CONDOLENCES

The IHS offers its sincere condolences to Leo Chapman of Wollongong whose mother has died after an extended illness.

BEST WISHES

To Jack Maynes who has just returned from hospital and Isobel Maynes who had a stay in Chesalon.

To Jack Southern who has also been in hospital. Special thanks also to Jack for the donation of his photographic collection.

To Alice Musgrave who has been in hospital and is now at Villa Maria in Wollongong.

REPORT ON AUGUST MEETING

Lieutenant Kevin Slade had no trouble holding the interest of members and friends who came along on Saturday, 5th August, 1995.

He is now stationed at the naval Hydrographic Office at Wollongong. He ‘launched’ his address by saying that it was naval policy to name ships, not buildings, after mariners and ‘sailed on’ in his address to demonstrate ‘RMS Flinders’ involvement in maritime survey work, supporting the opponents’ case (remember that) on the naming issue.

He spoke of navigation aids and their development; the chronometer, the sextant and the maritime tables and their use in the 18th century in establishing position at sea, and the accuracy that was achieved. He spoke of technology to determine tide levels, current flows and to identify distances at sea, from particular landmarks. The exacting nature of maritime surveying, carried out from small open boats by day and chart work by night, usually at very isolated locations, was covered. For sea-depths there was the leadline and techniques for establishing the nature of seabed materials.

He convinced us all that naval surveying work will never be finished and it has a valuable exploratory, commercial and maritime safety focus. Slides were available to show the range of naval vessels engaged in survey work from master vessels to very modern ones. The huge steel hull of a container vessel and its depth below water level demonstrated very forcibly the need for safe and properly surveyed sea channels, both in the wider oceans and in our local harbours and waterways. No evidence other than the running aground of the ‘Iron Barron’ in Tasmania recently was necessary to drive home the problem.
As Bill Mowbray said, in moving a vote of thanks, it was an excellent address. Lieutenant Slade was enthusiastic and had to struggle to confine himself to the time limit and, from reports, everyone was very pleased with what they heard.

In closing, Lieutenant Kevin Slade ‘floated’ the idea of an excursion to the Hydrographic Office, Wollongong, where early maps are available and some displayed. Mapping is another topic.

PETER DALY

ON THE HOME FRONT EXHIBITION

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Stephen Martin, opened the new exhibit at the Museum on Saturday 12 August. The exhibit, which was curated by Joyce McCarthy with much help from Warren Bellamy and from Amelia and Tony Pezzutto, commemorates the life in Wollongong during the second world war. The conversion of the shelter for use as an exhibition space was funded by the ‘Australia Remembers’ programme established by the Federal Government.

The opening was attended by about 50 Society members and friends including the Society’s patron, Cr. Frank Arkell. Also present was Lord mayor David Campbell and Cr. Pat Franks. Representatives from the war Widows Association, Tongara Museum and the Breakwater battery Museum were among the crowd.

The exhibit will be permanent and more items will be added as they are acquired. So far, Joyce has scoured the Museum collection and found a variety of relics including ration books, gas mask, air raid-warden’s helmet and egg box. From various sources a range of posters were gathered and copied from the exhibit. The Breakwater Battery Museum has loaned a uniform.

One interesting exhibit is a framed letter from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth (now the Queen Mother). The letter thanks Mr and Mrs Straker of Mangerton for providing a home for their niece. Rita Patterson, who was evacuated from England in 1940. Rita spent five years in Wollongong and has returned several times to visit friends she made during her stay.

In 1983, Rita Patterson (by then Rita Jackson) write of her voyage to Australia on the ‘Batory’ and of her life in Wollongong and forwarded the Royal Letter. She poignantly recalled her return to her family:

“On a November day in 1945, once again on a troopship (HMT Andes), and with only 70 evacuees this time, I left Sydney Harbour, band playing, streamers snapping, as the ship left