



ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN



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557

REPORT ON MAY MEETING (13.05.2015)

Attendance to the May meeting was boosted by the presence of some railway enthusiasts who joined with our members to enjoy the talk given by Rod Avery, author of Great Rail Journeys of Australia.

Our President Michael reported on the recent activities of the Society which have included a successful bus trip held in conjunction with Albury City Council visiting local World War One memorials. It was a great day with excellent well researched speakers provided by the Society. These were Greg Ryan, Ray Gear, Joe Wooding, Catherine Browne and Doug Hunter with valuable input from Chris McQuellin.

On Anzac Day a wreath was laid at the 10am service at the Albury and District War memorial on Monument Hill on behalf of the Society. The message read "The A&DHS honour the families of the area who gave so much that we may live free today."

The launch of "Albury at War" by Doug Hunter on 19 April was well attended and the publication well received. The book is based on what the families were doing on the home front and the various fund raising efforts. Funded by a grant from Albury City Council. Now available at the Albury LibraryMuseum for \$25.

Please go to Page 7 to read a very important message from the President regarding the rescheduling of the AGM and the voting on the new Constitution.

**NEXT MEETING
WEDNESDAY
10 JUNE, 2015
7.30pm at Commercial
Club Albury**

**Greg Aplin MP, Member
of the Legislative Assembly
for Albury and formerly
Manager for 13 years of
Prime Television, will
speak about the history of
our local television station.**

ALBURY LIBRARYMUSEUM

**FROM PARIS TO ALBURY
STUNNING GOWNS ARE
NOW DISPLAYED,
CELEBRATING REGIONAL
WOMEN AND HIGH
FASHION DURING THE
EARLY YEARS OF THE
1960s.**

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ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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<www.alburyhistory.org.au>

For your reference A&DHS account details are:

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June Shanahan, Jan Hunter.

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Meeting Greeter: Jill Wooding

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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



A2 class 4-6-0 type steam locomotive No.985. At the Albury Railway Station C1930
Photograph Courtesy Museum Victoria

My recent book “Great Rail Journeys of Australia” was a lot of fun to write. It is an account of sixteen contemporary rail journeys from the top end of the market down to the very budget end. It includes such trips as the India Pacific, the Ghan and tourist railways such as the Ida Bay railway in Tasmania which is Australia’s most Southerly operational railway. In writing the book I completed all of these journeys and I recently calculated that I travelled over 15,000 kilometres by rail. The trips included every Australian State and Territory except for the ACT. The reason I didn’t include the Sydney to Canberra Explorer was purely a lack of space in the book.

As I am talking tonight to the A&DHS I will be concentrating on the Sydney to Melbourne railway as Albury is integral to the history of that route. We need to step back and consider the history of the route and why that railway is there. A key theme I learned when researching my book was the importance of not judging the past by the present, but rather observing it and trying to understand the past in the context of the past. The Sydney-Melbourne Railway is a classic example of this with the break of gauge saga. Modern issues that are important today were often not so relevant in the past.

The Albury Railway Station is Australia’s break of gauge capital with its very long platform. It was once a busy bustling place staffed with hundreds of rail employees. Tired people from Victoria came in waiting to change to their NSW train and get into their sleeper. NSW travellers would arrive in the middle of the night and have to be woken by the conductors. Imagine stepping out onto that freezing cold platform in the middle of winter and then sitting up for the remainder of the trip down to Melbourne. Albury Railway Station today is often deserted but still alive with history and possibly a few ghosts.

It seems incredulous that even today in Australia we have three main rail gauges or rail widths. NSW is standard gauge except for a few branch lines up from Victoria. Victoria is the Broad Gauge State with increasing amounts of standard gauge now. Tasmania is narrow gauge. Queensland has a huge narrow gauge network. Western Australia is a mix of standard and narrow. South Australia has all three! How did this happen? How could the colonies not agree on a single railway gauge standard? History is not simple but complex. When the colonies were planning their railways in the mid 19th Century, the mother country, the UK already had a railway network and it already had its own break of gauge issues. The UK recommended that the colonies build their railway to the Stevenson standard gauge (4ft 8 and a half inches).

