

ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

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MARCH 2007

466

REPORT ON THE FEBRUARY MEETING (14/2/07)

The meeting was well attended and many members participated in the Question of the Month and Show & Tell segments. Business matters were dealt with promptly.

HOVELL TREE

An email from Leah Warburton, Community Arborist was tabled. Albury City Council is undertaking work to protect the tree from possums, improve watering and to remove dead limbs. Paving at the base of the tree is to be replaced with a mulched area. Plaques and interpretive panels will be rearranged. The meeting supported the proposal. A question was asked regarding an attempt to clone the Hovell Tree. Leah Warburton advises the project was being undertaken by CSIRO. Sadly however, other priorities brought the project to a halt.

BASE HOSPITAL ARCHIVES

The president tabled a letter to Albury Base Hospital inquiring about the hospital's archives and offering assistance if that was thought helpful. Subsequently, Doug Hunter and June Shanahan met with a hospital representative. The hospital is concerned its records be preserved but like many busy institutions it lacks the necessary resources to do all that is needed. Any assistance the Society could offer would be much appreciated.

The meeting resolved to: "provide assistance to do a

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

How, when and why was Albury's Noreuil Park so named?

NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY 14 MARCH 2007

8pm at Commercial Club

Speakers:

Jan Hunter "North Albury: recreation and sporting clubs."

Roma Freeman: "CWA beginnings in Albury 80 years ago."

BRING A GUEST NIGHT.

CANCELLATION

Regrettably, Garden Party at St Hilaire planned for Sunday 18 March 2007 has been cancelled.

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Single: \$22
Family: \$30
Corporate: \$50

History Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month 8pm at Commercial Club Albury.

Committee meets 4th Tuesday of the month 5.15pm at Albury City Library.

A&DHS website:
www.alburycity.nsw.gov.au/museum/heritage

preliminary cataloguing and assessment of the hospital archives, as time permits.”

Five members have indicated their willingness to be part of a project team.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

When were the serious drought years for Albury in the 20th century?

Wm Bayley in his book *Border City: History of Albury*, has 10 index references to floods, but none for drought. Drought is insidious and difficult to photograph compared to floods. Nevertheless, Albury experienced many years of drought during the 20th Century.

Members drew on local histories, anecdotal and newspaper evidence for the following:

Accounts of the droughts of 1914-15 and 1943-44 are given in *Black Range to Lavington: A History*, compiled by Margaret Scherleitner and Mary Palmer, 2002.

Federation was ushered in during the ten year drought of 1892-1902. The Great War raged during the drought of 1914-16 and the Second World War during the 1943-45 drought.

Joe Wooding noted that Victorian Country Week cricket was abandoned in the 1972-3 season and again in 1982-3 because of drought affected grounds.

Jean Whitla concluded the discussion with a resume of drought and flood information gleaned from many sources over the years. Here are her notes for the 20th Century:

1892-1902 - Ten year

drought. Water ankle deep in Albury Botanical Gardens when the rains came.

1907—Wodonga & Towong Sentinel of 17 May reported that ‘prolonged drought had become a most serious affair’ with beautiful bright days and frosty nights but no sign of rain. Lambing ewes were without strength and lambs had to be killed to save the mothers. Graziers in the district declared the prospects never were worse. Early 1930s—another dry period. Dust storms from the Mallee often covered Victoria.

Although 1939 was one of the wettest years on record, it began with bushfires that began on 13 January ‘Black Friday’ and burned 2 million hectares of forest.

1943/4—There wasn’t one shower of rain from November through to March and the dry conditions continued for more than 4 years.

1962—Drought for two years in a generally dry decade.

1967/8—The Hume Weir was down to 1% but filled within 100 days according to Bonegilla residents.

1983/84—Hume Weir dropped to puddles and the Murray River was clearly contained within its banks in the floor of the reservoir. Bushfires destroyed 2000 homes and the worst day was named ‘Ash Wednesday’.

1997/98—Dry years followed to the autumn of 2003 with severe drought throughout the Upper Murray, north-eastern Victoria and much of Australia.

