

ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

Registered by Australia Post PP 225170/0019

MAY 2014

545

REPORT ON APRIL MEETING (9.4.2014)

Every chair was taken in Banksia Room A at the Commercial Club and those present were treated to a varied and enjoyable evening of Albury history. Team Leader Cultural Services at AlburyCity, Jacqui Hemsley, spoke first giving an update on the council's efforts to find a satisfactory solution to the Water-wheel.

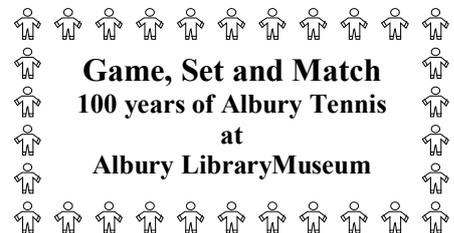
Charlie Summerfield then spoke about his father Tom Summerfield who conducted a cabinetmaking business, and later an antiques business, T R Summerfield & Co, in Albury for 60 years. Tom had arrived in Australia from England in 1928 as a 14 year-old Boy Scout migrant. During WWII he served in the 2/23rd Battalion (Albury's Own), was captured in North Africa, POW in Italy and later escaped to Russia.

This month, the 100th Easter Tennis Tournament was conducted in Albury. Albury LibraryMuseum is hosting an exhibition, "Game, Set and Match" to mark the occasion and we were privileged to hear from Sandra Rouvray, secretary of the Albury Tennis Association, and Chris Edgar of the Museum and Social History team, who has curated the exhibition. Chris showed a collection of photographs of Albury tennis personalities and fashions through the decades.

Ray Gear rounded out the evening by sharing some research notes he has gathered on the Nailcan Hill goldfield. Nail Can Hill is now a bushland reserve located to the north of Monument Hill. Today it is a popular walking and mountain biking area, but in years gone by it was the scene of industry as men worked

**NEXT MEETING
WEDNESDAY
14 MAY 2014
7.30pm at Albury
LibraryMuseum**

**Speaker: David Thurley
from the Astronomical So-
ciety of Albury-Wodonga,
"The transit of Venus" and,
weather permitting, an op-
portunity to view the heav-
ens with the ASAW.**


**Game, Set and Match
100 years of Albury Tennis
at
Albury LibraryMuseum**

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ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC
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<www.alburyhistory.org.au>

Patron: Patricia Gould OAM
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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 out-
standing as at 31 August.

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

with pick and shovel and explosives in pursuit of the elusive precious metal.

A question was asked, "How did the hill get its name?" One answer is that gold bearing ore was transported in nail cans from the mine to a crushing mill in the area. Some were not convinced, asking, "What were nail cans like and where did they come from, and what was special about them that they rated a name when other common mining objects didn't?" William Bayley tells many stories of mining on 'the Nailcan' but offers no opinion as to the origin of the name.

In the Members' 15 Minute segment, Joe Wooding shared early references to tennis in Albury and June Shanahan read a piece written by Albury historian, Rosemary Boyes, about the movement and installation of the Waterwheel near the Turks Head Museum. The president, Doug Hunter, mentioned the need for members to fill positions on the committee at the AGM in June.

THOMAS RICHARD SUMMERFIELD 1928 – 1996

Talk by Charlie Summerfield

Tom Summerfield traded as T R Summerfield & Co, cabinet makers, upholsterers, polishers & furniture repair specialists and antique dealers. The firm operated in Albury from 1946 to 2004 and saw 60 years of change in the furniture trade.

Thomas Richard (commonly known as Tom) arrived in Melbourne from England in 1928 as a fourteen year old Boy Scout migrant. He was hosted by a scouting family, the Dalrymples, until the scout movement could place him in employment on the land.

The first job secured was on a dairy farm at Nilma, Victoria and it lasted 12 months. He was returned to his host family to await another placement. In the interim, Tom started helping a toy maker who was in business up the street from his host family and that lasted about five months. He was then sent to a poultry farm at Cheltenham while the husband was away looking for work. He didn't get paid very often owing to the depression, but he stayed there another 12 months.

He took a roustabout job off his own bat at Gelliondale Station, then moved on to a job on a dairy farm at Jingellic, working for Thomas Francis Hart who, 11 years later, became his father-in-law. He moved about the Upper Murray, working at different jobs, coming back to work for Tom Hart a few times. On 6 February 1937, he married Bertha Hart at St Matthew's Church Albury. The Hart family were dairying at Baranduda at that

time. Tom and Bertha took time off between milking to get married and were late getting back to milk that evening.

