



ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

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499

REPORT ON THE FEBRUARY MEETING (10/2/10)

Six visitors swelled the numbers at the meeting to more than thirty. Speaker Kevin Wild spoke of his career with the NSW Mounted Police. This versatile arm of the Police fulfilled a wide variety of roles ranging from the more mundane of point duty at busy city intersections to the sublime, the provision of a coach and escort for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at the 1970 Royal Easter Show.

Some of the most challenging experiences occurred during the controversial visit of US President Lyndon Johnson during the Vietnam War. The Mounted Police also give exhibitions in tent pegging with lance, sword and bayonet and on occasions competed against teams from India.

Kevin's love of, and interest in, horses and riding led him to develop his judging skills. His credentials have allowed him to judge national and international competitions. The talk was illustrated by photographs from Kevin's collection. Also, Chris McQuellin provided a slide show of early photographs of the police paddocks in Albury.

The meeting was concerned to hear our vice-president Joe Wooding was in hospital awaiting the results of tests. Joe was to have reported at the meeting on his research into the letters of surveyor Thomas Townsend written during the expedition to layout settlements in the Riverina in 1838-40. Joe's report has been held over to a later meeting, when we trust Joe will be back to robust health.

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY

10 MARCH 2010

7.30pm at Commercial Club

Albury

Speaker: Bill Hayhoe "A history of Perls Albury."

ALSO

Joe Wooding: "The Townsend letters. Pt 1"

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

The Albury Medical Group Surgery 593 Kiewa Street was demolished recently. What is known about the building and the doctors who practiced there?

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ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Single: \$22

Family: \$30

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 Library/Museum.

A&DHS website:

www.alburyhistory.org.au

Chris McQuellin conducted an Australian history quiz and Doug Hunter reported on a connection between St Matthews Church and the Grenadier Guards.

A CAREER AS A NSW MOUNTED POLICEMAN

Report of a talk by Kevin Wild

Kevin Wild retired as a Chief Superintendent of Police (NSW) after a long career including service with the Mounted Police Section. Kevin Wild's early years were on a dairy farm at Singleton in New South Wales. He always loved horses but hated milking, so he would get on a horse and bolt before the cows were ready to be milked. There wasn't much money in dairying as he got older. When about 14½, he became a grocery boy earning £3/7/6 a week. He paid two shillings board and paid his sister sixpence to iron his shirts. He had to pay two shillings to get into the country dance where he met his wife. She was 12, he was 14 and they have been together ever since. It is a long long time.

He got sick of riding horses, competing at shows and around pony clubs, so decided to leave home and join the NSW police. Following six weeks training he was sent out on the streets with a baton, street directory, pistol and handcuffs. He had no idea where he was in Sydney. After 12 months probation and passing some exams he became a constable. He was considered a bit light for beat duty, so decided to have a go at the mounted police.

POLICE MOUNTED SECTION

Kevin believes his time in the Mounted Section at Centennial Park where they trained was probably the best time of his service life. Nine out of ten of the horses were thoroughbred; many were ex-racehorses. Three were horses that had won the Melbourne, Brisbane or Sydney Cups. Those horses became part of the mounted police everyday life.

"Work began at 6.30 a.m. Horses were groomed, equipment cleaned and polished ready for inspection before two left to do point duty at busy intersections throughout the city. All saddles and leather harness were spit polished. Ceremonial gear included lances, a tradition that had started in India.

"Riding boots were an item always in short supply. Each trooper had to wait his turn in obtaining a pair of boots. If anyone left, his boots were handed down to the next one in line. Troopers had to wear a felt hat everyday while they were training at the Park. Hats were made by the Akubra factory.

LYNDON B JOHNSON

"US President Lyndon B Johnson visited Syd-

ney in 1966. The mounted police met him in Oxford Street as his motorcade came from the airport. The whole street was blocked off by university students. They threw everything they could at the mounted police who had never experienced anything like it before; we had bottles and tacks thrown at us. The demonstrators lay down in front of the President's car so his body guards who were travelling with him said, "Drive over them" and they never stopped for anybody.

