



# ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

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**MARCH 2011**

**510**

## REPORT ON THE FEBRUARY MEETING (9/2/11)

The start of the meeting was delayed a few minutes while extra chairs were put out to accommodate the very pleasing attendance of 40 members and guests. The room was decorated with displays of firemen's uniforms, brass helmets and memorabilia, and on another table, relics gathered from near the railway at Henty.

CSU Occupational Therapy lecturer Therese Schmid was the first speaker. She is seeking people interested to participate in a research project to examine the relationship between activities and well-being in the 65-74 age group. Therese's phone number is 6023 3771.

President Chris McQuellin introduced two members of the Albury Fire Brigade, John Vandeven and Mark Trebley who presented a talk on the history of the fire brigade in Albury. Mark and John were followed by Edward Dale with a talk on the history of the Rail Motor which ran daily between Henty and Albury carrying school children and miscellaneous perishable produce. Both talks were well supported by power point images.

A short session of members' interests provided a wide variety of topics ranging from tulip bulbs to the name of the Chinese laundryman who had his business in Swift Street.

Edward Dale brought along copies of the recently published book, *Footprints of the Pioneers: stories of Henty's early settlers*. The book is the work of Tidy Towns Sustainable Communities of Henty NSW and followed on from an idea Ed himself promoted to identify previously unmarked graves in the Henty Cemetery.

## NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY

**9 MARCH 2011**

**7.30pm at Commercial  
Club Albury**

### Speakers:

**Jan Hunter - "Facades and  
Fixtures: stories of Albury's  
domestic builders and trades-  
men 1920-1950,"**

**and**

**Howard Jones - "Stately  
homes of the district."**

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## ALBURY BASE HOSPITAL EXHIBITION

**Albury Library Museum  
opens 1.00 pm  
Sunday 13 March 2011  
Don't miss it!**

**Patron:** Harold Mair OAM

**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, Jessica May and Eric  
Cossor.

**Bulletin Editor:** Doug Hunter 02 6021 2835  
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**Journals & Stock:** John Craig  
**Membership list & Bulletin dispatch:** Ray  
Gear

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Corporate: \$50

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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](http://www.alburyhistory.org.au)

## **A HISTORY OF THE ALBURY FIRE BRIGADE**

**Report of a talk given by Mark Trebley**

The history of the Fire Brigade in Albury can be divided into three periods: the 'loosely formed' Fire Brigade, the Albury Volunteer Fire Brigade and the NSW Fire Brigades.

### **LOOSELY FORMED FIRE BRIGADE**

Details of the very early days of the Fire Brigade are sketchy, however in the 1860s there is evidence of a loosely formed brigade of about 12 men organised to attend and fight fires in the town. [See Joe Wooding in Members' Interests, page 5] This brigade was equipped with a hand cart fondly named "Old Fogabolla".

Old Fogabolla was a four wheeled cart with a metal cistern containing a hand operated pump mounted on the back. There are no details of who built the vehicle or what happened to it in the end. It is known that when the loosely formed brigade was disbanded in 1885, Old Fogabolla was given to Corowa for a time, but later was returned to Albury and used by the Albury Volunteer Fire Brigade for about five years. It was stored in a shed at the town tip which was located off Dean Street in what became Dean Square.

If a fire occurred in Albury, the firemen would hurry to the shed, drag Old Fogabolla out and pull it to the site of the fire. There they would await the arrival of the first water cart. Water was poured into the cistern and with six men either side of the cart working the brakes, as they were called, fighting would proceed using the hose attached to the pump.

There was no reticulated water in Albury so water supply was largely in the hands of licensed water carters who drew water from the river at the end of Hume Street. Hefty incentives were offered to the carters to rush to the fire scene; £1 for the first cart to arrive and one shilling and sixpence for subsequent carts which arrived. A condition of the licence agreement was that carters had to respond to a fire call at any time, and had to have their carts full overnight.

### **ALBURY VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE**

In the mid 1880s, brewer Walter Billson, moved to Albury from Beechworth. Billson had been a fireman in Beechworth and was not satisfied with the standard of the brigade in Albury. In 1885, he

called a public meeting, chaired by the mayor at which 50 men put their names down for the newly formed Albury Volunteer Fire Brigade (AVFB). This number was reduced to about 30 and training began in earnest.

Equipment was purchased from Beechworth. The equipment included a hose reel, but because Albury still did not have a reticulated water supply, the brigade used a wooden standpipe in their training drills.