Victoria and South Australia accepted this advice. In Sydney, the Sydney Rail Company's first engineer was a gentleman by the name of Shields. He was an Irishman and Ireland had the broad gauge which measured 5ft 3 inches. Shields recommended the Irish broad gauge instead of the Stevenson standard gauge. Victoria and South Australia found out about this and decided to change to the Irish broad gauge. The three colonies were in agreement. Unfortunately Shields got into a dispute with his employer, he wasn't happy with his pay. He resigned and was replaced by a Scotsman called Wallace. Mr Wallace had a different opinion about gauge width and he recommended that the Standard gauge be used and this was accepted by the Sydney Rail Company. But by then the other States were too advanced in their planning to switch back. Victoria had already ordered their rolling stock from the UK. Queensland was later in developing its railways and chose a third option, the narrow gauge, based on the urgings of its chief Engineer, Abraham Fitzgibbon, who promoted the narrow gauge on grounds of economy and the States needs of developing its interior with a series of originally separate lines from its coastal ports. An election was fought and won over the decision to use Narrow Gauge, the argument being that you could construct twice as much line but trains had to travel more slowly than the standard or broad gauge lines.

The different gauges weren't really a problem until the various State rail lines began to meet at the borders. The concept of distance back then was very different to today so the question of what do we do when these railways meet was not uppermost in the minds of the Government authorities. Eventually when they did meet there were many different problems particularly during the war years when everything had to be unloaded and reloaded at Albury. After Federation the gauge problem started to be fixed and now we have reached the point where every capital city is connected by the standard gauge network. The first line to be fixed was the Sydney to Brisbane route in the 1930s.

In April 1962 the first train travelled from Sydney to Melbourne without passengers having to disembark and change trains in Albury. The standard gauge line had been extended from Wodonga to Melbourne. With this new development came the Southern Aurora, the new glamour train which had its own neon light on the back. It had a restaurant car and a lounge, it was special and an experience to ride on. The Spirit of Progress became the poor cousin, the all stopping train.



The Southern Aurora

These two trains lasted until 1986

when the glamour and the shine had gone, patronage was dropping and the two trains were merged into the Melbourne-Sydney Express trains. They were then replaced in November 1993 by the XPT which now goes through Albury twice a day. The old Southern Aurora carriages are scattered amongst railway historical societies and used for charter train specials.

The problems that our predecessors left us with have been partially fixed but we still have break of gauge issues. The V Line train to Melbourne is often cancelled. I think of that as a break of gauge issue because they only have a few N Class locomotives on standard gauge, all the rest are on broad gauge so if one breaks down there is no back up.

"Perhaps though we are a tad unfair in criticising those whose decisions caused the mess we still face today, for we judge the past by the present, with the benefit of hindsight, after those once-disparate colonies became one federation. In this huge country rail head travelled great distances to meet rail head, and we can now see the results of those decisions. We now see issues which perhaps weighed not so heavily on those pioneers' minds who had other priorities afoot. If only we could return to their time, get inside their minds and appreciate their contemplations; perhaps then we may just not be quite so harsh in our condemnation. Indeed gauge, or more precisely break of gauge, is a stand-out theme of Australian railway history. It is an issue that is, thankfully, now more often a mere historical curiosity, a curiosity we will experience in many of our journeys yet to come."

I think of the Melbourne to Sydney railway as having two distinct parts but not divided by the states, Victoria and NSW. There is a small town of Bethungra not far from Junee which I believe is the dividing line. From Bethungra to Melbourne the rail line is relatively straight so trains can run fast. The XPT between here and Junee does about 160km/hr and South from here about 120km/hr. At Bethungra there is a spiral, the North bound railway goes under the South bound railway and it does a complete circle, crosses over itself and then goes into the hills. From that point on the railway is very different. If you like photographing trains it is great because the trains are snaking and curving around the bends. The problem is that the speed drops dramatically because the curves are just too tight. The reason behind the tight bends is that the NSW Railways realigned many of its tracks in the late 19th and early 20th Century, a decision which was good for the time but bad for today. Gradients were eased but distance was increased. Trains back then were steam powered and with longer, heavier trains running they struggled to get up the hills, which is not a problem with today's modern diesel or electric trains. If you look carefully now you can still see the old alignment today which would be perfect for modern trains. The new freight trains are pulled by powerful locomotives and are 1500 metres long. The XPT could run at 160km/hr but it is restricted to 80km/hr because of the tight curves.

“Despite the fierce criticism the diehards level at the XPT, it is in many ways better than the trains it replaced. It has cut travel times, and filled the void. Without the XPT, there would perhaps be no Sydney-Melbourne passenger trains. While not riding on those famous trains of old, we get to experience, from our modern train, one of Australia's most historic rail journeys. The only negative to the journey is that the XPT is no longer the quite the dashing fast train it once was, with a human imposed speed limit, for now at least, of 120 kilometres per hour, when it could actually cruise comfortably at 160 kilometres per hour.”