"The mounted police just sat there dumbfounded as we couldn't do much as our gear was too heavy. The mounted police should have been in ordinary dress because being in all the ceremonial dress it was hard to handle. Had we been in ordinary uniform we would have been able to ride over them as well. It was a terrifying situation to be in.

"As part of his itinerary, the President was taken to visit Lady Macquarie's Chair and they couldn't get him out again. There were demonstrators planted everywhere. The mounted police were called on to go to Lady Macquarie's Chair to form a wedge and were able to get him out in that way. It is a formation used by the Queen's escorts in England and it is also done in America if there are problems."

QUEEN ELIZABETH II

"There were some rewarding times. When Queen Elizabeth II came in 1970, it was absolutely totally different. The Royal Agricultural Society said they wanted the Queen to arrive at the Show in a horse drawn coach. The police horses, being thoroughbreds, had never pulled a coach, so some training was necessary. First up, they organised an old cart but the horses wrecked it. Then a man brought in an old hay cart and the horses walked straight into the traces and never blinked an eyelid. Nobody could believe it.

"When the Queen arrived the Show Society obtained the coach for her to ride in. It was probably borrowed from someone. The escort was of 22 riders: two then four, then another four, then the coach with the Queen and another 12 riders following behind. I was out the front with another three riders all dressed up in their ceremonial gear. We hadn't done anything like it before.

"Anyway the next day it rained, rained, rained, it pelted down; the Queen was at Circular Quay. The carriage that she was to ride in had filled up with water and they had to bucket it all out. The Queen arrived and it was one of the eeriest feelings that I had ever felt - there was a capacity

OLD PHONE BOOKS?

Helen Livsey and Jan Hunter would appreciate phone books more than 5 years old to help with research.

crowd in the showgrounds; the carriage started to slide and the boss said that they couldn't stop so we just had to keep going, nothing untoward happened which was good. After letting the Queen off and when we were heading out of the showgrounds the horse that I was riding just lay down and wouldn't get up. It never worked again.

"One of the next biggest visits to Sydney was that of the Pope in 1986. It was enormous, but on that occasion there were no protests."

During his time as a mounted policeman, Kevin was part of many official escorts. He found all the governors to be terrific people to deal with. The premiers were no different. The Queen and Princess Margaret were lovely.

"The Duke of Edinburgh, well you had to be 22 yards behind him as an escort. If you were 21 or 23 yards you could bet any money you would get a message from the Commissioner to make sure your distance was right on the next escort. He was so particular with what he did."

POINT DUTY INCIDENTS

The closest Kevin ever got to having an accident with a car occurred on a corner in Anzac Parade near the Captain Cook Hotel. It was race day at Randwick. It was winter and the horse was wearing a half rug under the saddle. Kevin glanced round to see a car heading straight at him. The car swerved at the last minute, but caught the rug and ripped it clean off the horse and of course kept going. He was able to get the number plate and the driver was apprehended.

"An amusing incident happened one day when we all finished point duty and met as usual at Centennial Park to have a race home without the boss knowing, or so we thought. This particular day we started and one of the horses bolted for some unknown reason.

"It bolted down to a pedestrian crossing at the high school. A woman standing there said, "Gee, that was a brave constable." We said, "what are you talking about?" and she said, "the bloke up there nearly ran over me at the pedestrian crossing and he's chasing him." So we said, "Is he really! That is terrific."

"The horse and rider went straight down Dowling Street darting in and out of double-decker buses and traffic all the way back to the Academy. There, the horse just stopped dead in front of the boss's office which it did every time returning from an outing.

"When the boss said to him " Oh lad, you could have come in a bit steadier than that," he jumped off the horse and said, "You can stick the horse and the mounted section. I will never ride again." He was so terrified, the poor bloke, and the woman thought he was a hero because he was chasing the car that nearly ran her down."



NSW Mounted Policeman in ceremonial uniform with lance.

TENT PEGGING

"It was a lot of fun working for the mounted police and I met a lot of good people and had a lot of good trips. Nearly every mounted police section throughout Australia had a tent pegging team. Teams came from overseas to play at various times."

