



ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

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JUNE 2013

535

REPORT ON MAY MEETING (8.5.2013)

Extra chairs had to be brought in to seat the members and guests who attended the May Meeting at the Commercial Club. Guests included ten people who had been Queen candidates or attendants, or had designed floats at Albury's Floral Festivals. The program for the night was, as always, entertaining and informative. Chris McQuellin was in the chair and speakers were Victoria Cooper, Joe Wooding, Faye Stevenson and Marion Taylor. All talks were supported by excellent graphics in a PowerPoint format. Victoria used a number of excellent coloured images from the Dallinger Collection.

Victoria is a Trainee Museum Collections Officer with AlburyCity and is the curator of the Floral Festival Exhibition which runs at the LibraryMuseum from 18 May to 30 June. Joe Wooding completed his 5 part series of the life & letters of Thomas Scott Townsend the government surveyor who laid out Albury in 1838. Faye Stevenson has been researching convicts who were assigned to survey parties led by Townsend and has compiled a list of those who worked with the surveyor in his work in the district in 1838-9.

Marion Taylor spoke of the lonely grave of 19 year-old Maria Louisa Huon, daughter of Aime and Mary Huon de Kerilleau, pioneers of the border district.

[The amount of historical information presented at the meeting created a space problem for the *Bulletin* Editor. Rather than abridge the material, Joe's and Faye's work will be published in the next *Bulletin*.]

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY

12 JUNE 2013

7.30pm at Commercial

Club Albury

Annual General Meeting

Reports & Election of office
bearers

Speaker: Jane Downing

"What's in a name, a history
of Lavington"



ALBURY FLORAL FESTIVAL EXHIBITION

LibraryMuseum

18 May-30 June

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Annual Report	Page 2
AGM Agenda	Page 2
Albury's Floral Festivals	Page 3
Maria Louisa Huon	Page 6
Membership renewal form	Page 8

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Journals, Stock: June Shanahan

Meeting Greeter: Catherine Browne

ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

PO Box 822 ALBURY 2640

Membership list & Bulletin dispatch: Ray
Gear

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Subscriptions are due 31 May

Bulletins will not be sent to members who have
subs outstanding as at 31 August.

Single: \$25

Family: \$33

Corporate: \$50

Research undertaken \$25 first hour.

Enquiries in writing with \$25

Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the
month 7.30pm at Commercial Club
Albury.

Committee meets 3rd Wednesday of
the month 5.15pm at Albury
LibraryMuseum.

A&DHS website:

www.alburyhistory.org.au

ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13

On a reflective note during the past year the Society has lost respected members Bill Washington and Anne Davies and we are saddened by their passing.

The Society over the past year has had a number of our members active in the Albury-City LibraryMuseum volunteer programs of digital scanning, cataloguing and event volunteering. The Society is also represented on the AlburyCity LibraryMuseum Acquisition committee and the Art Gallery Acquisition and De-accession Committee.

Again we have had a very full year with the active contribution of members engaged in local history publications and historical research and excellent participation in our community events. The Pioneer Cemetery booklet has been completed and is available. Special thanks to Jan and Doug Hunter for completing this very worthwhile project for the Society. Also the major WWI (1914-1919) project research was completed through the work of Joe Wooding, assisted for the 1919 period by Richard Lee.

Society activities included:

- An excursion to historic Chiltern organised by Catherine Browne took in the Athenaeum museum, Dow's Pharmacy and *Lake View House*.
- Heritage Week in April this year at the LibraryMuseum was a public meeting which included member Noel Jackling interpreting some recent additions to the *Uiver* Collection.
- An oversubscribed bus tour to the Hume Dam environs in April. Speaker subjects included the Bethanga Bridge, Hume Dam Quarry and the Dam itself. This was followed by a creative image projection onto the dam wall by local artists in their 'One River Project' as part of the Centenary of Canberra.



Gates to the Hume Dam Wall being opened for our visit in April 2013. Access onto the Wall is a rare event these days.

AGM AGENDA

Welcome, Attendance & Apologies

Minutes of the AGM 13.6.2012

President's Report

Treasurer's Report & Audited Accounts

Appointment of interim chairman to conduct election.

