

ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

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JULY 2008

481

REPORT ON THE JUNE MEETING (11/6/08)

Thirty members of the Society attended to the business of the AGM and heard Albury identity Horrie Polkinghorne speak about the history of roller skating in the Albury district.

The office-bearers and committee were returned unchanged except that Catherine Browne was elected to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Helen Pithie who has left the district.

The work of our Research Officer, Helen Livsey, was noted with great appreciation. Research fee revenue for the year amounted to \$785.

The Question of the Month attracted many answers drawing on a variety of local histories and material from the Australian Dictionary of Biography-Online edition.

Following the meeting, members were able to view the skating memorabilia that

our speaker brought along. Memorabilia included skates dating from the 1800s, roller hockey stick and ball, and a jacket worn by Horrie when he played for the Australian veterans' team.

* * *

ANSWER TO QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Who was Dan Morgan and who was the district squatter with whom he had a bitter feud?

Several members brought answers. An authoritative reference is John McQuilton, "Morgan Daniel (Dan) (c.1830-1865)" in *Australian Dictionary of Biography Online Edition ANU*; ISSN 1833 7538.

Dan Morgan, the bushranger, terrorised the Riverina between 1860 and 1865. He robbed and murdered to the extent that commerce suffered in the district. Hawkers, travellers and stock buyers were robbed at gun point, road gangs and station workers were assaulted.

During a holdup at *Round Hill Station* near Culcairn in June 1864, Morgan shot and wounded

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY

9 JULY 2008

7.30pm at Commercial Club
Albury

Conclusion of AGM

Speaker:

Colin Laughton: "A history of Laughton's Foundry."

Research in Progress: Jan Hunter : *Mate's Communiques*

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Looking up and down Dean Street between Kiewa and David Streets.

See page 6 for quiz.

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ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Single: \$22

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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

two men and shot and killed a third as he rode for a doctor. Morgan occupied a lookout on a hill near Walla Walla. It is now a popular tourist attraction.

Bitter enmity existed between Morgan and all the squatters in the district including Robert Rand of *Mahonga*, Thomas Gibson of *Burrumbuttock*, and Evan Evans and Edmond Bond of *Whitfield* in NE Victoria.

After the *Round Hill* shootings, police intensified efforts to capture Morgan and a reward of £1000 was offered. In separate confrontations Morgan shot and killed Police Sergeant Maginnity near Tumberumba and Sergeant Smyth of Albury.

Morgan's undoing was his decision to return to Victoria to settle old scores with Evans and Bond. He held up *Peechelba* Station near Wangaratta, but word was got out by the nurse Alice Keenan, and an armed party was waiting for the outlaw next morning. Morgan was shot and mortally wounded just after dawn on 9 April 1865 as he went to saddle a horse. He was 35 years of age. Criminal activities occupied all his adult life. Morgan was buried at Wangaratta.

A feature film, "Mad Dog Morgan" was screened at the Cannes Film Festival in 1976. It won the award for Best Western.

* * *

ROLLER SKATING IN ALBURY

Talk by Horrie Polkinghorne.

HISTORY OF SKATES

Skates in various forms have been around since the early 1800s. The first in-line skates appeared in Belgium in 1820. They were used by ice skaters who wanted to skate when there was no ice. They also made water skates in Belgium. They were made on a board like snow skis, but they were awkward to transport because they were so long,

so others were made that were pumped up with air to suit the skater's weight. They were more popular.

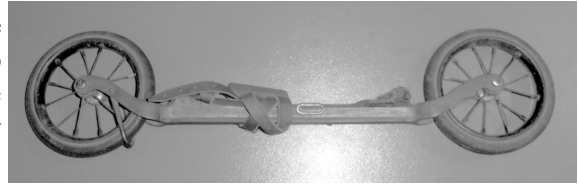
The long skates come from Scotland and were used for skating on roads. The long wheel base handled the dirt road surfaces well enough for high speed to be achieved. In 1880 an Australian won a world road skating championship in England reaching nearly 60 mph on those long road skates. Road skating declined as bicycles became popular and skating became confined to rinks. Skates changed to suit rink conditions. Early ones had four wooden wheels mounted on wooden soles that were strapped to shoes or boots. Later the soles were made of metal.

