



ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

Registered by Australia Post PP 225170/0019

AUGUST 2016

570

REPORT ON JULY MEETING (13.07.2016)

Our incoming president Doug Hunter welcomed members to the first meeting of the new financial year and the 56th year of operation of the Albury & District Historical Society. Doug thanked the Committee for their confidence in him and stated that he will be entering the next twelve months with great optimism and a solid committee behind him. There will be some new ideas tried out in the coming months and the Committee would appreciate feedback and encourage increased member involvement in meetings. Be prepared next month for a mystery quiz.

David and Stuart Baker were the guest speakers for the evening, this year being the 70th anniversary of their grandfather Alf Baker commencing business in the motor car industry. The Baker Motors Group must be unique in that five brothers work together in a family business which has been so successful and progressive over so many years.

Richard Lee took us back in time 50 years with a reading from the Border Mail on 13 July, 1966. He then gave the audience some hints about using the microfilm readers in the Library-Museum. (See Page 6.)

Joe Wooding plugged us into the early days of volts and amps and we were reminded that currently we take electricity for granted but one hundred years ago the switch was yet to be turned on for the surge of "liquid power" to run through the streets of Albury.

Before closing the meeting, Doug mentioned the launch of Gamblers & Heroes, a history of the Poy family in Albury.

NEXT MEETING

**WEDNESDAY
10 AUGUST, 2016
7.30pm at Commercial
Club Albury**

Tawonga Remembers –

Tawonga is a small rural town established in the mid 1800s. A history of the town and its community.

**Speaker:
Diane Edmondson**

**ALBURY LIBRARY-
MUSEUM
UP TOP: A SENSE
OF PLACE FOR
MAYDAY HILLS
HOSPITAL
FROM JULY 23**

Page 2 Baker Motors 70 Years
Page 5 Albury Library Memories
Page 6 Electricity in Albury

ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

PO Box 822 ALBURY 2640

<www.alburyhistory.org.au>

For your reference A&DHS account details are:

BSB 640 000 Acc No 111097776 (Albury & District Historical Society Inc)

Patron: Patricia Gould OAM

Honorary Life Members:

Howard Jones, Helen Livsey,
June Shanahan, Jan Hunter.

Public Officer: Helen Livsey

President: Doug Hunter

Vice-President: June Shanahan

Secretary: Helen Livsey 02 6021 3671

Treasurer: Ron Haberfield

Minute Secretary: Greg Ryan

Publicity Officer: Jill Wooding

Committee: Richard Lee, Howard Jones, Ray Gear, Greg Ryan, Marion Taylor.

Bulletin Editor: Marion Taylor
marion.taylor7@bigpond.com

Publications & Stock Officer: Ray Gear

Meeting Greeter: Jill Wooding

Bulletin dispatch: Richard Lee

Webmaster: Greg Ryan

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

Committee meets 3rd Wednesday of the month 5pm at the Albury LibraryMuseum.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Single: \$25

Family: \$33

Corporate: \$50

Research undertaken \$25 first hour.
Enquiries in writing with \$25

In order of age, Martin, Simon, Ross, David and Stuart are the third generation Bakers running the Baker Motors Group in Albury. We have been in the business collectively for approximately 160 years!

BMG was established in 1936 in Naracoorte South Australia by our Grandfather Alfred Edmeades Baker who emigrated

from Essex, England

in 1912. Alf was the eldest of 11 children - 9 girls and two boys , Alf and Bob who both came to Australia.

Alf or "A.E." as he was affectionately known started his working life as a farmer, hand clearing land at Kyabram in 1914 before beginning his business with a General Motors Dealership. When he joined the AIF (Light Horse) in 1918 his occupation was given as a sawmill engineer. In 1920 he married Maud Constance Clark. He was by all reports an energetic and enthusiastic person with a sharp business mind and had particular belief in the motor industry and its future potential. During the War, Alf continued the dealership and set up Australia's only charcoal bowser. He sold the Naracoorte business in 1945 and in 1946 relocated his family to Albury where he founded Baker Motors at 478 Olive street. A site, most of which is still owned by the family today. Lack of supply during the war saw A.E. trading in army surplus tanks and 4WD trucks which he purchased in New Guinea. These activities carried Baker Motors through the difficult post war years and by the early 1950's A.E. was ready to capitalise on the prosperity of the "lucky country" and an era of expansion began!

