REPORT ON THE MAY MEETING (10/5/06)


Introduction: When Max Elvery invited me to speak on the history of Albury HS I accepted because of my love for & of the school & not because I possessed any expertise on the school’s history. I am sure there are some of you, who as past students, parents & local historians, have a depth of knowledge far greater than I.

Tonight I will attempt (through outlining some highlights) to show the inter-

the District School & was located in the now Albury Public School building (opened in 1891). A District School was one which enrolled superprimary students for study towards the 3yr Intermediate Certificate. Such schools were established in most larger provincial centres in NSW. Students wishing to study for the Leaving Certificate to gain university entrance were compelled to leave Albury & go to Sydney. One such student was John Hunter (more on John later).

By 1919 the District School was providing Leaving Certificate courses & the secondary section of the school was relocated on a temporary basis to the old hospital buildings in Thurgoona Street. This was the birth of Albury HS as a separate entity & a full high school with Mr J G Monaghan the foundation headmaster.

In 1916 the NSW Dept. of Education had already purchased the land on which the school currently stands. At a cost of £26,137 the majestic building, which now symbolizes Albury HS, was completed & opened on 28 March 1928 by the Minister for Education Hon D H Drummond. A marble plaque at the main entrance recognizes the event. Prior to the opening of the school, the Dept. of Educ. had also purchased “Corra Linn” in 1926 with the view of establishing a boys’ hostel (more on Corra Linn later).

In the foundation years prior to 1928 the school had its ‘ups & downs’ in terms of student numbers. The imposition of fees by the government on high school students had a marked impact on numbers. An important feature of the school’s life in this period (1923) however was the establishment of the...
Parents & Citizens' Association under the first president Mr F(Fred) J Belbridge. Mr Belbridge was a prominent public citizen & was a founding member of the 'Belbridge Hallage' law firm. On his death in 1932, the school's flag was flown at half-mast.

By 1930 student numbers increased but continued to fluctuate, & as a consequence classifications of the school varied. By 1940 however, the numbers stabilized & the school was classified as a 'first class high school' & that status has remained. In 1940 there were 494 students of which 30 were in the 'Leaving Certificate' class. Assisting the stabilization of numbers in the period just prior to WWII & during the war years was a girls' hostel, located on the comer of Guinea & Olive Streets. There was no boys' hostel in Albury at the time because a boys' hostel was provided in Wagga.

After WWII student numbers continued to rise & in the mid 1940s (1946) a new girls' hostel was opened in "Adamshurst", & the former girls' hostel in Guinea Street became a boys' hostel. The hostels were linked by a walking path & the boys had their meals at "Adamshurst". Both hostels at times housed 30-50 students - in fact the boys were able to field a football team in the local junior competition.

At this time there were three high schools in the Riverina Region - Albury HS, Wagga HS & Hay HS, & all had hostels in an endeavour to cater for students coming from a wide geographic area. Students coming from centres like Tumbarrumba, Corryong, & Tallangatta (in Vic.), were housed in the Albury hostel. The 3 schools had an annual triangular inter-school sports competition, with visiting students billeted over a two days (Programs are in the Archives).

Besides the hostels providing accommodation for outlying students, another interesting method used for students to access the school at this time was the Motor Train. Students would ride horses, bikes, or walk to little railway stations such as Henty, Table Top, Culcairn, then catch the motor train to Albury Railway Station, then walk to school. The journey was reversed in the afternoon. How would modern day students like this?

Students studying Manual Arts subjects (now called Industrial Arts or TAS subjects) walked from the school to the old Technical College on the corner Dean & Olive Streets for these blocks of study, & then returned by foot to the main school building for core stream subjects.

Albury HS (as with other schools in NSW at this time) had class sizes up to & over 40 students (today class sizes are 30 max junior & 25 max senior).

In the mid 1950s a major physical transformation at the school was the relocation of the school farm from the south of Bungambrawatha Creek to the present site north of the creek. Also established at this time was the school's Memorial Oval with the Memorial Gates & Memorial Drive. The annual school ANZAC ceremony was held at the Memorial Gates until Kiewa Street traffic noise became too great.

