



ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

Registered by Australia Post PP 225170/0019

OCTOBER 2013

539

REPORT ON SEPTEMBER MEETING (11.9.2013)

Our September meeting fell in the middle of NSW History Week. The theme of the week was "Picture This!" a look at how images are interwoven into our history. Three members of the Wodonga-Albury Camera Club, Brian Paatsch, David Willis and Eric Bocquet, attended. They gave a short history of the 60 year old Camera Club and then provided an entertaining and informative program featuring excellent photographs of Albury and Lavington, and a 'snapshot' of NSW through the 20th Century. A history of the Club can be found on the website <www.waccfoto.com>.

Michael Browne showed photos of the construction team working on the Robbins & Porter monoplane which is now suspended in the foyer of the Albury LibraryMuseum. He captured something of the intensity of the last few hours of the project with images of the plane on the floor of the Library with only three hours to go before the official opening.

Doug Hunter reported on the financial situation of the project. The result was a pleasing one with the mega project coming in just 10% over the budgeted \$5000 allocated for the building of the monoplane. However the undertaking was only achieved through the generous gifts of time and materials from business houses, trades people, clubs and the general community of Albury-Wodonga, as well as the efforts of the 'build team' from the A&DHS. It was a laudable effort by all concerned.

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY

9 OCTOBER 2013

7.30pm at Commercial
Club Albury

Speakers: Bruce Pennay,
"The Experiment: Remembering the National Growth Centre" and
Bianca Acimovic, "Doing a Deanie"

COMING SOON

TO

ALBURY LIBRARYMUSEUM

The Experiment: Remembering the National

Growth Centre

AND

Doing a Deanie

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ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

PO Box 822 ALBURY 2640

<www.alburyhistory.org.au>

Patron: Patricia Gould OAM

Honorary Life Members:

Howard Jones, Helen Livsey June Shanahan

Public Officer: Helen Livsey

President: Doug Hunter 02 6021 2835

Vice-Presidents: Joe Wooding, Christopher McQuellin

Secretary: Helen Livsey 02 6021 3671

Treasurer: Michael Browne

Minute Secretary: Catherine Browne

Committee: Peter Whitbourn, Jill Wooding, June Shanahan, Ray Gear, Bridget Guthrie and Marion Taylor.

Bulletin Editor: Doug Hunter 02 6021 2835
<djhjrhlaptop@bigpond.com>

Publicity Officer: Jill Wooding

Journals, Stock: June Shanahan

Meeting Greeter: Catherine Browne

Membership list & Bulletin dispatch: Ray Gear

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

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

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Single: \$25

Family: \$33

Corporate: \$50

Subscriptions are due 31 May. *Bulletins* will not be sent to members who have subs outstanding as at 31 August.

Research undertaken \$25 first hour. Enquiries in writing with \$25



Clockwise from top left: Joe Wooding sanding the fuselage; Chris McQuellin and Joe Wooding working on wing bows; Bridget Guthrie 'test-flies' the completed monoplane before it is lifted into position; Michael Browne supervises the assembly of the undercarriage.

While the construction of the monoplane was an A&DHS project, AlburyCity engineers and technicians were responsible for lifting and securing the plane in its location over the LibraryMuseum foyer. Our thanks go to AlburyCity for its enthusiasm and cooperation in realizing the dream. Special thanks to Bridget Guthrie, Museum and Social History Coordinator who liaised between AlburyCity and A&DHS.

The theme of 'Picture This!' was completed with a selection of photographs from the Gyles Collection currently held at the 8/13 VMR Regimental Collection at North Bandiana. Sapper Murray Gyles was a Corowa boy who served in Egypt and Palestine in WWI. His photographic skills, probably gained from his step-father, Corowa photographer Mr McNichol, resulted in him working in the AIF Photographic Section.

MEMBERSHIP LIST AS AT 18 SEPTEMBER 2013

Life: Albury City Council, Commercial Club Albury, N C Douglas, B Geddes.

Honorary Life: H Livsey, H Jones, J Shanahan.

Corporate: P Harbick (Lester & Son), J Betteridge (Sweethearts Pizza).