The same day as the Queen's escort at the showground, the mounted section had an exhibition match of tent pegging against teams from India and England. Kevin was in the Australian team. During his run he had a fall and ended up in St. Vincent's Hospital with a head injury.

The mounted police team performed at many venues around the country. That opened the way for Kevin to begin judging at horse shows around Australia.

JUDGING

He has judged at most Royal Shows except Hobart and Perth and has judged with some interesting people. The first person was Gai Waterhouse (nee Smith). He didn't know who she was at the time until her mother told him. The other woman that he judged with was Princess Anne. He said, "Anne knew what she wanted and was very much a Royal. She rode in a three day steeple chase event at Centennial

Park, riding a horse that she had never ridden before. She had a go and cleared every jump. She is an incredible rider; the best horsewoman he had ever seen. That day was one of my highlights in judging. I was honoured to meet and judge with her. Her husband, Captain Mark Philips, was a great fellow, one could not have met a nicer bloke."

RETIREMENT

Kevin received various promotions and awards and finished up retiring with the rank of chief superintendent. He and his wife had enjoyed the six years they had spent in Albury and returned here to live after retirement.

ANSWER TO QUESTION OF MONTH

The Adelyn building, corner Wodonga Place & Hovell Street, was demolished recently. What do people know about its history and various uses?

The building has been used as a clothing factory, YMCA Activities Centre and since 1979, a practice area for the Flying Fruit Fly Circus. It was demolished in 2009 and currently a new facility is being constructed on the site for the Circus.

Bruce Pennay's *Albury-Wodonga's Industrial Heritage* says production at the factory had been stimulated by the war effort. It employed 120 workers. The factory was known as Metro before it became Adelyn. Howard Jones' *Albury Heritage* mentions that in 1946, the factory had switched from war production to making clothing for the civilian market.

June Shanahan, after consultation with former workers at Adelyn, says the factory in Hovell Street was built at the end of, or just after the war. Prior to that time the company produced military

uniforms in a house next door to *Chelvey* Private Hospital, later the Mercy Hospital, in Olive Street. Helen Livsey says a former employee told her the company was called Alamac. It became Adelyn after the move to Hovell Street, whether by sale or otherwise is uncertain. There might well have been decentralisation incentives from the government either to build, or extend the factory. Plans were lodged with Albury City Council for alterations to the office area in June 1946.

The siting of the building was such that it was just above the level of major floods, but was cut off when surrounding roads were inundated. Employees had to be ferried to work on the back of a tray truck. The roof of the building was of corrugated asbestos sheeting and an old type sprinkler system was installed on the roof for cooling in the summer months.

Mrs Amelia Brinkis worked at Adelyn after migrating in 1949. It was her first job in Australia. In an interview with Bridget Guthrie she said, "When the children were young I worked at the Adelyn dressmaking factory in Albury. We had to finish 35 dresses in one hour, it was slave labour. Many people got very sick if they worked there for a long time. I worked there for three years and that was enough."

All the designing of clothes was done by Adelyn's Head Office in Melbourne. The head cutter was Alain Gregson from 1947 to 1958. From then on until he retired he designed a range called "Town Girl" which was another division of Adelyn, but they still made the clothes in the same factory.

Some of the managers were Mr. Geak, Mr. Wood and Miss Eileen Rodgers. The last manager they had before it closed was Tom O'Kane, with assistant manager Geoff May and production manager. Hugh Russell.

For a number of years Adelyn entered a float in the Albury Floral Festival. Mary Crisp who married Len Lemke was one of the Floral Festival Queens and Maureen Hogan who married Timmy Byrnes was another.

The Adelyn listing in the 1966 phonebook, has a cross reference to the White Manufacturing Company Wodonga Place Albury. There is no listing in the 1971 phonebook.

When production ceased, possibly about 1970, the building stood empty for a long time. The YMCA conducted an activities



Factory built for White Manufacturing Co trading as Adelyn at 605 Hovell Street Albury C.1945

centre there before the Adelyn building became the home of the Flying Fruit Fly Circus when it began in 1979.

Thanks to all who contributed information at and following the meeting.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT.