As the postwar growth continued the school offered the full range of secondary courses for the awards of the Intermediate Certificate & Leaving Certificate. This was a stable period in NSW public education & Albury HS continued to establish itself as an outstanding educational institution.

In the 1960s the number of students in NSW wishing to complete secondary studies increased dramatically. In 1965 the "Wyndham Scheme" was introduced. This saw an additional year added to secondary schooling with the 3yr Intermediate Certificate replaced by the 4yr School Certificate; & the Leaving Certificate replaced by the Higher School Certificate (both 2yr courses). The last Leaving Certificate was in 1965 with a repeat in 1966, & the first Higher School Certificate was in 1967. Throughout NSW during this period there was tremendous demand for more secondary accommodation, so besides expanding the already established schools many new schools were built; e.g. in Albury "James Fallon" (as Albury North HS) in 1961, & "Murray HS" in 1976. For Albury HS the time when it was the sole provider of public secondary education for Albury students was now ended.

For Albury HS the reality of this growth of student numbers caused the building program 1972-78 which saw the old buildings behind the main block demolished & replaced by the current specialist classrooms. These buildings were opened in 1982 by the Minister for Education, Mr Ron Mullock. The Parents & Citizens' Association was the driving force behind the building program with parents Mrs Patricia Gould, Mr Bruce Fraser & Mr Haydn Heath (all former students) as members of the P&C executive.

Student population for Albury HS has hovered around 1000-1200 over the past three decades.

The "Wyndham Scheme" brought a whole new perspective to secondary education in that it brought into being a whole new range of subjects (called 'electives'), & various 'study levels', in order to cater for the diversity of students' interests, needs & abilities. While this scheme has been modified & varied since 1965, it is still the fundamental structural blueprint for secondary education in NSW.

Coinciding with the introduction of the Wyndham Scheme were some changes in nomenclature; e.g. 'Headmaster' replaced by 'Principal', 'Year 1,2,3,4,5' to 'First Form, Second Form, Third Form' etc., then to as it is now 'Yr 7, Yr 8 to Yr 12', - so that all Australian states now use the same terminology.

Before leaving the 60s, mention should be made that in 1968 the first ever strike by teachers took place. This first strike action set future patterns for industrial disputes between the NSW Govt. & the NSW Teachers Federation. From 1968 on, parents started to get more involved in school issues.

Corra Linn*: "Corra Linn" was built by Charles Schmidt (a local businessman in the liquor trade). He owned several hotels, one of which was the Albury Hotel. Schmidt served two terms as an alderman on the Albury Council. In 1888 'Corra Linn' was built (using local materials) on the then northern outskirts of Albury where vineyards, orchards & potato gardens existed. The house was a centre of social entertainment. In 1902 Schmidt committed suicide & John Dight (a squatter) purchased 'Corra Linn' for a town home. It is thought that Dight then left the building to a relative M McCaky.

In 1926 the Dept of Education purchased 'Corra Linn' with the view to establish a boys' hostel. Part of this plan was for Albury to raise £2000 towards the project. Only £200 was raised, so 'Corra Linn' became the Albury HS vested residence; i.e. the Headmaster's Residence. From 1927 until 1991 the residence was occupied by all Headmasters/ Principals, except in the years 1959-61, when Mr Allan owned his own home in Griffith Street.

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In 1991 when I moved to Thuringowa, the Dept. of Educ. intended to rent 'Corra Linn' with the rumour it was to be transferred to Charles Sturt University students. I approached the Minister for Education, Mrs Virginia Chadwick requesting the residence remain part of the Albury HS campus. Coincidentally, at this time the school was designated a LOTE (Language Other Than English) school, so I felt that the building could ideally be used to accommodate a language facility. In 1992 'Corra Linn' was opened by Mrs Chadwick as the Albury HS Language Centre. Today, Japanese, German, Italian & French languages are taught in this beautiful former dwelling.