Election of Office Bearers:

Nominations as at 22 May in []

President *vacancy*

Vice-presidents (2) [*Joe Wooding*] *vacancy*

Secretary [*Helen Livsey*]

Treasurer [*Michael Browne*]

Minute Secretary [*Catherine Browne*]

Committee of 6 [*Bridget Guthrie, Ray Gear, Jill Wooding, Doug Hunter, Marion Taylor, June Shanahan, Peter Whitbourn, Chris McQuellin*]

Appointments

Public Officer [*Helen Livsey*]

Honorary Auditor *vacancy*

Bulletin Editor [*Doug Hunter*]

Publicity Officer [*Jill Wooding*]

Journals & Stock [*June Shanahan*]

Meeting Greeter [*Catherine Browne*]

Membership list & Bulletin dispatch [*Ray Gear*]

General business:

Setting of annual subscription

[*Recommendation: Unchanged: Single \$25; Family \$33; Corporate \$50*]

Meeting closure

June Shanahan again had a very successful valuation day in partnership with Wodonga Historical Society and Helen Livsey has provided us great service as our Research Officer by answering requests for assistance on historic locations and family history. Joe Wooding did a talk to the Parkinson Support Group Wodonga for Albury Wodonga Health.

I am also pleased to report that the Society has had a very successful affiliation with AlburyCity LibraryMuseum over the last 12 months.

A special thank you to Carina Clement, the Libraries and Museum programs team leader and her staff, including our own Carole and Bridget, for the provision of their support and use of the Museum and library meeting rooms. All the LibraryMuseum staff have been extremely helpful to myself and our members during this year.

The Society started the 2012-2013 year on a welcoming note by conferring Life Membership to June Shanahan for her work over many years.

Our guest speakers during the year included Leo Coyle, Pam Gordes, Ken Ashley and David James from Twin City Bowmen, Noelene Allen, Christine Cransfield-Smith and Dr David Lawrence, James Jenkins, Sadie Moffitt, Victoria Cooper and Albury Mayor Councillor Alice Glachan. There were a good number of member speakers without whose passion and research ability we would not be the society we are today.

Membership has remained stable and we were able to welcome some new members.

It is pleasing to report that the A&DHS web site has become increasingly popular with over 30,000 individual visits to Society web pages. There has of course been a modest financial cost to the Society with this new technology.

The treasurer will give you a breakdown of our working account income and costs in his report. It is pleasing to report that the Society has had its first financial bequest and this from the estate of long-time member Anne Davies. The interest monies gained from such funds allow us to continue our work in and for the community.

The year sees us embarking on another community project with Albury City: Construction of the full-scale model Robbins and Porter monoplane project under the leadership of Michael Browne. We have enlisted the enthusiastic support of many community volunteers and the plan is to have it finished and unveiled in late July 2013.

Special thanks to Doug Hunter our A&DHS *Bulletin* editor for his diligent work in putting the *Bulletin* together and also to Ray Gear for his work in getting the *Bulletin* to us again this year.

2013-2014 committee is to be formalised on 12 June 2013. I hope that the coming year will allow for another energetic and instructive history program to be put into place.

May I also offer my sincere thanks to everyone on the A&DHS volunteer and research teams for your support during this last year.

Chris McQuellin May 2013

ALBURY'S FLORAL FESTIVALS

Report of a presentation by Victoria Cooper

Victoria has been researching the Floral Festivals, which were held in Albury between 1951 and 1972; for the exhibition in the Lane Gallery at the LibraryMuseum. It has been a great experience looking into the multifaceted festival. She was able to talk to a wide range of people who were involved and the AlburyCity photographic collection has grown considerably. The event had a brief revival in the 1980s, but did not continue, so she has focused on the original 21 year span of the festival, including:

- Festival beginnings and the influence of Mayor Cleaver Bunton;
- The type of festival it was and the events it contained;
- The Queen competition and what this meant for the women involved and the festival itself; and
- Fundraising and strong community efforts behind the festival.

Opening in 1951 to a crowd of 8,000 the Albury Floral Festival had a triumphant start. Dean Street was decorated with lines of potted trees and shrubs. Even the Town Hall (now the Art Gallery) was decorated inside and out to resemble a garden. A further 10,000 attended the grand finale held on the Saturday. Staged as a celebration to mark the Golden Jubilee of Australian Federation, the week-long event culminated in a procession of musicians, floats, school children and potential Floral Festival queens along Dean Street to the Sports-ground.

The festival was the brainchild of Albury's mayor, Cleaver Bunton, who took his inspiration from the Grafton Jacaranda Festival. He is remembered as one of the older generation with an old way of talking to the younger women of the queen competition, and as a great speaker, persuading people to continue their hard work.

The first festival was held in the month of March, but was moved to November in 1953. The bad weather in November 1954 caused a rethink and a return to March in 1956, skipping 1955.

Usually it began on the Monday after

Melbourne's Moomba Festival, and included a queen competition, balls and dances, band recitals, art, photographic and garden competitions and a Hampstead Heath street fête. Many people remember the time of the Floral Festival as being celebratory and charitable.