In July 1940 Tom joined the AIF at Albury becoming one of the 2/23rd Battalion (Albury's Own). He served in North Africa and was a POW, finally escaping into Russia until the end of the war. He was discharged in July 1945 and returned to the land for a short time and then in 1946 bought into the upholstery business of Greening and Thurling. Mr Greening wished to take on horse training full time and sold his share of the partnership to Tom who began repairing and making furniture in a lean-to at the rear of 491 Olive Street, Albury. This was opposite the old Mercy Hospital and Baker Motors and the upholstery was conducted in the front of the shop trading under the name of Thurling and Summerfield.

The machines Tom used came from the toy and cabinet maker that he worked for when he was a lad in Melbourne. Tom went to visit the old chap when on leave in Melbourne and found the workshop closed with all the machinery still inside. He managed to buy them and a quantity of toy patterns deciding at the time to become a toymaker. In 1946 Tom needed more room for the cabinet shop as he had taken on an apprentice John Gehrig and space was tight. Bill Thurling also put on an upholstery apprentice, Norman Hart, Tom's brother-in-law, who stayed with the business for 50 years. It had become generally known that Tom was looking for other premises and he was approached by Alderman Cleaver Bunton who offered him an old bakery at 553 Smollett Street, Albury. Council had resumed the property because of unpaid rates and a two-up school was operating from the building and the police were finding it difficult to close it down. Both Council and the police needed a permanent tenant or owner in the building.

Tom bought Smollett Street, but before he could move in someone set fire to the bakery section. Fortunately no structural damage was done.

The workshop was set up in the two room bakery, one room with a brick floor became the machine shop and the other room with a board floor, was the workshop. A lean-to verandah to the east was closed in to make a polishing shop and french polisher Frank Massey was employed. Mr Massey, wife Joan and family, moved into the residence at the front and the shop was used for storage.

One day a couple of men walked into the workshop and introduced themselves as directors of A H Gibson Electrical Wholesalers. They were buying the old semolina mill next to the workshop at 555 Smollett Street and enquired about a builder to renovate the mill into a showroom and

warehouse. Tom not to be outdone said, "look no further" and got the job - showroom at street level and warehouse underneath. Tom mended our school shoes with flat leather belting out of the mill for years after. The partnership of Thurling and Summerfield lasted about two years when Bill Thurling sold out to Malcolm Swallow and the business became Summerfield and Swallow in 1948.

This was a period of expansion. The firm won a contract to repair or replace all the canvas on the motor pool of vehicles at Bandiana for the Army and to repair all tarpaulins. An extra nine upholsterers were employed to do this work. Two stayed at Olive Street, handling the ordinary upholstery, while the Army work was done in a large shed on the corner of Banff Avenue and Crisp Street at the rear of Mal Swallow's residence. Tom decided they should expand the workshop and tender for the Department of Supply work. The oven was demolished and the bricks used to build an extension to the back, then an extension on the east side was next. This was taken to the boundary and was constructed with steel trusses and a fibro-cement sheet wall. A toilet block was also constructed at the back of the block.

At this stage Tom, with a staff of six cabinet makers, was building kitchen cupboards and general made-to-order work and repairs. Larger metal framed machines had replaced the original wooden framed machines and quite a few more different machines were purchased. Tenders were submitted for Department of Supply work. It was about this time that Mal Swallow decided to move on and sold his share to Tom in April 1952.

As a single proprietor and with the canvas contract drawing to a close, Tom now needed to consolidate, so decided to close the Olive Street shop. The Massey family had moved out of the Smollett Street residence so two walls were knocked out, a narrow office constructed at the front and the upholstery shop was installed behind that. This was at street level with the bottom rooms used for storage.

The lease for Olive Street was taken over by Mr Vince Harangozo of the Coronet Jewellers for which I think Tom received the sum of two hundred pounds, because to lease a shop in the CBD in those days was difficult.

Work settled down at this level for quite awhile and some of the Department of Supply work that had been tendered for began to come to fruition. Four more cabinet makers were employed and two more docking saws were purchased. In 1956 son Charles Thomas Summerfield joined the workforce as an apprentice cabinet maker and three assemblers were also employed, totalling 14 in the cabinet shop. The polishing shop was in-



creased to five and the upholstery shop not needed for Department of Supply work remained around the five but sometimes an extra one was needed.

Things stayed fairly static for a couple of years then not so many polishers were needed and that workforce dropped to three then down to one and remained so for a few years. While the Department of Supply work was being done the ordinary every day work continued apace. The last of the canvas contract was the field ambulances, khaki canvas outside and white canvas inside, quite a challenge at first but once on top of it, a breeze. The canvas work was completed and the upholsterers dropped to four then a bit later three.

