

P/O Alan Shelton

On the 12th October 1980 I spoke with Pat Hogan who had been a member of the Air Crew of P/O Alan Shelton, (Moir's elder brother.) I asked him in particular to tell me something of the events of the fatal night of 3/4 March 1945, over 35 years ago.

Pat had his official Log Book with him and we discussed the matter briefly. He asked for more time to recollect his thoughts, and, true to his promise, on the 2.11.1980 delivered to me his written remembrances of the events, which I reproduce below, word for word.

" As a prelude I will say that I was fortunate to attend the Annual R A A F Air Crew Europe Dinner on Grand- Final Eve in September 1979. The guest speaker had been flown out from England. Air Vice Marshall D.C.T. Bennett, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O. was of Queensland origins. He joined the R A A F and qualified as a pilot at Pt. Cooke in the early thirties. He transferred to the R.A.F. because of lack of funds (& therefore opportunities) in Australia. He specialised in D.R. Navigation (Direct Reckoning) and wrote the R.A.F. Navigation Training Manuals. Pre-war he broke numerous world records in distance flying without refuelling and became recognized as the world's greatest authority in Air Navigation. Whilst commanding a Bomber Squadron he recognised the need for more accurate and skilful bombing techniques and so conceived the idea of a Pathfinder Force. It took him a long while to get the idea accepted by authorities but eventually became both the founder and Commander-in - Chief of Pathfinder Force. In so doing he became the youngest A.V.M. ever appointed at 34 years of age.

During his speech he repeated his conviction that each and every operation by a Bomber Command Crew over Enemy Territory was the equivalent, in terms of the danger of death, of any major military or naval battle.

In July 1944 I was posted to an R A A F Operational Training Unit (O.T.U.) at Litchfield in the Midlands. Litchfield was a moderately small town but

had a large Anglican Cathedral.

All the trainees were addressed after lunch on the day we arrived. We were told we would be there about 10 days and that we were to mingle with trainees of all other categories and by the end of the ten days, the pilots were to form crews with people who were all individually compatible. Naturally the pilot was to be Crew Captain.

Within an hour or so a pilot approached me and introduced himself as Alan Shelton. We had a chat about our origins, background, families and interests. We soon got on to Aussie Rules and Alan's interest in South Melbourne. He asked whether I would like to join his crew as his navigator as he was sure we would have no worries in getting along together. I readily accepted and Alan took me to meet Roger Johnsons, whom he had known at Melbourne University. Roger was to be the Bomb Aimer.

We met several Wireless Operators and we all agreed that the diminutive and likeable Greg Dixon from Chatswood, Sydney was the one for us.

Roger Laing from Adelaide was to be the Mid-upper Gunner. Our first tail gunner was not medically fit and we got a real bonus when he was replaced by the big and friendly Bill Bullen. Bill (like myself) was from Bendigo but had been a sergeant in an Infantry Bn with the 9th Div. in North Africa, the only one of us with experience in warfare.

We found that by tea time on that first evening the four or five personnel who were not already in a crew were rushing about looking for a vacancy.

I think Alan probably commenced learning to fly a twin engined Wellington (Wimpey) at this stage, doing take offs, circuits and landings - 'Circuits & Bumps' - until going solo. The rest of us were attending lectures, escape duties etc.

The Catholic Chaplain at Litchfield was Fr. O'Mahoney, formerly of Xavier College and presently Parish Priest at Glenelg, S.A.

We were then posted, as was each alternate course, to the satellite station some distance away at Church Broughton, Derbyshire. When we arrived there was fierce bargaining with the outgoing course to proc-

ure bicycles. We were housed in Nissen Huts but the landing field was about 2 miles away on land belonging to Rolls Royce. On the same land was another airfield heavily fortified and strictly out of bounds.

Our flight commander at Church Broughton was, at that time, the highest decorated Australian flying in the R A A F in England, Sqdn Leader Dave Shannon, D S O & Bar, D F C & Bar. He was a veteran of over one hundred operations and had reached the ripe old age of 22 years. David, from Adelaide, got the direct hit that broke the wall of the *Moetne* Dam with the 'skip' bombs of the "Dambusters". His right leg was completely encased in plaster. Our imaginations ran wild on what had happened to him & we were somewhat disappointed to learn it was a result of some frivolity in the Officers' Mess on pay night at Litchfield.