Jean noted that the first drought recorded since European settlement was in 1789, and also in the more than two

centuries since, drought has occupied a fifth of the total.

Jean had staggering figures for stock losses in eastern Australia owing to drought in the 20th century, taken from internet sources:

1914/16 19 million sheep and 2 million cattle; 1942/5 30 million sheep; and 1963/8 20 million sheep.

Helen Livsey extracted a list of low rainfall totals from the *Border Mail* 2/1/2003, seen against a long term average of 760mm and a century top of 1203mm in 1939.

RAINFALL TOTALS

1902	423mm	1914	403mm
1922	486 “	1938	347 “
1940	387 “	1944	390 “
1957	493 “	1965	487 “
1967	333 “	1972	431 “
1982	393 “	1982	393 “
1994	482 “	1997	474 “
2002	435		

BRING, SHOW & TELL

Members responded with a bewildering array of items that demonstrated very clearly the variety of ways history and heritage can be understood and shared. Some items had a quirky history, others had no story only questions.

Jill Wooding showed an 18 carat gold man’s dress ring with diamond, found in her garden. She believes the ring came with a load of elephant dung collected from Alexandra Park after the circus had departed. The Ringmaster is probably still looking for his ring.

Max Barry: A very old blackened metal bowl, with a cover made of rings to form a lid. Max believes it to be a Chinese rice cooker, the variation in the lid, was to insure that various varieties of

rice were cooked with the appropriate degree of covering.

Jean Whitla: A necklace of "Black Eyed Susan" beads that was made by an aboriginal man and given to her father, an outback clergyman and intended as a gift for his fiancée. Jean's mother was not a tall woman so if worn as a single strand, the beads reached the floor. The 'beads' are the seeds of a tropical plant and are quite poisonous. They are green when first picked and turn red with a black 'eye' when dry.



Child's doll from Burrumbuttock NSW c.1922

Roma Freeman: A "Shilling" Needlework Book and a lovely Doll that was given to her mother as an eight year-old, then to her when she turned eight.

Bruce Pennay: Showed us a sketch of the former Staff Club at Bonegilla, when the first migrants arrived. The

sketch was done by a migrant who had worked on the staff for a number of years. Bruce outlined plans for restoration of this "Hut."

Kevin Monte: Who spent his early years at the construction site of the Hume Weir, and attended the Mitta Junction School, brought along an Album of photos of those early days, together with a map of the Victorian part of the Hume Weir village and a list of tenants and the rents paid. The Album also contained photos of the Mulwala Weir and Bogong High Plains when surveying for the Kiewa Hydro Scheme was being done.

Joe Wooding: A photo showing Albury Sports Ground half under floodwater. Joe has researched the incident and believes the photo was taken about 14 July 1905.

June Shanahan : Showed us a lovely Fresh Water Pearl which she found in the pocket of a jacket

Helen Livsey: Had a collection of Coronation Stamps from 1937, and a Docket Book from Hartley's, 481 Dean Street which was given to the Society by Mrs Leila Shaw of Sommerville.

Chris. McQuellin: Was able to show us a WWI identity disc that belonged to his grandfather, and told how this disc enabled identification of the body of a soldier discovered long after the war. When the body was discovered, the authorities were mystified because the name and number was that of a soldier (Chris's grandfather) who had survived and returned to Australia. His grandfather explained he and



China tea cup featuring "Hovell's Tree Albury"

his brother had exchanged discs to carry as 'family tokens', so the body was in fact that of his missing brother.

Carole Whitbourn: Brought a Bone China Cup depicting the Hovell Tree and inscribed with "Hovell's Tree Albury". She asked if anyone had seen anything similar. The cup was made in England.

VALE

GEORGE KRAIN

Members will be sorry to hear of the passing of Gerhard Georg (George) Krain on 12 February 2007 aged 85. George and Inga Krain have been long time members of the Albury & District Historical Society. Inga is the author of two books telling of the family's experience of migrating to Australia from Germany in 1950. A short stay at Bonegilla was followed by several years at Walla Walla. The family moved to Albury in 1954 where George worked as a carpenter by day and studied accountancy at Albury Tech College in the evening. When he qualified, George obtained work as an accountant eventually

establishing his own business.

