

## WODONGA PLACE ALBURY

*An article by Helen Livsey and members of the Publications and Research sub-committee of A&DHS Inc, 1986.*

UNION BRIDGE OPENED BY THE HON R J HEFFRON, MLA, PREMIER OF NEW SOUTH WALES 7th APRIL, 1961 – These words appear on the plaque on the present bridge over the Murray River at Albury – the third in this vicinity. The first, opened a century before, was a three-span timber bridge divided by a centre truss to form two roadways “so that collisions are avoided.” That was replaced by another timber structure which was unofficially opened by the workers from the nearby brewery on the last day of 1898.

To the north of the bridge in the area of Oddie’s Creek Park, Chinese market gardens were cultivated. Oddie’s Creek is named after James and Elizabeth Oddie who kept the Turk’s Head Hotel from 1886 to 1890. In 1985 Oddie’s Creek Park became a shipyard when the Upper Murray Steamship Company built the new *Cumberoona*. The 25.7 metre paddlesteamer was named after one which was built at Echuca in 1866 for a syndicate of Albury residents. The original *Cumberoona* was 33 metres and operated from Echuca to Albury until 1873 when it was sold to an Adelaide firm. *Cumberoona* was the native name of an area upstream from Albury.

NOTE: In 2016, the *Cumberoona* was re-located to Lake Mulwala, Yarrawonga.

The Albury Regional Museum for some years occupied the former Turk’s Head Hotel building. The plaque over the mantelpiece told of the opening of the Museum on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1983 by the Premier of New South Wales, the Hon N K Wran. Prior to that, the Museum had shared the building with the Sydney Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Another plaque at the Museum commemorated the planting of “the first tree in the streets of Albury on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1875” by Samuel Mudge. The tree, an English elm, survived for more than a century in Olive Street, Albury. After it died, a piece of the wood was used by local identity, Jeff Lewry, to make a miniature timber wagon which is also at the Museum.

The former NSW Government Tourist Information Centre, built in the early colonial style, blends with the Turk’s Head building on the edge of the riverside parkland area.

The old waterwheel in Australia Park was “re-erected in memory of the Pioneer Miners of the District” and “presented to the City by the Albury and District Historical Society” on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1969. This example of an overshot waterwheel is 17 feet 1½ inches in diameter, and 28 inches wide at the rim; there are 60 buckets each of which holds 6½ gallons. The waterwheel was given to the Society by Mr David Beer of Tallandoon, Victoria. It had been used at a gold mine near the head of Stony Creek between Sandy Creek and Tallandoon, where it drove a stamp battery. In 1892, when the mine ceased operations, Harper brothers who had the contract to cart the machinery to the mine by bullock wagon about 1888, acquired the waterwheel in payment on cartage owed to them. The wheel was used on their farm until 1948 to drive a chaffcutter, a firewood saw-bench and later the dairy milking machines.

NOTE: the waterwheel was removed in 2014.

Noreuil Park has served the city as a camping and swimming area since the first settlers arrived. In 1919 it received the name of Noreuil to commemorate the gallantry at Noreuil, France, in April 1917 of the 13<sup>th</sup> Battery, Australian Field Artillery known locally as the Albury Battery.

The first permanent resident of Albury was Robert Brown who arrived in 1836. He established a store and market garden near the river and promoted many ideas and activities of benefit to the

community. In 1956 a plaque in commemoration of Robert Brown was placed on the kiosk then operating in the park.

On 17<sup>th</sup> November 1824, the day after the discovery of the Hume (now Murray) River, Hamilton Hume and William Hovell each cut inscriptions into trees. The Hovell Tree still stands on the river bank although the original engraving can no longer be seen. The tree was struck by lightning in 1912 and was “nursed back to health” by the curator of the Botanical Gardens, Mr JER Fellowes. The Hume Tree is believed to have been burned by a bullocky’s fire in the 1840s. A monument was erected in 1858 near the site.

In 1871 a wharf was built at the end of Hume Street, but within two years the river trade had declined in favour of rail freight. By 1896 the wharf had fallen into decay and was dismantled. As early as the 1840’s there was a racetrack to the north of the Hovell Tree. When the height of the river delayed travellers, race meetings were held to pass the time.

The grandstand at the Albury Sportsground was built in 1915 and officially opened by the Mayor, Ald Alfred Waugh. The scoreboard clock honours the services to football of A H Hill and F Roach. The drinking fountain beside the grandstand was donated in 1962 by Albury Radio Taxis. The entrance gateway at the corner of Wodonga Place and Smollett Street was built in 1928.

The Olympic Pool in Smollett Street was opened in 1929 to replace the former pool at the corner of Creek and Stanley Streets, now the Gertrude Colquhoun Park.

The bridge over Bungambrawatha Creek was built in 1887-1888 when Smollett Street was extended through the Botanical Reserve.