Fire Brigades had an obvious practical purpose, but it also had a strong social function that centred on inter-brigade competitions. Rivalry was fierce and medals were presented to successful teams. AVFB competed at Sandhurst in Victoria and came third in the six-man hose & reel event.

In 1886, the Albury Brigade organised and conducted an inter-colonial competition that attracted teams from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand. Financially, the competition fell short of expectations and each Brigade member had to contribute 35 shillings to cover the shortfall.

Some who served in the AVFB were Walter Billson, Thos Ryan, Thos Chubb, Lew Winzer, Dan Watson, Jim McIntyre, John McEachern, Ernie Scanlon, Bob & Ernie Sharp, Jim Higgins, Bill Frew, Fred Bohr, Ted Frauenfelder, Bill Kappler, Ted Grass and Phil McCairne.

Albury had its first big fire in December 1865. The fire, in a shop in Dean Street, was caused by a gaslight in the shopwindow. The AVFB responded and was able to save the adjoining buildings reportedly 'utilising buckets'. It is unclear whether water was bucketed onto the threatened properties, or used to fill the cistern on Old Fogabolla.

In 1886, a reticulated water system was installed in Albury with a pumping station at Mungabareena feeding a reservoir on Eastern Hill. Several sizes of mains were used so the brigade had to carry two different standpipes. Also in that year the Brigade moved from the tip site to a shed alongside the Rose Hotel in Kiewa Street.

Their stay there was brief and in 1889 they moved back to Dean Street to a rough two storey structure beside the Mechanics Institute. The building had a tower at the rear where it seems likely a bell was installed. The tower could also be used as a watch tower and it was probably used to dry the canvas hoses.



**Albury Fire Station Kiewa Street opened in 1916. It was decommissioned in 1980 but recommissioned again in 1983 as Albury Civic Fire Station.**

The Brigade received a new fire cart that could be drawn by horses, or in an emergency, pushed to the fire by hand. When an alarm was raised, designated volunteers had to collect horses to pull the cart. Firemen rode on the cart to the fire where water was drawn from a hydrant.

Brigade Captain, Thos Ryan, wore double brass epaulets to signify his rank and officers of lieutenant and sub-lieutenant rank wore single brass epaulets. The Captain carried a whistle to give orders at the fire. Signals could also be conveyed by hand and at night a hurricane lantern might be used so signals were visible.

A photograph of volunteer Ernie Sharp showed him wearing a cap of the style worn by Union forces in the US Civil War with a cap badge made up of four separate metal letters: A V F B.

On his jacket he had rows of competition medals attesting to the success of Albury teams. (The Albury Brigade has none of the metal letters that made up the cap badge. They would dearly like to see some in order to have replicas made for current volunteers.)

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES FIRE BRIGADES**

In the first decade of the 1900s, the Brigade was constantly in conflict with Albury Council about funding. The Brigade threatened to ask the Board of Fire Commissioners to take over. Council opposed that option fearing it would mean a large rise in charges. The dispute was resolved in 1910 when the NSW Parliament legislated to incorporate all regional fire brigades into the NSW Fire Brigades.

Chief fireman, Alf Webb, visited Albury and inspected the Dean Street station. He was appalled, describing it as, "a two storey barn of wood and iron, earth floor, and a disgrace to the principal street." Land was obtained in Kiewa Street and a new Fire Station and residence constructed at a cost of £1,200. It was opened by Hon E H Farrar MLC in August 1916. The marble plaque at the station has the date 1915.

In 1912, the manual pump on the fire cart was upgraded to a petrol driven one.

In December 1915, fire broke out at Mate's store in Dean Street. The fire was small and the

Brigade attended with a hand reel and hose planning to use mains pressure to quell the blaze. They were not successful owing to poor pressure. The blaze began at 1a.m. and horses could not be obtained, so the fire cart was man-handled to the fire which by then had a substantial hold. The Brigade was able to save adjoining properties, but Mate's was gutted.

Concurrent with the opening of the new Station the Brigade received its first motor fire truck, a Garford Gwynne. It had solid rubber tyres and was chain driven. Also in 1916, six street alarms were installed throughout Albury: cnrs Hovell & David; Hovell & Townsend; Hanel & Rau; Perry & David; Perry & Young, and Thurgoona Street & Old Howlong Road.