By 1957 Tom was sick of the Department of Supply inspector who had to pass each consignment of furniture, etc., before shipment to Melbourne, so Tom stopped tendering for that work. He turned to manufacturing a few lines of furniture for the retail market, trying to keep his team of cabinet makers employed although some had moved on; the assemblers the first to go. Some of the items made were footstools, occasional tables and chairs, dressing tables, bed heads, children's lounge chairs, etc. Then an acquaintance of Tom's wanted a weather-

board house built so Tom quoted and built the house in Sackville Street, opposite Albury Technical College.

In 1959 there was a disastrous fire in the new showroom two months after it had opened. The upholstery shop had been moved from the old residence to a shed in Richs Lane, South Albury and the street level floor renovated into a showroom with office at the rear. It was stocked with tools for the handyman and polish, strippers, methylated spirits, turpentine, reconditioned furniture and a few antique items. In the rush to get it open the insurance was not changed from a workshop, so it was greatly under insured. Luckily the fire did not reach the cabinet workshop and we were able to continue working. An office was set up in a corner of the workshop and we operated the business from there.

Owing to being under insured the road back was arduous and it took some years of belt tightening to recover. A big shame of the fire, to my thinking, was the amount of old records and photos that we lost, information that could have been used today.

Son, Richard John, joined the family business as an apprentice upholsterer, but moved on after two years. Things settled down with general furniture repairs and made to order furniture taking over, with upholstery still a good part of the work load. The upholsterers were brought back from Richs Lane and went into the polishing shop area and the polishing shop moved to an extension out to the rear.

Tom started buying and selling antiques in a bigger way in the showroom. Antiques always played a part in the renovations side of the business in the early days and now increased in volume at a steady rate over the years. Skilled tradesmen were required to handle this work and T R Summerfield specialized in this.

Employee numbers had fallen to a regular 5 or 6 tradesmen over the three trades as the years passed and stayed at this number from then on. Charles became a partner in 1964 and his brother Don was employed in 1965. About this time a ten foot wide section of adjacent land the length of the block was bought from Mr John Roach, which then gave us a drive to the front and widened the Smollett Street frontage to fifty feet.

In 1966 Tom decided to return to England to visit his mother for the first time since leaving home in 1928. At Charlie's suggestion it was turned into a business trip and Tom bought a 40 foot container of antiques and shipped it back to Australia. This continued, with six trips in all, over the next three years until Tom's wife became too ill to cope on her own and Tom decided not to

travel.

At this time, the premises were extended over the last of the original block just leaving the drive up the side not built on. In 1969 we were approached by Mr Bill Goode and offered the property of the Old Curiosity Shop, 317B Urana Road, Lavington, and we bought it and ran it as a second-hand shop as an adjunct to the antiques business in Smollett Street. An uncle, Reg Hart, managed the Old Curiosity Shop for about twelve months until Don took over.

Tom made the decision to retire in June 1980. Charles took over the business continuing on in the same tradition. Brother Don was still managing the Old Curiosity Shop and he took that over in his own right. Nephew Mark Mullen was employed as an apprentice cabinet maker in 1981. Daughter Susan joined in 1986 taking over the office and showroom. In 1989, son Peter became a cabinet maker, nephew Paul an upholsterer and Buster Upshall a polisher, these men being the last apprentices we employed.

In February of 1996 T R Summerfield & Co celebrated its 50th year of business, with Tom passing away the following month. In 2004 Charles decided to retire, close the business and sell the premises. Paul Summerfield, his nephew, took over the upholstery side of the business and is still operating in North Albury today. The site is now part of a three storey apartment and office building called Florin House.

ARCHAEOLOGY AT THE ART GALLERY SITE

As reported in the last Bulletin, No 544, a brick arch was uncovered in the remains of the footing wall of the Mechanics' Institute. Archaeologist Sarah Myers inspected the site but was unable to give a definitive explanation without a great deal more digging. This is not likely to happen in the foreseeable future consequently the arch is just one more puzzle in this intriguing part of early Albury.

NAILCAN HILL JOTTINGS ON A GOLDFIELD

Compiled by Ray Gear

Gold mining in the Nailcan Gully commenced in October 1863, after its discovery at the rear of Portion 62, West Albury, by James Kelly Jr. Within weeks some twenty claims were registered, employing between forty and fifty persons. The average yield per ton was reported as 16.5 pennyweight (dwt) and, earnings per day per man using a tub and cradle at the head of the gully was said to be between twenty and twenty five shillings.