The XPT does have sleepers but it lacks the prestige of the old Southern Aurora. However, I do think that the criticism of the XPT is unfair having done the trip.

There have been recent issues regarding the condition of the track in Victoria. Several years ago the track was in poor condition, the sleepers were a mix of timber and steel. Heat speed restrictions were in force due to the rails buckling on very hot days. The Australian rail Track Corporation re-sleepered the whole line with concrete sleepers in 2008. Unfortunately there were problems, partly due to the way the sleepers were replaced and the very wet weather. The cheapest option for sleeper replacement was used which was the side insertion method. The machine would push down the old wooden sleeper which created an indentation. It would then slide the old sleeper out and insert a new one, lift it and the workers would clip it into place. The problem was there was clay bedding under the ballast which was broken by the side insertion method. This affected the drainage and with the very wet weather caused the mud holes to develop. They then had to do a ballast rehabilitation program but unfortunately today there are still ongoing problems.



Photograph Courtesy: Museum Victoria

THE SPIRIT OF PROGRESS & THE SOUTHERN AURORA

The Spirit of Progress was the premier express train passenger service on the Victorian Railways, running from Melbourne to the New South Wales border at Albury, and later through to Sydney. From its introduction in 1937 until April 1962 the train service ran on broad gauge line from Melbourne's Spencer Street Station to Albury, on the New South Wales – Victorian border, where passengers changed to a NSW Government Railways train (the Melbourne Limited Express), running on standard gauge track to complete the journey to Sydney. This craziness of having to change trains at Albury had gone on since the railway networks were first laid out. One irate passenger, a certain Mark Twain, commented: "Just imagine the paralysis of the intellect that gave birth to that idea." The Spirit of Progress ushered in a standard of passenger train speed and comfort not previously seen in Australia. Its introduction in November 1937 marked the culmination of many years of preparatory work by Victorian Railways, from the laying of heavier rail on the North East line, introduction of Automatic Staff Exchange apparatus to allow continuous high speed running between track sections, introduction of high-powered three-cylinder Pacific locomotives, and the testing of air conditioning equipment on passenger rolling stock. Such was the commitment of VR Chief Commissioner Harold Clapp to introducing a world-class train service to Victorian Railways, virtually no detail was overlooked. When introduced, the train featured many innovations new to Australian railway practice, such as streamlining, full air-conditioning, and all-steel carriage construction. Its overall exterior and interior design reflected the latest Art Deco style, and interior fittings used materials such as stainless steel and native Australian blackwood veneers. The luxurious new train also featured a dining car with a modern galley kitchen modelled after the most up-to-date hospital kitchens of the period and, at the rear, a round-ended parlour car offering panoramic views of the Victorian countryside as it disappeared into the distance. On 12th April 1962, after the unification of the rail gauge between Melbourne and Sydney, a new super train called the Southern Aurora made the inaugural run between Australia's two largest cities. It was in a time when travelling between the twin cities was full of glamour and romance. A new railway track,



The Spirit of Progress 1937

built to the NSW rail gauge, was constructed on the Victorian side of the border at a cost of £10.7 million. Just one week after the last spikes were driven into place the new train service was launched. The express train was designed as first class throughout with sleeping accommodation for all, and it was promoted as 'the finest train trip in the world'. For perhaps the first and only time, Australian rail travel was as good as Europe or America. The comfort level was said to be the equivalent to that of a first class hotel, 1960s style. The gleaming, American-designed, Australian-built stainless steel cars, with distinctive fluting, had air conditioning and fibreglass insulation to dampen the sound of motion. Every night the Southern Aurora left Sydney at 8pm and passengers could dine a la carte in the dining room before retiring to the lounge bar for a drink, play cards, write letters or even engage in a sing-a-long. As passengers dined, the stewards entered their cabins and converted seating into comfortable beds. Those in twinette cabins had their own bathrooms and enjoyed a hot shower, not a bad feature for a train. Those in bed could be served a cup of tea and Arnott's biscuits. The gentle swaying and motion of the train lulled passengers to sleep. They could be awakened by the stewards, one for each car, bringing in a continental breakfast. The more active could make their way to the lounge car and have breakfast watching the Victorian countryside flash by. The Southern Aurora would arrive some 13 hours later at No. 1 platform at Melbourne's Spencer Street Station. [SYDNEY for everyone Website.](#)

DR E.A.C. FARRAN

COMPILED BY JAN HUNTER

Dr E.A.C. Farran was the first doctor in North Albury. He came in 1936, lived in North Street and rode a bike when doing his rounds, with his bag in a basket on the front. If the phone rang when he was out, the doctor's neighbour, Arthur Knoble, would pop through a gate in the side fence to answer it. From that humble beginning, Dr Farran made good and had F W Rittweg build him a substantial house in Young Street with clinic rooms attached. The following account of gracious living was in the Border Morning Mail 15 April 1947.