We did intensive courses, lectures and simulated training sessions in our own categories. We came together flying as a crew in all sorts of exercises designed to give each of the crew the facility to improve his particular skills. This boosted the morale and confidence of each member of the crew working as a team and drove home the complete interdependence we had on each other under the quiet but firm leadership of Alan Shelton - hence we blended into a very harmonious unit.

Our relaxation periods, outings and social evenings were also a very important factor in the "getting to know you" process. We were not very interested in the local dances when we found they were alternately "White nights" and "Black nights" with the same girls in attendance. Authorities had learned that it was better to keep the American Negroes segregated. At that time our two favourite female singers on the B B C were Vera Lynn and Anne Shelton. Alan boasted that with such a lovely voice Anne must have some family connection in the distant past. Alan was even more sure when we saw a magazine (head and shoulders) photo with a very pretty face and long, well groomed, blonde hair. When we got a couple of days off we went up to London (Alan, Roger, Greg & I). The gunners had individual interests elsewhere. Anne was co-starring in a concert with one of the large bands - Alan aff-



irmed that he would go around to the stage door after the concert to introduce himself. She certainly had a nice voice and a pretty face, but claims to relationship ceased when Alan found she was "like the side of a house", or a "Sherman Tank". At interval he declared he had seen enough (no - too much) and suggested we go to a favourite haunt of Australians wanting a feed - "Dirty Dicks" off Fleet Street. We always enjoyed the steak at the sleazy one-eyed Greek's place. The fact that it was horse was not mentioned. The following night we went to a stage play. Just before the lights went out all eyes turned to see an elegantly dressed woman in an evening gown - most unusual in London at that time. Her companion was a large chap in a grubby overcoat, whom we recognized as Robert Newton. We had recently seen him in a film playing the Mad Hatter in "Hatter's Castle".

At first interval we went to the crowded bar and had had one drink when the bell went. The barmaid said to us "a gentleman has just paid for another drink for you". Around came Robert Newton and said: "Thats a bloody awful play, you might as well stay here and enjoy a few quiet drinks while the audience squirm in their seats". With a dead pan face he told us lots of stories about London, his dark eyes rolling and moving the whole time - just as they did when he later played Bill Sykes in Oliver Twist. He would not let us buy a drink but eventually put down a £1 note and said, "I wish I could show you the real London"; "unfortunately I've got to go back and try to make peace. Someone might as well enjoy themselves - cut that out", and back he went.

We were in high spirits when we went down to the underground to make our way back to the Red Cross Club we were staying at. We were horrified to see the whole platform covered with people who had been bombed out that night. They were all so cheerful and making cockney cracks - "Watch it cock, dont stand on me, stand on the missus, she's got more padding."

On completion of O.T.U. Alan received his commission. Because there was a lot of fog and snow, flying was restricted at all levels from Operations over Germany to Training Units. Hence we were sent to a

Commando Training Unit at Acaster Malbis a few miles out of York. Shortly before, this had been vacated by some of the famous "Red Devils" of Arnham fame. This course had the multiurpose aim of keeping us fit, tired and thus reasonably happy until we were ready to recommence flying at Heavy Conversion Unit at Riccall (York).

On arrival at Riccall in November 1944, we were introduced to the type of aircraft we would eventually fly on operation - the Halifax Mk 111 ("Halibags"). We were also introduced to much more sophisticated radar equipment, aids and skills. Just as importantly we also welcomed the seventh member of the crew - our new Flight Engineer. Wally Welsh was a tall, thin, shy, gangling, fair haired 18 year old youth from Devonshire. A little apprehensive for a start, he soon integrated very well in the crew of Australians.

Alan got on with the inevitable "Circuits & Bumps" in learning to fly the 4 engined Halifax. We all had long sessions day and night, attending lectures and learning new procedures to master new equipment with simulated exercises to tune our skills. As a crew we all had "circuits & bumps", whilst Alan practised 3 engine, 2 engine and single engine landings. Then on to bombing practice, gunnery practice and cross country flights of long duration, both day and night.

A couple of incidents are worth recording at this stage. On a daylight exercise we caught up to and passed an "old Wimpey". With youthful exuberance, Alan gave the other pilot the V sign as we went past. To the amazement of Alan, the gunners and Roger, the Wellington flew past us with both engines feathered. Bill Bullen commented "Have a look at where the rear turret should be! It looks like a duck's arse with smoke pouring out". Without knowing it they had just seen their first jet engined aircraft, with Wing Commander <sup>W</sup>Rolls in charge. He was from the high security base ~~near~~ Church Broughton. Some of these four crew members could not work out how an old Wimpey could "leave us for dead" with neither engine working.