He put his knowledge to good use in a variety of church and community organisations including the Lutheran Church of Australia, Lions International, Meals on Wheels and the German Austrian Club.

George is survived by his wife of sixty years Inga, and daughters Harriet and Christine and their families.

* * *

ARE YOU A COLLECTOR OF OBJECTS?

If so, Helen Pithie, Curator of Exhibitions and Collections at the new Albury Library/Museum, would like to hear from you. Helen is compiling a register of private collections in order to be able to call on people to lend items for temporary exhibitions. Names, type of collection and location would be kept strictly confidential. If you have a collection, please register with Helen on (02)6051 3483 or hpithie@alburycity.nsw.gov.au

BOOK REVIEWS

G L Buxton, *Riverina 1861-1891: An Australian Regional Study*, MUP 1967. Selectors and squatters, free traders and protectionists, land agents and surveyors, sheep by the millions, churches and schools, droughts and floods, the inter-colonial struggle for the wealth of the Riverina, paddlesteamers and railways, strikers and scabs, all this and much more on the 'ring-bark frontier'. Ample

land for selection and the extension of the railway systems of both NSW and Victoria facilitated an increase in population and a transition from pastoral to agricultural activity. Drought and flood were impediments to progress, but generally the period was one of prosperity and optimism.

Geoffrey Buxton's book about the turbulent thirty years that formed the Riverina as we know it today makes fascinating and informative reading. The book is doubly useful because it provides an excellent background against which to read local and family histories of Albury & district.

Studies of the growth of towns like Albury and Wagga help us understand why our cities developed as they did and why they differ from each other.

Albury's early prosperity owed much to its role as the conduit between Riverina produce and the markets of the Ovens goldfields. It was also the hub around which small farmers, many of them German migrants, prospered, growing wine and wheat. A professional, merchant and artisan community developed in contrast to the widespread master and servant society that characterised the pastoral Riverina. Shopkeepers ran against squatters for election to the NSW Parliament.

The population of Albury grew from 1587 in 1861 to 5447 thirty years later. The increase in population,

especially families, hastened the establishment of schools, churches and a hospital.

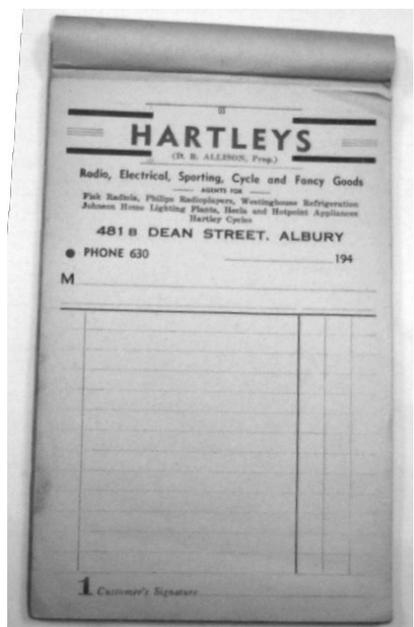
Available at Albury Library and well worth reading.

* * *

Jack Sullivan, *Patch and Glennie of Orindinna Gresford: Early Wine growing in the Paterson Valley Part 1*, Paterson Historical Society Inc, 2006.

The author has very kindly donated a copy of the book to A & DHS in recognition of the assistance given by our Research Officer Helen Livsey. Helen's help and interest is acknowledged in the Introduction.

As the title suggests the main focus is on the Paterson River district of the Hunter Valley. There is however a connection with some of the early wine growers at Albury. John



Docket Book Hartleys (D R Allison, Prop) of 481B Dean Street. The shop later became Barnes Delicatessen, and later again was demolished to build the Commercial Bank of Australia Limited; now Canteen Cuisine.

Delappe Lankester Jr learned his trade at *Orindinna* and other wineries in the Hunter before moving to Albury in 1870 to work for James Fallon.

Lankester's time in Albury is covered in Chapter 3 of Sullivan's book. Chapter 3 also notes others with links to both the Hunter Valley and Albury including District Surveyor, Phillip Francis Adams, and part-owner of the *Ettamogah* Vineyard, Francis H Biddulph.