Just inside the small gateway to the Botanical Gardens at the corner of Wodonga Place and Smollett Street stands the Hume Monument, the erection of which was suggested by Captain Hovell in February 1857. Robert Brown called a meeting and subscriptions were given for the cost of the monument which he unveiled on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1858. Hamilton Hume and his wife were unable to attend the ceremony due to ill health.

Because of its original position on the river bank near the Hovell Tree the monument suffered many indignities – boat operators used it as a bollard (mooring post) and derelicts slept in the enclosure. Captain Hovell was so dedicated to preserving the Hovell Tree that he built a fence around the tree at his own expense in 1857. In 1879 E H Hargraves wrote to the Sydney “Daily Telegraph” drawing attention to the defaced monument and surrounding railing which was partly destroyed. He offered a donation towards restoration and saw that the repairs were made when he passed through Albury the following year. The monument was moved to the Botanical Gardens in 1884.

The band rotunda was used for the first time in November 1890. Prior to that, band recitals were given from hotel balconies. The rotunda was restored and dedicated to the memory of Robert Brown on the centenary of his death in 1979.

The main entrance to the gardens is through the Robert M Wilkinson memorial gates. It is fitting that the gates face the hospital, one of the many institutions to which Mr Wilkinson gave his support. He was a Dean Street retailer and Mayor of Albury from 1903 to 1905.

North of the band rotunda is a granite drinking fountain, unveiled in 1916 in memory of Charles Hilton Dight who died in 1913. He was an excellent judge of livestock, an all-round athlete and a

frequent donor to the Albury Hospital. Elizabeth Mitchell who was known as the “Mother of Albury” was his grandmother.

The “white lady” is a statue of the Greek Muse of Tragedy, Melpomene. She was one of the nine goddesses who traditionally gave inspiration to the arts and sciences of history, tragedy, sacred song, dancing, comedy, astronomy, and epic, lyric and erotic poetry. From “muse” we have the word museum. Melpomene was presented to the town of Albury in 1892 by Alderman Charles Schmiedt, who served on the Council from 1887 to 1892 when he resigned to tour overseas. He was a member of the Council again from 1898 to 1901.

In 1950 when T H Mate and Co celebrated a century of retail service to the people of Albury they presented to the city a sundial surrounded by seats. The stone seats have been replaced and part of the sundial is missing – the legacy of vandals who obviously could not comprehend the quote on the plaque: “It matters not how long we live, but how.”

The wishing well near the corner of Wodonga Place and Dean Street was erected by the Albury Rotary Club in 1955 in honour of Paul Harris, the founder of Rotary, who visited Albury in 1935.

The first tree was planted in the Gardens by the Mayor, Ald W J Jones, in 1877. It stands near the wishing well, forming part of the famous avenue renowned for its beauty and shade during the summer and autumn. The Albury Horticultural Society has donated brass name plaques to identify trees and shrubs. Many of the trees also bear commemorative plaques.

The gateway to Albury Base Hospital grounds was erected in 1943 in memory of C H Lester. He was born at Bungowannah and was a partner in the undertaking firm of Trappold and Lester in Albury. The first hospital on this site was officially opened in 1918 to replace the Albury District Hospital which had been built in 1861 in Thurgoona Street. It became a Base Hospital in 1953.

In 1934 the Albury District Ambulance applied for part of the Hospital grounds. An ambulance station was opened facing Dean Street in December of that year, and in 1937 the foundation stone of the Nurses’ Home was laid on adjoining land. The Nurses’ Recreation Hall was built at the corner of Dean Street and Wodonga Place in 1958. Blackie House was opened as a modern maternity unit in 1947 and ten years later the blood bank was opened by Dr J P Morris, Director of the Victorian Red Cross. One of the major donors to the Hospital in the 1930s was Sir Charles Kingsford Smith. The proceeds from his aviation displays so increased the hospital funds that, in appreciation, he was nominated a life member. His brother, who was an Albury resident, was a member of the board.

Half way up the hill leading to the Monument is the Memorial Bowl. It was constructed in 1954 in memory of those who served in World War II, and was used annually in March for the crowning of the Floral Festival Queen.

The Albury War Memorial, known simply as “The Monument” is a 30.5 metre (100 ft) high structure of reinforced concrete, which is flood lit at night. It was unveiled in a solemn and inspiring ceremony on the dark, clear night of April 25, 1925. As names were not inscribed on the memorial, Mrs F B S Falkiner of Haddon Rig Station donated a Book of Remembrance. This is displayed in a glass case in the foyer of the City Council building. Council staff regularly turn the pages of the 250 page volume so that two pages of names are always on view. The commanding position of the Monument makes it Albury’s most distinctive landmark. From this vantage point magnificent views of Albury, Wodonga and beyond may be seen by day or night.

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