



# ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN



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OCTOBER 2014

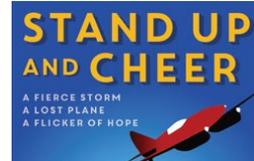
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## REPORT ON SEPTEMBER MEETING (10.09.2014)

Our September gathering was ably conducted by our Vice President, Joe Wooding who began the Meeting by requesting that members pay up their subs and carefully read the new Constitution when they receive it. Joe then passed on a request for information on the location of the oldest living planted tree in existence in Albury. Our first speaker was Howard Jones who entertained us with the story of Benjamin Pelin who began his life as an Irish agitator and then after emigrating to Australia became one of Albury's many colourful characters. Pelin was one of the founders of the Knights of the Plough group in Ireland who influenced the beginning of the Trade Union movement. He was an eloquent speaker and a forward thinker who supported the idea of the aged pension, electricity and sewerage for all, many years before they were introduced. Joe extended congratulations to Roma Freeman, one of our members who was recently awarded Life Membership of the CWA. The significance of the stories of Bonegilla were then woven through the history of Wodonga by Dr Bruce Pennay who believes that Bonegilla strongly deserves its place on the National Heritage List. Over half of the misplaced persons from WW2 came through the migrant camp. Poignantly Bruce said the most repeated memory from residents was "I remember Mother crying". The heaviest burden fell on the women. They were daughters who had left their families and homes and mothers who faced their children and grandchildren growing away from them in lifestyle and language. Joe closed the meeting after reading from an article written in 1865 which told of grave concerns about the indiscriminate use of firearms in Albury by the police. Suspicious characters were given three chances to stop, then the police fired at will. The description of events sounded more like the Wild West than a sleepy town on the banks of the Murray River.

## NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY 8 OCT, 2014

7.30pm at Commercial  
Club Albury  
**Speakers:**  
Doug Royal  
The 80th Anniversary of  
the Uiver Landing  
Joe Wooding  
Another Forced Landing in  
Albury - 10 Days Before  
the Uiver



**CHILDRENS BOOK LAUNCH**  
OCT 23RD 5.30PM  
ALBURY LIBRARYMUSEUM

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## ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

PO Box 822 ALBURY 2640

<[www.alburyhistory.org.au](http://www.alburyhistory.org.au)>

**Patron:** Patricia Gould OAM

**Honorary Life Members:**

Howard Jones, Helen Livsey,  
June Shanahan, Jan Hunter.

