



ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

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515

REPORT ON THE JULY MEETING (13/7/11)

Forty members and guests gathered at the Commercial Club on a very wet and cold night to hear Nancy Sarre (nee Stelling) speak on aspects of the Hunter and Stelling families who conducted a hardware business in Dean Street for seventy years. Members of the extended family were among the audience. Nancy read from letters in her collection written by her parents in 1927. They gave a glimpse into letter writing as an art and as a commentary on life in the period.

The Annual General Meeting of the A&DHS was held after a short intermission following Nancy's address. Reports from the President and Treasurer were accepted and office-bearers and committee for the year 2011/12 were elected. Chris McQuellin was re-elected President; as were Joe Wooding and June Shanahan as Vice-presidents. Helen Livsey, Michael Browne and Catherine Browne were re-elected to the positions of Secretary, Treasurer and Minute Secretary respectively. The six Committee positions were filled by Ray Gear, Eric Cossor, Jill Wooding, Bridget Guthrie, Doug Hunter and Marion Taylor. Marion was welcomed as a new member of the committee.

President Chris McQuellin provided an informative segment highlighting the refurbishment of the Hume Memorial located in the Albury Botanic Gardens, the assistance given to the recent Albury Base Hospital Exhibition at the Albury LibraryMuseum, the Heritage Study of the River Murray foreshore undertaken for

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NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY

10 August 2011 at the Commercial Club Albury commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Speaker:

Dr Rosemary Farrell:
"Chinese History in relation to Australian Circus."

HISTORY WEEK 2011

Theme: EAT History

ART DECO BUS TOUR

Saturday 3 September, leaving LibraryMuseum at 10 a.m. and finishing at the New Albury Hotel in time for a 1 p.m. lunch.

Cost of the bus tour \$15 per person, lunch extra.

Seats are limited, bookings are essential and may be made at the LibraryMuseum.

* * *

PRESENTATION

by Dr Bruce Pennay

"Eating into Post-war Australia: Bonegilla and Beyond"

Sunday 11 September at 2 p.m. at the Albury LibraryMuseum.

Entry free

Patron: Harold Mair OAM

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02 6021 3697

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Secretary: Helen Livsey 02 6021 3671

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Minute Secretary: Catherine Browne

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

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ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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Journals & Stock: and 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

AlburyCity, the Tour of the Chinese Section of the Albury Pioneer Cemetery coinciding with the *Tracking the Dragon* Exhibition at the LibraryMuseum, and most recently the Society's involvement in the visit to Albury of John and Douglas Domenie who presented *Uiver* memorabilia to AlburyCity.

HUNTER & STELLING

By Nancy Sarre (nee Stelling)

My parents were Horace and Cherry Stelling. Horace lived in Albury all his life, 93 years, and my mother Cherry from her marriage in August 1927 till her death in 1968. Others of their descendents are here tonight including Bob Stelling my brother and some of his family, and some of my late sister Margaret Baker's family too.

The reason why I am writing the history of the Stelling family is because I have 100 years of letters. The reason I have those letters is because my family were hoarders of letters. The letters have been stored in their houses and garages for all those years. Sometimes they have been taken out and looked at briefly but returned to their boxes mainly unread. I remember on one occasion at Bob and Dot Stelling's place, when my sister Marg Baker was still alive, we looked in one of the boxes and it was full of love letters between my parents. There are 300 of them; they wrote every day for seven months. We thought maybe we should not be reading them, so we put them back in the box for another 10 or 15 years until I decided to start to write the history.

My mother Edith Cherry Cole was born on 22 November 1893. Sadly, her mother died the following morning from loss of blood. Cherry's early life was at Coolah north of Mudgee in NSW where her father had a harness and saddlery business. In 1911 aged 17, she left Coolah to take up a job with David Jones in Sydney. She lived with her Aunt Lizzie a highly intelligent and understanding woman who played a big role in Cherry's life until she died in Albury in 1930.

Cherry worked in the corset department at David Jones. But she had always wanted to be a nurse. She started her nursing training at Royal Prince Alfred hospital in July 1920.

