

HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

Produced by the Student Heritage Group

Issue No 8

Welcome to the eighth Alumni newsletter and the second for 2010. In late 2009 a Memories book was added to the Alumni website. It contained the reminiscences of thirty ex-

December 2010

Hurlstonians. This year we aim to begin a new section entitled Famous Hurlstonians which will be a series of brief biographies of Hurlstonians who have achieved fame in the outside world after their time at HAHS. The first two will be John Edmondson and Roy Watts. Another section entitled the Pro Patria files will be added to the website. These are the transcripts of interviews with ex-Hurlstonians which were conducted in the 1990s by students. Another historical plaque has been added to the seven already scattered across the school. This will be a plaque commemorating the Hicks Highway, a road completed in 1957 by students and parents under the leadership of Milford Hicks, a parent of the period. Check out the plaque on the website. The class of 1958 generously sponsored the plaque and the planting of a number of Wollemi pines on the Hicks' Highway and around the school. My thanks go to Year 11 students, Allan Ly and Toan Bui, who have joined the Heritage Group and have been instrumental in finalising this newsletter.

Where are they now?

This section details the achievements of old Hurlstonians after leaving these hallowed halls of learning. We would like to hear from past students and staff and to use their information to let readers know what alumni have been doing. If you would like to do this contact Alan Pollock at "pollocks4@optusnet.com". This newsletter looks at two past Hurlstonians; Robert (Bob) Knight from the 1930s and Joe Hicks from the 1950s.

Robert Knight lives in Noorat, Victoria which is in the south-west of the state.

He was a student at Hurlstone from 1938 to 1942 inclusive, matriculating after the 5 years and proceeding to study Veterinary Science at the University of Sydney. He describes himself as a bit of a rebel at school who never reached any popularity stakes. However at Vet. school he did well and was one of the few lucky ones to graduate after five years.

A position was offered to him by Nestles at graduation which he accepted.

After 18 months another position was offered by the Glenormiston Butter Factory Company in Noorat, Victoria and which he took up leaving the Nestles job. In both cases the activity was attending to the stock of suppliers. At Noorat this developed into a veterinary practice which subsequently passed to Bob. He retired from the practice in 1985 and purchased 1016 acres of sheep farm on which he still runs fine wool merinos.

In the earlier years Bob was involved in the Victorian Division of the

Australian Veterinary Association being on Committee for many years and becoming President in 1968. The Association subsequently endowed him with a Fellowship.

Joe Hicks was guest of honour at the opening in August of the Hicks Highway on 12th August, a road in the school organised chiefly by Joe's dad in 1957. A plaque explaining the history of the site, a street sign and a series of tree plantings were unveiled at the ceremony. Joe gave an entertaining speech on the day about himself and the effect he had on a later Hurlstonian. Here is

an edited version of the speech:

"When I graduated from Hurlstone I was unsettled for some months and uncertain as to what I wanted to do in life. I ended up going to Papua New Guinea as a Patrol Officer ("kiap") with the Department of Territories. After a year in the field I was surprised to be selected to be the junior

officer on an exploratory patrol along the Tauri River and into the notorious Kukukuku (pronounced Cooker - Cooker) region. The Kukukukus were a much feared tribe of headhunters. It was a big patrol - 120 carriers, 30 fully armed native police, 2 interpreters, 2 native medical orderlies and 4 European officers. We were out for five months. It was a fascinating experience for someone still a teenager.

When I came home on my first leave in 1962 it was arranged that I would go to Hurlstone one night and give a talk to the boarders on life as a Kiap in New Guinea. This I did. Most of my talk was taken up with showing slides of the Tauri River Patrol.

For some time, every two years on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland there has been a Kiap Reunion. It is always well attended with former officers coming from all over Australia - although, unfortunately, the numbers get less each two years. At the reunion in 2001 I was introduced to a Peter Salmon, another old boy of Hurlstone and another kiap. Peter told me that I was the inspiration behind his unusual choice of career. He had been in the audience in 1962 when I gave the talk.

This is what Salmon said, "I was in 4th year at the time and one of the boys in the audience. After you left and the next morning all the boarders could talk of was Joe Hicks and being a Patrol Officer in New Guinea. All the senior school wanted to do was get through their Leaving Certificate and go en masse to New Guinea as Patrol Officers. As the months went by their enthusiasm waned but not mine. I was determined to become a Kiap. At my Vocational Guidance Interview when I told them this they looked at me as if I was a mental defective. I stuck with my ambition and as soon as I had completed the Leaving I applied to the Department of Territories to become a Patrol Officer. You made it all sound so exciting the night you gave your talk. You did not say a word about putting one foot after the other through the mud for day after day. You did not say anything about the heat, the rain, mosquitoes, malaria, snakes, crocodiles and eating bully beef and sweet potato for days on end. I had to learn all this for myself the hard way and like you I stuck at it. Because of you I became a Kiap which is something of which I am very proud and would not have had my life since leaving school any other way. I thank you for that and after all these years I finally get the chance to shake your hand and have a drink with you."

The History of Hurlstone

A regular part of the alumni newsletter is a tidbit from Hurlstone's illustrious and colourful past. The following is a story from Peter Anthony Witschi 1951 - 1955.

"I recall my first day at boarding school as if it was yesterday. It was quite a journey from Katoomba by steam train. We had to change at Parramatta and catch an electric train to Granville and then another to Liverpool via Fairfield before we could catch the "Campbelltown Terror" to Glenfield. The little steam engine would go forward on the up journey and travel in reverse on the return. I was allocated a bed on the first year dormitory veranda which was great but when winter arrived it was another story.

