

BELONGINGS has come to the Illawarra:

Tell *your* post-war migration story through *your* special mementos

www.belongings.com.au



Jim (Orfeo) Pontarolo from Fairy Meadow with his father's clock, reminiscing about WW2. His father removed the clock from a Nazi military vehicle in Italy ... and it still works today! (Photographer: Andrea Fernandes, NSW Migration Heritage Centre)

Belongings is a NSW Migration Heritage Centre website exhibition which records and shares post-World War Two (WW2) migration memories through community memorabilia – or *belongings*. At this month's MHP committee meeting, I delivered a presentation which heralded the beginning of this important work in your region.

One out of every five people in the Illawarra is overseas born. Many arrived in the decades immediately after WW2 when the Australian Government actively pursued an immigration policy of 'populate or perish'.

Sadly, as the post-WW2 migrant generation age, too often we don't know what their memorabilia items mean or what stories they tell. Frequently this history is lost. *Belongings* helps to save some of this history.

Whilst documenting community oral histories and keepsakes, *Belongings* also advocates for *belongings* to be kept within the family and advises on how to care for them.

This means that through *Belongings*:

- mementos will be passed down within families with their stories and meanings understood;
- historians will know which memorabilia items are important and why; and
- curators can request a loan from the private owner for museum exhibition displays.

(Continued over)

2008 MHP MEETINGS

The MHP Committee meets the first Thursday of the month (February-December) at 5.30 pm, Meeting Room 1, Level 10 Wollongong City Council Administration Building, Burelli Street, Wollongong. Members and other interested people or groups are always welcome. The meetings scheduled for 2008 are as follows:

7 August, 4 September, 2 October, 6 November (AGM), 4 December

(Venue for meetings provided through the Wollongong City Council Multicultural Services)

MHP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman

Franca Facci

Treasurer

Mendo Trajcevski

Secretary

Fidelia Pontarolo

Committee:

Gregor Cullen

Rina Montgomery

Olga Romano

Giulia Bonacina

Ludwik Ihnat

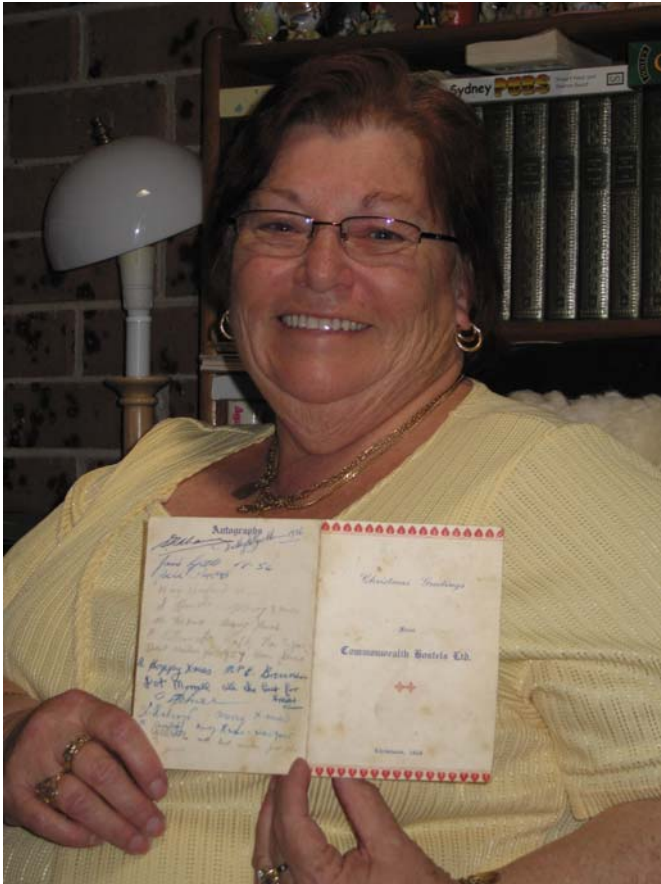
Peter Bestman

Louise Thom

Migration Heritage Project
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South Coast Mail Centre
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Ph: 0438 832 094
Email: mhp@1earth.net

Don't forget to visit our website

www.mhpillawarra.com



Beryl Fletcher from Flinders - holding her Christmas Day menu from Berkeley Hostel – talks about the housing and working conditions new migrants faced in the mid-1950s. (Photographer: Andrea Fernandes, NSW Migration Heritage Centre)

In partnership with the MHP, *Belongings* has now come to the Illawarra and is actively seeking people to participate.