In 1951, the culmination of the festival was the parade along Dean Street with hundreds of people turning out to view the parade. Some got a grandstand view by standing on the shop awnings above the street. The procession ended in the Sportsground where over 3000 school children formed an outline map of Australia with the children forming the State boundaries moving to form the word "Jubilee" while the infants formed the figures 1951 thus marking the 50th anniversary of Federation.

The profits from the first three festivals covered most of the cost of the Memorial Bowl on Monument Hill and helped Albury Council to meet the cost of building the War Memorial Civic Theatre. In 1953 there was a call for each organisation to be allowed to use funds raised to support their own needs, or their chosen charity. In return, the work that the community groups put into keeping the Floral Festival going over the years saw each one improve on the previous year's success.

From 1953, three competitions were held: the best float, the most money raised, and the Floral Festival Queen. The festival was a big deal; there was the fund-raising, float making, preparations of dresses and many social events to consider. For these committees, it was not just a week-long event; there were months of preparation.

Behind each candidate was a group of people working hard to win. The competition was friendly, however; all had their job to do in raising money and awareness. They sold buttons, had stalls in the Hampstead Heath held on Dean Street, and held fund-raising nights through bingo or a ball. They could be as creative as they liked.

In 1972, Kentucky Fried Chicken candidate, Pamela Cohen, organised a concert in the Memorial Bowl that attracted 800 people to hear a dozen bands from the Albury-Wodonga area.

Some even caused a stir by holding raffle nights. The *Border Morning Mail* reported on



Coral Hague, representing Albury Base Hospital, being crowned Floral Festival Queen by the Mayor of Albury, Alderman Cleaver Bunton 1959.

Photograph AlburyCity Collection

14 April 1952 that Rev. Robert McMillan thought Albury was conducting a gambling racket 'second to none' in its history, thanks to the Floral Festival's apparent, 'free for all licence' to conduct chocolate wheels and raffles, a form of gambling.

Saturday was the grand finale: the big parade. All the hard work paid off in the display of beautiful elaborate floats with their queen candidate as they made their way along Young and Dean Streets towards the Albury Sportsground along with the bands, excited children, clowns, marching girls and community groups. It was followed by what was termed in the newspapers as the Mardi Gras, usually held at the Sportsground. There would be motorcycle and chariot races, stunt displays, and the arrival of the parade of floats with the queen candidates. Then would follow the crowning ceremony for the prestigious Floral Festival Queen, then a concert and ball for more dancing and fun!

A Floral Festival coach was officially presented to Cleaver Bunton at the Citizen Mili-

tary Forces drill hall on Friday 6 May 1964 by members of the 8/13 Victorian Mounted Rifles Workshops who had restored it using original materials except for the canvas hood which needed to be replaced. Alderman Buntton stated that it was “a coach worthy of a floral festival and of the efforts of the committees and candidates, and will get the 1964 Floral Festival off to the best start ever.”

The coach carried the previous year’s queen, Dorothy Pepper, to the Sportsground in the afternoon parade, and then took the newly crowned queen, Colleen Schoff, to the Town Hall where she appeared on the balcony to wave to a thousand excited viewers in Dean Street.

The competition was always stiff. In 1969, half a point separated the six candidates! Judging began on the opening day when each candidate was introduced to the judges. During the following week they were further assessed during the various events, including the Wednesday night ball, and an interview. Judging for the 1964 competition was completed with 50 points from each judge; 30 to apply to the candidate (including deportment and behaviour at the various events), 10 to her attendants and 10 to her float.

The candidates trained together. In the early years, they were trained by Raie Langley; in 1961, by Jean Dunstan; while Jan Skinner, who was herself, crowned the final queen in 1972, trained the candidates in the later years. They were a group of young women in a new situation together and long-lasting friendships were often made.

Betty Ward (later Steer) was working as a ticket-writer and window-dresser for the G.J

Coles department store when she was asked to represent the store in the first Floral Festival. The colourful Easter-themed float was made near the Coles store, in an alley off Dean Street near the Globe Hotel. Betty told Victoria that she remembered they would hide the float. There was keen rivalry so the theme and design of the float was a closely guarded secret. Betty’s attendants on the float were Marie Jacobs and Pat Cotter. The *Border Morning Mail* reported that during the parade, Betty’s fellow staff members formed a cheer squad outside the store and cheered her as she passed.

[It was announced at the Meeting that sadly, Mrs Betty Steer had passed away two days earlier.]