John Irvine Hunter; Albury HS has had many students go on to 'great heights' to figure prominently at a world & Australia level; e.g. Richard Roxborough - world famous actor, Steve Rixon - Australian wicket-keeper, Peta Edebone - Olympic softball medalist - there are very many more, but I would briefly like to highlight a pioneer of the school as being one of our most famous graduates, & so make mention of the wonderful John Irvine Hunter.

John completed his Intermediate Certificate in 1912 before the school offered Leaving Certificate courses. He went on to Fort Street HS in Sydney to do his Leaving Certificate, & then on to Sydney University where he won the University Medal & graduated with First Class Honours in Anatomy. John's pass has not been equalled or bettered at that University.

By the time of his all-too-sudden death in 1924 (age 26) John was acclaimed world wide as the leader in his field.

The original library in the main building was dedicated to John & was named the "John Irvine Hunter Memorial Library". Today in the new library John's photo has pride of place in the library entrance.

A book on John's life has been written by a former Albury HS parent, John Brett, - who had a son at the school in the early 1980s.

Two institutions worthy of mention in the history of the school are the Captains & Prefects & the cadet unit. Right from 1920 Albury HS has had Captains & Prefects, with Vice Captains introduced in 1936. The cadet unit, although relatively short lived (1979-1993), was an important extra curricula activity for many students. The unit initially was for boys only, but in later years girls also served.

The building which symbolizes Albury HS is on a heritage listing as are the two palm trees in the front of the building. The building is magnificent & was built to last. As a newcomer in 1982 I was overwhelmed when I first saw the school with the wonderful columns, patio, balcony & 2 storeys. Even today when I drive past I am in awe & feel special to be associated with it. In other centres of NSW, schools which were built at the same time display similar architecture, e.g. Inverell HS & Hay HS.

Illustration 2: Keith Crossley (1982)

Some other memorable characteristics about the building I discovered on my arrival were:

weatherboard floors in the classrooms with holes drilled to allow mop water to drain away (yes in 1982!).

fireplaces now covered but each with a beautiful marble mantelpiece.

the raised terms BOYS (north) GIRLS (south) set in cement relief at the side entrances - this brings a laugh today.

the beautiful rear balcony space - but one which proved difficult to seal to prevent water leakage.

the room built as the original library now the staff common room.

Albury HS (like other NSW schools) responds to directives from the NSW Dept. of Educ., the NSW Board of Studies, & to the needs of its local community. These "forces" have a significance in shaping the culture of the school & thus the school's history.

Some of the recent "forces" impacting on the school have been:

- abolition of corporal punishment in the early 1980's (a punishment book & cane are stored in the Archives.
- the establishment of a School Council. The School Council plays a role in the governance of the school & is a body made up of 4 elected parents, 3 elected staff, & 2 appointed community representatives. Albury HS was the first high school in the Riverina to constitute a School Council which commenced in 1991 with Mr Derek Norquay the first president.
- the policy of ZONING which operated in 1980's & early 1990's had a major impact on Albury HS, & was a sensitive policy to implement because 'places in high schools' were determined by students' place of residence'. Many parents, being former Albury HS students, wanted to enrol their children in the same school they had attended but were denied. A range of devious ways were used in an effort to beat the zoning restrictions (e.g. through feeder primary schools, board in the zone, live within zone with relatives) by those who desired subjects offered by Albury HS. Only sibling rights existed. Today there is freedom of choice between high schools.
- The phasing out of the inspectorial system by the end of the 1980's early 1990s. 'Teacher efficiency' was placed in the hands of the Principal. Promotion positions were to be filled by the interview system (term Merit Selection) & this saw a greater number of local teachers gain promotion. This policy remains today.
- The devolution of financial management to the school in the late 1980's in the form of a Global Budget made the school more financially independent from the former middle management of the Educ. Dept. Coinciding with this policy was the move to eliminate school fees & replace them with Voluntary Contributions; i.e. free public education philosophy (what a big change from the early days when fees levied on students deterred attendance at the high school).
- The impact of technology. In years to come there is little doubt that the impact of electronic technology will feature in the historic records of the 1990's. TV, video, DVD, fax machines, photocopying machines & computers have revolutionized the administrative & teaching/ learning processes. Albury HS embraced this technological revolution & restructured office & classroom facilities to maximize benefits.