So, if you, a relative or friend arrived in Australia between 1945 and 1974, live or work in the Illawarra area and have a special personal *belonging*, then please complete the *Belongings* expression of interest form and send to the MHP at mhp@learth.net or PO Box 1589, South Coast Mail Centre, Wollongong NSW 2521. The form is printed on the last page of this newsletter or can be downloaded from the MHP website – go to www.mhpillawarra.com

Closing date for responses is Monday, 1 September 2008.

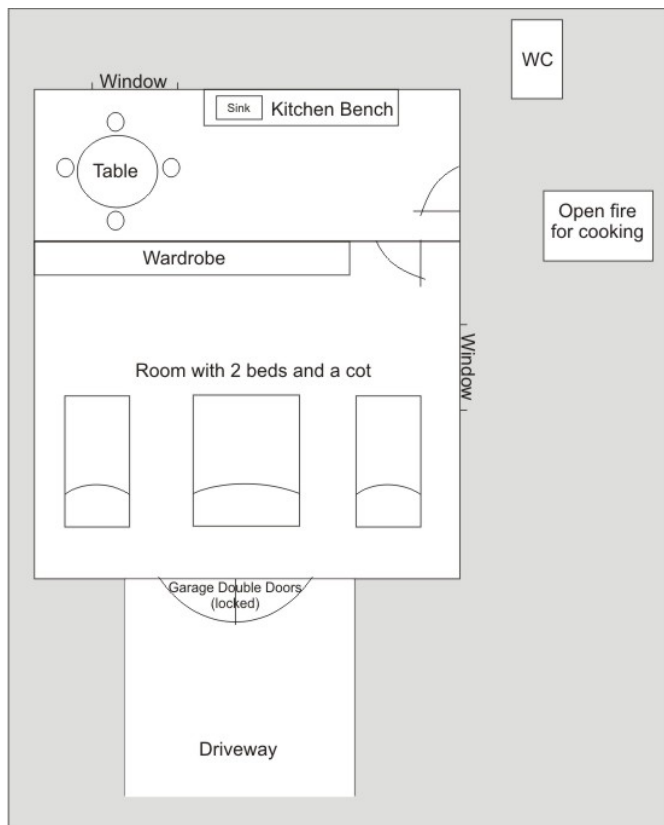
Up to 15 entries will be selected for *Belongings* but all expressions of interest will form an important body of historical information for the MHP and the NSW Migration Heritage Centre and may be followed up through later projects. Interviews take place in the participant's home and will begin going online this year. For more information about the project, please visit the *Belongings* website at www.belongings.com.au

Andrea Fernandes
Belongings Curator
NSW Migration Heritage Centre
www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au

FIRST HOMES

I lived in a garage! I say this with some glee because it makes me feel a bit like a pioneer. The fact is though, I have very little memory of being a garage dweller because it all happened when I was a toddler; when I was about two years old. But in the back in my mind I recalled some past conversation about when we lived in a garage. What spurred on this recall of memory you ask? Well it really has been in the back of my mind ever since Meredith Walker gave her illustrated talk on 'First Homes' at the MHP Annual General Meeting in November last year. Her talk was taken from material gathered in the MHP's 'Wollongong Migration Heritage Thematic Survey', what is often referred to as the 'Places Project', and one of the subjects of the study was first place of accommodation. Many of the contributors of the information offered by Meredith in her talk were in the audience that night and it was intriguing to listen to them talk about how they lived as new migrants to Wollongong. What struck me was the common theme about how many people in Wollongong were forced to live, and not only the post World War 2 migrants. Truth be told, migrants arriving after World War 2 were better catered for with hostels, unlike the earlier migrants who did not have such a support system and had to fend for themselves with regards to housing. I fell into the later category, my family having arrived in Australia in the 1920s, so our living in my grandparent's garage was purely an economically-based decision until my parents could afford a deposit on a house. Meredith spoke of people living in tents, caravans, garages, boarding houses and when finally able to purchase property (sometimes depending on land opening up for residential dwellings), building their own homes without the aid of electricity or water, and still living in makeshift accommodation on the land that was purchased.