Roller hockey skates are different again. The wheel base is shorter so the player is on four wheels all the time, not on heel or toe as in normal skates. I ground off the outer edges of my wheels, a bit like motor cycle tyres, to get greater freedom of movement.

LEARNING TO SKATE

I was born in Albury in 1931 and ran a saddlery business here for 50 years. I learned to roller skate when I was young. Our family lived in Smollett Street and I used to hear music coming from the skating rink. I didn't know where it was coming from until one day someone took me there and I saw people skating around and I thought: Oh my goodness, that is what I would like to do!

When you watched people skating, they were smiling and were just floating along and that was



Road skate made in Scotland c.1880 used on dirt roads and capable of speeds in excess of 60kph

H Polkinghorne collection

really something nice to see. There was a guy skating backwards and within two weeks I was able to do that too; that was the passion I had for it.

When I first learned to skate it was during the war years when the soldiers would come into the Palais on a Saturday night to the dance, some of them would be very intoxicated so I learnt to skate jumping over the drunken soldiers. Those days there were many more men than women skating.

ALBURY RINKS

The first skating rink in Albury was in Smollett Street and was built about 1888. The second rink was the Federal Skating Rink built in 1890 on the corner of Kiewa and Stanley Streets. The third one was built in Kiewa Street where Blacklocks was situated.

The fourth skating rink was at the old Showgrounds on the corner and Young and Guinea Streets which is now The Scots School. The fifth rink was behind the Palais Royale dance hall. It was opened in 1937 and



Roller Hockey skate. Shorter wheelbase for better control especially if edges of wheels are ground off

H Polkinghorne collection

extended and altered several times to include miniature waterfalls and gardens. During the summer months, they extended the skating rink beyond the dance floor area; it was a massive concrete area.

ALBURY SKATING CLUB

The Skating Club was run by a committee for 35 years. When the Palais was sold and the rink closed in 1968, the committee started a new skating rink in 1970 at the Albury Showgrounds. It took the committee 12 months to set up the rink because a new floor had to be put down. When we had our meeting each month we would take our skates along and after the meeting would all skate down to the Gloucester Hotel on the corner of Townsend and Smollett Streets just to keep us fit until our rink was finished. We had some hockey players visiting from Adelaide and one of them said, "What are you doing here? You should be in a bigger place."

We thought, "How can we afford a bigger place?"

So that is when we looked at moving to the Village Centre on the corner of Crisp and Young Streets. When we went to the bank to get some money all the members went guarantee for about \$500 each and we put the new floor down. In six months everything was paid for, and it was known as Village Skateland. We were there for 27 years. My first wife, Norma, was the club treasurer for 40 years and my daughter Dianne was club secretary for 15 years. Norma managed Skateland for 25 years; she did all the clean-

ing, selling tickets and drinks etc. She did a fantastic job.

ROLLER HOCKEY

I played team roller hockey for many years representing Albury. I have played in 30 Australian tournaments in capital cities around Australia. We had a lot of good players over the years but our team never won an Australian title.

When I was a boy, the Albury roller hockey team used to play all around the Riverina. We had a very loyal team; they stuck together and, nobody could beat them.



Albury Roller Hockey Premiers 1948
L to R Back: Wally Phillips, Bob Davis,
Horrie Polkinghorne
Front: Len Vogel and Bill Moffitt
H Polkinghorne collection

I came up with the idea that we would select the captains out of the four best players and we would put four numbers in a box and each captain picked a number out. The captain who drew out number one had the first pick for his team and so on. To have a good team you all had to get on well with one another. so that happened for 50 years.

We used to go to various centres teaching roller hockey: Brisbane, Newcastle, Wollongong, Sydney etc. We also taught at

Mordialloc, a suburb of Melbourne and they finished up beating us. Most teams that we taught did beat us. We felt that was good as we helped promote the sport and it seemed like a family affair.