Family: M & C Browne, E & B Cossor, H Glachan, R & B Haberfield, D & J Hunter, S & P Jack, H & H Jones, S & C Judd, B & B McGrath, K & S Monte, D & P Petts, G & C Ryan, B & I Strang, P & P Vine, C & P Whitbourn, J & J Wooding.

Individual: H Auchinleck, D Bartsch, G Blom, M Bollenhagen, J Bullivant, R Burdack, V Colley, M Comitti, K Crossley, D Eagles, R Gear, V Gherashe, M Gleeson, J Henwood, L Howard, A Kelso, R King, R Lee, H Leggatt, M Lenehan, D Lindner, C McQuellin, A Nugent, R Paech, S Palmer, L Passant, M Pas-

sant, D Royal, M Royle, T Ryan, K Scholz, P Scott, B Sheridan, F Stevenson, B Stewart, M Stokes, P Strachan, R Symes, V Symons, M Taylor, G Trampusic, V Wharton, J Whitla, D Widdison, C Wilson.

If your name is not there, please contact the Treasurer to rectify it. Electronic transfer can be made to BSB 640 000 Acc No 327006S10 (or 510) in the name of Albury & District Historical Society Inc.

TALK BY BILL STIRLING

WHEN PRESENTING EQUIPMENT FROM THE ALBURY TELEPHONE EXCHANGE TO THE REGIONAL MUSEUM IN 1986.

A&DHS *Bulletin* No 243 October 1986 recorded:

TWO ALBURY REGIONAL MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

"TELECOMMUNICATIONS AT THE CROSSING PLACE"

A Working Exhibition of Equipment from the Albury Exchange 1935-1985 which includes a graphic history of telecommunications in the region from 1856 to 1985 prepared by the Communications Section of Telecom.

Opens officially October 22nd - Speaker, William Stirling, Regional Manager.

There was no record of Bill Stirling's address on the day, until now! Ron Haberfield was speaking to Bill who, after some searching, found a copy of his speech and a photograph of the exhibition. We are pleased to be able to publish both, albeit 28 years after the event.

I would like to relate a little of the history of communications in this area.

In 1856 a telegraph line was erected in Victoria which ran from Sandhurst (now Bendigo) and branched via Kilmore, Longwood, Benalla, Wangaratta and Beechworth to Belvoir (now Wodonga). The line was connected to Belvoir in December 1857. The line did not stop at Wodonga but continued a few Kilometres to the bank of the Murray river opposite Albury. This was as a result of an understanding that the NSW Government would build a line from Sydney to Albury to link up with the Victorian line.

A committee chaired by Sir Henry Parkes had recommended in December 1856 that immediate steps be taken to connect the cities of Melbourne and Sydney by electric telegraph. An amount of £38,000 was provided by Parliament in 1857 for this construction, and a contract was let in May of that year.

Buildings were needed for the telegraph system and it was recorded in the official Statistical Register of 1860 that a building was in the course of construction in Albury at a cost of £950. This station next to the Court House was finished in 1860, but the cost had risen to £1967. (These problems were apparent in those days too).

As a result of public subscription by the Albury inhabitants, enough money was raised to have Wodonga established as a telegraph office. A public meeting was held in March 1858 and an offer by Mr Nicholls to provide two rooms adjoining his hotel (thought to be the Victoria) [actually Rose Hotel] was accepted.

The office was opened for communication in April 1858.

The first telephone exchange was opened in NSW in late 1881. In Albury, two early private lines which preceded the telephone exchange were from T H Mate & Co's bond store to the Custom Office, and a line from the Council Chambers to the waterworks pumping station. In 1898 the first telephone exchange was opened in Albury with seventeen subscribers.

Shortly after Federation in 1901, a larger switchboard was installed and a line was built connecting Howlong and Corowa. Connection was also made with Sydney and Melbourne.



A Working Exhibition of Equipment from the Albury Exchange 1935-1985 which included a graphic history of telecommunications in the region from 1856 to 1985 prepared by the Communications Section of Telecom and donated to the Albury Regional Museum on 22 October 1986

Three attendants operated the exchange until 1903 when continuous service was given and the telephonist staff was increased to 6.