**Public Officer:** Helen Livsey

**President:** Michael Browne 0428691220

**Vice-Presidents:** Joe Wooding, June  
Shanahan

**Secretary:** Helen Livsey 02 6021 3671

**Treasurer:** Catherine Browne

**Minute Secretary:** Catherine Browne

**Publicity Officer:** Jill Wooding

**Committee:** Peter Whitbourn,  
Jill Wooding, Ray Gear, Marion Taylor,  
Greg Ryan and Ron Haberfield.

**Bulletin Editor:** Marion Taylor  
<[marion.taylor7@bigpond.com](mailto:marion.taylor7@bigpond.com)

**Journals, Stock:** June Shanahan

**Meeting Greeter:** Jill Wooding

**Bulletin dispatch:** Ron Haberfield

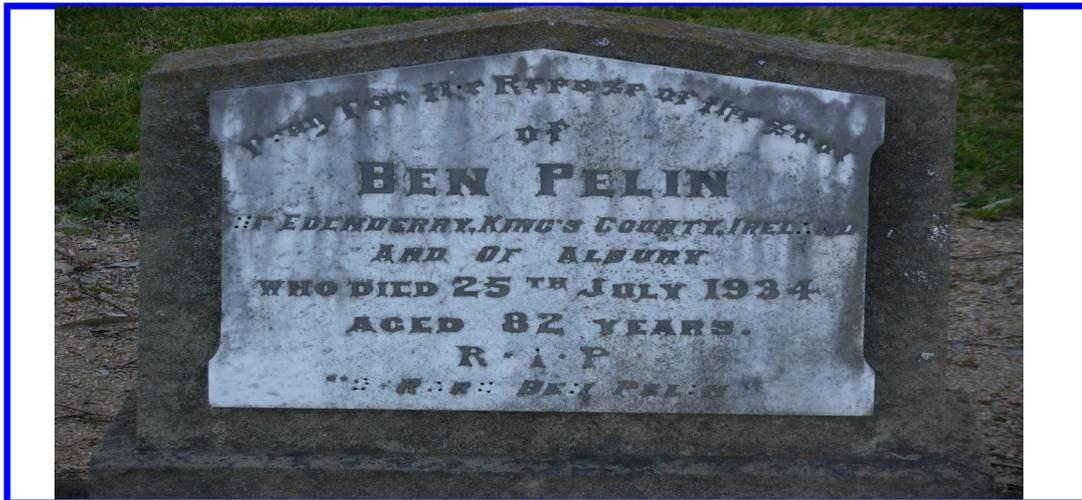
**Meetings:** 2nd Wednesday of the  
month 7.30pm usually at Commercial  
Club Albury.

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

## ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Single: \$25  
Family: \$33  
Corporate: \$50

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



**BENJAMIN PELIN IRISH AGITATOR & ALBURY IDENTITY**  
**by Howard Jones**

Ben Pelin was famous in Albury for standing in the council election in 1925 when Cleaver Bunton was first elected as a young man of 22. Cleaver got 306 votes of the 849 cast. Pelin got two. Cliff Chamberlain used to write about Ben Pelin as the warm-hearted battler's friend. Pelin kept a boarding house in Smollett Street known as the Bushman's Home, or the Wanderer's Club. But the greatest publicity he received across Australia was in 1932, after he had visited the Soviet Union in his 80th year. He paid his own way to go as an unofficial member of an Australian Workers Union delegation, as guests of the Russians. Several hundred unionists went from around the world.

Ben Pelin and other delegates returned with glowing reports of communism at work. After they returned home, there was widespread famine in the Soviet Union. It killed millions in 1932-33, notably in Ukraine. Benjamin Pelin was much more than being an Albury socialist and battler's friend. He figures in the history of Ireland in the 1890s. Pelin was born about 1852 in Edenderry, west of Dublin. He worked on farms in Country Kildare until he was past 40. Irish politics in the 1890s was partly about Home Rule, but the burning issue was land for farming- or lack of it. In June 1892, Pelin called a meeting in Narraghmore of landless labourers and tenant farmers to protest against the landlords who refused to release good land for the ploughing of crops. Pelin was a landless labourer himself but worked for other family members on small farms. He was widely read and became an eloquent public speaker. The meeting at Narraghmore formed a radical organisation called the Knights of the Plough, with Pelin as president. It had several aims, including payment of MPs, a single tax and a state pension of 20 pounds a year for everyone over 65. Apart from advocating a strike at harvest time, the Knights weren't militant and didn't have much time to protest. Labourers worked six days a week, from 6am to 6 or 7pm, including Saturday. The Knights demanded they be allowed to finish at 5pm on Saturday. A friendly priest agreed to ring the church bell at 5pm to alert them. The Knights of the Plough was shortlived, but lit a spark that led to the Irish Land and Labour Association. Over the next 30 years such groups became part of the Irish trade unions. Pelin, who never married, decided to emigrate to Australia in 1894, possibly after his father and uncle died and he didn't inherit a farm. He also had a brother in Orange. He landed in Sydney but went on to New Zealand briefly before returning in July 1895. He was heading for Melbourne when he stopped in Albury, got a job as a casual at the railway station and stayed here for nearly 40 years. By 1903 he had set up a boarding house for working men, then bought land in Smollett Street and opened the Wanderers Club or the Bushmans Home, for men down on their luck, from all walks of life. Once he was prosecuted for selling tobacco after his licence had expired. He refused to pay the fine on principle, and went to jail for 24 hours before his priest, Father Mulligan, paid the fine.