One night exercise was designed to take us virtually around England and Scotland. As we approached Lands End in heavy cloud we were tossed about in a

violent electrical storm. Alan had to fight very hard to maintain control. When we got on top he asked me for a course designed to take us up about N/N/E off the Cornish coast to cross into Wales. When a break came in the clouds, Alan saw the coast coming up at the estimated time. Hence we all got quite a shock when anti aircraft flak started to burst around us for the first time. We realised we were over the small pocket of resistance still holding on to Dunkirk - our compass had gone haywire in the electrical storm. We came down to low level and "unflappable Alan" flew over the heavily fortified Southampton with Alan using the distress call "Mayday" and Wally firing Red Verrey Cartridges and we map-read our way back to Riccall.

On time off ( e.g. 48 hours leave pass ) Wally would head for home, the gunners had undisclosed plans and the other four of us usually headed for Leeds. On the first occasion we stopped at a large hotel built over the main railway terminal. We were told we could not go near the fourth floor as the whole floor was occupied by an Indian Maharajah and his entourage.

We came home about 1 a.m. to find the doorman asleep at his post and the lifts were out of action. We started up the stairs, and when we got to the 4th could not resist a look. There was no one about and we were intrigued by the variety of shoes and kneeboots, some with ornate silver and brass fittings, and outside the doors for cleaning. We all looked at one another and grinned with the one idea in mind. We spread the Indian boots and shoes on all 12 floors, as also all those of the other guests, including our own.

Alan was up early, dressed and in socks and demanding a frustrated "boots" ( <sup>a</sup> ~~or~~ poor young bloke of about 75) to immediately find his new officer issue shoes - thence down to reception to join the queue of protesting guests.

On another occasion we went to Edinburgh, and stayed at the Victoria League Club in Princes Street. When we got in one evening, the hostess asked could we please stay in until lunch time the next day as the Royal Family were coming the next day and wished to meet all Dominion Airmen staying there. With tongue in cheek Alan told her that would not be possible as we had arranged an escorted



trip over the "Bass" brewery next morning. As it was only available once a week, we were sorry we would have to decline the kind invitation to meet the Royal Family. The hostess got on the phone to the manager of the brewery next morning and arranged a "private" tour the following day. Whilst we were waiting Alan introduced me to a Flt/Sgt Groves from Mordialloc. Just then we were asked to form a circle around the room and Alan and I were on either side of this chap. We were wearing name tags and the hostess introduced us all to the King, the Queen, Princess Elizabeth (in A.T.S. uniform) and little Meg, and we shook hands with each. Because of the King's impediment the Queen spoke to each third bod. She asked Ken "Where do you come from Sgt?" = "Melbourne, Your Majesty" - "Which suburb?" - "Dudley Flats, Your Majesty" - "A lovely area isn't it, Sgt." - "Delightful, your Majesty". It was hard to control our mirth until they were out of earshot. See "Dudley Flats" Photo p.15

The 2½ hours of stooging around the brewery, climbing ladders to look into smelly vats, definitely did not justify the supposed reward of a couple of glasses of free beer.

These stories are inserted to show that whilst we had to take serious risks, work long hours, take enormous responsibilities on young shoulders, we were also <sup>few</sup> <sub>A</sub> loving boys at heart.

Leeds was a favourite spot for us as it was easy to get to on leave at short notice. Also by this time we had found an 'old' widow (Mrs Ackeroyd) who lived close into the city and would give us accommodation for a very nominal amount in return for a few food coupons. 'OLD' is all in the eye of the beholder. I am probably considerably older now than she was then. Apart from shows, Leeds was the "Black Market" Town of the North. Whilst we did not smoke the four of us always took our weekly ration of a carton of American cigarettes at a nominal fee. On one occasion in Leeds we were able to barter (in a pub) 2 cartons of Camels for a tin of Mushrooms, a tin of tomatoes and 2 Australian peaches (wrapped in cotton wool.) For a couple of days we dreamed of a magnificent feast on these delicacies. Off duty back at Riccall we got on the bikes and toured the

