

Dutch Tulips Coloured the Albury Racecourse

Noel Jackling

On January 12, 1937, KNILM's Douglas DC-2 PK-AFL, a sister plane to the 'Uiver', arrived from Batavia at Sydney airport carrying some very important cargo – two tea chests of Dutch flower bulbs, including tulips.

Anton Bakker, the Sydney representative for the Netherlands East Indies shipping company KPM and the airline corporations KLM and KNILM, sent one of these chests to Parliament House, Canberra, the other to the secretary of the Albury Racing Club, Mr Tom Barnett.

Anton Bakker had been closely associated with the flight of the 'Uiver', and on December 13, 1934, visited Albury as part of a NEI delegation that lavished gifts on those who helped the 'Uiver' to land on the racecourse on the night of October 23/24, 1934. Bakker returned to Albury on April 22, 1936 where, at the Albury Racecourse, he presented the KLM Netherlands Gold Cup to the owner of the winning horse, Kenneth Richards.



Pictured are the flowers and board explaining the gift of bulbs. Photograph from 'Eckers Globe Hotel Albury,' 1940. Attributed to Max Dupain.

Anton Bakker's tea chest of bulbs reached Albury in mid-January 1937, and was delivered to the home of the president of the Albury Racing Club, George Reis, whose wife 'Queenie' (Annie Regina) was told to select some for herself, and for many years these flowers added colour and distinction to the garden of the Reis home on the south-east corner of Guinea and Macauley Streets. The remainder were soon planted at the Albury Racecourse and by October 1937 were in flower. In November 1939 they were reported to have increased tenfold. In 1940, notable photographer, Max

Dupain, is said to have photographed the flowers and explanatory board, for a booklet promoting the Globe Hotel (see photograph). The board may read as follows:

BULBS Tulips, daffodils, narcissus presented by THE PEOPLE OF HOLLAND to commemorate the **LANDING** of the **UIVER** at Albury **RACECOURSE** 24-10-1934.

In November 1942, the flowers were cut so as to leave a cross, said to be red, and sold for the war effort. But then the flowers simply disappeared, possibly because of a lack of 'manpower' to care for them during the war years.

The Dutch bulbs continued to thrive for many years at the Reis household, which in the course of time became the Thompson household. Eventually, they too disappeared.

In 2012, Doug Royal saw Jean Thompson, who allowed him to dig up her side garden, where he found no tulips, but some nascent hyacinth bulbs. These were propagated by the staff of the Albury Botanical Gardens and given to the Albury and District Historical Society and the Uiver Memorial Community Trust, and are botanical reminders of the Uiver's emergency landing.