Dr and Mrs Farran's house, 'Elm Trees'. c. 2008

Au Revoir Party.

About 20 friends of Mrs E A C Farran assembled at the home of Mr Evans [455] Perry Street yesterday to say goodbye. Floral decorations of gladioli and dahlias were arranged by the hostess and a presentation of a floral china ornament was made by Mrs Latchford on behalf of those present, together with a shoulder spray made by Mrs Keith David. Mrs Farran, who was attired in a navy romaine suit, with finely pleated skirt, with a jacket featuring mock reverses of handmade lace, added a modish navy balibuntal hat massed in the front with mixed flowers, responded to the presentation and speech. She leaves this morning with Dr Farran for her new home in Melbourne. [Reverses are the turn back collars on jackets and balibuntal is a type of straw, very popular in millinery in the past.]

ARTHUR "BARNEY" ALLAN

"Many readers of the Bulletin will remember Mr Arthur Allan, a science teacher, then deputy headmaster of Albury High School, known as Barney. A story from 1950 will bring back many memories. "On the occasion of one of our school socials, Barney, then deputy to Mr Eddy, was the supervising teacher for the evening event. Now Barney, always unconventional, had problems on the night with the electricians in his Ford so he was late and we were all waiting in front of the school for his arrival to open up. It seems the car would go but the lights would not work, so we were all amazed when the trusty Ford came rattling into the school yard with a hurricane lantern swinging from each end of the front bumper bar as the only illumination. This is a true story. I was there!" John Gerdtz. Sydney. (Provided by Jan Hunter).

James Allan, (1860-1941) coachbuilder, was a prominent Albury citizen who served on the Council and was Mayor of Albury in 1912. James was preparing to join the utopian community in Patagonia in 1893 but before they sailed, word came that the community was not functioning well so Allan remained in Australia. James Allan married Sarah Field in 1885. The Field Family were early Albury pioneers. James and Sarah had five children including Josephine (Josie), and Irene (Rene) Allan who were long serving teachers at Albury Primary School (Girls). As young women they were involved in community affairs, including the singing group "The Boomerangs" during World War 1. The youngest and only son of the family, Arthur James ((1897-1982), became a teacher also, taught at Albury and in various NSW towns and returned to Albury High School in the fifties, becoming Deputy Head, and Headmaster. Arthur was a very early member of the A&DHS. Miss Ella Henry came to Albury in 1935 to teach Geography at Albury High School. She was a graduate of the University of Sydney. Ella was an active member of the Albury Methodist Church. She married fellow teacher, Arthur Allan, in 1941 and lived in other NSW towns where Arthur was teaching. When Arthur was transferred back to Albury, Ella continued her church involvement, being a leader in women's groups at St David's Uniting Church until old age took its toll. Ella was a founding member of Age Concern and School for Seniors and a very early member of the Albury branch of the Business and Professional Women. Ella and Arthur were very active in welcoming migrants from Bonegilla, helping them settle into Albury life, thereby making life long friendships.

Albury Library Museum Records

FAREWELL BRIDGET GUTHRIE



Bridget Guthrie: We will miss your smiling face.

Members will be sorry to hear that our well known and well liked member Bridget Guthrie has left Albury to take up a position with the Tamworth Regional Council as Director of the Tamworth Regional Gallery and Powerstation Museum. Bridget leaves the Albury LibraryMuseum with a highly regarded museum, a well trained professional staff and a corps of active volunteers. Bridget has fostered the relationship between the LibraryMuseum and the A&DHS to the benefit of both. We thank her for her work in the Society where she served on the committee for four years.

Following secondary school, Bridget completed a degree in Architecture at Deakin University and participated in an exchange program at Nottingham University UK. She worked as an architect for a short period before returning to Deakin University to complete a Graduate Diploma in Museum Studies. She then worked for three years for Walgett Shire

Council in far western NSW as the Youth & Cultural Development Officer and as Project Officer, Outback Arts Coonamble, where she curated a temporary exhibition: *More Than a One Horse Town: The History of the Mounted Police at Coonamble*.

Bridget joined AlburyCity in 2001, first as Youth Development Officer, later Cultural Services, Projects & Collections Coordinator and finally in 2011, Museum and Social History Coordinator.

