



A CUP OF TEA WITH NELLIE MENEGAZZO

On Friday 15 July I was privileged to be introduced to Nellie Menegazzo by Rina Montgomery. Rina was keen for me to meet Nellie so that I could hear the story of this family of talented Italian craftsmen who came to Australia in the early 20th century. In particular to hear the life of Mrs Menegazzo's late husband Peter Menegazzo who was an extraordinarily clever metal worker with an extensive portfolio.

Over a cup of tea Nellie Menegazzo told us the story of the family. Peter's father, Marcello Menegazzo came to Australia from Treviso in Northern Italy in 1910 at the age of 15. He went to Broken Hill where he had an uncle and worked in the mines until 1915. With the onset of war he joined the Australian Armed Forces and went overseas to England. War at this time was very close to his home village where his family still lived so when he was offered the opportunity to fight with the Italian Forces he didn't hesitate. After the war Marcello met his wife Giuseppina and they were married in Italy. Peter Menegazzo was born in Italy in 1922. Marcello moved back to Australia where he settled in Tarrawanna and soon after Peter and Giuseppina joined him there in 1923.

In the 1920's Tarrawanna had a strong community of Italians. Marcello worked in Waters timber yard as a wood machinist. He also set up a poultry farm on the corner of Balmoral and Foothills Road in Balgownie. Peter and his father later built a workshop on this land and opened a steel and metal fabrication workshop in 1948. A boiler maker by trade Peter's work also included ornate wrought iron, and hand beaten decorative work. For example he created the St John Vianney's communion Rail and Baptismal font door; the Alpine Crest and gates for the Alpini Monument; the Balgownie school crest and numerous other crests. Wollongong Council crest is still on display in the Town Hall. One of his major achievements for which he was well known was the statue of Jesus on the Church of the Little Flower in West Wollongong. It was based upon the statue in Rio de Janeiro. His company Illawarra Gate Manufacturers was responsible for the majority of domestic wrought iron work from 1948 to the late 1950's in Wollongong. He received wide acclaim and media coverage for his work.

Nellie a fourth generation Irish Australian, met Peter through their mutual love of music and they married in 1950. Peter was well known for his beautiful singing



Life size statue of Jesus, Little Flower Church West Wollongong.
(created by Peter Menegazzo)

voice and Nellie for her accordion. In his later years Peter turned his hand to word carving and turning which he did with as much flair and creativity as his metalwork. Peter passed away in November 2003 and is sadly missed by Nellie and their three children.

By Louise Thom July 2005. Louise has recently been commissioned to undertake work for the Migration Heritage Project and will be conducting workshops and networking with community groups. Louise was the heritage officer for Wollongong Council for 10 years and now works part time for Woollahra Council as heritage officer and runs her own heritage consultancy.

AT A GLANCE

The Migration Heritage Project committee has been busy preparing a variety of projects, some of which have resulted from funding received through the IMB Community Foundation and the Community Relations Commission. The committee has been meeting regularly on the first Thursday of each month and the last few meetings have had guests who have attended also. One in particular, Clare Curtis from the Mt Kembla Heritage Committee, has been attending our meetings regularly and we have certainly enjoyed the exchange of topics and her assistance with contacts

within the schools in the Illawarra. At the Annual General Meeting in November last year we were very fortunate to have Dr Glenn Mitchell, Senior Lecturer History and Politics at the University of Wollongong, as the guest speaker. Dr Mitchell gave a delightful and entertaining address entitled 'Four Holes in the Wall' alluding to a sign that once sat in the brick wall outside a tailor's shop in Wollongong. The elections were held again of course and the nominated members were elected unopposed. The Office Bearers and Committee members for 2005-2006 are: Franca Facci (*President*), Mendo Tracjevski (*Treasurer*), Rina Montgomery (*Committee*), Gregor Cullen (*Committee*), Ludwik Ihnat (*Committee*), Fidelia Pontarolo (*Committee & Acting Secretary*), Olga Romano (*Committee*) and Giulia Bonacina (*Committee*).



Dr Glenn Mitchell addressing the Annual General Meeting November 2005

Migration to Wollongong Publication

We are drawing closer to completing the Migration to Wollongong Publication. To recap, the Migration Heritage Project came up with the idea to put together a publication that would feature Wollongong Migrants' experiences in settling in the Illawarra following certain themes, such as arriving, homes, social activities and events. The publication is twofold in that it features local Wollongong people and it will also include sections in the publication to allow anyone to record their own journey and stories. A meeting with the Migration Heritage Centre of NSW resulted in funding to produce this publication in a glossy magazine style as well as being able to print a larger quantity. It also means that the publication will be used as a reference source throughout NSW. Meredith Walker, a renowned heritage consultant, should have the text ready for editing by the MHP committee by March and the publication should be produced by June this year.

Home Movies Animating Heritage Project

The other exciting project is the Home Movies Animating Heritage Project. This has been made possible through the IMB Community Foundation Grant and in partnership with Film Illawarra. You may have seen the news item featured on WIN 4 in February with Beth Herbert from Film Illawarra and John Papakosmos (MHP member). This project aims to set up a register of films and then to select films (or video) to digitise. These moving images will depict significant

community or family events within the migrant settlers of the Illawarra such as religious festivals, arrival of family from overseas or family celebrations and more, so don't think it is restricted to these types of events that you've just read. For more information contact the Migration Heritage Project or Beth Herbert, Film Illawarra, Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong, Northfields Avenue, North Wollongong 2522
Ph: 4221 3791, Email: bherbert@uow.edu.au.