The book is to be placed in the History Room Albury Library.

THE HUME WEIR VILLAGE

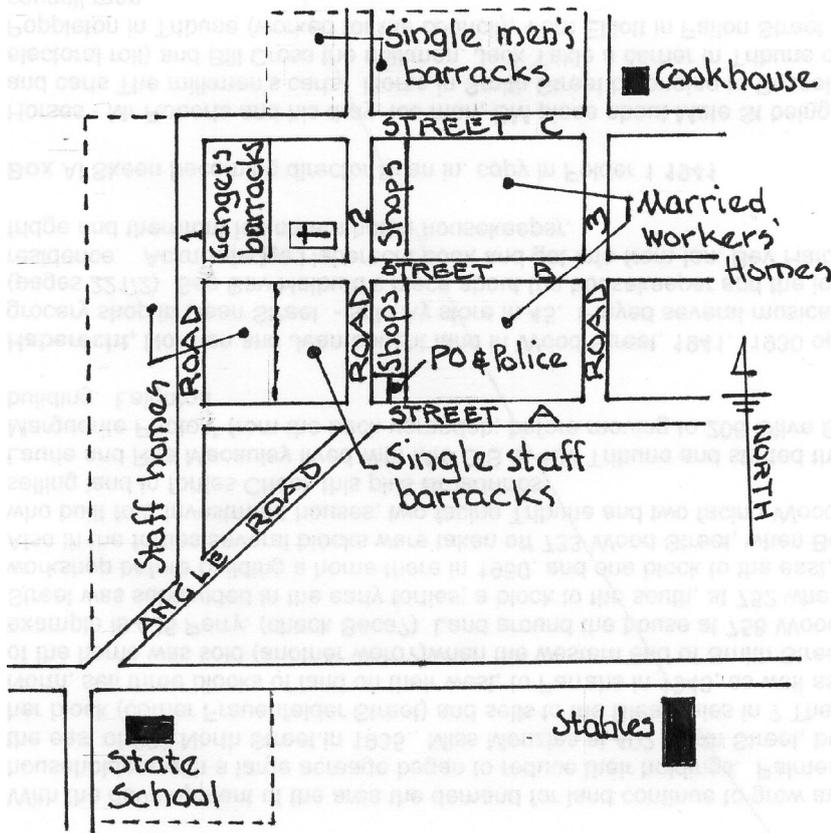
In memorabilia Kevin Monte brought to the February meeting was a 1923 map of the village and a list of tenants, their occupations and their annual rents. See the following table. Many of the names are familiar Albury names.

Alongside the married workers' homes were extensive single men's barracks. The street names perhaps reflected the interim nature of the village; the east-west streets were Street A, B, C, and the north-south thoroughfares were Road 1, 2, 3. and Angle Road. Mitta Junction State School was on the southern edge of the village and the shops faced Road 2. (See Map next page.)

UNDERTAKERS IN ALBURY

Pauline Harbick is compiling a history of early Albury undertakers, in particular Lesters which was estab-