Pelin was secretary of the Albury Labor League in 1904 when the Commonwealth got its first Labor Government. Pelin wrote to the Prime Minister, Chris Watson and asked him to help Harry Davies' election for the Albury state electorate. Watson wrote back to say he was a bit busy, but would see if another minister could come! Pelin wasn't satisfied unions were helping the farm

**Continued:**

### **BENJAMIN PELIN IRISH AGITATOR & ALBURY IDENTITY**

labourers, so in 1907 he set up The Farmers and Bushworkers Union with branches in Corowa, Holbrook and Albury. His ploy was to get the Australian Workers Union to do more for the men in the bush. When Pelin stood for Albury Town Council in 1907, he was ridiculed for revolutionary proposals such as proposing a municipal electricity scheme and sewerage for Albury. He lived to see both installed. He also advocated an abattoir that was approved in 1937. Again he was ahead of his time. In World War I, Pelin became secretary of the Anti-Conscription League in Albury in 1916. This put him at odds with Labor people such as Harry Davies, who ordered a policeman to arrest him at one meeting. However, Pelin's campaigns were successful, as in the two referendums, Albury people voted against conscription. Monitored by police, Pelin in 1917 was convicted of making statements prejudicial to recruiting and was effectively silenced. Pelin was a delegate to NSW Labor Party conferences in 1917 and 1918. He supported Tom Barker, an anti-war socialist jailed in Albury in 1918 and who later worked in Russia.

In 1932, Pelin made that trip to the Soviet Union with AWU delegates, paying his own way. On his return, he said everyone seemed happy and prosperous in Russia. The women worked in all industries, swept the streets, drove trams and got equal pay.

He had queued up in Red Square to view Lenin's body and visited St Basil's Cathedral, no longer used for religion. Being an Irish Catholic, he was disappointed the Soviet Union was officially atheist. It was, he said, its one black spot.

Pelin died in 1934 and was buried in the Catholic Section of the Albury Cemetery.

### **CELEBRATING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UIVER**

**BULLETIN**  
25 OKTOBER 1934  
Het K.L.M.-Vliegtuig  
de Uiver  
zal 8 uur starten  
van ALBURY  
NAAR MELBOURNE  
AFSTAND = 250 KIEM

**25 October 2014**  
**Albury Airport Open Day**  
The Uiver 80th Anniversary, Albury  
25 October 2014, 10 am - 2 pm  
Static Aircraft &  
Historic Automobile Displays  
Joyflights available  
Food & drinks available  
Childrens activities  
Entry: Gold Coin Donation

The Uiver celebrations will proceed as follows, on Saturday 25th October:

- 8:00am until 9:40am. Dutch Street organ in Queen Elizabeth II Square, Dean Street.
  - 9:30am. Parade of pre-1946 cars along Dean Street by the Antique Car Club Albury-Wodonga.
  - 10:00am to 2:00pm. Albury Airport. Memorial KLM Douglas DC-2 Uiver on display, together with historic warbirds and civilian aircraft by the Albury & District Aero Club - and the vintage motor cars.
- 6:00pm 'High Flying Heroes' at the SS & A Club.

## **"HIGH FLYING HEROES"**

Première sponsor: KLM Royal Dutch Airlines

When: 6:00pm - 9:00pm, Sat 25 October 2014

Where: First floor, SS & A Club 570 Olive Street, Albury.

What: Canapés and drinks at the Bar until 6:40pm when Captain Richard de Crespigny, pilot of Qantas QF32 A380 Airbus will present the story of his aircraft being crippled soon after takeoff from Changi Airport, Singapore with uncontained engine failure.

- Ambassador for the Kingdom of the Netherlands, HE Mrs Annemieke Ruigrok
- Air France KLM General Pacific Manager, Mr Simon Spinks
- Auction of KLM return ticket to Amsterdam
- Original footage of MacRobertson International Air Race
- Murray Conservatorium Band playing 'Albury', composed in Holland in 1935 for the visit of Albury Mayor, Alfred Waugh.

You are invited to book for this very special event to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the night time emergency landing of the KLM Douglas DC-2 Uiver on the Albury Racecourse on 24 October 1934 and the launch of the appeal to restore Albury's own Douglas DC-2 Uiver memorial. To book, please go to:

<http://www.trybooking.com/FRLI>

Tickets \$50. All proceeds go towards restoration of memorial Uiver by the Uiver Memorial Community Trust.