The number of services connected in 1899 was 30; in 1901 – 52; 1910 – 194; and in 1925 – 529.

This is a very brief history of the era of communication in this district with the installation of the first telephone exchange.

The equipment you see in the exhibit today dates back to the early 1950s when there were some 1600 subscribers connected. There was an operating staff of telephonists of approximately 60 ladies and one male supervisor. Also two “night boys”.

Albury, including Lavington, now [1986] has in excess of 17,000 lines connected by two automatic exchanges. There is also some 10,000 services in Wodonga. These exchanges are connected to the national network by the coaxial cable which has a capacity of 9,000 lines, and was installed at a cost of around \$11M in 1960.

A new optical fibre cable is now being installed which will also connect the Albury district to the national network. This cable is costing in excess of \$20M and will provide the equivalent of 60,000 trunk lines.

The Albury-Wodonga area now has some of the most modern equipment available in the world.

A computer controlled exchange has been recently installed which will accommodate initially 1000 lines and provide for the connection of further computer controlled exchanges at Wodonga, Lavington and Jindera.

Albury already has an optical fibre cable operating between the exchange and Eastern Hill.

Many different types of services are available to the people of Albury/Wodonga such as telex, data, facsimile, video services, radio paging, and shortly mobile radio telephone.

These services have been made possible with the advent of new technology, but this will never completely replace the operator.

We still need assistance and information from time to time and in Albury this is still given by a small staff of telephonists now called Manual Assistance operators. A number of these staff were operating the boards you see in the exhibit. This equipment has now been replaced by a modern computer controlled exchange this year. We would be happy to arrange for members of the public to tour the new installations.

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the Telecom staff who have given generously of their own time over many months to make this exhibit a success.

I now have pleasure of officially presenting part of Albury's history to the Albury Regional Museum. +

CAROLE WHITBOURN'S RETIREMENT

Carole Whitbourn retired from the staff of Albury LibraryMuseum on 30 August after 35 years service. Carole's association with the Library extended over 46 years and she had the unique experience of having worked in all three Albury Library buildings: Mechanics Institute (1964-1966), QEII Square Library (1966-2007) and LibraryMuseum Kiewa Street (2007-2013).

In her work at the Library Carole was unfailingly helpful and her wealth of experience made her a 'go to' person. Carole's recollections of her time at the Library are recorded in *Bulletin* 469 (June 2007).

Several members of the A&DHS attended Carole's farewell at the LibraryMuseum and joined with her colleagues in wishing her a long and happy retirement.

Carole served on the A&DHS Committee for eight years and provided valuable liaison and advice enabling the Society to forge a closer relationship with AlburyCity.

MAGAZINES IN ALBURY LIBRARYMUSEUM

AlburyCity subscribes to a large number of magazines and periodicals which are available to members of the Library. Current issues are available to be read in the Library and past issues can be borrowed. Publications which might be of interest to A&DHS members include: *Inside History*, *History Today*, *Archaeological Diggings*, *Wartime*, *Antiques & Collectables*, and *Australian Family Tree Connections*.

Please take time to look in the magazine racks at the Library. You will be certain to find articles of interest.

NOTICES

Saturday 12 October Annual Antiques & Collectables Valuation Day, this year being held at the Wodonga Senior Citizens' Centre, Havelock Street Wodonga. This is a joint venture between A&DHS and WHS.10.00 a.m to 3.30 p.m.

Sunday 13 October Annual Pioneer Cemetery Walk commencing at 2.00 p.m., meeting at the lychgate, northern end of David Street. Walk will last about 1½ hours and we finish with a BYO thermos afternoon tea.

Thursday 17 October opening of “Doing a Deanie” exhibition at the LibraryMuseum at . 11 a.m. A chance to revisit your youth! Exhibition runs till 6 December.

Wednesday 23 October opening of “The Experiment: Remembering the National Growth Centre” exhibition at the LibraryMuseum at 5.30 p.m. Exhibition runs till 15 December.