She loved her work at the hospital with little thought of getting married in fact she was

sure that she would be an old maid. She made many friends and was much loved as indicated in many letters that survive from those days. One of those friends was Kit Mill who later became Kit Brian. Cherry visited Albury on a number of occasions to stay with Kit and it was there that she was introduced to the Stelling family and in particular to Horace, a bachelor still living at home.

My father, Horace Wilhelm Stelling was born in Albury on 11th June 1896 to Emily Jane Stelling (nee Hunter) and George Berthold Stelling. George Stelling was born in Warrnambool Victoria and grew up there. He worked in retail and in the late 1880s came to Albury to manage Hunter's hardware store. George Hunter, the store proprietor, took a liking to the young man and invited him to live with him and his family at their beautiful home *Luton* in Perry Street Albury.

Luton was the Hunter home till 1945. It was a boarding house during the 1950s and was purchased by the Albury Grammar School in the 1960s and demolished sometime after that.

Emily, the eldest daughter of George and Hannah Hunter, was a talented artist who worked as a governess. When George Hunter and his wife noticed an attachment was forming between their daughter and George Stelling, they asked him to find accommodation elsewhere. He did just that and set about sav-



George Hunter's store in Dean Street, established 1870, sold to Jack Hunter and George Stelling 1906

ing money. During the following five years he saved enough to put a deposit on some land in Kiewa Street and commenced build-

ing a home. He and Emily Jane were married on 8 March 1893 and moved into four rooms which George had built on his land. Their first child Doris was born in August 1894 and Horace Wilhelm in June 1896.

In 1982, my sister-in-law, Dot Stelling, interviewed Doris and Horace, when they were well into their eighties about their early life. The first home, where they were both born, was on the corner of Kiewa and George Streets and was called *Ellismere*.

When Doris was 9 years and Horace 5, their father had to come to the rescue of Grandpa, George Hunter, who had run out of money. They sold *Ellismere* and moved into a portion of *Luton* with George and Hannah Hunter. A few years after this, George Hunter inherited money from his sister in England. George Stelling was re-paid the money owed to him and the family moved to a rental house while a new house was built in Wyse Street about a block down from Kiewa Street. It was called *Grasmere* after a town near Warrnambool where George Stelling's aunt had a property.

Also, the story is that when George Hunter was running out of money, he sold his hardware business to his son Jack Hunter and his son-in-law George Stelling. The business became Hunter & Stelling in 1906.

Another of Doris and Horace's recollections was of living in a large tent at 360 North Street while a new house was being built. The tent was 60 x 40 feet and had been a bath house at Noreuil Park. It was big enough for three rooms. "At one end was mother and father's bedroom and this was divided by pot plants on a stand before we came to the dining room and kitchen."

Doris also remembered:

Father built two timber rooms, one a washhouse and the other a stable and chaff house. Then while the house was being built, father built two timber rooms, one for Doris and the other for Horace and Mr Evans.

Who was Mr Evans? He was a theology student. The Congregational Church did not have a minister in Albury so various students would come up from Melbourne for the weekends to preach on Sundays. Mr Evans was one of these, only he stayed for 15 months! The family took a liking to him. He was a very fine chap. We loved him... He was like one of us. He

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was such a trick, a real trick. He had a girlfriend who lived in Bendigo and when he wrote to her he used to get dressed up in his best suit and go down to the Congregational Church and write his letter there. He used to get up early between 4 and 4.30 a.m. to study. He got his MA.

Horace attended Albury Public School until he was 16. He actually won a scholarship to Fort Street in Sydney but didn't take it up. I don't know why because he had a most enquiring and intelligent mind. He worked for a time on the Moll property at Gerogery, but before that, he worked for Dalgetys in Melbourne. He went to the farm thinking he might be a farmer, but he gave up the idea because he found the work too hard. He went back to Dalgetys and worked there until he joined the staff at Hunter & Stelling.