#### **JAMES SELBY GRINTON**

Sub-Lieutenant James Selby Grinton was employed by the NSW Fire Brigades and became Albury's first full-time fireman. Grinton had been recruited by Thomas Ryan in 1893 when he observed the wiry bricklayer running up and down ladders while working on the Mechanics Institute. Ryan saw his potential as a team member in competitions. Grinton went on to make a career in the Fire Brigade serving at Albury as fireman and Sub-Station Officer until his retirement and transfer to Sydney in 1930.

James Grinton was an avid gardener. He had the land behind the Station and that covered by

the Scout Hall under cultivation. He grew prize-winning vegetables and flowers.

An adjunct to his story is that after he moved to Sydney in 1930, his home was burgled and all his Fire Brigade medals were stolen, all except one medal given to him for his service with the AVFB. His family, some of whom still live in Albury, have that medal.

James Grinton was followed by other permanent firemen including W Carr, J Elwood, C Dwyer, H Pettit, K Savage, A Bowcher, T Hawkridge, L Butler and J Grundy.



**Fireman's helmet bearing the crest 'NSW FB'. This style was designed by Captain Sir Eyre Massey Shaw exclusively for the London Metropolitan Fire Brigade c.1870, but to Massey Shaw's dismay, brigades across the Empire copied it. The helmet looks smart, but every feature is intended to give the wearer maximum protection from falling debris, hot water and molten metal. They are no longer used having been replaced by helmets of a lighter material.**

In 1927, a siren was installed on a mast at the rear of the Fire Station. The first time it was used it drew uncomplimentary headlines in the *Border Morning Mail*: "Dog's death howl nothing on new siren. Children and patients terrified... medical opinion given."

The Fire Station siren is now only sounded on two occasions: at 11am Remembrance Day 11 November, and on the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve.

In 1929 the Garford Fire Engine was replaced with a Dennis Engine and in 1943 a second engine was located at Albury. This addition was to safeguard the huge stores of wool and other war stores.

#### **DE-COMMISSION & RE-COMMISSIONING**

In 1980 the Kiewa Street Station was de-commissioned and staff and equipment moved to the newly opened Mate Street Station. The decision was reviewed three years later and Kiewa Street was re-commissioned as Albury Civic Fire Station. Fireman Harold Byrnes was appointed Captain. He retired in 1983 after 43 years service, and was succeeded by the current captain John Vandeven.

#### **THE TIN HARE**

Report of a presentation prepared by Kay and Edward Dale,

with thanks to Frank O'Rourke of Canberra, Noel Wood of Culcairn, Kevin Piltz of Henty and Bridget Guthrie and Staff at Albury LibraryMuseum for their assistance

The CPH, or 42 foot rail motors were introduced by the New South Wales Government Railways in 1923 to provide feeder service on country branch lines.

They were referred to as "Tin Hares", having evolved at the same time as the mechanical lures used in greyhound racing in Australia. The first vehicle was placed in service on 17 December, 1923 and based at Culcairn, in southern New South Wales.

#### **CONSTRUCTION**

They were lightweight vehicles and considerable care was taken in the original selection of materials used in their construction. One of the most innovative features was the under-frame. No bolts or rivets were used in its construction. It was fabricated entirely by welding. This is believed to be the first application of the technique on a railway vehicle in Australia.

The body was of timber construction, using mainly Queensland yellow wood pines and cedars. The cars were finished externally with vertical tongue and grooved boarding below the window line.

#### **SEATING**

The seating capacity was 45: 21 in first class and 24 in second. A further seven passengers could be accommodated on the flap seats provided in the guard's compartment.

An additional feature of these carriages was the prized seats either side of the driver, the drivers cab being centrally located in the middle of the front carriage.

#### **MOTOR**

As built, they were fitted with petrol engines of either Leyland or Thornycroft manufacture and a three-speed mechanical transmission controlled by a massive lever in the driver's cab. Experiments were made using AEC and Winton motors. During World War II, gas producer units were fitted to six vehicles to conserve petrol. This was unsuccessful owing to the danger of fire spreading from the producer to the train. Beginning in 1945 however, petrol motors were gradually replaced with diesel. Multiple unit controls were also fitted.

#### **OPERATION**

A total of 37 vehicles were built and they operated many branch line services throughout NSW from Kyogle in the north, through the central western regions and in the Riverina till their withdrawal in 1983.