Fortunately, the garage I lived in with my mother, father and sister is still there. Driving past the house where the garage is located it appears to me that it may still be used as some type of granny flat. I drive past the house everytime I go to work and I try to get a good look at it without appearing like I am 'casing the joint'. I got my mother to tell me the layout of the garage and I sketched a diagram for prosperity, and if I may be so bold to say, for my memoirs. Apparently when we lived in the garage there was no water or electricity for some months as it was a new subdivision. We cooked on an open fire and water was obtained from the creek which ran behind us. Even my grandparents who had the luxury of living in the house had to cook on the open fire place and get the water from the creek. I look at the creek today and think 'oh yuk!' but I'm sure that over 50 years ago it was much more pristine, before the world became environmentally negligent. Needless to say the outside dunny was in existence and our needs were seen to the by 'dunny man'.



Sketch of garage where I lived

It was indeed a good thing that I was lucky enough to listen to Meredith's wonderful talk, without which I am sure my memory would not have been jogged and I would have completely forgotten that we too lived in a garage. This impelled me to ask questions, jot down memories and make a sketch of my first home. As soon as I can I will try (without looking too suspicious) to get a photograph.

Francesca Battagin, 2008

MEMBERS



Peter Stawanski at the May 2008 MHP Committee meeting where his membership application was submitted

In May this year the MHP was pleased to welcome Peter Stawanski as a member. Peter is 91 years young. Born in Poland, he migrated to Australia in 1951, spending some time at Bonegilla before living at the

Steelworks Hostel. Peter worked at the Steelworks for 32 years before he retired in 1982. Peter is very interested in migration heritage which is why he joined the MHP.

The MHP is greatly appreciative of the support of its members and hopes that if you aren't already a member that you too, like Peter, may like to join the MHP. Your membership application can be sent to the MHP or you can bring it to one of the MHP meetings. Membership forms are available from the MHP website or you can write to the MHP and a membership form can be sent to you.

PLACES PROJECT

Wollongong's Migration Heritage Places Study 2007 was an initiative of the Migration Heritage Project and was also known as 'The Places Project'. The study was made possible through funding from the Department of Planning NSW Heritage Office, the Migration Heritage Centre of NSW and Wollongong City Council. The study was conducted by Meredith Walker, Louise Thom and Glenys Cummins. The Project report was officially handed over in February 2008 to the MHP, MHC and WCC. Material from the study will be incorporated into other forms of media by the MHP but publishing the study is entirely dependent on funding availability and volunteer assistance.



Sophie Karsulke, graphic design practicum student, Wollongong University

Sophie Karsulke, a graphic design practicum student at the University of Wollongong, Faculty of Creative Arts, is assisting the MHP as part of her studies. Sophie is designing material for publishing the results of the MHP Places Study Project. Sophie is from Germany where she attends the university FHTW Berlin. Sophie is here for one year and specifically chose Wollongong to continue her studies. The MHP, through Gregor Cullen, is very fortunate that Sophie was able to lend her expertise to put together graphics for future publications around the Places Project.

BELONGINGS: post-WW2 migration memories & journeys
Tell *your* post-war migration story through *your* special mementos
www.belongings.com.au

A partnership project between the NSW Migration Heritage Centre and the Illawarra Migration Heritage Project.

Expression of interest form

1. Please provide your full name (including your maiden name).

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2. Please provide your full contact details - postal address, telephone numbers, email address etc.

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3. What is your cultural background or ancestry?

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4. In which country did you mainly live before coming to Australia?

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5. Where did your boat or plane arrive in Australia? When?

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6. Where was your first *home* in Australia, inc. migrant hostels?

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7. What kind of *work* did you (or a family member) first do in Australia? Where was it located and who was the employer?

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8. Please list memorabilia items you have. They can relate to your life before moving to Australia, the journey over or early settlement years in Australia (such as migrant accommodation, home, community life or workplaces).

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9. What does each item mean to you and why?

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Please return this form to: The Migration Heritage Project, PO Box 1589, South Coast Mail Centre, Wollongong NSW 2521.