In late 1864 Kay and Denny from the Scotchman's Reef forwarded to the Magenta Crushing Mill at Chiltern three lots of stone, which returned 1.5 troy ounces (30 dwt) to the ton, attract-

ing fresh interest in the Nailcan. Nine months later in July 1865 it was announced that a crushing mill would be established at Black Springs, about midway between the Nailcan Gully and the Black Range Goldfield, first discovered in 1851. This mill, christened the "Lavington Crushing Mill" was opened on the 27 November 1865 by the Mayoress Mrs Mary Ann Blackmore in front of three hundred people.

Despite earlier promising crushings, quartz from Nailcan reefs disappointed. In February 1866 the Albion Reef for example returned poor results of 3.5 dwts to the ton. At the same time drought was being experienced which saw mining in the Albury District decline. Because of a lack of crushing available and poor returns, the Lavington Crushing Mill was removed to Emu Creek, in October 1867.

In mid 1879 the Nailcan Reefs were generating new interest and a meeting was called to form a prospecting company. At the July meeting rather than form a company, the meeting accepted an offer from Joseph Reeve of Yackandandah, to erect a quartz mill. This mill was opened on the 8 December 1879 on the margins of Sergeant's Lagoon, 2¼ miles west of Albury and christened, 'The Young Prince Crushing Mill' (later known as 'Reeve's Mill'). The plant for the mill consisted of five stampers, an eight horse power engine and pump. Six months later it was reported in the *Border Post* newspaper as, 'giving the Nailcan Reefs a new impetus'.

Working old ground in early 1880, John Johnson & party when cleaning out an old shaft, struck a reef which yielded 1.36 ounces to the ton. This find encouraged the formation of the Albury Goldmining Company, Old Nailcan Reef, Albury, which aimed 'to develop and work in a systematic manner the well known, Old Nail Can Reef'. Other claims being worked in 1880 in addition to Johnson & party included, Messrs Booker, Lawson and Co, and the Albury Tribute Quartzmining Company who,

tributed a lease of five acres belonging to Joseph Reeve.

Other miners active in 1880 included William Armstrong, Samuel Brown, Henry Cavalier, John Johnson, Joseph Reeve, Michael Scanlan, William Shepherd, Matthew Smith.

Share in Quartz Claim for Sale.
THE undersigned being about to enter into a mining speculation, is open to sell his half share in the Prospecting Quartz Claim on the Scotchman's Reef, Nailcan Gully, near Albury. The last fifty tons raised yielded about 1½ oz to the ton, and the stone is raised with great ease.
 Apply to
JOHN KAY,
 Scotchman's Reef, near Albury.
 Albury, 5th Nov, 1864
 63 839

Advertisements in May - June 1880 invited applications for shares in Albury Gold Mining Company (Limited) Old Nailcan Reef, Albury. Nominal capital was twelve thousand pounds made up of 24,000 shares of ten shillings each. The closing of the share list was set for the 28 August 1880. Directors

appointed were, David J Abercrombie, Albert Aeschmann, George H Billson, John Cronin and John Johnson. Conrad Ten Brink was appointed manager. A month later, these directors appointed John Trudgeon from Hurdle Flat, Beechworth, as mining manager. On 22 September 1880 the *Border Post* carried an advertisement notifying of the application to register the company. There were 88 shareholders listed in the application, 38 of them having their residence at Albury.

Annual reports of the Department of Mines (ARDM) quoted the company obtaining 18 dwts to the ton in 1880 while in 1881, their average yield was 11 dwt. In 1881 in addition to the Albury Gold Mining Company, other claims worked included the Cherrytree claim and the Albion Companies claim.

The Cherrytree claim worked by, Charles F Duchatel, Keran Slattery, Stephen Ryan and Joseph L Dale, was at a depth of ninety feet and yielded in October, an ounce and a half to the ton. At the Albion Companies claim

Tenders.
TENDERS are called for SINKING the Advance Australia Gold-mining Company's SHAFT, at Nailcan-hill, 20 feet. For further particulars apply to JOHN G. LAYTON, Advance Australia Hotel, or on the shaft.

that adjoined the Albury Gold Mining Company, their shaft was down to a depth of 130 feet however, no payable yields had been struck.

The Albury Gold Mining Company reported, in

October 1881, that they purchased the plant belonging to Joseph Reeve for one hundred and thirty five pounds. The following year, the plant which had become inadequate for requirements, was advertised for sale. In the same year, shareholders decided that a remodelling of the company was needed. In late September 1882 it was reported in the *Albury Banner* that the company had been wound up. Either a new company (the New Nailcan Company) was formed or its claims were leased to others.

