



ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

Registered by Australia Post PP 225170/0019

FEBRUARY 2012

520

REPORT ON THE DECEMBER MEETING (14/12/11)

An exceptional attendance of 48 members and guests filled the Elizabeth Room at the Albury Commercial Club. The gathering was rewarded with a interesting and varied program which began with a report from Dr Tuija Turunen, a research fellow at CSU Albury Campus on a research project focusing on childhood transition to school. Dr Turunen was followed by Audrey Davidson who spoke about her grandfather James Selby Grinton who was Albury's first professional fireman.

Nine members then participated in a Show & Tell segment which ranged from penny farthing bicycles, new book publications, decimal currency and dolls to photos of football teams and lady lawn bowlers, joy-ride tickets with Smithy and *Uiver* memorabilia.

Dr Turunen has been interviewing local residents about their recollections of starting school. In the course of her research, she interviewed 87 people, the oldest began school in 1929 and the youngest, in 1995. The stories of transition from life within the familiar family environment to the public and structured activity at school, varied greatly according to the location and circumstance where it occurred. There were however some common themes.

Almost everyone remembered the fun of the playground and the development of friendships which extended beyond school. Few remembered much about the academic aspect of school. More than one interviewee said in rather surprised tones, "I must have learned something. I can read and write."

NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY

8 FEBRUARY 2012
7.30pm at Commercial
Club Albury

Speakers:

Richard Lee: "East Albury Cricket Club and cricketer, Tom Jones," and

Ray Gear: "Albury postcards"

VISIT TO HENTY

Sunday 11 March 2012
Combined excursion with
Wagga Wagga Historical
Society

See details page 6

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

James Selby Grinton	Page 2
Show & Tell snippets	Page 3
<i>Ancestors of a Wimbledon Champion</i> , June Shanahan	Page 6
Membership list	Page 6
Henty excursion details	Page 6

ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

PO Box 822 ALBURY 2640

Honorary Life Members

Howard Jones, Anne Davies,
Helen Livsey,

Public Officer: Helen Livsey

President: Christopher McQuellin
02 6021 3697

Vice-Presidents: Joe Wooding, June Shanahan

Secretary: Helen Livsey 02 6021 3671

Treasurer: Michael Browne

Minute Secretary: Catherine Browne

Committee: Jill Wooding, Doug Hunter, Ray Gear, Bridget Guthrie, Marion Taylor and Eric Cossor.

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

Journals, Stock & Meeting Greeter: John
Craig

Membership list & Bulletin dispatch: Ray
Gear

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Single: \$25

Family: \$33

Corporate: \$50

Research undertaken \$25 first hour.

Enquiries in writing with \$25

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

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

A&DHS website:

www.alburyhistory.org.au

There were many stories of getting to school. Some walked barefoot, others rode bicycles and some country children rode horses.

Some had clear recollections of teachers urging them to try new tasks and the confidence that flowed when new skills were mastered. Words of praise and sometimes criticism were remembered too.

Dr Turunen's findings will be incorporated into teacher training.

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

Chris McQuellin spoke briefly of two activities during the last month involving volunteers from the Society: the repacking of 30,000 photographic negatives from the McPherson Studios for cold storage and the transfer of the Albury Base Hospital Heritage Collection to the AlburyCity Collection storage facility at Thurgoona.

The McPherson Collection contains photographs taken by Gustav Pottyondy who operated the studio between 1955 and 1975. They are mainly portraits, child studies and wedding groups of local people. The collection was given to AlburyCity initially, passed to the Mitchell Library and only recently returned to AlburyCity.

The ABH Collection was catalogued by a team from the A&DHS. Many of the items were featured in the exhibition, "Open up and Say Aaaagh" held at the Albury LibraryMuseum in 2011. Following the exhibition, the hospital board agreed to transfer the collection to AlburyCity.

JAMES GRINTON FIREMAN & GARDENER

Talk by Audrey Davidson (nee Friday)

To-night I want to tell you a little about my maternal grandfather, James Selby Grinton, who in 1893 was Albury's first full-time fireman and became resident fire chief when the Kiewa Street Station opened in 1916.

