

Lord Somers Camp 1932

This article was written by Professor Peter Sutton about his father Ern Sutton, who was a Green grouper in 1932 (the second Big Camp held at Somers). Peter spoke along these lines in a video shown at lunch on Thursday at this year's Lord Somers Camp. A selection of the thirteen photos are shown here.*

My father, Ernest John Sutton 1914-2006, attended Lord Somers' Camp in January 1932, at Somers. Before he died he documented thirteen photographs taken at the camp, and wrote out his Green Group's War Cry of 1932, as he still remembered it (inevitably it will have changed). According to my sister Kaye he was prone to whoop it out from time to time. He had an awesome memory:

*Tulkamore Tulkamore, Eagle Eagle Ah,
Nurra Nurra, Nurra Nurra, Consawhacka Wah,
Soda Water, Soda Water, Pop Pop Pop
Cola Beer, Cola Beer, Wop Wop Wop.
We are the Boys who Wear the Green
We are the Boys who Reign Supreme,
Yarra Yarra. Wobble Wobble, whiskers on his Gobble Gobble,
Yellow Belly - Rusty Guts
WHOORAH*



Green Group guard of honour greet Rotary Club visitors. (Ern Sutton is second from far right)

Ern was born into a poor family in Port Melbourne. His father was a fish cart driver, an alcoholic, extremely strong, and inclined to fits of violence. Ern's mother worked at Swallow & Ariell's biscuit factory. By the time Ern attended Big Camp at eighteen, he had been out of school for four years as an unskilled factory worker, when he could get the work. For some time he wrapped Solvol sand soap on a production line.

Ern always looked back on his time at Somers as a crucial turning point in his life. He said it made him realise he could mix with people of any and every background. He learned to be a



Bristol Bulldog aircraft. (Ern Sutton is front centre)

team player. Above all he realised he did not need to stay where he had inauspiciously started in life. He enrolled in night school, studied chemistry, and learned to be a soap-maker instead of a soap-wrapper.



Green Group. (Ern Sutton is on the far right). Leader: Mr Dennis Cole.

While at the camp, aircraft and staff from RAAF Point Cook paid a visit. It seems this might have given him ideas. Ten or so years later Ern was at Point Cook being trained as a member of the Air Force during wartime. He attempted to qualify as a pilot, became chief caterer at Darwin barracks, and ended up as Flight Sergeant and an air gunner known as 'Deadly Ernest'. Later we moved out of Port Melbourne, heading for leafy suburbia, when I was about five (1951). When I was the first person in our extended families to finish high school, and earned a university scholarship, Ern gave me ten pounds. Like many others, I suspect, I've been a second-generation beneficiary of the Camp and its positive philosophy.

Peter Sutton



Air Commodore Richard Williams & Bristol Bulldogs & Wapiti aircraft from Point Cook. (Ern Sutton went on to be trained at Point Cook during the War when in the Air Force. The Bristol Bulldog fighters purchased by the RAAF arrived at Pt. Cook in 1930. The Wapiti bombers purchased by the RAAF arrived at Pt. Cook between 1929 and 1931).

* Prof. Peter Sutton is a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Adelaide and the South Australian Museum. As anthropologist and linguist he has lived and worked with and for Aboriginal people in many different regions since 1969. He writes on indigenous languages, art, land ownership, history and policy. His latest book is *The Politics of Suffering: Indigenous Australia and the End of the Liberal Consensus* (2009).

Bushy, Talky, Gabbett & company - (Looks like Bushy is in the bowler hat).



Tug-of-war



Green Group outside hut. (Ern Sutton 4th from left).