The photos shown by Jan Hunter at the December meeting were taken at the final performance of the entertainment group Victory Vanities, produced by Miss Raie Langley. The Victory Vanities put on many concerts for troops and civilians from 1940 until September 1945 and raised a great deal of money for the war effort.

The Merry Makers (not Melody Makers) were another entertainment group instigated in the late thirties by Mrs Vi Colley (wife of mercer, Bill Colley) and Mrs Brown (wife of a doctor).

RADIO HERITAGE WEBSITE & 2AY

Colin Glassborow has drawn our attention to this website. It is well worth a look.

<<http://www.radioheritage.net/Story67.asp>>

GRENADIER GUARDS & ST MATTHEWS ALBURY

An inquiry from the archivist at the Grenadier Guards Museum in England alerted us to an interesting connection between the Albury Anglican Church and the senior regiment in the British Army. In 1991, the Australian Branch of the Grenadier Guards Association chose Albury as a suitable location for a reunion of it members.

The Association approached the rector of St Matthews, Father John Davis, to ask if they might hold a church service during the reunion. Father Davis responded enthusiastically and a special service was held.

A proposal was then put forward for St Matthews to become in effect the garrison church in Australia for the Grenadier Guards Association. These decisions are not taken lightly and the proposal was referred to the Association governing body in England.

It was finally approved in time for the 1999 reunion when a framed plaque was presented to the church and mounted on the wall of the chapel opposite the 2/23rd Battalion (Albury's Own) memorial window. Subsequent reunions have been held, the last in 2009 when advancing age had reduced the number of ex-guardsmen attending to eight.

BRICKS & MORTAR

Bricks & Mortar: Maurice Gulson's Working Life is the title of A&DHS Paper No 12 recently completed and lodged with the National Library of Australia and the NSW State Library. The story was told by Maurice to Jan Hunter.

Copies have been placed in the resources area of Albury and Lavington Libraries.



**Wishing Well placed in Albury Botanic Gardens by Albury Rotary Club 6 March 1955.
Decommissioned c.2004**

ROTARY WISHING WELL

By Doug Hunter

There is a stone structure in the Albury Botanic Gardens, a short distance from the gate on the corner of Dean Street and Wodonga Place. It was placed there almost exactly 55 years ago by Albury Rotary Club. It is a piece of Albury's history and adds to the interest of the heritage-listed Botanic Gardens.

The structure is a Wishing Well and was erected as a memorial to Paul Harris, founder of Rotary on what was the Golden Anniversary of the movement. The structure was designed by Albury architect and Rotarian Bill Purtell and constructed by voluntary labour. It was officially opened by past international president Angus S Mitchell on Sunday 6 March 1955. The mayor of Albury, Alderman Cleaver Bunton, accepted the Wishing Well on behalf of the citizens of Albury from the president of the Albury Club, Rotarian W Pay. Proceeds gathered from the well were to benefit charities in Albury. The first wish was made by District Governor Alec Sellers, whose wish was: "May peace, goodwill & understanding solve the problems of the world."

A Golden Anniversary conference of the 28th Rotary District was held at Albury on the weekend of 4/5/6 March 1955. It was reported 600 Rotarians, wives and friends attended the conference functions held in various venues in the city. The conference opened at the Plaza Theatre on the Friday evening.

Throughout the weekend business sessions were conducted in the Wool Exchange.

The Saturday luncheon was held in the Palais Royal and a cabaret that evening was held a Bonegilla. The chief guest was an Indian gentleman, Mr Nitish (Ned) Laharry representing the President of Rotary International.

The weather had been unduly wet; Albury received 150 mm of rain in the week prior to the conference. There were wide spread floods in NSW and in response, during the Saturday luncheon, £19/5/3 was collected by way of 'fines' to aid the Flood Fund. In 2010 dollars that would be an amount approaching \$2000.

In 1960, the Well was reported to have been a steady source of funds for local charities, but there was a problem: the pond was a fertile breeding ground for mosquitoes. A visitor to the Well today will see there are no mosquitoes because there is no water and there does not appear to have been any for some time.

When I spoke to the Albury Rotary Club on 15 February 2010, I asked, "What happened?"