farms buying eggs. It was highly illegal and we felt the price was exorbitant at three pence each but we eventually got 14 eggs. We obtained a loaf of bread, but how would we ever get butter. ? Alan said "Leave it to me". Next day he was almost hysterical when he turned up with  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb of butter. He told us he had got up early, gone to the Officers Mess and sat at a table where he knew a number of R.A.F. Instructors usually sat. He read the morning paper, folding part on his lap. He put the butter from the table in the paper on his lap and put the empty butter plate at the far end of the table. When the English Officers arrived he ordered his breakfast, still reading the paper and not involved in conversation. When his breakfast arrived he politely asked one of the R.A.F. Officers would he mind passing the butter please. As there was no butter the Englishman called the stewardess and ticked her off for not putting butter on the table. She said she had put it there. He said she obviously had not. She burst into tears but eventually produced another  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. Whilst the English Officers discussed the dreadful proposition of a stewardess trying to pinch butter, Alan ate his breakfast and departed. The lass stopped him in the passage, apologised for crying and said she was grateful that Australian Officers were so kind and understanding, whilst English Officers were so harsh and cruel.

As a crew together we cooked our meal on the potbellied coal heater in the middle of our hut, and further cemented our crew relationship.

By mid-January 1945 we had been deemed a crew fully trained and ready for Operations. The only ingredient lacking was experience. We were sent to fill a vacancy on 466 Sqdn R A A F, Driffield. Driffield had been a pre-war 'drome and "Bulldust Castle", the living quarters, and all other buildings looked very imposing compared to any other station we had been on. On arrival we had a great feeling of humility, expectation and awe knowing we were the only crew on the Sqdn which had not yet experienced an operation over enemy territory.

Alan did his first operation as second pilot (2nd Dicki) with an experienced crew under the leadership of F/L Bob Molyneaux. (Bob recently retired from C.B.A. Bank and he and his wife Billie have settled in Anglesea). Alan did another 9 operations as our Crew Captain - the last



being on 3/4 March 1945.

On 1st February, we were at last blooded, doing our first operation as a crew. We were checked into the briefing room by armed guards, the C.O. lifted a blind covering a large Map of Europe. We were to attack a railway junction and marshalling yards at Mainz. The Nav. Leader explained the route and how to gain or lose time if necessary - the bombing Leader described the type and quantity of bombs to be carried, the Met. Officer explained the expected weather and cloud conditions - Bill Harrison, the Intelligence Officer, explained the build up of enemy troops, tanks and equipment in the target area, pointed ~~out~~<sup>out</sup> heavily fortified gun emplacements along the route, to be avoided, and finally eased the tension by giving us the address of Cooks in Mainz so that if we were shot down over target we could go to Cooks and book a trip home. Then a hurried couple of hours on flight planning, a meal, collect parachutes, into a truck and out to our aircraft.

Being the new crew we were allocated the worst aircraft on the Sqn - K for King. The type of target is briefly described in my log book as Communications. We carried 7000 lbs of High Explosive Bombs. On the route in Alan had great difficulty endeavouring to get the required "revs" out of the engines, Consequently we were slightly behind and remembered all the wall poster warnings about the night fighters picking off the stragglers. Sure enough, Bill Bullen spotted a night fighter stalking us from the Port Quarter Beam. He calmly called out the reducing distances holding off his fire and as it got almost to its firing range and Bill gave the sharp instruction "Down Port - Go." Alan dived sharply to the left. The gunners opened fire as the fighter went over us, not being able to follow us with his extra speed. We then rolled to starboard and climbed quickly to our operational height as the force of G hit us all in the tummy. I spent the next 5 minutes crawling around the floor retrieving calculator, protractor, ruler, pencils, etc. Again as a straggler we had trouble avoiding searchlights and anti-aircraft flak having to frequently change our altitude.

Over the target area there was a great amount

of excited chatter as the gunners and Roger Johnston and Wally described the colourful bombing, the incendiary flares, the aircraft hit by flak and those colliding. I eventually chimed in with "How the bloody hell do you expect me to plot courses out of the target area if you keep gabbling?". Alan demanded quiet and all future reporting was brief and only when necessary. Roger inspected the Bomb Bay and found one bomb had 'hung up'. This necessitated releasing it in an allocated area in the North Sea. Here I had made a 'blue'. It is obvious that the area to drop these bombs would be on our route home and allied shipping would be kept out of that area. I had made an error in writing down the latitude of the bomb disposal area. Over conscientiously I took them 60 miles north of where we should have got rid of it, as Roger went down to release it. With the slow aircraft and me taking us the extra distance we were about 20 minutes late back to base in the old crate.