As I said earlier, my mother came to Albury to visit her friend Kit Mill and it was through her that she met members of the Stelling family including my father. Horace was living with his parents at *Tintern*, corner of Macauley and Perry Streets when he wrote the first letter to Cherry;

Dear Miss Cole

I told you I would send the snaps, so here they are. You could say it was a scheme on my part to use the film in order to have an excuse to write to you. Well, so it was, but if the snaps had all been blanks I would still have written because I can simply not help doing so.

Cherry replied:

Dear Horace

You see I am dispensing with formality: may I and will you. I wanted to ask that when I was there and wished to use your Christian name. I will be pleased to hear from you whenever you have time and the inclination to write and will answer, but I hope you won't be disappointed in my letters. You don't know me very well you know and I fear that really I am not the least bit interesting. I was glad I wasn't a nuisance to you on Sunday. Thank you for the snaps, I think them splendid. What a pity you are not in one or two of them.

Now about my trip; I believe you are interested. A man and a girl soon came along and claimed that corner and the one opposite, but as they wanted to sit together, soon exchanged and gave me the corner opposite where I was most comfortable until the objectionable man you mentioned moved over beside me. I bore him as long as I could then I had to move. A man next to the corridor window opposite then gave me his corner and the objectionable one got out at June. There were only five in the carriage the rest of the way and I was most comfortable. Again thank you for your kindness to me.

Yours sincerely

Cherry Cole

Cherry was on night duty at the RPA Hospital for quite a long time in the getting to know each other stage and she would talk about her nights on duty and time off but also gave quite a picture of her life. The correspondence flourished and they fell in love. During this time they discussed all sorts of topics. Horace in his second letter to her:

This morning I drove Mum and Dad to church and then walked to the Gardens where I am writing this. I wish you could be here as everything is so beautiful and you would harmonize with the surroundings. The sun only has a few lazy clouds to contend with and feel of spring is in the breeze. Many shrubs are massed with blooms and the honey eating birds are



Hunter & Stelling store in Dean Street c.1960. Located between the Albion Hotel and the former Coles, now Red Cross shop and Fletcher Jones.

working overtime. The air too is full of songs of birds who are responding to the warm sunshine.

I do not have any letters around Xmas time but no doubt there would have been some, because in early January Horace visited Sydney and we know from subsequent letters that Cherry and Horace spent time together. Their engagement on 13 January 1927 sparking a delighted reaction from Cherry's and Horace's family and friends.

Letter from George Stelling:

Dear Cherry

Please pardon me from being so familiar but they say fathers are privileged and as I have expectations I am exercising the privileged now. Perhaps you think that I have been slow in writing to you, but I don't generally rush into things of this kind, although my congratulations are rather belated they are none the less sincere. Most heartedly do I congratulate you and wish you the early confirmation of all of your hopes and desires. Of course I don't know you very well having only spent a few hours in your company, but from what I have seen and heard I think Horace is more than fortunate in having won your affection and confidence. I hope you love one another most sincerely and I believe you do, but nothing but deepest love will ensure your future happiness. I want to tell you too that in Horace you are getting one of the purest of young men and I have no fears for the future. He is exceedingly fond of his mother and sister and is such a big blub for his own, cannot fail to prove a good

and devoted husband. Let me tell you too that I am looking forward to a share in the love that you will bring with you and hope that we will be a very happy family. May God take care of you both and give you the desire of your hearts is the prayer of yours sincerely, Geo B Stelling.

Cherry and Horace wrote many letters to each other in the months before the wedding on 13 August 1927. They were deeply in love and it seems each was the other's first real love. I have two shoe-boxes full of love letters from that year. Apart from the typical things that lovers say to each other there were many practical thoughts exchanged and also some interesting snapshots of their lives, Horace was a keen observer of nature and so it seems was Cherry even though in their married life it was much more evident in Horace. They would talk about flowers and birds and he gave little chats about his observations in the garden; they would send pressed flowers to each other. These are still in the letters over 80 years later. They have written in the margins of the page; he because she did, "I must write here only because you do it and I like doing anything you do, Dear."