Rotarian Ken Curnow was able to tell the end of the story. He and Rotarian Graham Turner were in charge of the well in later years. Maintenance became an ongoing battle with antisocial people who vandalised the Well almost every week. Locks on the security grill were broken open and the money taken. Frequently, garbage and muck was tossed into the Well. The task of keeping it clean and presentable was never ending and the theft of money made it unrewarding.

About 2004, Rotary took the decision to close the Well and convert it into a garden bed. Discussions continue between Albury Rotary Club and the Botanic Gardens management about the future of the Wishing Well.

REVISED MEMBERSHIP LIST

Corporate: Lester & Sons (P Harbick).

Life: W Chambers, N Douglas, B Geddes, Albury City Council & Commercial Club.

Honorary Life: A Davies, H Jones, H Livsey

Families of: M & C Browne, E & F Dale, B Dunn/B McGrath, H Glachan, R & B Haberfield, G & D Hamilton, R & J Harrison, D & J Hunter, C & S Judd, W & B Moriarty, K & S Monte, B & M Pennay, N Reid/L Rayner, E & K Scholz, J & J Wooding and C & P Whitbourn.

Individual: E Allan, A Brennan, D Bartsch, M Bollenhagen, J Bullivant, R Boadle, J Craig, V Colley, K Crossley, M Comitti, E Cossor, M Curtis, R Freeman, G Fagan, R Gear, V Gherashe, B Guthrie, A Holloway, L Howard, F B Higgins, J Henwood, T Jelbart, A Kelso, H Leggatt, D Lindner, J McKenzie, C McQuellin, H Mair, J Marsden, J Moore, J Morgan, A Newnham, A Nugent, R Paech, L Passant, M Passant, D Royal, M Royle, S Schubach, B Stewart, V Symons, P Strachan, F L Stevenson, J Shanahan, R Symes, P Scott, G Trampusic, J Whitla, J Wilson, D Widdison, P Waterstreet and V Wharton.

JOURNEYING THROUGH THE JOURNALS

By John Craig

The Muster: Central Coast (Gosford) FHS Journal, Dec 2009.

- Am I who I thought I was? What family research uncovers.
- Barefoot & shipwrecked: after the wreck of the *Sacramento* at Point Lonsdale 1853. *The Argyle Bulletin: Goulburn HS & FHS Journal*, Nov 2009.

- The wilderness child.

- The alleys.

Royal Australian Historical Society (RAHS) Journal, 2009.

- From bullets to pullets: Bankstown soldier settlement 1917.

- Fangs & faith: the search for the snakebite antidote.

Wagga Wagga HS Newsletter, Dec 2009-Jan 2010.

- Days of yore: the shooting of Edward Donnelly in 1875 at the Squatters Arms Hotel. Name changed to Cookardinia Hotel 1879.

Ancestry: Burwood & District FHG Journal, Nov 2009.

- German migrant ships to eastern Australia; Pt 15, *Aurora* 1855.

History RAHS Magazine, Dec 2009.

- New currents in Australian maritime history. *Descent: Society of Australian Genealogists (SAG) Journal*, Dec 2009.

- Waverley Cemetery. You'll be the death of me. Contact your cemetery every year or so, to ensure right of burial.

Heritage: Heritage Council of NSW Magazine, Summer 2009.

- Where all roads lead to Sydney Town. Macquarie Place: a time capsule.

- The attack on Sydney Harbour 1942. Personal account by Mr Kevin Loughry, West Albury NSW.

Memento: National Archives of Australia Magazine, Jan 2010.

- Jimmy Minahan: Aussie lad or Chinese scholar?

- Stanley Melbourne Bruce: Australia's forgotten prime minister.

KEEP THESE DATES IN APRIL FREE

Sunday 11 April: Pioneer Cemetery Walk. Meet at Lychgate, end of David Street at 2 p.m. BYO thermos afternoon tea.

Wednesday 14 April: History Meeting at Commercial Club 7.30 p.m.

Sunday 18 April: CBD Laneway Walk. Meet at LibraryMuseum at 2 p.m. Finishes with afternoon tea at LibraryMuseum.