Neither of these basic errors occurred again and as we went on further operations we kept learning, always asking advice from experienced crews, improving our techniques, avoiding the hazards and working better as a team. It was also necessary to develop a good relationship with the mechanics, fitters, riggers etc who serviced our aircraft - the cigarettes were handy here.

Our fifth operation (20/2/45) was our most memorable one. Old K for King had oil pressure problems in warm ups before take off. We were quickly transferred from the Worst aircraft on the Sqdn to the best. The standby was L for Love - belonging to the C/O, Wing Commander Alan Wharton.

As it turned out the boffins (planners) goofed on this one. The idea was that the main stream was to bomb a section of the Dortmund-Ems Canal. We were in a small group which flew over the main target about 15 minutes before the main stream to give Jerry the impression the target was further East. We flew on past our own target, a synthetic oil refinery at Reisholz with 8000 lb Bomb Load. After about 60 miles we turned back and approached our target. As we came in on our bombing run, from the comments of those looking we were flying into the moon.

We were in a line of four aircraft, almost wing tip to wing tip - two on our left - one on our right - in bright moonlight. We were attacked by ME 109 fighters,

being beautifully silhouetted for them. The bomber on our left dived to Starboard and the one on our right dived to Port, both underneath us. To avoid collision Alan had no option but to calmly continue, straight and level, and drop our bombs and cop it sweet from the fighter attacking us. An oil line was severed on the Starboard Outer engine and Alan had to feather it. Shortly after the Starboard Inner also gave up the ghost and Alan had to work frantically adjusting trim etc. Bill Bullen reported that a shell had gone right through his turret, front and back, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  " above his head. The turret would not turn hydraulically but "not to worry" he could turn it manually.

Greg Dixon and I saw out for the first time on an operation as a shell had grazed down the port side of the aircraft taking a 6 " strip off the fuselage. Wally went on an inspection tour and reported the Elsom (Toilet-Can) had been blown to bits and the interior of the aircraft would scarcely pass examination by a Health Inspector.

Roger Johnson reported there was a 1000 lb bomb stuck in the bomb-bay and Alan found the hydraulics would not open the bomb-bay doors.

Wally Welch got busy transferring fuel from the Starboard Tanks to the Port Tanks. Alan kept coaxing L for Love along as we gradually lost altitude. Over the North Sea the Port Inner seized and <sup>had</sup> to be feathered.

There was a crash drome near ~~FLAMBOURG~~ G14 Head but not one of us questioned Alan's decision to return to Drifffield or his ability to land on one engine with a 1000 lb bomb. He also found the hydraulics would not operate the ~~oleo~~ <sup>oleo</sup> legs (landing wheels). Control asked us to circle whilst more ambulances and fire carts were lined up. Keeping Wally to assist him Alan ordered the rest of the crew into the centre of the aircraft and to brace themselves against struts and bulkheads as firmly as possible to avoid breakage of limbs. He put her down beautifully <sup>on her belly</sup> on the tarmac and seeing the sparks flying I wondered whether the bomb would blow or the fuel ignite and we all made a hasty exit.

At this stage Alan Shelton was regarded around the Squadron as a quiet, friendly, likeable young pilot, improving with experience. After this incident his stocks



improved considerably and every one on the base became aware of him as they all went to have a look at the wreck. Air crew and ground staff - fitters, cooks, riggers, drivers, armourers, clerks - came and shook us all by the hand. Certainly Alan took a bit of ribbing for "writing off" the C.O's aircraft but the friendliness and admiration were gratifying.

We then did 3 daylight operations - a different ball game. The second of these was to a synthetic Oil Refinery at Kamen to the North of the Ruhr Valley. The Germans apparently foxed us with camouflage and we evidently bombed a mocked up <sup>FACSIMILE</sup> ~~facsimile~~.

There was another abortive attack on Kamen in which we had no part. On the night of the 3rd March we set off on a more successful raid on this Oil Refinery.

It started with the usual joint crew briefings, explanations of target, hazards that might be encountered, type and weight of bombs to be carried, met. intelligence, etc. Thence to our individual sections for flight planning, off to the Mess for eggs and bacon and our chocolate ration for the trip. (Eggs and chocolate were an strict ration, available only to aircrew on a trip and expectant mothers. )

A rush to collect our parachutes and the cheerful lasses pointing out the large Wall Sketch with the caption: "It wont mean a thing, if you dont pull the string." Near the parachute section was the Chapel and Fr. Baron our chaplain ( from Lancashire) always waited in case we had the time to slip in. On this night Alan, Roger, Wilf Tobin ( also shot down that night), several others and myself slipped in for less than a minute, received a General Absolution and Holy Communion.