Moresby Park Pre-school’s 1959 float featured Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Heather Faulkhead (now Heinjus) was the candidate and the dwarfs were pre-schoolers who were tied in position as a safety measure. The float used flowers saved from the previous year. The minutes recorded, “we were all weary after the Floral Festival but when we saw the float entering the arena we were all very proud of ourselves and the people who helped us.”

Coral Hague (now Close) was a new nurse-in-training at the Albury Base Hospital and was for the first time living away from home. Amongst all this, Coral agreed to be the Floral Festival representative. She prepared for this, with the help of many others including her friend and floral attendant Jeanette Sharp, in any spare time. This included making the flowers. Everyone would be in the common rooms, making those flowers following the instructions of the ABH Floral Festival committee, which was a creative team.

It was an exciting time; she remembers the hard but positive work that was involved. Mostly it was the overall spirit of community and social goals and working together. Coral went on to be crowned Floral Festival Queen in 1959. Her crown was made from fresh flowers by local florist, Ron Martin.

Margaret Ryan (now Lenehan) won the Floral Festival Queen competition in 1961 while representing the Mercy Hospital. She has loaned her crown for the exhibition. With the support of her parents and encouragement



Coralie Williams with attendants on the Netball Association float 1967.

Photograph AlburyCity Collection



Queen candidates in day dress, hat and heels, being introduced to the community at a garden party at the Albury Botanic Gardens, March 1961.
Photograph AlburyCity Collection

from the nuns and staff of Mercy Hospital, she was happy to do her part to help raise much needed funds. All local hospitals such as Albury Base Hospital, Mercy and Wodonga, were able to reach funding that was not, in those days, available from the government. For the Mercy Hospital in 1961, it was a very big deal as they were in need of the funding. It was their first floral festival entry and they won all three categories – Queen, float and money raised.

Jan Skinner represented the Wildlife Conservation Society in the final Floral Festival in 1972. Her attendants were Jenny Collins (Duncan) and Margaret O'Keefe (Roach). It was not Jan's first experience with the festival; as a child she had twice won the prize for the best decorated bike and later she trained the queen candidates. Jan designed her own dress, buying special material in Melbourne and having it made by her aunt, Lucy Holmes. She wanted the dress to have a sparkle to it, but not look glittery and found some perfect netting. Jan remembers waving from the balcony of the Civic Centre to a large crowd of around 5000 people.

There were many challenges along with successes throughout the Albury Floral Festival's 21 years, but overall, the support and celebration of the local community provided entertainment for the people of Albury and raised tens of thousands of dollars each year for local causes. The best photographic record of the annual event was compiled by Albury photographer, Jack Dallinger and may be viewed on the Flickr website.

MARIA LOUISA HUON

By Marion Taylor

Recently I have met Tanja Schramm Trethowan who is married to Barry Trethowan who owns the properties "Eastfield" and "Huondale" at Gerogery. While discussing our mutual interest in early Australian history she told me about an old grave on their farm. She said that about 20 years ago her husband was spotlighting and when he shone the light on the old gravestone he was just able to read the name but not much else. You could imagine I was very intrigued especially since I had an idea I had seen that name somewhere in my research of the area.

To put this find in context I will just refresh your memory by taking you back to the very beginnings of the first white settlement of this district and the pioneering efforts of the de Kerilleau family.

Gabriel and Louisa had five children, all born around Sydney; four of them being very important to our early history.

Elizabeth, an amazing pioneer woman, came to Albury from Goulburn in a bullock dray with 10 children aged 7 to 26 to join her brothers in the land beyond the limits of location. There were hostile Aborigines, very few police, no doctors, intermittent delivery of essential supplies, the nearest PO was Yass, and only a handful of women living in the area. More recognition should be given to Elizabeth and her sisters-in-law. I would like to start lobbying to have her portrait reinstated at the Albury Base Hospital.

Paul, whose claim to fame starts with having three wives, including one aboriginal and one whose parents were both convicts. He fathered 16 children from these relationships and died in 1849 at the age of 50. He also had an early involvement in the Wodonga area with the Woodonga Run and through his son William and daughter Emma. His daughter Sarah from his third marriage married James Mitchell.

John Francis was sent to France by his father to claim the de Kerilleau family inheritance. He drowned off the French coast and some say he was murdered for the money he was carrying. Aime is a key figure in our story today as you will see in a minute.

Charles was an excellent bushman, said to overland cattle regularly from Woodonga to Adelaide without any trouble from the abo-

rigines and with only a tomahawk for equipment. Charles married Eleanor Brown, sister of Robert Brown of Albury Crossing Place fame, after settling in the district. They had no children.

