

# From down under comes a beaut ending!

by SARAH EDGE

**THE SON of a Second World War hero landed in Tameside this week having flown more than 10,000 miles to spread the news his father is alive and well!**

As we reported last week, David Hadfield's dad nearly didn't make it back to British soil after being shot down in the battle of Arnhem in Holland in 1944.

Listed as missing in action, the Tameside-born glider pilot was even rumoured to have been named as one of the fallen on a war memorial in the borough.

But unbeknown to many family and friends George had in fact been taken prisoner at a Stalag Camp in Bavaria, Germany.

Suffering from serious injuries, he owed his life to Russian prisoners of war who smuggled him extra food and blankets until the Americans freed them in 1945.

And this week his son David made his first visit to the borough to tell everyone his father - now 86 - is alive and well, living on the Sunshine Coast near Brisbane in Australia.

Speaking from Woodley this week David Hadfield said: "My father originally trained in the Manchester Territorials. The operation was codenamed 'Market Garden', principally to capture the bridges so the allied army could cross the river into Germany.

"But British intelligence was lacking and they weren't aware of a German tank division posted there. So when they landed Germany had a lot more troops than expected and four days later, after engaging in close quarter fighting, he was wounded and shipped off to Stalag 383 in Bavaria.

"When he arrived back in Britain he surprised my mother because she believed he had been killed, but it all ended quite well and in a matter of weeks he was demobbed."

The pair moved to Wales, where David was born then



**NET GAIN: Left, friends Tony Burton and David Hadfield. Right, David's mum and dad, George and Helen on their Diamond Wedding Anniversary. (FD01-400)**

on to Southern England before finally emigrating to Australia in 1959.

George and Helen now have another daughter Susan and two grandchildren Katherine and Robert.

"I left for Australia when I was 10 or 11 and I have lived all my life hearing stories about Tameside - now here I am!" David added.

During his visit David, who has devoted much of his time to tracing the family tree since his retirement, was keen to find the family haunts on his first visit to Tameside.

Among them were The Sycamore in Ashton and the Cotton Tree in Droylsden, which were owned by his



grandfather Samuel.

He was shown round by pal Tony Burton of Woodley, whom he first met on the Internet while tracing his family history three years ago.

"I have to sing Tony's praises. He has been my ears, eyes and legs in this area for a lot of years now. I have been able to research on the Internet, but now not only can I put faces to names, but I have got a perception of Tameside."

David and Tony would still like to hear from you if you remember George Hadfield or have any further information about the family. Please contact the newsdesk on (0161) 303 1910 if you can help.