Maltese Exhibition

Our most recent project is an exhibition that will feature the Maltese community. This will be funded by the grant received from the Community Relations Commission. Still early days yet, but the MHP was lucky enough to secure the services of Linda Raymond and Lorraine Vargas. You may recall Linda curated the inaugural MHP Exhibition 'Celebrations: Spirit of Communities' in 2003 at the Wollongong City Gallery and Lorraine Vargas was the Maltese Community Worker up until last year (Lorraine was featured in Issue 4). The MHP is happy that Lorraine has agreed to work on this MHP project and as such she will be able to expand on her considerable efforts in recording Maltese objects and stories.

Project Officer

Louise Thom, our current Project Officer is continuing to try and make contact with various communities out there and has come up with another idea for a project which will feature a Wollongong suburb that had an influential and important beginnings for many migrant families. More to come about that as it develops. Louise is also available to give talks about the Migration Heritage Project to community groups.

The Late Efrem Bonacina

It is with much sadness that we mention the passing of our committee member Efrem Bonacina. Efrem was well-known amongst the Italian community for his tireless welfare work. The MHP were fortunate to have Efrem's support. Not only was he part of the working committee that eventually become the Migration Heritage Project but he also brought a wealth of experience to the committee. His wife Giulia continues her work with the MHP and is a currently an elected committee member.

MHP MEETINGS 2006

Don't forget the MHP meets once a month on the first Thursday of the month. The dates are: 2 March, 6 April, 4 May, 1 June, 6 July, 3 August, 7 September, 5 October, 2 November and 7 December. The venue is Committee Room 1 on level 10 in the Wollongong City Council Administration Building starting at 5.30pm. Please, you are welcomed to attend any of these meetings, we would love to see you there. If you would like to confirm your attendance please email us at mhp@learth.net

MEETING WITH THE NATIONAL TRUST ILLAWARRA SHOALHAVEN REGION

The MHP met with members of the National Trust Illawarra Shoalhaven Region on 9 February to see if there was a way forward in which the two organisations could possibly work together in a way which met both the National Trust's and the MHP's objectives. Stuart Waters, from Twyford Consultants, was the facilitator for the meeting which resulted members from both organisations coming away with a better insight and appreciation of the respective organisations. The MHP looks forward to the possibility of working together on a joint project sometime in the future in addition to drawing upon the National Trust's areas of expertise.

MHP WEBSITE LAUNCH

Well the MHP website is nearly ready for going 'live'. The MHP website committee has been beavering away for the past twelve months in anticipation of this moment. The test site has gone through a couple of evolutions and we now reach the point where we 'launch' the site. To this end we are arranging an official launch on Thursday, 6 April 2006 at the Old Court House (opposite Belmore Basin) commencing at 5.30pm. We'd love to see you there. Please contact Fidelia Pontarolo (0438 832 094) to confirm your attendance.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP OR PARTICIPATE IN A PROJECT

We would certainly welcome your participation in any of our projects. You don't have to be a member to be part of an MHP Project. Just come along to one of our monthly meetings or alternatively you can email mhp@learth.net and your email will be forwarded onto the relevant project co-ordinator.



MHP WEBSITE LAUNCH APRIL 2006
www.mhpillawarra.com

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Joining Fee: Individual	\$5.00
Pensioners	\$2.00
Organisations	\$10.00
Annual Fee: Individual	\$10.00
Pensioners	\$5.00
Organisations	\$10.00

Joining fees payable within fourteen days of receipt of advice of membership approval. Annual fees payable by 30 June of each year.

The Secretary
Migration Heritage Project Inc.
PO Box 1589
South Coast Mail Centre NSW 2521
Email: mhp@learth.net
We would love you to join but you don't have to be a member to participate.



CAN YOU HELP US?

(AND MAYBE SAVE A FEW TREES IN THE PROCESS)

We are trying to streamline the production and dispatch of the Migration Heritage Project Newsletter. First of all, do you still want to receive a copy and secondly, can we email you a copy instead of sending a hard copy through the post? Can you please let us know what you would prefer by completing the form over the page, detach and return it to:

MHP Newsletter
Migration Heritage Project
PO Box 1589
South Coast Mail Centre NSW 2521

or alternatively you can let us know by email to: mhp@learth.net

Please type 'MHP Newsletter' in the subject heading of the email and don't forget to list all your contact details in your email.

All members of the Migration Heritage Project will continue to receive a copy of the Newsletter however if we could send the Newsletter by email please let us know as well.

To: MHP Newsletter
Migration Heritage Project
PO Box 1589
South Coast Mail Centre NSW 2521

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Migration Heritage Project Newsletter

Name: _____

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(please tick box)

Please remove me/my organisation from the MHP Newsletter mailing list.

Please send the MHP Newsletter by email to _____
(email address)

The Migration Heritage Project Committee thanks you for your assistance in this matter.