



ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

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OCTOBER 2007

473

REPORT ON THE SEPTEMBER MEETING (12/9/07)

You will remember in October last year we 'farewelled' the Albury Regional Museum with a meeting at the Turk's Head venue and four months ago we 'farewelled' the Library at the 'old' building. Now thirty members and guests met in the new facility to 'welcome' the Library Museum. We listened to two entertaining speakers, Phillip Shanahan who spoke about a century of St Patricks Tennis Club, and Kevin Monte who continued his work history. We then availed ourselves of the kitchen facilities and enjoyed supper.

Carole Whitbourn, a staff member of the Library Museum, spoke briefly of the rather frenetic but immensely pleasing process of moving into and operating the new facility. Visitors in the first month were 17,000 and 1800 new library users registered.

Borrowings are up 60%.

This is progress from 'Visitors to museum 18.12.1982-25.1.1983: adults 374; students/children 168.'

The folk museum at the Turks Head was run then by a part-time director and volunteers from the Historical Society. In truth: From little things big things grow!

The Society was represented at the opening of the Harold Mair Bridge and the unveiling of an interpretive panel about the Albury Railway yards, and a plaque marking the 25th anniversary of the first XPT service to Albury. It was also represented at the launch of Keith Crossley's History of the Albury High School. Keith's book is available at the school.

Jan Hunter, with the support of the Society, has gained a grant of \$1,000 from the Royal Australian Historical

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY

10 OCTOBER 2007

7.30pm at Commercial Club
Albury

Speaker: Graeme Hicks:
"Kokoda 2007."

Research in progress: Pauline Harbick: "Lester & Son and other early undertakers in Albury."

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What were the notable happenings in Albury during the 1980s?

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Question of Month answer Page 2
History of St Patricks
Tennis Club Page 2
Work history K Monte Page 3

Society (RAHS) to assist with the publication of her forthcoming book "Building the neighbourhood: North Albury 1920-1950.

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Single: \$22

Family: \$30

Corporate: \$50

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.alburycity.nsw.gov.au/librarymuseum/research

ANSWER TO QUESTION OF THE MONTH

How and when did Papua & New Guinea become 'part' of Australia?

Geoff Hamilton provided an answer: Queensland attempted to claim the eastern half of New Guinea in 1883, but this was disallowed by the British government. The following year Great Britain declared a protectorate over the south-eastern portion of the Island, calling it British New Guinea. The German New Guinea Company had already established control of the north-eastern quarter of New Guinea plus islands to the north. The German government formally annexed this part of the territory in 1884.

Great Britain handed the Protectorate of British New Guinea to Australia in 1906 beginning Australia's rule of Papua (Australian Territory). In September 1914, Australian naval and military forces captured the German colony. At the end of the Great War, the Treaty of Versailles decreed the former German New Guinea would become a Mandated Territory under the protection of Australia.

During the Second World War the separate administrations of Papua and New Guinea were merged. In 1946, a new future was planned for the country. Australia accepted the Trusteeship of New Guinea (the old German colony) from the United Nations promising to prepare it for advancement and self-determination. Australia included its own territory of Papua in this promise.

Papua New Guinea became self governing in 1974 and independent on 16 September 1975. So PNG was 'part' of Australia from 1906 till 1975.

ST PATRICK'S TENNIS CLUB 1907-2007

Talk by Phillip Shanahan

It was only a couple of years ago we walked past a plaque in our club house dated 1907 and realised we had a centenary dinner coming up and a celebration of 100 years of our tennis club. Where does one start when you have a 100 years of history? I have been at the club since 1986 and I didn't know a lot about it so the first thing I had to find out as President was where we came from and what made St. Patrick's a great club.

I visited houses around Albury and the safe opened and out came life membership badges and old *Border Mail* articles of the history of tennis in Albury. It was the start of assembling our Club history. We had a fire in the club many years ago when it was in its first location and everything was destroyed so we really had nothing when we went to the new site. Putting together our club history involved phoning and talking to a lot of people. We had one photo up in the club house to begin with and after six months we now have 78 framed pictures up in the club house now.

St Patrick's Tennis Club started of course in 1907 at the instigation of the parish priest, Father Joseph Dwyer. The club comprising four courts was located down behind Haberfield's Dairy. The entrance was via a lane in between two houses in Olive Street.

The earliest photo that we have of St. Pat-

rick's tennis club dates from about 1912. It shows the costumes of the day and the umpire chair. I am sure if they could get one of those now it would be used in a Wimbledon final.