Football Dribble at The Games



Greeting Rotarians



Ball and Bucket at The Games (Ern Sutton is third from right)



Bushy & company



The Programs and Activities of Lord Somers Camp and Power House



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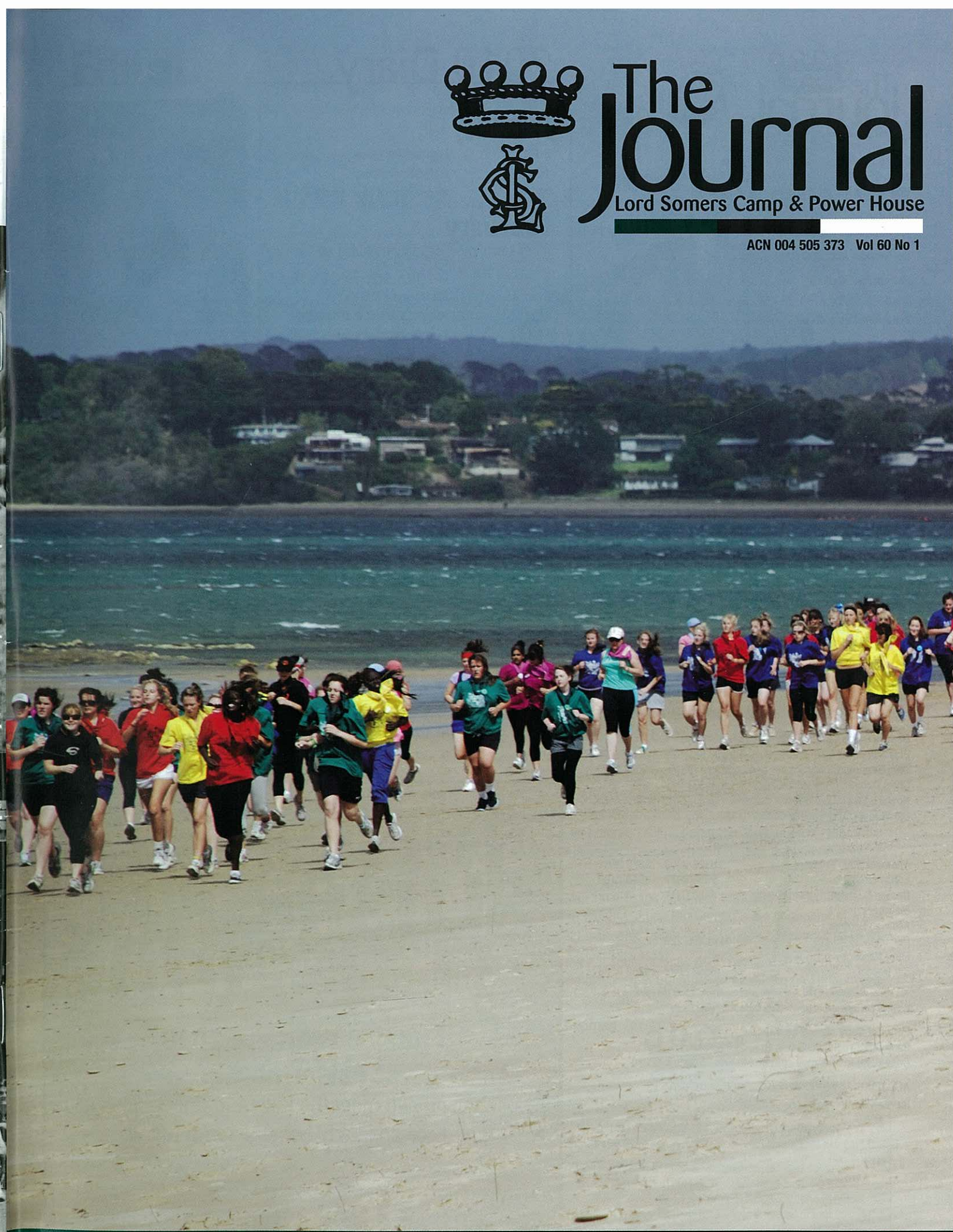
Below: Tug-of-war



Below: 100 Somers boys with Dr McAdam Camp Chief, George Nicholas, Sir William Irvine, Air Commodore Richard Williams, William Kent-Hughes and Slushies.



Big Camp 1932



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