Firstly, going back into the mists of time, the name Grinton, meaning Green Town, was first mentioned in the Doomsday Book. The area round Grinton in Yorkshire, England, had been an important lead mining area dating from Roman times, but the lead mining days ceased in the 1700s.

Grinton was the significant town of the valley situated on the banks of the Swale River with its stone church and a consecrated grave yard. The first church was built early in the 12th century. I have searched the Grinton churchyard's ancient tombstones, but unfortunately found no one called Grinton.

In those days people's surnames often related to the area from whence they came, for example, John of Grinton became John Grinton. However,



Framed photograph of James Selby Grinton wearing his uniform and medals. Most of the medals are competition medals and were stolen from his Sydney home after his retirement.

I have visited twice and feel a very strong affinity with the area. Something tells me that my ancestors lived there centuries ago. I know gut feelings are not scientific proof, but there it is.

The earliest record I have of my grandfather's lineage is dated 1799 when his grandfather married Jane Clark at Liberton, now an Edinburgh suburb. They had 8 children, the youngest of whom, John, was born in 1815. He married in Edinburgh in 1844 and had 4 children before deciding, like so many others, to seek his fortune on the Australian goldfields in the 1850s.

Now for the interesting bit; it appears from documents that he 'forgot' about his wife and family in Scotland and bigamously married Emily Selby in 1859. My grandfather, James Selby Grinton, was the fourth of 7 children of this 'marriage' and grew up on the goldfields near Bendigo. Apparently there is no record of his birth, yet I know from other records that he was born at Sandridge on 23 June 1864. James, or Jimmy as he was called, was of slight build and was very athletic. He left home at 14 and worked around the Bendigo area as a brickies' labourer, in the process becoming a competent bricklayer himself.

He worked in the Brocklesby and Walbundrie areas, specialising in chimneys and arches before moving to Albury where it seems he built the facade arches of the Telegraph Office, corner of

Dean and Olive Streets, now the Conservatorium. This was opposite Ryan's Hotel and Thomas Ryan was captain of the Volunteer Fire Brigade.

My grandfather, James Grinton married Elizabeth Ellis at Moorwatha in 1894. They lived at Brocklesby, later moving to Albury. He was a great gardener and somewhere I have seen an old photo of the garden at their house in David Street (now demolished) and he also grew flowers and vegetables on the land behind the Kiewa Street Fire Station. Jimmy and Elizabeth had 3 children, girl, boy, girl. Their son, Ralph died of sunstroke in 1906, at the age of 5. Their younger daughter, my mother, Doris was so proud when the Albury firemen formed a guard of honour with their axes on her wedding day when she married Peter Friday of Mansfield in April 1930. Jimmy and Elizabeth retired to Sydney and it was there that all his medals were stolen save one, a medal marking 20 years service with the fire brigade. Elizabeth died in 1939.

Jimmy divided his time between both daughters, Edith Howse in Sydney and Doris Friday, on the farm at Mansfield where he established a wonderful garden which kept our family in vegetables all the year round. In his later years he became very deaf and almost blind. He died 12th February 1950 and is buried in the Mansfield cemetery.

When I was a child he would reminisce and tell stories about his days as a fireman. Unfortunately I was too young to remember all the details. I vaguely remember something about rescuing nurses from a burning building and another about uncoupling carriages when a train was on fire.

I do remember this incident however, perhaps because it involved me. It was summer. I don't know where my mother and younger sister were but they were not home and my father, who was captain of the Mansfield Volunteer Fire Brigade, was away fighting a fire on my grandparents' property. The fire was about two miles away and travelling directly towards our farm. Granddad, although blind, took charge of the situation. He got my brother, Adrian, who was about 10 or 11 to hose all the garden fence posts and I, who was about 8, to bring a deck-chair for him and put it in the centre of the lawn. It was from there that he gave us our jobs.



