Scone Larrikin” which was both self-published and published by the NSW branch of the Oral History Association of Australia in 1997.

Two years later the State Library published a special Memory Man technique which explains the process by which life story audio recordings can be published as a book. These events led to an ongoing association with OHAA and a mission to help families capture precious family oral histories before it is too late.

He runs “in service” training for Diverisional Therapists, volunteers and carers who play an important role in ensuring residents of homes and people in their care are both physically and mentally stimulated.

As well as teaching techniques for the

recording of oral histories he also assists family to records their precious memories of their older folk. He arranges the interview, asks the questions and does all the work to produce the oral and written histories.

Recording older people’s memories accords them time and respect while shedding light on another time his history.

His first topic “101 Ways to Trigger Memory” is aimed to teach people how to trigger memories using a variety of techniques, and how to conduct successful reminiscence sessions.

Some of the topics covered are: The nature of memory (mental management, memory aids, dementia warning signs); Use of verbal and non-verbal triggers; Use of various memory prompts such as music and other sounds, old household memorabilia, and even smells.

His second topic, “That’s Funny, I Thought I’d Forgotten That”, is a talk based on past interviews. Interview excerpts are short and snappy, and demonstrate how questions and visual

prompts trigger memories.

The stories you will hear are typical tales of yesteryear, told by ordinary people living their lives to the full. The war years, the Depression, sporting tales and any other stories from real life are featured. These stories are brought to life with the help of an overhead projector, screen and tape recorder.

Humour is at the forefront of the talk. What you see and hear will rekindle memories long forgotten. Some tales will have your heads nodding in agreement while others will simply blow you away.

If you’ve ever thought of recording your own memories, or those of a loved one, this is an evening not to be missed. It’s the little things of life that make the most important listening – not the great and momentous occasions.

Make a note in your diary now and turn up on Wednesday, 12th April at 7:30 pm in the Senior Citizens Centre, Wellbank Street, Concord.

Yaralla Open Day - Sunday, 9th April, 2006

Please put the date in your diary now.

This year’s event will take on a different format. We will be conducting group tours through the house as usual but the ground tours will be self guided.

Visitors will be given a map noting the various points of interest and at each point we will have a guide(s) to help answer any questions. There will also be site boards at the various sites with the appropriate information.

During the coming weeks we will be carrying out extensive advertising which could result in a record number of visitors.

As such we will need many volunteers to man the various sites of interest around the grounds to talk to people about the history of this magnificent estate. If you don’t already have a copy, you will be given one of our

tYaralla Tour Guide books (which will also be on sale to visitors) which should help you answer any questions you might be asked.

We will also need extra help with the Devonshire teas.

Some of our regular guides will not be available for various reasons so we urgently need additional helpers. You don’t need to have an extensive knowledge of the estate, just about the site where you will be situated - and we will supply you with all the information you’ll need.

Please, won’t you volunteer some time for the day?? Money raised goes towards our ongoing work on the estate

It is important that we know who will be helping on this day so please telephone Lois on 9744-8528 NOW!

Rules for Women Teachers (1915)

1. You must not marry during the term of contract.
2. You are not to keep company with men.
3. You must be home between the hours of 8 pm and 6 am unless attending a school function.
4. You must not loiter downtown in Ice Cream Parlours.
5. You may not travel beyond the city limits without permission of the Chairman of the Board.
6. You may not ride in a carriage or automobile with any man unless he is your father or brother.
7. You may not smoke cigarettes.
8. You may not dress in bright colours.
9. You may under no circumstances dye your hair.
10. You must wear at least two petticoats and your dresses must not be shorter than 2 inches above the ankles.
11. To keep the school room clean you must: sweep the floor at least once a day; scrub the floor with hot soapy water at least once a week; clean the blackboard once a day; start the fire at 7am so that the room will be warm by 8 am.



City of Canada Bay Council Seniors Week Activities

Morning of Music - Mon. 3rd April - 10am to 1:30 pm. in the Senior Citizens Centre, Wellbank Street. A showcase of various performers to suit all tastes. Refreshments provided. Cost \$2 donation. Bookings essential, call 9911 6580

Mind Your Mind - Thurs. 6th April - 10am to 12 noon - Drummoyne Community Centre, 10 Cometrowe Street, Drummoyne. Alzheimer's Australia workshop looking at healthy ageing, focusing on ways to reduce the risk of dementia. Limited transport available. Bookings essential, call 9911-6580

Computer Seminar - Fri. 7th April - 2pm to 4pm - Concord Senior Citizens Centre, Wellbank Street. Introduction to computers, internet, digital cameras, genealogy and lots more. Bookings phone 9743-1243 or 9713-6565.