The first game of roller hockey was played in Australia in 1880's but it wasn't played competitively until 1912. There was a lot of roller hockey played in Sydney.

Incidentally, Charlie Chaplin was a great roller hockey player and skater and he thought more of skating and roller hockey than he did of clowning. My 1977 Statesman Caprice,

red in colour and fully restored, was made in the year that Charlie Chaplin died so I will always remember him. In Albury, roller hockey was always played at 9pm Saturday night which meant that the game was played while the other skaters were out having their cup of coffee. Rules for hockey varied between states. We were part of the Victorian Association and played with a puck, a hard fibre disc about 5 inches in diameter, and allowed full body contact. NSW and Queensland played with a croquet type ball and didn't allow body contact. As you can imagine, this led to problems when we played NSW teams in carnivals. Before the match we had to agree on the rules.

We were invited to play an exhibition match against the local team at the Goulburn Lilac Festival in 1956. When we went to Goulburn all they talked about was how much money they would back themselves to win. They never

R U L E S
OF THE
ALBURY RINK.

MEMBERS' COMMITTEE:

W. J. JONES, Esq.

D. J. ABERCROMBIE, Esq.

Dr. NICKOLL.

The Rink will be open to the public on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday Afternoons and Evenings.

Admission, One Shilling.

Skates for Gentlemen, 1s. ; Skates for Ladies, 6d. ; Children half-price, Skates 6d. up to 8 p.m.

Monthly Tickets for Gentlemen, 12s. 6d. ; Quarterly, £1 10s. Monthly Tickets for Ladies, 10s. ; Quarterly, £1 2s. 6d.

The Rink is open for Ladies ONLY from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., but to all Members at any other time up to 10 p.m.

No Metal Rollers allowed.

Lessons given by Professional Attendant, 2s. per hour.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT:

Messrs. DARBY and HEADLEY.

PRINTED AT THE "ALBURY BANNER" OFFICE.

Opening times and admission charges for a skating rink at Albury. Pamphlet undated and no address for the rink. Can anyone provide a date, or information about the rink and the persons named?

talked about the rules. There was 5000 people at the game. in the main street of Goulburn. When the game finally started they suddenly said we had to play the game their way. I held up the game until we came to an agreement.

We agreed to use the ball but contact was not banned, so when

the game began again, and one of the Goulburn guys had the ball and kept turning his back on the other players, one of the Albury players took him out. The Goulburn blokes said, "You mongrels! If that is how you want to play we'll show you."

They couldn't show us as we were 'contact' men. The *Woman's Day* wrote up the story about how much the crowd

enjoyed the game.

It was on that trip a gentleman gave me two very old books about skating. He gave them to me because he said that I was a good skater and he thought I would treasure them which I do. Once I loaned them to the Australian Federation of Roller Skating in Brisbane and did I have a job getting them back again.

When a Queensland team came down to Albury to play against our team, we beat them. After they went back to Queensland, apparently no one up there believed that the Albury team had beaten them. They wanted written confirmation from the *Border Mail* that the Albury team had won.

DEMISE OF THE SKATING RINK

Several things led to the closure of Skateland. The popularity of in-line skates and skateboards, and good concrete footpaths and other paved areas to skate on for free, and the skate park in David Street took young people especially away from the rink. It became hard to get committee members and to pay the rent, so Skateland closed in the late 1990s.

Transcribed by June Shanahan
Edited by Doug Hunter

* * *

AMERICAN FEVER AUSTRALIAN GOLD: *American and Canadian involvement in Australia's Gold Rush.*

This publication is now available on CD from co-author Christine Wild 3 Fadden Court Wodonga 3690 at a cost of \$40 plus \$2 postage.

Included among the North Americans who came to the district are William Brickell and Adam Kidd. They were both born in Ohio USA and arrived in Albury in 1852. They had a general store in Townsend Street; ran the Exchange Hotel for a time; operated the punt over the river, and built the first Union Bridge in 1861.