He acquired more land in Olive Street and built a double story building which housed display vehicles (showroom) underneath and was their family home above. Austin and Morris were the original vehicles displayed in the showroom. The building although no longer owned by the family is still there today and we understand is on the Albury City Council's local heritage list. Around that period he also purchased a saw mill (in Olive St) and a brickworks in Chiltern which incidentally supplied much of the material for the New Mercy Hospital in Poole St.

In 1958, AE died and the responsibility of running the family business passed onto our father, John or JB at the young age of 25. John like Alf shared a passion and love for business and enterprise. In 1964 JB purchased the Chrysler dealership on the corner of Dean and Young Streets. Realising that the fortunes of the motor industry were or would be largely determined by foreign currency and product in the future JB increased his range of products by purchasing Albury Motors which had Mercedes, Renault and Peugeot in its stable. Albury Motors was at that time operated in Townsend St, next door to the Pastoral Hotel. In 1974 he added Honda and in 1979 Mitsubishi purchased Chrysler. This gave us business product from Australia, Japan, Germany and France.

In 1986 we then took on Hyundai which is now our biggest selling product. This was initially housed in Olive street but in 1989 we purchased our High street Site in Wodonga specifically for the Hyundai brand and have only this year completed a major rebuild of that facility. Subaru was our last product addition in 1996.



Maud Constance Baker, John Baker and Alfred Edmeades Baker Photo Courtesy: Baker Family





The Olive street Service Reception was opened by Tim Fischer in the same year. In 2003 the Autohaus was completed. In 2005 there was a major fire at the Olive Street premises. In 2006 we won the FBA (Family Business Australia) NSW and ACT Third Generation award.

In 2010 we had the first totally electric car iMiev from Mitsubishi in the showroom. We commenced building works in 2012 on stage one of the Young street redevelopment after at least 8 years procuring land from ARTC, Rail and Track, State Lands and many many planning and compliance issues/hurdles. The new buildings would house a state of the art Service Department, Spare Parts, Honda and Mitsubishi New vehicle showrooms. In 2013 we opened stage two of Young street which housed Subaru, Peugeot and Used cars. In 2015 we began construction of a complete rebuild of our Hyundai Facility at 44 High St, Wodonga and in 2016 this new facility was opened.

We were all schooled at Albury Public and Albury High and did various forms of tertiary education before coming into the business. This was certainly not pre-planned by us but may have been by JB. Dad went to school at Scots, the former Grammar school and Mum went to Albury High. At the moment there aren't any of the fourth generation Bakers working in the business but we are always open to that possibility.





HELP REQUIRED:- Five Ways Lavington has a long history and the Albury Library-Museum is keen to record the history of the intersection with the help of the Society. They would like to hear from anyone who could provide material, photographs or memories of the Five Ways from the early days to the present. Contact the Museum Social History team on 02 60238333 or librarymuseum@alburycity.nsw.gov.au



NOT A MYSTERY OBJECT

The 8/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles Regimental Collection at North Bandiana is the custodian of a 440mm tall silver plated cup with two handles and lid featuring a figurine of a rifleman of the Victorian era. The cup is engraved: "Presented by M Blasbalk / H Coy (Albury) 1IR" and "Won by Col.Sergt GA Williams Club Shooting 1897-98"

H Company 1st Infantry Regiment, located at Albury NSW, was a unit of the New South Wales Colonial Forces. There is a fine photograph of the company on display in the Crossing Place Gallery, Albury LibraryMuseum.

Following federation H Company became No 4 Battery Australian Field Artillery (Albury Battery). Colour-Sergeant George A Williams, a citizen soldier, conducted a painting and decorating business in Albury. Morris Blasbalk was a well established jeweller in Albury. This trophy is representative of community support for a regional town's citizen soldiers and shows the high regard in which those soldiers were held.