I will read one more letter then show some photographs from my collection. Horace wrote this letter from Mooroopna and describes a motoring trip:

Wednesday 26 January

Would you like a short account of our trip? We left the shop yesterday afternoon at 4 o'clock and arrived here at

10pm. We stayed awhile at Wangaratta and Benalla; 26 miles per hour and the roads were very pot holey, but parts were good enough for a spin and we did 40 miles per hour in several places. We got bushed once, but someone happened along and put us on the right track. The sunset I think was the best I have seen this summer and although my eyes were apparently glued to the road I saw it all so that I could share it with you my darling. I also recall your line, "I saw that the golden day was dead, its light no more the countryside adorning."

(Horace's grand children who are here tonight would understand that, because he was notorious for not having his eyes on the road when he was driving.)

The friends were waiting for us and after a nice hot and cold shower I was ready for some nice cold fowl. Father came away in such a hurry he forgot to bring his coat which contained his license which meant that I had to do all the driving; 130 miles. It was the longest drive I have had yet. I like it immensely though and it does not tire one like a train journey. This morning we had a run through some of the fruit country, thousands of acres of orchards and all irrigated. There are two canneries here too; fruit mostly peaches and pears. This afternoon we hope to visit the basin which is the source of the irrigation water here.

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REMINDER

**Annual subscriptions for the year 2011-2012 now due.
If you have not already done so, please forward to the
Treasurer at PO Box 822 Albury 2640 as soon as possible.
See over page for details**

IN CASE YOU MISSED THEM ON PAGE ONE:

ART DECO BUS TOUR Saturday 3 September

&

Eating into Post-war Australia: Bonegilla and Beyond

Sunday 11 September

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What is the origin of the term Art Deco, and when and by whom was it first used?

Ann Brennan and Patricia Strachan came up with answers. "Art Deco" was the title of an exhibition held in Minneapolis USA in 1971. It was organised by Bevis Hillier and his book *The World of Art Deco* was published at the same time as the exhibition.

The term Art Deco is derived from the title of a much earlier exhibition held in Paris in 1925 called "Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes." From **Arts Décoratifs** we get Art Deco.

JOURNEYING THROUGH THE JOURNALS

By John Craig

Royal Australian Historical Society Journal, June 2011.

- Post War Housing in Sydney: the camps that never were;
- Hurdles, thrusts and ploys of the New State Movement in NSW 1920/1930.

History: Royal Australian Historical Society Magazine, June 2011.

- One hundred years of Australian Antarctic explorations;
- Celebrating Mawson's Centenary Antarctic exploration 1911/14.

Insites: Historic Houses Trust of NSW, June 2011.

- Vaucluse House: 100 years of public ownership;
- Colonial property *Beulah*, rewriting history.

Heritage: Heritage Council NSW Magazine, April 2011.

- Listing highlights Aboriginal experience;
- Albury – All change! By Bruce Pennay.

HUME MONUMENT

Our Secretary received this email from Robert Brown's great granddaughter and A&DHS member, Mrs Vonnie Wharton:

Bulletin received today, HELEN. Lovely to see the Hume Monument has been refurbished. May I add my thanks as the monument was the idea of Robert Brown to honour his friend Hamilton Hume. He couldn't stop the Hume River being changed to the Murray, but he could see Hume was acknowledged in some way.

LIGHT HORSE MUSEUM

Kevin Monte and Doug Hunter are volunteers at the 8th/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles Regimental Collection which conducted the Light Horse Museum at North Bandiana. Two years ago the building housing the Museum was found to have structural defects and had to be closed. The Collection, amounting to 5000 items, had to be packed up and moved to a store area. The work was conducted under difficult and hurried conditions and much of the collection required repacking and cataloguing.

This is almost complete so the volunteers are now working to put some of the items back on display where the public will see them. Items deemed to be of significance to Albury's social history such as the Watson Collection have been transferred to AlburyCity Collection. Several items have been placed on long-term loan to Man From Snowy River Museum, Corryong, Athenaeum at Chiltern and the Albury Club. Displays have been installed at the Wodonga Library and the SS&A Club Albury. A display is being prepared for the Lavington Library in October.

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Membership Subscriptions to 31 May 2012.

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