In the 1830s and 1840s the four siblings Elizabeth, Paul, Aime and Charles had laid claim to a huge tract of land in the Albury and Wodonga district. After the Hume & Hovell Expedition you would imagine there was a lot of talk in the Hume family about the "land beyond the settled districts" that had been discovered in 1824 especially the fertile, open woodland watered by the Murray River and numerous creeks. No doubt Francis Rawdon Hume had discussed this with his brother Hamilton (the explorer) and then passed on the information to his mother-in-law Elizabeth Mitchell and her brothers.

Charles had come down from Goulburn in 1836 guided by Aborigines. He was sent by his brother Paul and squatted on Woodonga. Aimee Huon and Robert Brown followed with cattle and horses. Aimee was already married to Mary, another sister of Robert Brown. It was said that Aime stocked all the country on the Billabong Creek.

Aime formed the Gerogery Run in 1839 and by 1847 it was over 43,000 acres. Aime and Mary had three children Maria Louisa, Elizabeth and Charles. All were born around the River Murray.

From the *Colonial Times* (Hobart, Tasmania 1828 - 1857), Saturday 18 November 1854:

About three weeks ago a fatal accident took place close to the station of a Mrs Mitchell, situated about 6 miles from Albury. It appears that two young ladies named Dight and Huon went to pay a visit at Jone's station which is situated on the opposite side of the Murray River to Mrs Mitchell's. At Mrs Mitchells there has been for some time a small log punt or canoe intended for the use of the family and their friends. After the visit was over Miss Dight was conveyed back to Mrs Mitchells across the river in the canoe by a youth named Joseph Mitchell, the only son of Mr Joseph Mitchell, of the Temperance Hotel, Malop St, Geelong. This young man was no relation to Mrs Mitchell who kept the Station, but merely happened to be stopping there. Upon Miss Dight being safely landed, young Mitchell returned for Miss Huon, when sad to relate, in crossing the river the canoe upset, both Mitchell and the lady met with a watery grave. The body of Miss Huon was recovered in about half an hour after the accident, but that of the youth was not found until sometime afterwards. Miss Huon was the eldest daughter of Aime Huon, Esq of Gerogery. This event, which at once deprived a father of his only son, and another parent of his daughter has plunged the families of both into the deepest grief. She was an amiable young lady and to her parents it is a most trying bereavement.

Maria Louisa was only 19 years old. This

A&DHS Bulletin 535 PAGE 7

REMINDER

Annual subscriptions for the year 2013-2014 are now due.

If you have not already done so, please forward your subscription to the Treasurer at:

PO Box 822 Albury 2640.

You might wish to pay using the electronic transfer method . A&DHS account details are:

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Individual: \$25.00

Family: \$33.00

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was a time when very few people could swim and you could imagine how difficult it would be trying to get to shore wearing a long dress with the river at Mungabareena being swollen with spring rains.

Was Maria crossing the River to meet a boyfriend, or to look for a suitable marriage prospect? Everyone north of the river was related to the poor girl! Miss Dight was her first cousin, most probably Emma or Mary. At this time Bonegilla Station was owned by David Bowen Jones, the first President of the Albury Show Society. Why was Joseph Mitchell at Bonegilla Station and where is he buried? What started out as an adventure across the river on a beautiful spring day, ended in tragedy.

Maria Louisa's body was brought back to Gerogery and buried not far from the old homestead, the headstone now is very weathered and virtually unreadable, if you look carefully you can see the words 'Sacred' and 'Maria'. It appears to be a sedimentary stone maybe quarried from Table Top Mountain. I think someone has repaired the base at some time over the years. That Maria was buried here makes me believe that the family, Aime, Mary, their other daughter Elizabeth (14) and son Charles Augustus (2) were living at Gerogery at the time.

Aime sold the Gerogery Run to Samuel Watson in 1869. Then seeking further challenges and fortune he and his brother Charles moved to Suva, Fiji where they bought land



The grave of Maria Louisa Huon with Table Top Mountain in the distance.
 Photograph Marion Taylor

and became plantation owners. They grew bananas and tried to can pineapples and dry bananas. Aime's daughter and son also went with the family where, according to Prue Grieve the family historian "they founded a dynasty of Huons who intermarried with the locals resulting in some gorgeous looking part-Fijian relations." In Suva there is a suburb called Toorak with streets called Amy, Huon and Augustus.

Aime and Charles are buried in Fiji, and possibly their wives too. I think about Maria Louisa many thousands of miles away under Table Top Mountain. Obviously this place was special to her as an effort was made to bring her back from the watery depths of the Murray to bury her in the quiet paddocks of "Huondale".

A&DHS Bulletin 535 PAGE 8

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