Rail Motors continued to be used extensively in the Wollongong area, working north to Waterfall, west to Moss Vale and south to Port Kembla and Kiama. They also provided pre-electrification services on many Sydney suburban services. These included Bankstown to Lidcombe, Clyde to Carlingford, Liverpool to Campbelltown, Westmead to Rogans Hill, Kingsgrove to East Hills, Hornsby to Cowan, Blacktown to Richmond and Sutherland to Waterfall. The Sydney area motors were all withdrawn in the mid-1980s. Many of



**Rail Motor of the type that serviced the Henty to Albury run for half a century.**

these veteran rail motors are preserved and still operational.

Every school morning the Rail Motor left Henty at 7a.m. stopping at Culcairn, Gerogery, Table Top, Ettamogah, Albury Race Course, Fallon Street, Albury Grammar School, Guinea Street and finally Albury Railway Station. It carried school children as well as parcels, eggs in crates of 6, 15 and 30 dozen, and cream-cans for Dairy Farmers Butter Factory in Fallon Street and Holdenson & Neilsen on the Lincoln Causeway.

The Rail Motor sometimes stopped at the entrance to farms to pick up children. As well as the Grammar School, students attended Albury High School, Albury Public School, St Joseph's and St Patrick's Schools.

The Rail Motor left Albury Station on its return journey at 4p.m.

#### STAFF

Drivers and guards who worked on the Rail Motor included Bruce Church, Albert Eddie and Tom Doran. Tom would play the guitar for a sing-along in the Tin Hare. Trevor Smith was Station Master at Culcairn when the Rail Motor was stationed there. Kay Dale's father, Mathew (Mat) Walsh, was a ganger responsible for track maintenance on the Henty-Pleasant Hills line. Kevin Piltz, as a young fellow, travelled in from Pleasant Hills to Henty on the Rail Motor that did the Henty to Rand and return run.

#### RECOLLECTIONS AT THE MEETING

Several members at the meeting recalled travelling on the Rail Motor. Betty Dunn made the daily journey from Culcairn for five years while attending school in Albury. John Craig remembered that cleaning staff from Albury could catch the Rail Motor to Culcairn, arriving in time to board the Daylight Express from Sydney and have half their cleaning work done before it reached Albury.

#### MEMBERS' INTERESTS

**Joe Wooding** was able to hand to firemen, Mark Trebley and John Vandeven, a copy of two articles from the *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* dated 7 February and 7 March 1863, giving details of the first two meetings of the Albury Fire Brigade.

From the same paper, dated 28 February 1893, Joe had two items, the first a public meeting convened to raise funds for the relief of residents of Brisbane who had lost everything in floods. The second item noted the start of the open season on game in NSW but noting there were no ducks on the Doodle Cooma Swamp, near Henty, because there was no water. [Currently, the swamp covering 20 square kilometers, is full.]

**Kevin Monte** showed three large photographs of a military parade in Albury during WWII. The

photos show trucks and troops in Dean Street and troops lined up in Kiewa Street opposite Mate's Ltd. The troops are all in shirts and shorts and are wearing tin hats. The inscription is "Scene at Opening, The Sun Display War Pictures, Albury", but opening of what and when?

**Jean Whitla** is trying to locate a cassette tape recording of an interview with Miss Kate Ronan. A search at Albury Library was unsuccessful, so Jean hopes the tape is somewhere in the community. Jean would like information about the Ronan family, and others, in Wodonga generally.

**Doug Royal** is conducting research into the tulip bulbs given to Albury in recognition of its part in the *Uiver* landing. Joe Wooding is assisting.

**Noel Jackling** wants the name of the Chinese laundryman who had his shop in Swift Street on, or close to, Arnolds Lane.

Noel is also seeking the name of the donor of four postcard sized copies of the *Uiver* at Albury Racecourse now held in the AlburyCity Collection.

**Pauline Harbick** wants information about the Chinese in Albury. She and Chris McQuellin are preparing for a tour of the Chinese graves in the Albury Pioneer Cemetery in June 2011.

**Betty Dunn** drew our attention to two advertisements showing society was a bit different in Beechworth 150 years ago:

*Ovens & Murray Advertiser* 25 July 1857: FOUND. A child. The owner can have it on applying at the office of the Superintendent of Police, and paying expenses.

*Ovens & Murray Advertiser* 3 August 1857: WANTED. Any quantity of Mr Nixon's patent indelible marking ink, for branding Chinamen. Apply to Captain White, High Street.

**Patricia Strachan** has started research into the life of Albury resident George W Daniel. George Daniel was an alderman 1918-22 and 1925-37.

#### GLOBE HOTEL FIRE 1962

By Noel Jackling.

