

# In memoriam — the late I. O. Horys



Along with most other newspapers and magazines nowadays (with the possible exception of the London TIMES) the NEWS does not go in much for obituaries.

However, from time to time in these pages "In Memoriams" have appeared, some more comprehensive than others, and it certainly seems fitting that contributions to the life and work of Sulphide Corporation, made by outstanding personalities particularly, should be properly acknowledged.

We believe this is important in order that we might pay them homage and, also, so that their names and their work are adequately recorded in NEWS pages, one of the few remaining repositories of Sulphide history.

Undoubtedly such a person was Ivan Onufry Horys, Chief Chemist of Sulphide Corporation from 1950 to 1972 and consultant to the company for some years after 1972. Mr Horys died in hospital on Thursday, 4 September 1980, after a short illness.

For a period of a quarter of a century, possibly the most eventful and important in Sulphide's 85 year old history to date, Horry played a unique role in the chemical and metallurgical activities of the company. His scientific knowledge, based on long European experience prior to arriving in Australia in 1949, was unrivalled at Cockle Creek and, in fact, placed him in the forefront of people working in similar fields in this country. Some achievements:

**In the Laboratory**, which he transformed from an old time "Chem. lab." into a modern, scientific operation — atomic absorption spectroscopy (particularly for lead-in-blood determinations and continuous process control), the use of direct reader for spectrographic analysis, and the automation and computerization of instrumental analysis.

**On the Works**, Horry made very significant contributions to operations; for example, the solution of major superphosphate quality problems, the improvement and uprating of cement

quality and production, development of double superphosphate and control of effluents. His attention to Smelter affairs was unceasing and invaluable.

NEWS No. 231 published at the time of Horry's retirement gives a comprehensive account of his most interesting and eventful, even hazardous life, before the Horys family emigrated to Australia at the end of World War II. Some highlights: Born at Kossivka in the Ukraine on 23 April 1911, he started work at eight years of age and had a clear recollection of the Russian Revolution. At 12 years' old Horry was earning enough by coaching other children to keep his younger brother and himself. He entered University in 1931 and, after graduation and post-graduate degrees, progressed to the position of Professor of Physical Chemistry at the University of Dnepropetrovsk in 1941.

The war wrought great changes. He served as an artillery officer in the Soviet Army, was a P.O.W. in Germany, but eventually gained a considerable amount of industrial experience in that country — typical, we think, of Horry's remarkable tenacity. Reunited with his wife, Raissa, and daughter, Olga, at war's end, Horry chose Australia instead of America — and, to our great good fortune, eventually arrived in Newcastle where, legend has it, Mr and Mrs Horys sighted the old Sulphide (as it certainly then was) almost by chance, knocked on the door, and were welcomed into the Sulphide fold. The rest is company history.

Horry was quite a disciplinarian in his early days with us; the writer still recalls the trepidation with which he watched him inspect cement plant operations and products in the '50's. Undoubtedly, this sort of thing did us the world of good. And as a teacher and trainer of young men, Horry was without a peer. He placed great importance on finding the right niche for everyone. "People," he used to say, "are all important. They must be taught, trained, encouraged — inspired, if you can, and looked after. Then they will give of their best."

On the Works, particularly, there were few, indeed, in supervisory positions in

earlier times who did not experience his keen questions and enthusiastic expositions. We recall at the time of his retirement Horry explaining with that impish grin that he was sorry but he felt it his duty to occasionally "step on people's toes in the name of progress". Certainly, he was rarely if ever incorrect in his judgements and recommendations.

In latter years he mellowed and became a real patriarchal figure. This was especially so after his retirement, when it was always a great pleasure to see him at Sulphide functions, speak with him in the street, or hear that unmistakable voice on the telephone. He retained his keen interest in the world around him; for example, the writer recalls one of his last phone discussions with Horry, which took the form of a thorough resume of the Afghanistan situation, revealing aspects of a quite original, exceptional nature.

Natural surrounds Horry liked best; he was not a city dweller and it is of interest and some sadness that we learnt recently of his and Mrs Horys' thoughts of returning to a house and garden after eight years in a city unit. When they were both working at Cockle Creek, the Horys lived at Argenton, where their prowess as "primary producers" and their great love for gardens were legendary.

Horry became a dedicated and knowledgeable disciple of the Australian bush and there was nothing he and Raissa enjoyed more than long trips into the inland. For Europeans this was perhaps surprising, but something they attributed to country origins in the Ukraine; it was a part of life in their adopted country which became very important and which gave them both great pleasure.

The strong representation of Sulphiders and ex-Sulphiders at the funeral on 6 September was ample testimony to the warmth of respect and affection in which Horry was held.

The NEWS also now takes this opportunity, late though it is, to send a message of sympathy to Mrs and Miss Horys; we can assure them that Mr Horys' place in Sulphide history is assured.

by J. H. Scarfe

## Sulphide Rejoins City & Suburban Cricket

All of the old timers will remember Sulphide's participation in the Newcastle City and Suburban Cricket matches between 1956 and 1964. The team played in A Reserve and acquitted itself very well, winning the Stokes Cup on one occasion, and reaching the finals during several others. Regardless of this, over the years, interest waned and with no new talent coming forward team members gradually went their separate ways.

However, over the past few years a new group of enthusiasts among our shift workers, particularly C & D panels, has been meeting on each fourth Wednesday to play soccer during the winter and cricket during the summer months. This gradually led to the inclusion of other panels and finally, this year, to the formation of a

group who lodged a successful application to rejoin the competition after a break of some 14 years.

Consisting of 20 registered players the team is looking forward to the season which began on Saturday, 11 October.

Because of shift work commitments by most of the players a couple more reliable players are needed. So, if you are (1) reliable and (2) know something about cricket, then you could contact one of the following members: Barry Bradley (Charge Prep.) President, John Sievers (Laboratory) Secretary, John Turner (ISF) Treasurer, or Vince Alder (Laboratory) Captain.

Could be that you don't want to play, but would like to be one of the spectators, then your presence at the matches to give some support to our team would also be appreciated.