St. Patrick's club was the first to have night tennis in Albury. Electric lighting was installed in the early 1920s at a cost of £130. So new was the experiment in those days the club was advised to have a post for every light. One can only imagine trying to play tennis with a dozen posts on each side of the courts. After a few racquets were smashed and many collision with the posts occurred, it was decided to have them removed and the lights suspended. The all up cost was £200.

There were some great Club members at St. Patrick's. The first two were Norm Frauenfelder and his doubles partner Carg Hamilton. I believe up until the 30's they were never beaten in doubles in the area. Norm Frauenfelder played in an exhibition match against Davis Cup player Fred Kalms at St. Patrick's in the 1920s in front of a large crowd, and it was just gold to find a photo of the occasion. Norm was also made a life



1936-37

St Patrick's A Grade Premiers

Jack Perry, Norm Frauenfelder, Jack Nolan, Carg Hamilton
Mary Hamilton, Kit Storey, Mary Glover, Glad Matthews
[From St Patrick's Historical Collection]

member of the Albury Tennis Association.

Both Norm and Carg were active in work around the club. In the *Border Morning Mail* 21st Jan 1950 Norm Frauenfelder was quoted as saying if ever a man did so much for the game for so little reward it was Carg Hamilton, from top dressing courts to concreting and erecting fences. After watering and rolling the four courts, Carg would then mark the courts with a white-wash brush. His wife Mary was a guest speaker and was interviewed at the Centenary Dinner on the 1st June at the Commercial Club, she is our longest serving life member.

Three others who were instrumental of keeping the club alive were Peter and John Lucas and Patrick Wighton. Those five seemed to be the five who probably did most of the work for the club. Peter Lucas spoke at the Centenary night at the Commercial Club and he said St. Patrick's was always at its best when it had no money because people got in and did the work. He said, "When we knew we were broke we knew that we were healthy."

Some of the great players of course Margaret Court my Aunt started her tennis career at St. Pats and Margaret was invited back to be the special guest at the centenary. She really enjoyed the night. some of the other great players Dianne Fromholtz as a young girl, Oriel O'Brien and one of the great legends of Albury tennis who should have played Davis Cup for Australia was Jimmy Matthews. Rex Hartwig was invited to the Centenary but was unable to attend. Rex often talks about having a hit around at St. Pats. There is a picture of Margaret when she was about 13 taken with the young Rex

Hartwig who is probably one of the greatest players this region has ever produced. playing Davis cup for Australia.



Preston Motors staff outside the Townsend Street premises c.1950

In 1970 the constitution was changed to allow the club to appoint its first non-catholic president and that was Eric Thomas from Culcairn. Eric was president for nine years. Lucas talked about that period of time in Albury when the catholics were walking down the street and the protestants were walking down the other side. I think the footballers started all that when St. Patrick's had a football team, so we won't blame the tennis players.

In 1985 the clubhouse for a second time was destroyed by fire, everything was lost, life membership board, club champions names and it has been difficult to get all that information back.

In 1987 the property in South Albury where the courts were sited was sold to the Housing Commission for £123,000. The club received £10,000, and had to find a new home. Father Moylan the then parish priest of St. Patrick's together with Patrick Wighton and Royce Boyd, and with the help of Harold Mair MP arranged for the club to relocate to new courts in East Albury adjacent to the Albury Sports Stadium. We have three items that came from the old club: two plaques and the front gate. The front gate had been dedicated by Father Conway, Monsignor Larkin and Jack

Friedlieb. Margaret Court opened the new facility on 13th March 1988.

The Centenary celebrations in June were an opportunity to ask guests to record their memories of the past years of the club. We got a huge response and are filling in many of the gaps in our history.

O O O

A WORK HISTORY

Talk by Kevin Monte

I count myself as an Albury person being born at "Burnley" Private Hospital in 1930. I was away from Albury for my early years because my father was in the RAAF. I returned in 1944, and the next year took up an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic with Preston Motors in Townsend Street. Prestons had the GMH dealership. The new manager, Robert Jacka, started the same day I did. Several years later he went to head office and Bob Callahan took over as manager.

The motor mechanics course was a five year one and included fitting & turning, welding and panel-beating. Work hours were 8 till 6 weekdays and 8 till midday Saturday. I started on twelve shillings and sixpence a week and for a while swept floors, washed parts and ran messages. One job I did get was cleaning gas producers on vehicles. There was very little petrol in Albury at the time. Gas producers were

temperamental and I often lost my eyebrows and singed my hair trying to start one. I studied at Albury Technical College which was located at the corner of Dean and Olive Streets in the building now occupied by the Conservatorium.

I remember the arrival of the first Holden cars at Prestons. They had not been named at that stage so they were registered as Chevrolets. A week later they were officially named Holden and the mascot was fixed to the bonnet. That was the FX series.

