

## A&DHS CEMETERY WALK 2017

Our Society held a “cemetery walk” on Sunday May 21 at the Albury Pioneer Cemetery as a late celebration of Heritage Week. The theme this year was “having a voice” so speakers concentrated on personalities buried at the Pioneer Cemetery who had a voice - singers, auctioneers, newspaper editors and local council members. So with lovely weather we headed off to listen to what each of our personalities had to say.

Howard Jones talked about three men whom others saw as heroes of a kind:

**James Edward Miller** was Police Superintendent in Albury from 1918 until he died in 1923. He had been involved in the “Battle of Broken Hill” in 1915 when two Afghans shot at a train and were then shot dead by police. That night, Miller bravely fronted a mob and stopped them destroying the Afghan camp, after they had already burned down the German club.

**Isaac Manns** died at Lavington in 1896, 66 years after he was convicted of breaking new farm machinery at a Hampshire foundry. His death sentence was commuted to transportation. He



was a working class hero, among more than 1000 farm labourers convicted over events arising from a desperate fight against poverty. Manns and his comrades received a royal pardon in 1836, but Manns stayed in Australia, married and raised 10 children. Descendants still live in Albury.

**Willie Moffit**, 24, was a clerk at the Albury Bank of NSW in 1879. Seeing a suspicious stranger enter and fearing the Kelly Gang was about to rob the bank, he drew a revolver from behind the counter. But it exploded and Willie was shot in the leg, dying a week later from tetanus. The stranger turned out to be just a drunk.

Chris McQuellin spoke of **Foster Cooper** who came to Australia in search of gold, arriving in Melbourne in 1858. He moved to journalism and spent almost 50 years as editor of the *Albury Banner* newspaper. In that role he had a significant impact on the thinking and attitudes of Albury and district residents. Cooper was also influential in the establishment of the Albury Volunteer infantry in 1885.

Richard Lee spoke of three men, two of them brothers, who played significant roles in Albury's development in the late 19<sup>th</sup>, early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries:

**Stuart McKenzie Logan** was an upstanding alderman, mayor and businessman, addressing Albury's issues for over three decades. Always practical, straight forward and possessing a sense of humour, he was an extremely hard working committeeman helping change Albury for the better. As well as his contributions on council, as a builder, Logan was responsible for the construction of many local buildings.

**Charles Lucas Griffith** was the quintessential Australian stock man. His stock and station business saw Albury grow to a city, though not in his lifetime. His help to the general farming industry and to charity was enormous. He played an important role in the growth of the local cattle and sheep industries becoming the largest in country Australia.

**Thomas Hunter Griffith** was another of the ideal townsmen, making his presence known with his ability on committees as an alderman and as mayor. His popularity saw him being elected to the NSW Legislative Assembly. It was an exciting time to be a part of politics as Federation came to Australia. Further generations carried on the Griffith name in the industry that he helped found in Albury.

Helen Livsey told the story of three singers who entertained in Albury and beyond:

**Charlie Schmiedt** was a hearty and jovial man who was involved with the Rose, Bridge, and Tattersalls Hotels but was remembered at the Albury Hotel by solicitor W G Henderson who loved to hear old Mr Schmiedt calling the maids in the morning as his rich bass boomed musically through the hotel.

Charlie had a son, Charles, who performed at many local venues, including the Catholic and Anglican churches, and the Sydney Town Hall. He performed with Ella Caspers, also from Albury, and in Faust with Madame Melba. He left Albury for England in 1903 and on returning to Australia taught singing in Sydney. Among Charles' repertoire was *Soldiers of the Queen*, *The Yeoman's Wedding*, *The Mighty Deep*, & *The Toreador's Song*. He died in Sydney in 1933.

Charles' sister Mary married Frederick Quintrell, another local musician. Mary was a popular soprano and performed at concerts including one to raise funds for the Albury Race Club resulting in it being free of debt.

**Malcolm McEachern** was born in Albury in 1883, son of Archibald the brother of our famous blacksmith John Lachlan McEachern. Walter Malcolm McEachern was educated at the Albury Public School and Howard Tracy was his first singing teacher. He moved to Sydney and then to Perth where he performed with the Melba Concert Company. He toured with Albury singer Ella Caspers and other leading artists.

His voice took him through Asia, North America, and England, performing in Shakespearian productions, Gilbert & Sullivan operas, and Vaudeville, and he was Mr Jetsam in the *Flotsam & Jetsam* light entertainment act with witty topical songs. He died in London in 1945.

June Shanahan remembered Conrad Reis and Mary Josephine Waterstreet:

**Conrad Reis** came from Baden Germany with his parents in 1848 his father purchased land at Mungabareena on Sydney Road just out of Albury where they farmed and had vineyards. At the age of 27 years he married and built a very successful general store on the corner of Wilson and Olive Streets which sold everything from a 'sewing needle to a racehorse.'

**Mary Josephine Waterstreet** (née Carroll) mother, singer and publican. During World War I Josie helped form a song and dance group called the "Boomerangs" to help raise patriotic funds. She had a wonderful singing voice and was known for her performance of "Danny Boy" and her generosity with charities especially St John's Newtown Orphanage where she took over from her late husband running sweeps for years as a fund-raiser.