Bridget developed the Museum's capability to mount short term exhibitions of local significance. To name a few: *Festival of Flowers* (Floral Festivals), *Open wide and Say Aaaah* (Albury Base Hospital), *Emporium* (Abikhair Collection), *Into the Action* (WWI Travelling Exhibition) and *The Trumpet Calls* (WWI Albury Battery).

We thank Bridget for her contribution to the conservation, interpretation and display of Albury's heritage and wish her every success in her new position.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT REGARDING THE AGM AND THE VOTE ON THE NEW CONSTITUTION

In the last issue of the Bulletin, May 2015 - #556, notice was given of the upcoming Annual General Meeting for Wednesday June 10th 2015.

Unfortunately the business of the AGM cannot proceed as the notice was in contravention of clauses 10 and 33 of our current constitution (1987). The AGM and the vote on the new constitution will be rescheduled for later dates and all members will receive notification of the new dates pursuant to these clauses. I regret any inconvenience this delay may have caused and assure members the Committee is committed to serving the Society to the highest standard.

Our general meeting will proceed as normal with Greg Aplin MP as guest speaker.

QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH

1. When did AMV 4 commence broadcasting?
2. What was included in the opening nights program?
3. What time did they cease transmission on opening night?



Answers provided at our next Monthly Meeting.

MYSTERY PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE ALBURY LIBRARYMUSEUM COLLECTION

Is this Morgan D'Arcy or Geoffrey Kiddle?
Your Historical Society volunteers at the Albury LibraryMuseum are often confronted with tricky questions. So many photos collected many years ago, but without any identification. This is one of them. The faint writing in the bottom right corner says 'Bourne & Shepherd India'. This photography firm is one of the oldest continuously operating firms in the world. The uniform worn by this man indicates he was a second lieutenant in the cavalry. Is this a photo of Morgan Rostron D'Arcy of Albury, who was a member of the Indian Army when WWI broke out? He spent five years with the 8th Bengal Cavalry before joining the Royal Flying Corps where he saw service in Mesopotamia. Captain D'Arcy was living in Bombay when his father died in 1920 but he is buried in the Albury Pioneer Cemetery. Morgan's father was the Customs Officer in Albury and his brother and sister both served in the war. Or could the photo be Geoffrey Kiddle? Kiddle was born in 1882 and his family lived at Walbundrie Station. When WWI broke out he was in India and went to France with the 4th Brigade Royal Field Artillery in the first Expeditionary Force. Kiddle was wounded three times, Mentioned In Dispatches several times then sent to Mesopotamia to join the force for the relief of Kut-el-Amara. He died of illness in the British General Hospital at Basra on July 29, 1916. After his death his father, a very early member of the Albury Club, donated Geoffrey's sword to the club. There it stayed until it was stolen about seven or eight years ago.



Photograph Courtesy: Albury LibraryMuseum

RESEARCHED BY JAN HUNTER.

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTHS QUESTIONS

Rail from Melbourne reached Wodonga in 1873.

Rail from Sydney reached Albury in 1881.

The Rail Bridge across the Murray joined the two Colonies' Railway Systems but they were different gauges. One was standard and the other broad gauge.

1) The story of rail gauges in Australia is very complex. There was no such thing as State Rail in the early days and any railways were privately owned and used around mines and forestry etc. It is believed the earliest railway was at Newcastle and dates from December 1831, being used for coal mining. In 1846, the British Government had advised the Colonies to adopt the British standard gauge of 4ft 8 ½ in. In 1850, Irish Railway Engineer of the Sydney Railway Company, Sir Francis H Shields convinced his directors to use the Irish broad gauge system of 5ft 3in.

It should be remembered, in 1850, that Sydney administered all of Eastern Australia with Queensland the District of Moreton and Victoria the District of Port Phillip until 1851. In 1853, Sydney Railway Company appointed a new Engineer, Mr James Wallace, a Scotsman, who persuaded the company to revert back to the original format, using British standard gauge. A standard gauge line Sydney to Parramatta opened in 1855.

In something of a sick Irish joke, Victoria, now running their own affairs, including railways, were not prepared to listen to 'big brother' in Sydney and chose to continue with the broad gauge system, hence the fiasco some 30 years later, which occurred in Albury when the railway systems of both Colonies finally met. A temporary wooden bridge was constructed to span the Murray, incorporating both standard and broad gauge lines, was first used in June 1883.

2) Victoria had the broad gauge.

3) The Southern Aurora travelled from Sydney to Melbourne on 13th April 1962. Freight trains had operated straight through from January 1962.

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<https://www.facebook.com/Albury.DHS>**