I injured my hand at work so was given light duties for four weeks. This consisted of going to Melbourne by train and driving new vehicles back to Albury. That was the days when new vehicles had to be 'run-in,' so the trip was almost 8 hours at 35 mph. One day I picked up a Maple Leaf truck. It was only a half-cab and chassis. It had no seat so they tied a park bench to the chassis and I drove home sitting on hard wooden slats. Not much fun I can tell you.

Some of the names I remember in the workshop were Eric Lyons and George Martin. Mr Martin was a retired Petty Officer and started off running the workshop like a ship's company. This caused a bit of dis-sension among the ex-servicemen mechanics. He mellowed after a while and we all got on well.

Robert Jacka's personal secretary was Shirley Burrows. Her father was a Wodonga policeman. We met through work and social outings and after four years courtship we married.

Also in 1946 I joined the No 12 Sqn of the Air Training Corps together with another apprentice Owen Meredith. That didn't last very long with the war being over. We trained for about four months and it was disbanded. In 1951, I joined the local CMF unit, 8/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles. It was a tank regiment. I missed out on national service training. I was 21 years of age by then and they were only accepting 18 and 19 years olds. I was in the unit for six years.

I stayed seven years at Preston Motors then left to work for Geoff Gregory. Geoff was a Vacuum Oil representative originally from WA. He saw an opportunity to take up a

dealership for David Brown tractors then Land Rover and Rover. He opened the business in the old Bannon & Glenn building on corner of Mate and Bellevue Streets in North Albury. Jeff and Bert Lewis had been operating Bannon & Glen but as their business moved more into Army surplus vehicles they moved to Bandiana.

Land Rover was popular with farmers. It was the only four-wheel drive alternative to army surplus. In 1953 Gregory Motors gained the dealership for Volkswagen. The German makers were very particular about the operation of dealerships: showroom space and good workshops with special tools to service the vehicle and adequate spare parts. The 'beetle' was a great seller and the fully imported models trouble free. Once local assembly began however, so did our warranty problems.

John Duncan (Snr) joined Gregory Motors as a salesman after the company moved to Townsend Street. He was the father of Councilor Amanda Duncan-Strelec. He worked there for sometime before leaving to go into loss assessing. He asked me to join him as a motor loss adjuster. That was about 1963.

I worked with John for just on 9 years before Shirley and I eventually bought him out. I had developed a passion for fire and general losses, and investigation work which was workers comp and compulsory third party insurance in those days. I went to Sydney to arson seminars, so took on a lot of fire losses, domestic and commercial, and also bush fires. This kept me going quite a bit out of town and all over New South Wales and Victoria. The office was upstairs in the old White House building also known as the Snow White laundry and shortly after Shirley & I bought John out in 1972, we moved to Dean St near Foto Supplies and later to 580 Stanley Street.

Soon after we moved from Dean Street it turned into an illegal gambling den. I won't mention names, but I had a friend that was a bit addicted that way and I went to pull him out of the place because he was loosing money. Lo and behold, still on the door was our business name Kevin J Monte & Co. I was on to the agent in a flash to have it removed.

We opened offices in Shepparton, Wagga and Bendigo and had a staff of 20. Our Stanley St premises were not entirely satisfactory, so we were looking to buy. One day, Shirley was walking to the Post Office and they were busy putting up a 'For Sale' sign at 560 Stanley St. She came back and told me. We rang the agents and within two hours had purchased the place. We stayed there for a number of years. The house was built by a Mr. Hodge and it was about 110 year old when we brought it.

I had taken up flying by this time and it was an advantage for the type of work I was doing. I could travel all around NSW in a quarter of the time it took to drive, and flying myself to remote areas cut down on costs. I use to do a lot of work on rural properties throughout NSW, flying out as far as Cobar, Bourke and Wilcannia. I would be away for a few weeks sometimes, especially if there were bush fires because of the loss of buildings, fencing livestock etc.

I used to stay overnight at properties while I worked out adjustments with the owner. One experience I'll never forget. It was a station called "Wingding," and the owner's four daughters were home from boarding school. I worked through to about 11.30 that night calculated and agreeing losses with the owner and by that time I'd had enough so decided to have a shower and go to bed. I got into the shower and lo and behold the lighting plant ran out, so it was total darkness, I was standing in the bath naked when one of the girls came in with a torch asking: "Mr. Monte are you all right?"

That is one little episode I have never forgotten.

We operated our own business for about 25 years and adding the nine years I had with John, I had 33 years in loss assessing I started to wind down in my late 60's and I stopped at 70. Today the only thing about insurance I want to know is whether my house, cars are covered. My son took over the business completely. I've got absolutely nothing to do with it.