James Selby Grinton's Long Service medal presented to the A&DHS by his granddaughter Mrs Audrey Davidson 14 December 2011

We had to go to the shed, get the long ladder and prop it against the house. Adrian climbed up and I passed him socks, underpants, singlets, tea-towels and other bits and pieces from the laundry washing basket. Adrian stuffed them down the drain pipes, then I passed up the hose and the spouting was filled to overflowing. I remember that water was scarce and I thought grandfather was being very wasteful. When all was done to his satisfaction he made us sit beside him on the lawn, then suggested that we hose each other and even him, Now that was really something for a small girl to remember. He told us to leave the hose running and when the lawn was nice and wet he suggested that we cover ourselves with mud. Wow! What fun we had. Every so often he'd ask whether or not we could see any flames. I do remember seeing a lot of smoke billowing skywards; bits of black sooty charred leaves on the lawn and many, many birds flying low overhead. I guess once a fire, always a fire. I have grand-father's only remaining medal and now 61 years

after his death I feel sure he would be proud to have it go to where it will be preserved as part of Albury's early history.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you tonight.

SHOW & TELL SNIPPETS

ARTHUR NEWNHAM

Arthur showed an inscribed metal cigarette case that was presented to his father, Arthur (snr) by a Dutch delegation who visited Albury after the *Uiver* incident in 1934. Arthur (snr) was the man who broadcast the appeal for motorists to drive to the racecourse to light an emergency airstrip.

NOEL JACKLING

Noel continued the *Uiver* theme saying that another cigarette case containing a small Dutch flag was reportedly dropped from the plane on its return flight over Albury in 1934. A third case was presented to Clifton Mott, probably by the visiting delegation. The whereabouts of these two cases is currently unknown.

Noel then reported on a visit to a collection of

memorabilia on three planes, *Uiver*, *Pelikan* and *Snip* held by former KLM pilot, Herman Steunenberg. Noel obtained a commemorative jigsaw puzzle showing the route of the 1934 air race.

Noel continues his painstaking research for a forthcoming book on the *Uiver* and the Air Race.

ERIC COSSOR

Eric showed two tickets for a flight with Charles Kingsford Smith in 1932. Smithy was flying from a paddock at Bonegilla and offering joy rides to interested locals. Eric's mother-in-law Gladys (nee Chapple) and her brother were given the tickets by their father. A number of the 1920s & 30s flyers conducted these 'barnstorming' circuits between major flights to raise funds to cover the day-to-day upkeep on their aircraft.

PATRICIA STRACHAN

Patricia had a large framed photograph of the foundation members of the Albury Ladies' Bowling Club taken at the opening of the new greens in North Street on 7 November 1947.

Patricia explained that the establishment of a ladies club really began with a chance meeting at a social gathering at the home of Ralph & Ada Marks in Bellevue Street, Albury. Her father Harold Angel talked about bowls to Albury businessman Carl Farrah who said he would be interested to join the Albury Bowling Club, but was concerned his Lebanese ancestry might be a stumbling block.

Harold Angel had no time for bigotry and believed it to be in the Club's and the community's interest to remove any thoughts it might exist. He sponsored Carl's application for membership and it was approved.

Carl Farrah was so enthusiastic about the game he built a green beside his house in North Street. His wife Maree became interested and invited friends to try the game. A Ladies Bowling Club was formed and the ladies played at the Albury Bowling Club greens in Macauley Street till their own facility was built in North Street just west of the Bungambrawatha Creek bridge. It was opened on 7 November 1947.

Patricia presented the framed photograph of the foundation members to the A&DHS to be handed on to the AlburyCity Collection.

JEAN WHITLA

Jean reminded members of the most recent publication of the Wodonga Historical Society: *Memories 5 of Old Wodonga*, which is compiled from Govt records and reports, newspapers, the recollections of people and the Society's archives by Jean Whitla OAM and Uta Wiltshire, 292 pages, \$20

It is available from Wodonga Historical Society rooms 19 South Street Wodonga (open most Wednes-



Tickets for flight with Smithy in the "Southern Cross" undertaken by Mavis Chapple and her brother at Bonegilla 1932

days 1-3p.m. and 1st Sunday of month 1-4p.m.), or by phone from Jean Whitla 6024 1606, or by email <historywodong@iprimus.com.au>

Memories 1, 2 and 3 now combined in one volume, 164 pages, \$20

Memories 4, 272 pages, \$20

You may order by phone or email and Helen Livsey will bring books to next A&DHS meeting.

Also of interest is that the *Wodonga and Towong Sentinel* 1885-1954 has been added to the list of digitized newspapers on Trove.

PETER WHITBOURN

Peter brought along his penny farthing bicycle and spoke about its history and peculiarities of the conveyance.