Alternatively, tickets can be purchased at Camera House, 494 Dean Street, Albury.

For more information about the restoration project, you may like to visit the website at: <http://www.uivermemorial.org.au>

### For the enthusiasts:

ABC Goulburn-Murray

1. Uiver Radio Play Friday 17 October 2014 between 9 and 10am.

This is a repeat of the play that was put on for the 75th anniversary.

2. 'The Uiver Emergency' on Friday 24 October 2014, also between 9 and 10am.

This is a brand new and extraordinary documentary, that includes a number of sound grabs from 1934 recordings.

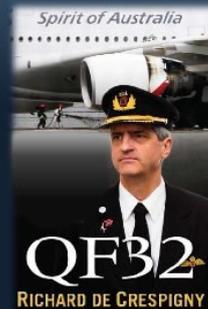
# High Flying Heroes



## Celebrate the 80th Uiver Anniversary

experience a unique evening with

### Captain Richard de Crespigny



The heroic pilot of QANTAS flight QF32 presents the dramatic story of the rescue of the stricken Airbus A380

**Saturday 25th October 2014**

**SS&A Club Albury**

**6pm - 9pm**

complimentary canapés provided until 6.30pm  
drinks available at bar

**Tickets \$50**

[www.trybooking.com/FRLI](http://www.trybooking.com/FRLI)

All proceeds go to the  
Uiver Memorial DC-2 Restoration Fund  
for more details contact 0422 012 580  
[www.uivermemorial.org.au](http://www.uivermemorial.org.au)

PRESENTED BY THE UIVER MEMORIAL COMMUNITY TRUST

We are looking forward to a great night, and are confident that you will enjoy it too!

## **DON'T MISS THESE EVENTS**

A life size bronze statue of Albury's VC winner Albert Borella will be unveiled at 5pm on November 6th. The Memorial, to be unveiled by Captain Borella's son, Rowan Borella will consist of the life sized statue, the Australian flag and a bronze blade and bayonet of a Lee Enfield 303 rifle engraved with 100 names of Australian VC recipients. Brad Chalmers is writing a biography on Captain Borella. He can be contacted on 03 58825932.

Members of the A&DHS are welcome to attend The Friends' Christmas Party in the Botanic Gardens Sunday Nov 9, 12.30pm.

Light luncheon compliments of the Friends followed by an opportunity to participate (in) drawing, painting or photography en plein air or enjoy a historic tour of the gardens by the Albury and District Historical Society.

Bring along your own chair and art supplies if you wish to participate.

Please register your EOI for catering purposes to [admin@friendsalburyartgallery.org](mailto:admin@friendsalburyartgallery.org) or PO Box 538, Albury by Nov 5.



As time went by, many other local people seem to have moved from an initial indifference and patient civility to a growing curiosity about ‘these people’ from a place called Europe. There were increased opportunities for engaging with the newly arrived strangers as many secured local jobs and became local service providers, fellow employees and even neighbours. Schools, hospitals and churches became places where the longer settled and their children met and mingled with the New Australians. They both learned to trust each other and to collaborate, perhaps most noticeably on the sporting field, on the school playground and in the neighbourhood. Citizenship ceremonies were used to emphasise bridges between the new and the older settled. Even more intimate bridges were made through personal friendships, courtships and even marriages. Indeed, bed, it was said, was the best place to effect assimilation. But the strangers did not have to become naturalised citizens, close friends or bed partners to win closer attention and acceptance. Long-term mingling of respected and respecting neighbours meant that the early civility and curiosity gave way to both sets of strangers simply living together – cohabiting without rancour. And that is the point made in both the SBS films. The second phase of local engagement in memorialising Bonegilla eventuated as it closed. Locals, working with former migrants, nurtured, indeed, inspired, managed and created Bonegilla as a memorial place, a heritage asset. Journalists at the Border Morning Mail, most particularly Tony Wright, Howard Jones and Maria Galinovic explained that something important to Albury-Wodonga and to the nation happened at Bonegilla. Theo Charles-Jones, a community development officer at the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation, and Bill Day, the director of the local office of the Department of Immigration, were among the first to prompt and support the Ethnic Communities Council in its efforts to try to get the place memorialised. Louis Maroya and Julius Visser, both immigrants who lived and worked locally, were to the front in trying to organise a Bonegilla Museum. Bill Day and the Ethnic Communities Council organised a highly successful reunion in 1987 and a nomination to the Register of the National Estate that ensured that the Block 19 remnant of the camp was saved from abolition.