The trip itself was undoubtedly the most uneventful we had encountered to date. We were fairly relaxed as we crossed the coast and were very surprised when the gunners reported a heavy barrage of Anti Aircraft fire from our own Coastal Batteries. We immediately correctly assumed that there were intruders in our midst and I gave Alan a course to take us directly to Driffeld. This took us close to the Leconfield Airfield Circuit which we were supposed to give a wide miss.

We were the second aircraft back to Base. As we were on our landing approach, Joe Moss landed. Unfortunately

one of his engines caught fire and he went into standard procedures to quell the fire. As we were about to touch down ( Joe had not given the 'Runway Clear' call ) Control called " Braemar to Rudkin Charlie - Overshoot ". Alan instinctively obeyed the command, gunned the motors to full revs; ~~replying~~ " Runway Clear ", *called for - alas too late for us.*

The crew members who occupied the nose, Roger Johnson, Greg Dixon and I, always had to come back to benches in the centre of the aircraft for landing. It was called the " rest position".

Alan had to fly to an allocated height and rejoin the queue for landing. When we were instructed to land we approached once again. As we got down to about 200 feet the lights went out and with it an urgent message from control " Braemar to all Rudkin Aircraft - Scramble - Intruders".

As Alan climbed again he urgently requested me to return to my navigation table and give him a course to another drome. In my haste I left my parachute in the 'rest position' - a mistake which undoubtedly saved my life.

As we were flying roughly West we went to dromes in that direction and found all three we went to, blacked out. With the extra take offs we had used more fuel than normal and Wally warned we were getting very low. We decided to gain height to a safe 4000', turn to the East, bale out and let the aircraft crash in the sea.

As we turned on to 90° we were unfortunate enough to fly into the firing line of a Junkers 88 night fighter. The radial engines of a Halifax present a lighted circle from the front at night. It was relatively easy for the Hun to shoot out the four engines, a target rarely presented to him. Alan gave us the order to Bale Out, wishing us good luck very calmly and said he would try to control the kite. Under my chair was the front hatch which those crew members in the forward position were supposed to use to escape. I had to climb over 2 bulkheads to get to my 'chute. When I got to the mid hatch it was already open as Roger Laing had gone out. Wally Welsh was standing there looking at the flames. I pushed him out and followed immediately pulling my rip-cord as I went.

Wally must have waited to ensure he was clear of the tail-plane. His parachute had opened but did not break his fall, indicating he was under the safety limit of 800' when he pulled it.

After my first headlong rush downwards, it was a

relief in the darkness to feel the jolt as the parachute filled with air and I found myself sitting in the harness. I looked up and saw a bomber attacked and blow up. I was counting the parachutes opening when I hit the deck reasonably gently, as I was in a fallowed paddock.

After a fairly eventful night we ~~all~~<sup>three</sup> arrived back at Driffeld the next afternoon. We were grounded for some time and flew on one more operation on Anzac Day 1945, with a crew of four other 'odd bods'.

Bill Bullen was killed in the early fifties, after buying a saw mill at Beaufort. He was felling a tree and it crushed him. I saw Roger Laing in 1946 and 1947 but on my last couple of trips to Adelaide some years ago, I was unable to trace him.

Alan Shelton was a very likeable young man who got along with all and sundry. He had a very keen sense of humour - often concealed by asking a seemingly naive question which produced a hasty reply. He loved to make people 'bite'. He was healthy of body and mind, and clean of body and mind.

He was calm in everything he did even in his last moments. It was a pleasure to work with him and under him, as it was to enjoy his companionship. He was always quietly confident in his own ability and let each of his crew feel he had complete confidence in them. Mercifully Alan would have died on impact and would not have suffered.

This has been written on the days of Nov 1 and 2. It raises the thought that All Saints Day honors all the people who have made the grade into Heaven without being canonised - millions upon millions through history.

On All Souls Day we pray for the repose of the souls of our relatives and friends.