Concord Autumn Flower, Floral Art & Vegetable Show - Sat. 1st April - 10:30 am to 4pm and Sun. 2nd April - 11am to 3pm - Concord Community Centre, 1A Gipps Street.

Harbour Cruise - Wed. 5th April - 10am to 2pm - Parramatta River - cost \$15.00. Enjoy lunch while cruising around the inner harbour. Pick up from Chiswick or Cabarita wharves. Limited number of tickets, which must be purchased prior to event. Bookings 9911-6555.

Some signs seen while travelling:

■ **In a Japanese hotel:** You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid.

■ **In the lobby of a Moscow hotel** across from Russian Orthodox monastery: You are welcome to visit the cemetery where famous Russian and Soviet composers, artists, and writers are buried daily except Thursday.

■ **In an Austrian hotel** catering to skiers: Not to perambulate the corridors during the hours of repose in the boots of ascension.

■ **On the menu** of a Swiss restaurant: Our wines leave you nothing to hope for.

■ **On the menu of a Polish hotel:** Salad a firm's own make; limp red beet soup with cheesy dumplings in the form of a finger; roasted duck let loose; beef rashers beaten up in the country people's fashion.



From the Daily Telegraph, 2/11/1942

Churches Support Austerity - Appeal for Sterner Ways of Home Life (edited)

The first Austerity Sunday was observed in churches throughout Australia yesterday. Most preachers urged the people to practice more austerity in home life. The Navy Minister (Mr. Makin) appealed to Australians to discard their complacency saying that Australian austerity should be more consistent with the sacrifices of people in other parts of the world. He said one way in which the austerity campaign could be aided was by using less cotton and sugar, both of which were urgently needed for war production.

The Primate of Australia, in a letter to Church News, supporting the austerity campaign, said . . . "Wine and beer are good gifts of God but, like many other gifts, we are grossly abusing them. Most young people might abstain from liquor altogether for the duration of the war, or at least ration themselves severely."

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane said no Australian worthy of the name would refuse to take part in the austerity campaign to help the men in the front line.

And directly underneath that article, the following . . .

Austerity Sunday was forced on 23 men arrested this afternoon at an alleged "two-up" school at West Melbourne. Police raiders seized £69.

From the Daily Mirror, 9/11/1942

Magistrate Objects to Woman's Slacks in Court. When a woman witness appeared at Redfern Court today wearing a pair of slacks, Mr. Harris, SM, asked her why she wore such fancy clothes when attending court. The witness replied that her husband had taken all her other clothes away and she only had slacks to wear.

For your Diary

Wed. 22nd Mar - Executive Meeting
Wed. 12th April - General Meeting
Wed. 26 April - Walker Estates
Wed. 10th May - General Meeting
Wed. 24th May - Executive Meeting

From the Secretary's Desk

Our Photographic Collection: We still haven't had any response for our call for help. Isn't there someone out there brave enough to give it a go. Computers don't bite and they certainly won't blow up if you press the wrong button?

Yaralla: When you come to our open day, or just visit Yaralla you'll be impressed by the even greater efforts of the Jones Boys and Derek and his band of Rookwood staff.

They have managed to clean up major areas of the grounds, now giving us access around the dairy building, the hen houses and pig pen.

They've also cleaned out the dairy building which should be open on our day as well as the timber shed adjacent to the squash court.

A great big thank you to all who helped.

April Guest Speaker: Have you ever considered recording your family history for your grandchildren and their children - or perhaps you have an elderly relative who's life should be recorded before it is too late. Then you must not miss our speaker for April.

Once our elderly relatives are gone we have lost a very important part of our own history.

Some "Food for Thought"

What disease did "cured" ham actually have?

Do illiterate people get the full effect of alphabet soup?

Who was the first person to look at a cow and say: "I think I'll squeeze these dangly little things here, and drink whatever comes out?"

Why do toasters always have a setting that burns toast to a horrible crisp, which no decent human being would ever eat?

Why is there a light in the refrigerator but not in the freezer?

If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is from vegetables, what is baby oil made of?

If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, what's the point of the stupid song?