Bonegilla Woman.  
Photo Courtesy Brian Yap

Vicki Northey at Albury Regional Museum secured a collection of objects and photographs the migrants had collected. In 1993 Elizabeth Close launched a plan to expand and exhibit the Bonegilla Collection. She organised a week-long memory and memorabilia collection festival in 1997. The success of the 1997 festival prompted several bodies to mount a smaller festival in 1999. They included both the Albury and Wodonga councils and the Development Corporation, through its Investment Albury-Wodonga off-shoot and the Regional Arts Board it had helped establish. Helen Pithie at the museum arranged a travelling exhibition, ‘From the Steps of Bonegilla’, which attracted wide interest as well as supplementary materials in both Canberra and Melbourne.

Wodonga Council was reluctant to take up ownership of the site when the Army proposed to transfer it to the state. The implementation of a master plan and interpretation strategy was energised by local volunteers, including Narelle Vogel. It focussed on the migrant experience. After a family visit to the site and consultation with local enthusiasts in 1997, John Pandazopolous, a leading Victorian politician, promised a \$2 million commemorative centre and tourism venue at the site if the Labor Party won office. The Labor Party was successful in 1999, and Pandazopolous delivered on his promise in 2005. Block 19 Bonegilla was readied for visitors and another festival was organised with input again from the Regional Arts Board led by Chris Pidd. With the shift of the museum to its new Kiewa Street site in 2007, Bridget Guthrie organised a semi-permanent exhibition and digitised much of the ever-expanding Bonegilla Collection. She helped publicise the place with interviews she conducted for the NSW Migration Heritage Centre web-site. Local volunteers, working under the aegis of Parklands Albury-Wodonga, continued to seek funding support. A successful local nomination of the place to be listed on the National Heritage List prompted Wodonga council to take greater interest. It was not until 2009 when local volunteer, John de Kruiff, a former migrant, took up attendant

responsibilities that visitors had ready and easy access.

Wodonga City Council took a new interest when it was headed by Mark Byatt. It took over custodian duties from Parklands Albury-Wodonga in 2012 and has proceeded to develop a second master plan and interpretation strategy 'to enrich the visitor experience in an authentic manner [and] to achieve a high level of self-sustainability with significant positive benefits to the Albury-Wodonga region'. Wodonga Council's new embrace of Bonegilla contrasts with its early reluctance to take over the millstone of caring for an abandoned former migrant centre and army camp. That shift in thinking points to the way Bonegilla is, and has been, important to local place-making. Reference was made to Bonegilla and the consequent large migrant workforce in winning the accolade of Wodonga as 'Victoria's Top Industrial Town' in the 1960s. It was a consideration that had state planners name Wodonga-Albury as one of five key decentralisation projects in 1967. Much effort was taken to memorialise Bonegilla by officers of the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation and its off-shoots during the Growth Centre experiment which began in 1973.

With the demise of the growth centre scheme, the two councils have pursued separate interests. Wodonga has been keen to re-make itself as something more than an Albury adjunct. The Rural City of Wodonga has become the City of Wodonga, a front-ranking Victorian regional centre in its own right. With the removal of the main-street railway, Wodonga is developing a new city heart. Today Wodonga is still very much a work-in-progress and Bonegilla is part of that work. The Bonegilla story helps distinguish Wodonga from other country centres. It is not only a tourism asset that brings money and prestige, but it also suggests something of the character of the place. The local story does not displace the national story or the migrant story. It supplements them. The local story unlocks nuances in the publicity strategies used to keep the Australian electorate favourably disposed towards large scale non-British immigration. The local story brings personal agency to the front and provides the names and faces of individual movers and shakers. Like the migrant story it indicates a respect for the resilience and fortitude of those who came with little more than courage in their cases. It shoulders responsibility for the local cuddle being little more than offers of a limited hospitality. The local story encourages the kind of local ownership which will ensure ratepayers are happy to keep paying the water and electricity bills and the fees for reducing the incursions of white ants, birds and rabbits.