* * *

TAILORESSES IN ALBURY

In our report on tailors in Albury, we listed only men. There were ladies who, while they didn't conduct their own businesses, did work as tailoresses.

Patricia Strachan says her father's aunt Miss Susan Rake worked as a tailoress in Mate's Tailoring Department for many years. Patricia says, "I remember when I was about 7, I wanted a pair of bib and brace overalls for my boy doll. Mother got Auntie Susie to draft a pattern for them. The resulting overalls were perfect."

Mrs Elizabeth Passant worked with Edgar Roberts, Tailor, of Temple Court Dean Street in 1926 not long after emigrating from Wales with her husband and his family.

Do people know of other tailoresses we can add to our fund of knowledge?

* * *

READING BLOCK 19 BONEGILLA

The Society has been fortunate to obtain a generous grant of \$2000 to produce a Guide for teachers conducting secondary school visits to the Bonegilla Migrant Experience Heritage Park. Our application was strongly supported by the Wodonga Historical Society. Dr Bruce Pennay is to carry out the work and the Guide is to be posted on several local websites from where teachers will be able to download it.

We hope the Guide will encourage schools from as far afield as Melbourne to visit the Heritage Park and to obtain maximum benefit from the experience.

* * *

NSW POLICE IN THE BUSHRANGING ERA

Australian Heritage, Winter 2008 issue, carries an article pertinent to our discussion on Dan Morgan. The discovery of gold, the rapid increase in popu-

lation and the rise of bushranging gangs in the 1850s brought about a reorganization of the NSW Police under the control of Inspector-General John McLerie.

The force was modelled on the Irish Constabulary with the State divided into police districts. Albury was one. Mounted police predominated in the regional districts.

Police received better weapons. The muzzle-loading pistol was replaced by the Colt six-shot revolver and the muzzle-loading carbine was replaced by a breech-loading model. Each policeman was issued with 20 rounds of ammunition and had to account for each shot fired. A sword and handcuffs completed his equipment.

By 1866, the 'bushranging war' in NSW was largely won. "Flash" John Gilbert, Ben Hall, "Mad Dog" Morgan and Thunderbolt had been shot and killed

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ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

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and Frank "Darkie" Gardiner had fled overseas. Police numbers, organization and equipment had established secure and safe conditions for commerce, transport and colonial life generally.

* * *

AWM PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION

The Australian War Memorial (AWM) is embarking on an ambitious project to obtain an original photograph of each of the 102,000 names on the memorial tablets around the Pool of Remembrance. Details are available on the AWM website or see Doug Hunter or Chris McQuelin if you have a photograph.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN RESEARCHING?

Are you interested in doing some research, but can't decide on a topic, or are unsure how you might begin? Here is a list of projects waiting for someone

to apply a bit of close scrutiny:

- The Biscuit Factory;
- stock & station agents;
- tanneries;
- soap making;
- Viscount Holdings (Albury's first publicly listed company);
- Albury Hospital (150th anniversary in 2010);
- Albury & District Historical Society (50th anniversary in 2010).

You might, of course, have a topic already chosen.

Helen Livsey is happy to give some leads in how to research the topic. You would be welcome to report on 'Research in Progress' at our monthly meetings. Final work can be published as an A&DHS Paper using our ISSN.

Getting started is the important thing and the Society has experienced people happy to help you do so.

* * *

QUIZ: LOOKING UP AND DOWN DEAN STREET BETWEEN KIEWA & DAVID.

1. Where is the Kiwi with the key?
2. Which clocks have no numerals?
3. Where does it say "Peace Loan 1919"?
4. How many flag poles between Kiewa & Olive Streets?
5. Where are the two snakes?
6. Where are the terra cotta chimney pots? How many are there?
7. Where is "The Block" written?
8. Where is the 'Chief Town Planner 1985-1992' remembered?
9. Where does it say "Established 1850"?
10. Who are the three families with buildings named after them?

Bonus Question:

Where is the headless kangaroo?

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