The bikes were popular in the 1870s to 1890s. There were 200 manufacturers in England alone. Bikes had to be custom built with the diameter of the front rim based on the leg measurement of the rider. The large wheel enabled the penny farthing to reach 20 miles per hour on a good surface. Falls were common and spectacular. The term "coming a header" originated with riders being pitched over the handlebars when the wheel struck an obstacle and stopped.

The Elizabeth Room at the Commercial Club was not quite big enough for Peter to demonstrate the mounting and dismounting procedures.

Peter built his bicycle beginning with a rim he found in 2005. He used the internet to find mechanical drawings and specifications. He was also



Doll dating from 1848 displayed by Mrs Mavis Stokes at the meeting. Clothing was made by a dressmaker friend in Bairnsdale

able to make contact with other enthusiasts, some of whom race in penny-farthing races held annually at Evandale in Tasmania. Peter has been to the championships, but believes he needs a bit more experience before competing.

DOUG HUNTER

Doug began with a lively rendition of the jingle:

In come the dollars, in come the cents

To replace the pounds, the shillings and the pence.

Be prepared for change when the coins begin to mix

On the fourteenth of February 1966.

He showed two one cent coins which came into circulation, as the jingle said, on the 14th February 1966. That was nearly 46 years ago, so two generations of Australians have grown up never handling pennies, threepences, sixpences and shillings.

The decision to change to decimal currency was made in 1963 and there followed three years of frantic preparation for the big day. There were big decisions to be made including what would be the value of the basic unit and what would it be called.

Names suggested were the austral, the merino and the royal. Finally the government settled on the dollar with a value of ten shillings. Notes were issued for one, two ten and twenty dollars. Coins were issued for one, two, five, ten, twenty and fifty cents.

Inflation caught up with the 1 and 2 cent coins in 1990 and they were withdrawn from circulation, so one generation of Australians have never handled these little copper coins.

The glamour coin of the 1966 issue was the silver 50 cent which had 80% silver content. People kept them as souvenirs and there are still many thousands in cupboard and drawers across the country. A bigger problem however, was that the silver value of the coin was far in excess of its face value and dealers melted them down by the bucketful to get the precious metal. The coins disappeared from circulation as fast as they could be minted. The silver 50 cent coin was replaced with the 12-sided cupro-nickel coin in 1969.

The name dollar is derived from thaler, a coin containing 1 ounce of silver minted in Bohemia in the 16th century which became the preferred unit of currency in international trade. Spanish silver dollars were used by Governor Macquarie in 1813 to make dump or holey dollars which became the first official currency in the colony of NSW.

It wasn't a decimal system however; the holey dollar was worth five shillings and the dump, 15 pence, that is four to the holey dollar. These were withdrawn from 1822 when sufficient sterling currency became available in the colony.

MAVIS STOKES

Mavis showed a doll which had been the property of her grandmother. It was made about 1848 and obtained as a reward for saving a number of tea labels.

The doll has a porcelain head, soft body and turned wooden limbs. It was originally dressed in a plain cheesecloth dress. As a child Mavis often saw the doll in the drawer where it resided, but was never allowed to play with it. One of her siblings even said they thought it was a body kept in the drawer.

NEW RESEARCH SERVICE

Mark Grealy launched a research service in Melbourne for individuals and historical societies seeking information from the Public Records Office Victoria (PROV). Mark recently provided our Society with a CD containing lists of pupils who attended North-east Victorian schools.

Mark has a website and a dedicated contact email address for research requests:

<research@archivalaccessvictoria.com>

<www.archivalaccessvictoria.com>

Years later, the house was being cleared and Mavis was able to save the doll from the tip. The cheesecloth clothing had disintegrated with age, so Mavis had the doll restored by the Doll Hospital in Geelong.

She was never entirely happy with the way it was dressed, so she worked with a dressmaker friend at Bairnsdale to research materials and clothing styles she thought more in keeping with how she remembered the doll. Her friend made the current dress and the doll now has pride of place on Mavis' bed.