Produced with software by the Open Source Community "OpenOffice.org2" & "The Gimp2".
Ordinary classrooms were rapidly transformed into computer rooms. The days of dependence on textbooks/library books rapidly faded.

- The appointment of a second Deputy Principal to the school took place in 1992. Initially the position was known as Leading Teacher. Albury HS, one of the last high schools to receive this appointment because of the government's policy which was based on 'need'.

- The battle to install a user-pay 'Gold Phone' for students was a classic example of how technology makes what is new today obsolete tomorrow. Mobile phones rendered the Gold Phone obsolete within a couple of years.

While the "forces" I've just outlined have an administrative focus there are others of an educational nature:

- the introduction of an assessment component in the Higher School Certificate, i.e. 50% assessment & 50% examination, replaced the full examination system. This meant the school had to develop its own assessment policy, & this saw the need to have closer communication with parents so they were made aware of the requirements.

- the implementation of part time HSC study via the PATHWAYS concept.

- the establishment of links with Albury TAFE College to widen the curriculum to allow more vocational type courses not offered within the school.

- the abolition of examinations in all subjects for the School Certificate; then to only having exams in English & Maths; then to reference testing in English & Maths; then to reference testing in English, Maths, Science, History/Geography; then to the present system of an internal & external mark.

- the introduction of mandatory hours of study in School Certificate subjects over the 8KLAs (Key Learning Areas).

In Albury HS this was (still is) addressed by a 2 x 2 module. Module 1 (Yrs 7&8), Module 2 (Yrs 9 &10). This organization has allowed a very rich curriculum to be available to all students.

Conclusion: Albury HS has had 14 Principals from 1920 to 2006. It was my privilege & pleasure to serve as Principal at Albury HS for 16 years. Albury HS, while recognized as a school with wonderful physical resources, has since its beginning developed an excellent reputation through its personnel. The consistent achievement of excellent academic standards has rated the school as one of the top government comprehensive high schools in NSW. It is a school which has a fine history & is rich in tradition, pride & spirit. The overwhelming majority of students & parents have a deep love for & pride in their school. The school motto, in Latin, "ad astra per aspera" (to the stars through difficult/troubled ways), is a realistic guide to life & has been with the school since its birth in 1920.

Albury HS, except for some Great Depression & WWII years, has produced an annual magazine, & these provide a wonderful historic record of the school. The magazine in the first two years was named the "Alburian", but since has been the "Southern Cross". One project I was able to achieve in my time at the school was the establishment of an archives room. The room now houses many items of historic significance & value; e.g. magazines, annual speech day programs, documents, etc. There is also an old school yard bell thought to be the original, which has been sand-blasted & is in good condition. While the collecting of archival material was difficult, it is now safely stored. If any one is interested in visiting the Archives I'm sure an approach to the current Principal, also a 'Crossley', would be fruitful.

Albury people can be very proud of Albury HS & the contribution it has made to its community throughout its life. Words written by the students in the very first "Alburian" in 1920 reflect the true fabric of Albury HS & have been the foundation for all future students to build upon;

"Let us make such a set of traditions that in many years to come, students will think of us with respect. And for the honour of the school do those things which now seem to us to be for its honour."

Thank you -Keith Crossley 10/5/06

Answer to 'QUESTION for MAY': (What were the first schools in Albury & where were they located?)


The fact is that Albury's early schools were many & varied. Some opened & then closed after a few years to be replaced by others. Grammar schools, for young men, & Dame's schools for young ladies, were conducted in residential premises. Most offered boarding facilities.

The Albury Public School can be traced from its beginning as the 'National School' in a brick building on the corner of Dean & Kiewa Streets in 1850, to its current site on Olive, Smollett & David Streets.

Catholic education began in 1855, sharing a building 'near the Chinese Camp', Townsend Street with church services on Sundays. The Sisters of Mercy arrived in 1868 & established a Convent School by 1872 with 30 boarders & 172 day pupils.