In August 1887 the discovery of a new reef by Messrs Sheehan and Strangman saw a rush to register claims around and near the prospectors' claim. These claims included: 'The Jubilee', 'The Oddfellows' (Messrs J French, E Cass, F Simmons, Alfred Catt), 'The Foresters' (Messrs J Frauenfelder, S Frauenfelder, E Voss, S Schubach), 'Four men's ground' (A G McWilliams) and, a five acre lease north of 'The Oddfellows' worked by Messrs R Driscoll and Co. Later claims included the 'Advance Australia' (Messrs W Driscoll, Layton, Clarke, McGovern and Walker).

While Thomas A Browne in his Mining Warden's Report for 1890 reported that mining in the district was going backwards there was some life in the early 1890s at the Nailcan. Working, were Messrs Crawshaw & Miles who occupied the area previously known as the Cherrytree lease, Watkin & party and, Layton and party. By the mid 1890s however, little mining was being done at the Nailcan Reefs.

References: *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express, Border Post and Wodonga Advertiser.*

THE BRITISH LANDING AT GALLIPOLI PENINSULA.

CONTINUED FROM *BULLETIN 544*

The spirit of the troops was splendid, and as they passed by, crammed on to a small destroyer or being towed by the trawlers, greetings and cheers were passed between them and our own men. Then someone sings out "Are we down-hearted?" but before he has really time to finish, there is a whole chorus of hearty "No." The next moment, as if to emphasise the answer, there is a huge flash from one of the battleships, a volume of smoke, a report that shakes the whole ship, followed immediately by a noise like an express train in the distance. As the eye searches the shore up shoots a great column of earth and rocks, and who knows, perhaps, arms and legs. The Turks that escape that messenger of death are seen to run as if possessed by a thousand devils.

We are unable to land our horses yet awhile, so we watch, and as we do so, we notice two small boats of troops, rather apart from the others, just approaching a small patch of sandy beach. Nothing happens until they are just about to step ashore - Pom, pom, pom, pom; a quick-firer opens up almost on top of our brave lads, and down they go like nine pins; some collapse in the boat, some manage to struggle a few yards along the sand, but owing to having drifted away from

the main body, nothing can be done, except - and here our Navy steps in, and with a well directed shot, we have the satisfaction of seeing a whole heap of something go skywards, and we heard no more from that quick-firer.

Within a few hours of landing there was a number of small wireless pack stations erected, and they did splendid work with our battleships, directing the fire, giving information regarding the wounded, etc., so that, although our men were fighting for very life, and on enemy territory, there was at least one connecting link with comrades and reinforcements; and I feel sure it must have been a source of comfort being able to converse so easily with headquarters.

As night came on our Navy ceased fire, and brought their search lights into play; but the horrible rattle of musketry, and, more horrible still, the prolonged pom, pom, pom, of quick-firers, continued nearly all night.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT *BULLETIN*

NOTICES

A&DHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 11 June 2014 at Commercial Club starting at 7.30 p.m.

Nominations for committee to Secretary by 20 May.

'THE SPIRIT OF THE DIGGER'

SHRINE OF REMEMBRANCE LECTURE

'The Spirit of the Digger' is the title of a lecture to be given at Wodonga Senior Citizens' Centre Havelock Street on Tuesday 20 May by Patrick Lindsay one of Australia's leading non-fiction authors.

The function begins at 5.30 p.m. with refreshments; lecture commencing at 6.00. Cost Free but gold coin donation welcome.

Bookings are essential at <www.shrine.org.au/wodonga> or telephone Shrine reception on 03 9661 8100.

ROBBINS AND PORTER

See the new interpretive panels located on the mezzanine balcony at the LibraryMuseum, also the new brochure listing the community sponsors and contributors to the project.

ALBURY CBD HISTORIC BUILDING WALKING TOUR

If you have friends visiting Albury, this might be the ideal way for them to experience Albury's beautiful CBD in the context of our rich, pioneering history. Included on the tour are stops at the Albury Railway Station, Botanic Gardens, Beehive Buildings and the former Waterstreet's Hotel.

The tour has been available as a free app for smart phones, now a brochure is also available.

Silver bollards mark the stopping points along the tour, and a brief description of each individual landmark is provided.

The brochure, including a CBD map and landmark descriptions, is available from the Albury Visitor Information Centre.

**REMEMBER
MAY MEETING LIBRARYMUSEUM**