It took three weeks or more to make new friends and settle into school work. I tried to keep up with my piano lessons and practiced as often as I could on the old piano in the school hall but my new school friends did not want to hear classical music. I started to play the hit parade tunes by ear much to the disgust of my music teacher and she soon gave up on me because of my lack of progress. I was given some help from Brian Moffitt our P.E. teacher and soon improvised many tunes which I played to the school on Saturday evenings when the movies were shown in the Hall. It was not long before I played the school song and Merv Harvey our Agriculture Master asked me to play the hymns at Thursday Scripture sessions."

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Student Achievements

Hurlstone's Year 10 debating team of Wendy Tran, Monica Waters-Neil, Alvin Chung and Kabir Dulichan were regional finalists, winning six of their seven debates. They were defeated by Elderslie High in a close finish. The topic - "That we should process asylum seekers off shore." Kabir Dulichan was selected for the Regional Year 10 debating team.

The Philip Garside Memorial Public Speaking Competition to commemorate the memory of Philip Garside, a student at the school tragically killed in a canoeing accident in 1977, was held at Hurlstone Agricultural High School on Tuesday 23rd November 2010. Year 9 students representing nine schools from Sydney South West Region attended. Students presented prepared speeches on a diverse range of topics from the impact of Facebook on teenagers to the impact of the war on terror on society. Students were also asked to present an impromptu speech on the topic "That it's been done before." Brendon Kim (Hurlstone Agricultural High) and Daniela Garrido (John Edmondson High) were Highly Commended.



The Year 8 Janene Best Debating competition took place at HAHS on 25th November with six schools taking part. Hurlstone's team coached by Ms Schultz was successful, defeating Merewether High in the final.

In the English University of NSW Global Competition the following students received High Distinctions :- Rob Abergas (8), Laura Howard (8), Xiao Cheng Lun (10), Pierri Lin (8) and Lana Nguyen (11).

In the Australian Intermediate Maths Olympiad 772 students from 99 schools participated and completed a four hour exam. The following students achieved outstanding results:- Lisa Lai – Distinction, Bruce Tran – Credit, Cindy Van – Credit, Thomson Ngo – Credit, Ying Tran – Credit and Zarif Mashrur – Credit.

The annual Australasian Problem Solving Mathematical Olympiads have been operating since 1987. Every year, schools from all over Australia, New Zealand and other neighbouring countries take part. Approximately 35,000 students took part in the 2009 contests. The Olympiads consist of five separate contests held between May and September. The aim of the contests is to develop important mathematical problem solving skills in an enjoyable environment. Students compete against other members of their team, as well as against teams from other schools. This year, the year 7 team of 30 students from Hurlstone Agricultural High School finished 13th in the overall team competition. Anton Tran (of Fairfield Heights) was the school's top scorer with 23 from a maximum of 25. Over half of the team scored results that placed them in the top 10% of all entrants.

At the Central Coast Cattle Show Senior Team Judging 1st Place was awarded to Tahlia Guymier, Sam Bush and Erin Goodacre.

In the Computer Skills University of NSW Global Competition the following students received awards:- Anthony Ha (9) Credit, Anna Huynh (9) Credit, Julian Bungard (9) High Distinction and Katherine Tat (9) Medal.

Two students are to be congratulated for receiving prizes at the Minister's Awards For Excellence in Student Achievement - Community Languages.

They were in the Senior Section: Kavi Karunaratne (10R) for Sinhala, whilst Wilson Tran (10R) was Highly Commended in Mandarin. The awards were "for their outstanding achievement in the study of a community language and their contribution to the development of intercultural understanding..."

Two students received awards at a ceremony at the Liverpool Catholic Club. Jess Dunn received an award for Primary Industries whilst Jordan Kerr and Hilda Adams received Premier's Awards for Volunteering.

The Year 11 Mock Trial teams from Hurlstone Agricultural High School in Glenfield and Meriden Anglican School in Strathfield did battle on 02/09/10, with Meriden claiming victory by the pencil-thin margin of three points. Both teams were two of the final sixteen teams in the state's interschool Mock Trial Competition, and both performed exceptionally in the fight for a place in the final eight. The magistrate stated "it was a trial worthy of a final" and one that was "almost impossible to split". Nevertheless, Meriden walked away with the win and will be proceeding to the quarter final.

In the 2010 NSW History Competition, 9847 students sat and answered 50 multiple choice questions on Australian History. Of the 165 HAHS students who sat the paper; 42 achieved a High Distinction (top 4% of state) and 50 achieved a Distinction (top 15% of state).

All of Year 9 and 10 students participated in the NSW Geography competition. Fifty five per cent of our students achieved High Distinction or Distinction (compared to twenty two per cent state-wide). This is the best result we have had in the competition for many years.

HAHS'S Remembrance Day ceremony was held at the C.O.L.A. on November 11th. The compere was Zoe Diamond and Rayan Calimlim spoke movingly about his personal response to the Day. Both are Year 11 Modern History students. The school song and national anthem were led by Pradeepti Singh of Year 11.



Michael Byron; a veteran of the Vietnam War and father of Brendon Byron of year 12, donated to the school a tree descended from the famous Lone Pine at Gallipoli. Jenny Jackson from the Agriculture Department has been nurturing it and at a short ceremony in November the tree was planted in the Memorial Forest.