The earliest grammar school began in 1856. Others followed including a Church of England denominational school in 1866. Mr G B Wilson took over an existing school in 1876 & conducted it for 40 years in the Young, Perry & Wood Street area.

In 1860, "Vineyard House" advertised "an academy for young ladies conducted by Mrs Edwards. Particular attention paid to religious & moral training, health, comfort & deportment." Other ladies' schools included "Glenair" in Crisp Street, "Springfield" in Macauley Street, & "Woodstock" in Schubach Street.

The earliest school was a Community School operating in a bark hut in 1848, but its location is uncertain.*

Edited Extracts:
"Albury Banner" & "Wodonga Express" p.22 November 2 1923.

SCHOOL AT NORTH ALBURY:
At a recent meeting of the Albury Chamber of Commerce attention was called to the rapid extent of Albury in a northerly direction, & it was pointed out that as a school must sooner or later be established at North Albury a site should be secured without delay.... Mr Garnsey has secured many signatures to a petition asking for a school & last week he accompanied Mr J M'Dowell, M.A., district inspector of schools, around the locality. The inspector was impressed with the claims for a school... & supplied Mr Garnsey with an office form of petition for the signatures & other particulars in regard to the children who would avail themselves of the school if established... it is up to the residents of

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North Albury to assert their just claims. An area of about 2 acres is required. With the great & continued growth of Albury the necessity for branch schools is merely a matter of evolution. With the overcrowding of the present buildings which is imminent, now is the time for residents to agitate in no uncertain manner for the establishment of an infants' school in that locality. From a report which has been furnished by the local inspector of schools, I find that the conditions are favourable for the granting of the request & I have given instructions accordingly. Steps will be taken without delay to put this decision into effect.

'Albury Banner' & 'Wodonga Express', October 29, 1926. The minister for Education has informed Mr Goodin, MLA, that he has had under consideration representations regarding the erection of the new Infants' School at North Albury. He now advises that plans & specifications for the work are approaching completion, & it is anticipated that tenders will be invited in three weeks' time.

'Albury Banner' & 'Wodonga Express' January 14 1927. Mr V.W.E Goodin, MLA has been informed that the Minister of Education has accepted the tender of E W Parnell of Lavington for the erection of the public school at Albury North.

'Research in Progress; Chris McQuelin

Two areas of my research are the Air Training Corps 1942-44, & a local connection with the contingent to the Sudan War, 1885.

The Air Training Corps began in November 1941. The Second World War was in progress & the government was encouraging young people to join the RAAF. The Junior Air League for teenagers between 14 & 16 was in existence & this evolved into the Air Training Corps. Its post war equivalent is the Australian Air Force Cadets, a group of which exists in Albury. I was a cadet in the 1960s & my two older boys are now cadets.

I am in the process of researching newspapers for information from June 1941, & am up to the middle of 1944. It is quite time consuming, as one has to read every page of the newspaper. There were six wings of the Air Training Corps formed, one in each state with headquarters in the capital city.

I have interviewed two gentlemen who were in the Air Training Corps in Albury during the war. Jack Larkin, now 80, who went to Britain with the RAAF to fly in Halifax bombers as a wireless operator/air gunner, & Fred Thorman who became a cadet in 1944. The war ended before Fred was old enough to enlist in the RAAF. The Air Training Corps met at the Albury High School for instruction.

I am also researching people who came from Albury or who were born here & went off to war in Sudan in 1885 & the Boer War in 1899-02. The expedition to the Sudan was the first Australian force to serve in a war
I have found only one man who was born here who went to the Sudan and fought in the Boer War. His name was John Peter Eppel. He left Australia on 3 March 1885 as a private in the D Company. Eppel was a machinist by trade. He got the adventure bug at the age of 20 & decided that he was going to hit the road; so he signed up to be in the first contingent of 520 soldiers that left our shores, resplendent in white uniforms. When they reached Sudan, their uniforms were changed to dull, but more practical, khaki. The Australian contingent was only in the Sudan for about three months & then came home again. It seems Eppel returned to Africa, serving first with Baden Powell then in the Boer War. He is not on the list of Australian Boer War soldiers, so he probably served in one of the many irregular units raised in South Africa. However, he was definitely an Australian & an Albury 'boy'. The Border Morning Mail published a story about him in 1943. He had a very interesting life!