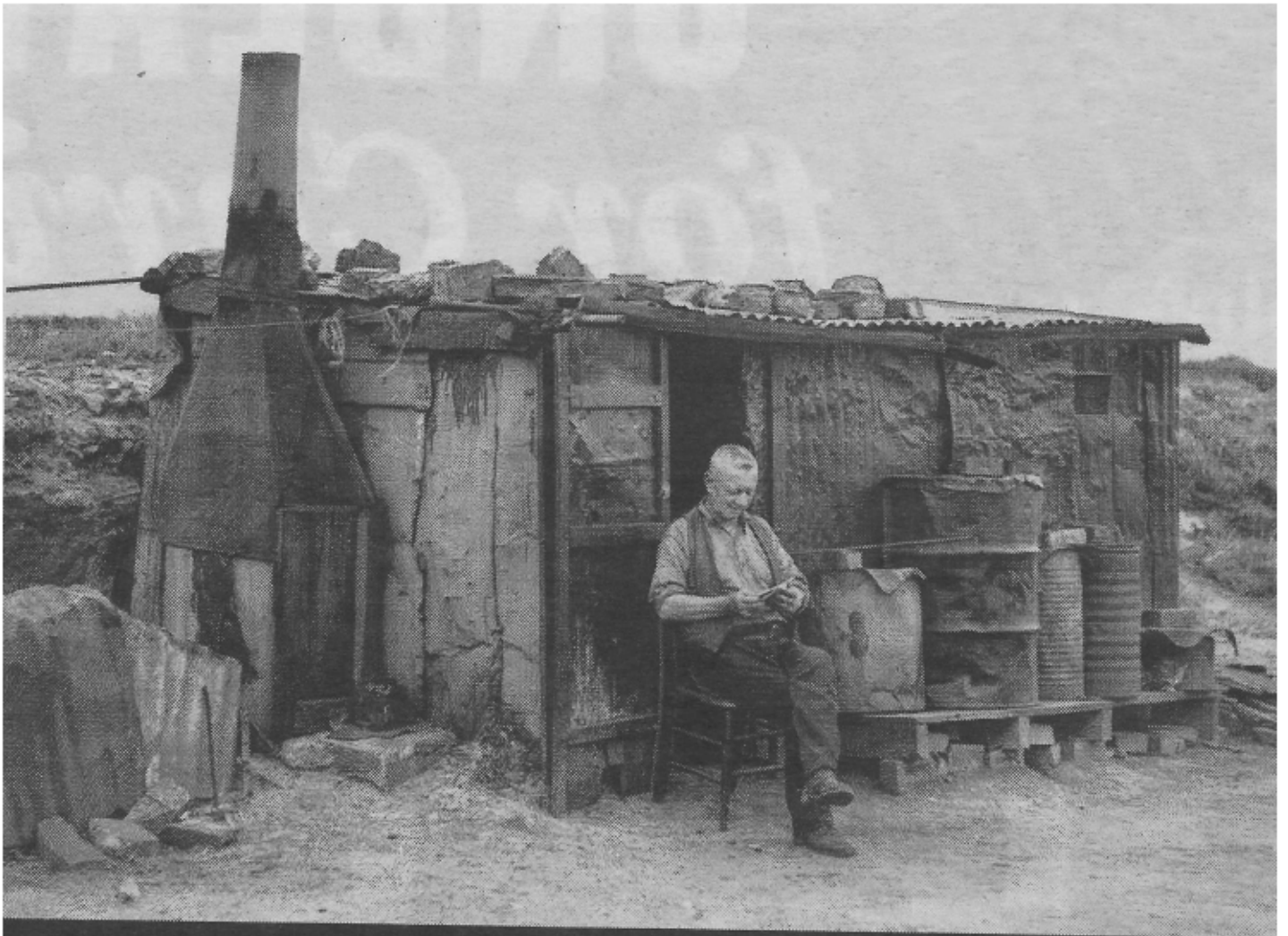
My final tribute to Alan Shelton is to suggest to his family that, instead of praying for him, they might try praying to him.

Pat Hogan  
2/11/80.

P.S. Alan, Roger and Greg were buried at Harrogate, Yorkshire. Wally was buried at Weymouth, Dorset, where his parents retired.



See Royal Family reference p7.



## SCRAPPY TIMES IN THE WILD WEST

**HUTS** made from scrap and a corrugated iron roof weighted down with rocks — such was life in Dudley Flats in Melbourne's west in 1936. The shanty town stood between West Melbourne and Footscray from the 1930s to the 1950s. This chap and his "typical residence" featured in *The Argus* in December 1936, as officials debated the slum's future.

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