*A Reminder from the Treasurer that Membership fees are now due.
A renewal form was included with the July Bulletin.*



**RECOLLECTIONS OF MY TIME AT THE ALBURY LIBRARY AT THE MECHANICS INSTITUTE
DEAN STREET.**

BY MARGARET ATCHISON (NEWNHAM)

My father Arthur Newnham obtained a position for me at the Free Library and I became an employee of the Albury Council. (20 November 1947)

I took up my position as a junior library assistant when I was about 17. The Albury Library was an important part of the Mechanics Institute although the mechanics had long gone.

The ground floor of the building consisted of a huge auditorium (to my mind) with a large stage and dressing rooms and offices in front. While upstairs was extra seating- the dress circle and a flat occupied by the caretaker Mr. Osborne and his mother.

On one side of the ground floor was the 'cloakroom' with one toilet and a large mirror over a fireplace - the toilet (or lavatory) was for the express purpose of convenience of ladies.

Then going towards the front was a small office with a glassed in bookshelf which held to my mind lots of old books. As I have been a librarian, a mother and again a librarian, I would now love to handle those books.

The office was used by Mr. George Osborne who used it as a booking office for the films and concerts held at the hall. In the front with big windows facing the street was a Reading Room (with a fireplace) where up to date newspapers were available to the public. To my young eyes the room was inhabited by elderly gentlemen and I was always careful not to look that way.

There was a long sloping counter to hold the papers. On the other side of the foyer was a Subscription Library (with a fireplace) run by Miss Grace Acocks, a sweet person although to my mind elderly.

Upstairs in the building taking up the entire frontage was a billiard room. The Albury Council determined that a free library for children would be established. The Free Library Service of NSW was gradually being developed over NSW. Anyway the billiard room tables were disposed of, book shelves erected and a Librarian appointed. Miss Miriel Vernon was the second librarian after the first lady resigned and eventually I was added as the junior assistant.

This surge of freedom of intellect spread to the Adult Library and the two of us took over the books downstairs. Miss Acocks was pensioned off (much to the chagrin of some country borrowers who had had lots of privileges, taking home cases of books at one time) and then we had to catalogue all the books. The finances of these events were borne by the Council and the State. On cold winter days Mr. Osborne kept our fires going - they were also lit before we arrived at work. Mr Osborne suffered me well, although he did scold me for running my bike over the clean floors of the foyer when I was allowed to keep it in the cloak room. I had to carry the bike over the linoleum. But I was well brought up and understood his feeling.

The auditorium was well used by the citizens of Albury. I remember going to many school affairs there. The atmosphere was not always pleasant up in the Billiard Room (the Children's Library) if a school occasion happened during a summer afternoon – no air conditioning and the hot air rose!

Miss Stellar Kroeber was employed as a book coverer and mender and we gradually had other staff as the Library hours spread to evening sessions and there was a lot of work recording new books and organising loans.

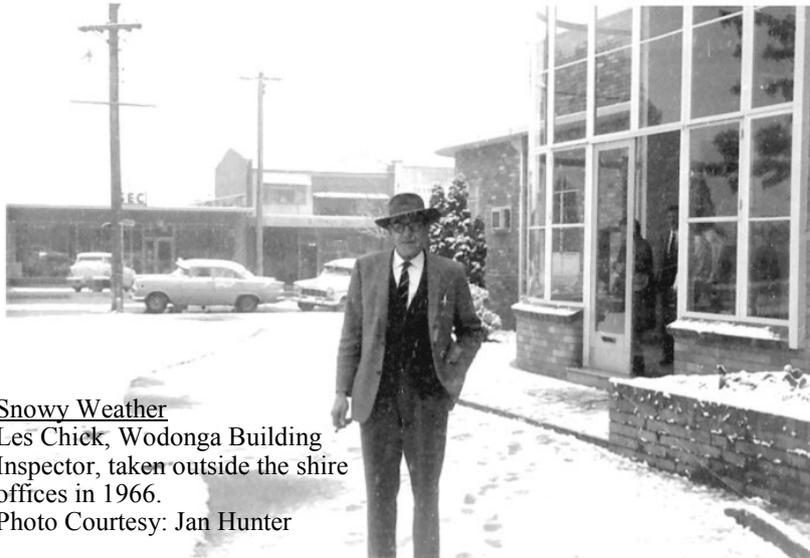
The Upper Murray Regional Library Service all stemmed from this beginning with Miss Vernon with the help of her staff and the Free Library service of NSW as they negotiated with various country shires to open branches in their areas.