Some Society members may remember the fire in Tietyens Angel & Jackling on New Year's Eve, 1962. Tietyens Angel & Jackling rented offices at the northern end of the Globe Hotel building adjacent to the laneway.

A fireman took his daughter to the New Year's eve celebrations at the corner of Dean and Kiewa Streets. Midnight came, and some people on the balcony of the Globe Hotel threw confetti down on to the crowd below. Some of it lodged down the neck of the fireman.

With midnight having come and gone, he began to take his daughter home. The confetti was irri-

tating and, just as he was passing Tietyens Angel & Jackling, he bent over to shake it out from his neck. As he stood up he glanced at the Tietyens Angel and Jackling double doors and observed a glow along the corridor.

He rushed up Kiewa Street to the Fire Brigade premises and raised the alarm. By the time they got to Tietyens Angel & Jackling, the fire had taken a significant hold and occasioned much damage. Nevertheless, the judgment was that the early intervention of the fire brigade saved the Globe Hotel.

The arsonist had planted two suitcases each with a plastic bag of petrol inside. One was in a typists' room two-thirds of the way down the offices from the street. The other was half way down the staircase that led to the basement. On the other side of the wall was the cellar that contained the Globe's stock of spirits and wines. Had the spirits caught fire, there was little doubt that the whole Globe Hotel would have become a bonfire.

Between the two bags of petrol, the arsonist had laid a trail of petrol. The petrol bag in the typists' room ignited. The petrol bag down the staircase did not. The speedy action of the firemen probably saved the day.

All members of staff rallied and helped in the clean-up, including the articled law clerks Peter Lucas and Lou Lieberman. Phil Williams and Russell Dick may also have been amongst those who helped.

#### **ARTHUR (BARNEY) ALLAN'S CAR**

**Jan Hunter, in her research sometimes turns up a car in a photograph. She contacts former Albury resident John Gerdtz to identify its make and model. John responded to an enquiry about a car owned by Arthur Allan, one time headmaster of the Albury High School. John wrote:**

"Well this brings back some memories. Barney had this car when we were at High School, I remember it well. It is a 1938 Ford V8 sedan.

"An interesting byline.

"On the occasion of one of our school social dance nights, probably in 1950, Barney, then deputy principal to Mr Eddy, was the head supervising teacher for the evening event.

"Now Barney, always unconventional, had problems on the night with the electricians in the Ford, so he was late and we were all waiting in front of the school for his arrival to open up.

"It seems that 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."

#### **RESEARCH & PUBLISHING**

A research team of Helen Livsey, Chris McQuellin and Jill & Joe Wooding, with Doug Hunter providing editorial support, has completed a Study for AlburyCity of the Heritage Sites on the Murray River frontage between Bungambrawatha Creek and the Union Bridge. The Study was handed over on 15 February and was well received.

The Society has published Paper No 13, *Albury Builders and Allied Trades Contractors - c.1900-1950* compiled by Jan Hunter. A copy is on the Local History shelves at Albury Library.

Research Officer, Helen Livsey, continues to respond to requests for information on an almost daily basis. Helen is the 'shop front' of the Society and considerable revenue is gained from her work.

#### **ALBURY STREET NUMBERING**

*Border Morning Mail 19 August 1920*

At a Municipal Council meeting conducted in August 1920 the following report was adopted:

Numbering of Buildings. (1) The Council make compulsory the numbering of buildings in accordance with the plan previously adopted. (2) That the work of providing and affixing the numbers be carried out by the council and a charge of 1/6 be made for each number. (3) That E Brougham be offered the work of supplying and affixing the numbers at 1/6 each.

The engineer explained that where two or three or more numbers appeared on premises it was on account of the fact that there were as many entrances to the building as numbers. The system of numbering started from the centre of the town and the numbers ran from 500 upwards and 500 downwards. All streets running parallel to each other would thus have the corresponding numbers in approximately the same position and thus the finding of houses would be much simplified. Dean and Olive streets were taken as the standard or base streets in Albury; all streets running north and south from Dean would start at 500 and all streets running east and west of Olive street would start at 500.

#### **NSW HERITAGE WEEK ACTIVITY**

**Murray River Heritage Walk**

**Sunday 17 April 2011**

**12 noon to 2 p.m. BYO lunch at Hovell Tree Park. The Wood Fired Oven will be available.**

**2 p.m. to 3.30 p.m. Guided walk along the River Path to the Union Bridge.**