DOUG ROYAL

Doug has been assisting Mrs Jean Thompson (nee Reis) to clear some items from her Guinea Street house prior to its sale. He showed a number of photographs of football teams in the hope someone might be able to identify some of the players. One photo was of the St Pats c.1923 and another Albury West 1929. Already identified in that photo were captain & coach Clarrie Nolan, and three Bunton brothers, Cleaver, George and Haydn. Haydn Bunton went to Melbourne the following year and won the Brownlow Medal for the Best & Fairest player in the VFL in 1931, 32 and 34.

Doug also brought along a large horseshoe, saying he was searching for the district's largest horseshoe. Ask Doug for details!

ANCESTORS OF A WIMBLEDON CHAMPION JUNE SHANAHAN'S NEW BOOK

June brought along her recently published book *Ancestors of a Wimbledon Champion*.

The book traces the ancestors of June and her Wimbledon-winning sister, Margaret Court (nee Smith) who began her tennis career in Albury.

June follows her family from the village of Watton-on-Stone in the county of Hertfordshire, England in the early 1800s to Melbourne in 1867 when her great-grandfather James Smith married an Irish girl Kate Myers.

June's father, Lawrence William Smith, came from Numurkah to Wodonga to work at the newly constructed Holdenson and Nielson's butter factory. He met his wife Maud Beaufort in Albury and they married at St Patricks Church in 1928. They lived in South Albury and it was there that their four children were raised.

June talks about the efforts of her parents to support Margaret's career in tennis which began as a four year old hitting a ball with a broken fence paling. A real racquet at age six paved the way to Wimbledon by way of countless tournaments, junior, Country Week and state titles.

Margaret was not the only sports person in the family. June's brothers, Kevin and Vincent, were

track cyclists of note in the early 1950s, winning races including the Wagga Wheel Race and the Bendigo Grand Prix.

June manages to weave what could have read as a score sheet into a fascinating narrative of family, local and sporting history. It is a story which will appeal to many, both tennis enthusiasts and those interested in the story of an ordinary Albury family that includes a sporting great.

Ancestors of a Wimbledon Champion by June M Shanahan, 318 pages, including many photographs, is available from Albury LibraryMuseum. Price \$40. Or contact June direct 02 6025 1324.

MEMBERSHIP LIST

The following is a list of financial members of A&DHS as at 17 December 2011. If your name is not there and you think it should be, please contact the Treasurer. If you have inadvertently left your membership unpaid, the Treasurer is happy to receive your subscription.

Corporate: Julie-Anne Betteridge (Sweethearts Pizzas Albury), Lester & Son Albury.

Family: C & M Browne, E & B Cossor, E & K Dale, B Guthrie, G & D Hamilton, R & J Harrison, S & P Jack, H & H Jones, S & C Judd, B Dunn/B McGrath, K & S Monte, W & B Moriarty, N Reid/L Rayner, F & D Riley, B & I Strang, P & C Whitbourn, J & J Wooding.

Individual: R Boadle, M Bollenhagan, A Brennan, P Browne, V Colley, M Comititi, K Crossley, R Freeman, J Ford, R Gear, V Gherashe, M Gleeson, R Grace, R Haberfield, P Harper, L Howard, N Jackling, A Kelso, B Kurdian, R Lee, H Leggatt, D Lindner, D Lonergan, J Marsden, S McDonald, C McQuellin, J Morgan, A Nugent, M Passant, D Ross, D Royal, T Ryan, K Scholz, P Scott, J Shanahan, B Sheridan, F Stevenson, M Stokes, P Strachan, V Symons, M Taylor, J Thompson, G Trampusic, W Washington, P Waterstreet, V Wharton, J Whitla, R Willmet.

EXCURSION TO HENTY TO MEET WITH MEMBERS OF THE WAGGA WAGGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND VISIT PLACES OF INTEREST IN HENTY.

Sunday 11 March 2012

Itinerary:

10.00 Meet in front of the Henty Library in Sladen Street and have Morning Tea
Visit Henty Printing Museum 1906-1981,
Henty Cellar Mini Museum and Judy's
Dolls & Gifts

12 noon Lunch at the Henty Central Bed and Breakfast, cost \$20-\$22.

Visit Craft shop at Henty Railway Station,
Headlie Header and Blacksmith shop
and follow Footprints of the Pioneers,
Stories of Henty's Early Settlers at
Henty Cemetery

Afternoon Tea and Depart

If you require transport, please contact Chris McQuellin.