Local ladies were given the responsibilities of organising borrowing sessions and of changing their collections often bringing in a suitcase of books. This necessitated a lot of book keeping.

I'm sure the systems are now very modernised!! We had some lovely visits to the little libraries around the region. One terrible time the Rutherglen branch under Miss Judd's responsibilities was burnt by fire and Miss Vernon and I had to go and salvage what we could. Burnt books are heart breaking. My husband Doug Atchison and I left Albury (1953) to be with my father in Croydon (Melbourne). My lovely mother Louise Newnham died and he was devastated. Four children later and I became a librarian again at Croydon library which was eventually included in the Eastern Metropolitan Library Service.

Special thanks to the Commercial Club Albury Ltd for supplying a meeting room for many years and also for their continued support. Please click on the logo to access their website.





Snowy Weather
 Les Chick, Wodonga Building
 Inspector, taken outside the shire
 offices in 1966.
 Photo Courtesy: Jan Hunter

**CAMBODIA'S DAUGHTERS
 &
 APNA GHAR**

Two short documentary
 films that explore the
 illicit sex trafficking of
 young girls to
 Cambodia's brothels
 and the lives
 of India's vulnerable
 'Railway Children'

**BUTTER FACTORY
 THEATRE**
 GATEWAY ISLAND, WODONGA

20TH AUGUST
 SATURDAY, 4PM

ENTRY FREE

Q&A with filmmaker,
 Helen Newman,
 after the screening.
 BYO drinks and
 nibbles.

RSVP: helen@nomadfilms.com.au
 or enquires phone Beck on 0400 917184

THANK YOU TO HOTHOUSE FOR HOSTING THIS EVENT

RESEARCH AT THE ALBURY LIBRARYMUSEUM

What newspapers are available on microfilm? The four main papers available are:- The Albury Banner and Wodonga Express 1860-1950, the Border Post 1856-1902, the Border Mail Nov 1903-Present and the Albury Daily News & Wodonga Chronicle 1891-1924 Others include: The Twin City Post, Mid Week Express, Albury Evening Mail and the Albury Telegraph and Federation Journal. All you have to do is book the microfilm readers, you can ring up and book or usually just walk in and book one. The cost can be zero if you use a USB to store information from the microfilms. Some people use their phone and photograph the pages and others get a printed copy. The copy is on A4 and costs 30 cents per page. Richard Lee is available most days to assist anyone wanting to learn to use the microfilm readers. He has a good knowledge of the microfilms and can help you in loading and viewing. If you would like to research a topic or an article on 50 or 100 years ago we would love to hear about it at our next meeting.

ELECTRICITY IN ALBURY

"It seemed as if the night had been suddenly transformed into day"
Border Morning Mail 29 July 1916



At 6 p.m. on 28 July 1916, Mrs Vera Burrows, wife of the town mayor, pressed a switch which flooded Albury streets with light powered by electricity. This power came from a steam generator at the Water Pumping Station located on the Murray River just east of Albury. Albury had briefly experienced electric lighting prior to 1916. The banquet celebrating the junction of the NSW and Victorian railways in 1883, and the Industrial Exhibition pavilion, 1896, were both illuminated by electricity. And forward-thinking retailer Abe Nathan had installed his own generator in 1912 to light his emporium on the corner of Dean and Townsend streets. In 1926, the steam generator was placed in reserve and the town drew its power from the State Electricity Commission (SEC) of Victoria grid which had reached the border. Sir John Monash, chairman of the SEC, pressed the switch to make the connection. The SEC continued to supply power to the growing town until 1958 when the newly formed Murray River County Council (MRCC) became the electricity distributor for the Albury region, drawing its power from the New South Electricity Commission. Albury's electricity is now supplied by private distributors.

<https://www.facebook.com/Albury.DHS>