NAME	OCCUPATION	RENT p.a.
Anderson J	Storekeeper	£17.8.0
Baker A	Motor mechanic	£9.0.0
Benson P A	Head stableman	£19.10.0
Brown A	Bank foreman	£19.10.0
Buchanan D A	Cost clerk	£21.0.0
Dalley J	Pump driver	£19.10.0
Daniels A	Second Cook	£19.10.0
Davey C	Pump driver	£19.10.0
Davis C	Labourer	£19.10.0
Dusrow C	Shovel driver	£19.10.0
Evans Mrs	Fruit shop	£10.10.0
Evans Sarah	Boarding House	£12.0.0
Ferguson G C	Surveyor	£24.0.0
Finlay H G	Assistant stores	£29.18.0
Fleming J H	Transport officer	£21.0.0
Fraser N	Carpenter	£19.10.0
Gehrig F	Boarding House	£22.4.0
Gordes F	Labourer	£19.10.0
Gray D L	Schoolmaster	£19.10.0
Hamilton C	Labourer	£19.10.0
Howling R	Postmaster	£7.16.0
Jones W	Blacksmith	£19.10.0
Kinsella L	Leading fitter	£19.10.0
Knowles L N	Plant foreman	£21.0.0
Ladd G	Shovel driver	£19.10.0
Lewis M	Labourer	£19.10.0
McConchie A R	Draughtsman	not known
McDonald J	Billiard Saloon	£15.0.0
McIntosh J	Labourer	£19.10.0
Mehrens G C	Foreman	£21.0.0
Meredith W	Ganger	£19.10.0
Moore P	Butcher	£12.0.0
O'Brien P	Ganger	£19.10.0
Phillipini J	Ganger	£19.10.0
Power J	Ganger	£19.10.0
Purtle W	Labourer	£19.10.0
Richards P	Labourer	£19.10.0
Robinson J	Labourer	£19.10.0
Rutherford J M	Storeman	£21.0.0
Ryan J	Head cook	£19.10.0
Shannon Amy	Storekeeper	£19.16.0
Smith Bert	Labourer	£19.10.0
Smith W	Fitter	£19.10.0
Storey M	Miner	£19.10.0
Swain A	Carpenter	nil occ built
Thomas R	Storekeeper	£12.0.0
Till A G	Ganger	£12.4.6
Watkins W	Cook's assistant	£19.10.0
Williams E	Groom	£7.16.0
Wood F	Benchman	£19.10.0
Zeinert Mrs F	Confectioner	£9.0.0
	RC Church	£2.0.0
	Police Station	No rent



Map showing layout of Hume Weir Village c.1923 (Victorian Section)
[Redrawn from information on the original sketch]

lished 100 years ago this year. Pauline would like to hear from anyone with information that might be useful in her research. Her phone number is (02)6021 6472.

JOURNEYING THROUGH THE JOURNALS

by John Craig

The Muster - Central Coast (Gosford) F.H.S. Journal. December 2006.

1. Transcription of Charles Kinsela funeral registers 1905/1982 now complete;
2. Index to notices *The Gosford Times* 1879-1933; and
3. D.M s- Probates - Inquest

Descent: Society Australian Genealogists (5.A.G.) Journal. Decem-

ber 2006.

1. Copyright. Some provisions of the act have changed. Copyright in a library differs from commercial copying facilities.
2. Obituary: Nicholas John (Nick) Vine Hall died Melbourne October 2006 aged 62 years.

Ances-Tree: Journal of Burwood F.H.G. November 2006.

1. Emigration applications from Baden-Wurtemberg and Hohenzollern to parts of Europe and New World..

Military Historical Society of Australia: Albury-Wodonga Branch Newsletter 5/2006.

1. Presentation on Military Service of WO1 Colin Druitt: 20th Light Horse; Darwin Mobile Force 2nd AIF; Interim Army; BCOF; and ARA; 1936-1964.

Still Wanted

Bulletin contributions about Albury's history and heritage: say 200-300 words about such things as identities; sport, buildings, businesses, your research and books you've found useful. Talk to the Editor: Doug Hunter 02 6021 2835, or djhjrhlaptop@bigpond.com

2. A definitive biography of Australian WWII fighter pilot *Clive Caldwell-Air Ace* by Kirsten Alexander.

Memento: National Archives of Australia Magazine. Summer 2006/2007.

1. National Security; The internment of Australians considered security risks during WWII

2. Joseph Lyons and Keith Murdoch and the 'Leaked Cables' affair 1932.

Book Donation: *The Homestead: a Riverina Anthology*, by Peter Freeman.

OPERA IN ALBURY 100 YEARS AGO

On 4 February 1907, the Albury Operatic Society announced its decision to perform "Floradora" during Albury Race Week. "Floradora" was described as "one of the most tuneful and successful comic operas produced in Australia". It had never been performed in Albury. The first rehearsal and allotment of parts was scheduled for Thursday night at the Conservatorium in Smollett Street at 8pm.

The committee discussed the matter of Sunday rehearsals and decided not to continue its previous practice because, "many musically inclined folk hold aloof from the society at this season." [Should that have read 'for this reason'?] *Border Morning Mail* 4 Feb 1907

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