Further, the unravelling of Bonegilla stories at the site in Wodonga and the museum in Albury illustrates the defiant togetherness of a cross-border community. In spite of the two local governments insisting that each should pursue separate economic development interests after they were unbuckled from the growth centre experiment, there remains, as there always was, one labour market in Albury-Wodonga. The cooperation between the site and the museum in telling Bonegilla stories helps confirm cross-border community togetherness. Indeed, it might be better to call the prequel 'Once upon a time in Albury-Wodonga', as long as we do not lose sight of the involvement of heritage in place-making.



A book on the Burrows family of Pioneering Flour Millers will be launched on Nov 9. It covers the expansion of John Burrows' milling business to 4 flour mills and 3 grain stores, and his son Percy, company manager and Albury Mayor. A diverse array of other subjects include Albury Rotary & Technical School, shipping diaries, and WWI trench warfare. The book of 411 pages has over 350 photos and sells at \$49.50 plus postage. Further details can be obtained from [secretary@alburyhistory.org.au](mailto:secretary@alburyhistory.org.au) or Helen Livsey. Phone 60213671

The original Albury Burrows Flour Mill located in Dean Street near Wodonga Place until demolished in 1910.

### **COMMITTEE BITS & BOBS**

The new Constitution has now been sent out to financial members and will be voted on at the November Meeting. Please advise someone from the Committee if you do not receive a copy. Work is continuing on revamping the Society's Website. The new Facebook page has continued to be popular and we will be promoting the site to local aged care homes and the Albury City page. This will make our Society visible to a broader audience.



### ADD ANOTHER FIVE

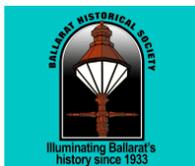
The film 'Add Another Five' was made for the Wodonga Shire Council in 1964 at the instigation of Wodonga Rotary Club, presided over by Colonel Henry Guinn (who was also the Director the Bonegilla Reception Centre), and by the Wodonga Ratepayers and Tenants Association, and its energetic secretary, Henry Voelker (a former Bonegilla resident). The film was to accompany Wodonga's entry in the Victorian Premier Town competition which would hopefully 'bring prestige, publicity, increased investment [and] greater civic pride'. The newly established AMV 4 television station filmed Jack Hore, the Shire President, showing a group of five migrants around Wodonga. Plainly Bonegilla was important to the local economy. Investors might be confident that Wodonga had a large workforce. The presence of so many migrants also suggested a cosmopolitan touch which distinguished Wodonga from other country towns. The film was, in effect, a last hurrah for Bonegilla. From 1965 on Bonegilla was on a track to close, though that did not eventuate until 1971. By 1964 Bonegilla was, as the film suggests no longer the stark ex-army collection of huts it had been in 1947. However, in 1965 Hubert Oppermann, the Minister for Immigration, announced that none of the new funding to improve migrant accommodation would be spent on Bonegilla; the long-serving director, Henry Guinn, retired; the army reoccupied some of the blocks. Perhaps it is not surprising that in 1965 an unnamed journalist in the Border Morning Mail suggested obliquely that there might be some memorial to commemorate the spirit of what seemed an important place.

By Dr Bruce Pennay.

### **DOES THE ALBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEED A NEW LOGO????**

Since the demise of the waterwheel there has been discussion within the Committee regarding the relevance of our logo. There seems to be some support for a change. We would like the members to consider this idea. If the logo is updated, do we want an old style logo as seen below in some examples or do we want a modern graphic design as favoured by Canberra and Ballarat? Please convey your thoughts to the Committee.

Canberra & District Historical Society



Bathurst District  
Historical Society Inc.



Find us on  
**Facebook**

**You can now find the Albury District Historical Society on Facebook!**

**Greg Ryan has been adding some excellent before and after photos of the city of Albury. We are aiming for 100 likes. Tell your friends. It is not necessary to sign up for Facebook to view the page. To have a look please go to <https://www.facebook.com/Albury.DHS>**