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**JULY 2005 TO JUNE 2006**

I am able to report another satisfactory year of operation for the Society. Monthly meetings have been well attended & the calibre of the speakers, high. Society members have participated well. The committee has met faithfully to conduct the Society’s business. Finances are adequate.

The Commercial Club Albury has continued to provide a highly satisfactory venue for our monthly meetings at no charge to the Society. Albury City Council has provided a grant of $2,700 to finance research for, & compilation of a submission to have the Albury Railway Station & Yards nominated for inclusion on the National Heritage List. Captain Ray Slade made the Paddle-Steamer Cumberona available for our picnic meeting 2 October 2005. Peter Lynch made the Murray Conservatorium available for our April 2006 meeting.

Guest speakers were: Heather Taylor, Jane Eyers, Frank Davidson, Wilma Friedlieb & Keith Crossley. Members who spoke at meetings were: Bruce Pennay, Max Barry, Joe Wooding, June Shanahan, Jan Hunter, Ray Gear & Chris McQuelin. Gerry Curtis gave a slide presentation.

Membership for the year was: Corporate - 4; Hon. & Life - 9; Family - 3. Attendance at monthly meetings has averaged 21 with 5 apologies.

This year we marked the 150th anniversary of the arrival at Albury of the first paddle steamer with a picnic luncheon meeting on board the ‘PS Cumberona’ on 2 October 2005. Gerry Curtis spoke & John Alker-Jones & Ray Slade participated in a re-enactment. We held our April meeting at the Murray Conservatorium building with Wilma Friedlieb (the first local teacher) speaking. We noted with pleasure the launch of Bruce Pennay’s book, ‘Making a City in the Country’. We had a conducted tour of the 100 year old St David’s Church Albury in May, & Carole & Chris hosted an introductory tour of the History Room at the Albury Library & spoke of plans to improve cataloguing in preparation for the ‘InfoZone’ at the new Library-Museum.

Gerry Curtis’s busy round of presentations to service clubs & groups was interrupted by illness. It is good to report Gerry is well again & has resumed these activities. Helen Livsey answered numerous requests for information. The Society features on the Albury City heritage web site. (see P1).

The Bulletin continues to maintain a high standard both in content & presentation. June Shanahan was editor for the first half of the year & Michael Katalinic for the latter half. Ray Gear has printed & dispatched the monthly publication. Thirty Bulletins are able to be sent by email. The majority of these are on our ‘free’ list eg. schools, media & other historical societies. Catherine Browne has begun work on scanning early Bulletins on to CD.

Heritage issues were: Albury Railway Station & Yards, Adamshurst & the Uiver. Bruce Pennay has completed the submission to have the Railway precinct placed on the National Heritage List. A brochure is being prepared also. Adamshurst has been restored & is now operating as a restaurant. Jan Hunter spoke on the history of the building (Adamshurst) to 130 women at a gathering there. Gerry Curtis continues to represent the Society on the ‘working party’ considering the restoration of the Uiver DC3 aircraft. Concurrently, Gerry has played a leading role in making a model of the Uiver for display at the airport.

This year the Society has ended with a modest financial surplus. The improvement on last year’s position is credited to some remedial action outlined in last year’s report. John Craig has been responsible for improved marketing & sales of stock items.

I believe the A&DH-Society ends the year in satisfactory shape. Attendance at meetings is good & many members are engaged in research & presentation of local history. Office bearers & committee are active & finances are sound. I believe our biggest opportunity & challenge next year is to ensure the Society takes advantage of the heritage restructuring which will accompany the opening of the new Albury Cultural Precinct. Finally, my thanks go to all who have contributed to, & supported the Albury & District Historical Society for the year 2005-6.

- Douglas Hunter (President)