

# ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

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484

## REPORT ON THE SEPTEMBER MEETING (10/9/08)

Forty-one residents of Murray Gardens Retirement Village joined with twenty Society members to enjoy a varied program in the Community Centre at the Village.

Soldier, Darrin Wright, presented a well illustrated report on his deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan to evaluate equipment and procedures being used by Australian troops in the two theatres. Other speakers were Carole Whitbourn and Howard Jones.

A trivia quiz, complete with Fantale rewards, followed by a mystery item brought along by Michael Browne, rounded out the first phase of the evening.

The gathering then broke up to view the static and digital displays while enjoying a fine supper.

Jill Wooding and Catherine Browne provided an interest-

ing display of dolls houses with miniature furnishings, and a collection of antique toys. Our books and publications also drew interest.

The digital display ran on two laptop computers showing Powerpoint presentations: one of the building of the Hume Dam and the second a CD prepared by Judy and Neisha Webster for St Matthews Church entitled "Brides of St Matthews." Concurrently, a DVD of Albury Buildings made by the late Gerry Curtis was shown on the DVD player.

The response from Murray Gardens residents was positive. The consensus was that we should do it again some time.

### IMPRESSIONS OF IRAQ

Report on a talk by Darrin Wright  
Darrin Wright is a member of the Australian Defence Force. In mid 2007, he spent seven weeks in Iraq and Afghanistan evaluat-

## NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY

8 OCTOBER 2008

7.30pm at Commercial

Club Albury

**Speakers: Gerard Hunter:**  
"History of Hunter's Shoes."

**June Shanahan:** "Some family history."

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Where in Albury was wool sold, stored or traded?

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## ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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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.alburyhistory.org.au](http://www.alburyhistory.org.au)

ing equipment used and the operating environment encountered by Australian troops in these theatres of operations.

He flew via Darwin to pick up troops going to Iraq, then to a refuelling stop at Diego Garcia, a US base on a remote atoll in the Indian Ocean, and finally on to Kuwait. At the Ali Al Salem air base in Kuwait, pre-deployment training was finalised. This included weapon training wearing full body armour.

#### **ALI AL SALEM**

Ali Al Salem accommodates between 15,000 and 20,000 troops in air-conditioned tents.

Temperatures can reach 54°C. Recreation facilities include swimming pools, McDonald's and Pizza Hut. There is also a car dealership where service personnel can salary sacrifice to purchase a new luxury motor vehicle and have it waiting for them on their return to the USA. This was something new to Australians.

While in Kuwait he inspected bunkers built of reinforced concrete for the Kuwaiti military by a French company. The bunkers were designed to be missile-proof, but were easily penetrated and destroyed by US missiles during the Second Gulf War when they were occupied by invading Iraqi forces. The Kuwaiti government has taken the contractors to court claiming compensation for non-performance of the bunkers.

#### **BAGHDAD**

Darrin then flew to Baghdad. The journey from the airport to the Australian HQ in Baghdad is along Route Irish, the second most dangerous road in the world. Traffic on the route is frequently targeted by insurgents with rockets and explosive devices. Passengers travel in the 'Rhino bus,' an armoured com-

partment, or 'pillbox' mounted on a strengthened truck chassis. The bus is escorted by Humvees, light armoured vehicles. Darrin's journey was uneventful, but several days earlier a Humvee was destroyed by a rocket and the crew killed.

In Baghdad, the Australians are accommodated in a palace built for one of Saddam Hussein's sons. It is one of a number of palatial buildings around a man-made lake. The buildings are of sandstone and marble with gold-plated fittings. The palaces have swimming pools and BBQ areas. Soil excavated to form the lake was deposited just outside the city to make one of only two hills in the region. It is used by the allies for communication transmission towers. Black Hawk helicopters are in the sky over Baghdad all the time.

#### **TALLIL**

From Baghdad, Darrin flew to Tallil air base from where the Australian troops were monitoring security in southern Iraq and supporting the Iraqi military. (This deployment ceased in June 2008.) The base was home to allied forces from a number of nations including Romania who dubbed their lines 'Camp Dracula.'

Near to the camp was the ancient city of Ur. Darrin visited the site and viewed the House of Abraham that had been restored by the Saddam regime in preparation for a visit by the Pope. The building has been painstakingly restored but no roof has been put on it. The papal visit never took place because the regime announced they could not guarantee the Pope's security in Iraq.

Tallil base also has a recreation and commercial area with a PX store, McDonald's etc. Commerce is staffed by Pakistani, Indian and Turkish nationals.

Iraqi nationals have little contact with coalition forces because they fear reprisals by insurgents.

Darrin noted the paradox of the region: the ever present debris of war - destroyed aircraft, tanks and other weapons, and the beauty of the sunrises and sunsets caused in part by the desert dust and the smoke from oil refineries.

#### **AFGHANISTAN**

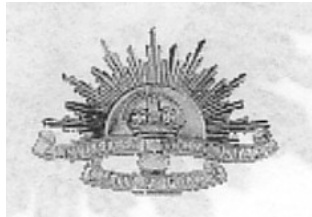
Darrin also visited Australian troops stationed at Camp Holland in Afghanistan before returning to Australia. He found Australian equipment is among the best in use by any nation especially the Bushmaster 4 x 4 armoured fighting vehicle manufactured by Thales of Bendigo, Victoria. Dutch forces co-located with the Australians in Afghanistan are using Bushmasters and have purchased more.

Darrin concluded by answering a number of wide-ranging questions.

#### **ANSWER TO QUESTION OF THE MONTH**

*What is the meaning of Mungabareena and what is its significance to the history of Albury?*

It was noted that Murray Gardens Estate is located on the ancient ground used by Aboriginal people for meetings and ceremonies prior to the trek to the mountains for the Bogong moth season. The aboriginal name Mungabareena means: place of plenty talk. In 1835, William Wyse claimed a squatting lease by that name for his employer Charles Ebdon. In 1838, Charles Huon purchased *Mungabareena* for his widowed sister, Mrs Elizabeth Mitchell. Elizabeth Mitchell became known for her charitable works in the district as "the mother of Albury." Mungabareena Reserve is today one of Albury's best known recreational areas. Roma Freeman read a comprehensive answer from the preface of a book of verse entitled *Mungabareena Poets* compiled by Albury resident, Eve Alva Smith.





Postcard showing Dean Street looking east from the CML tower c. 1934. One of two cards sent to us by the Echuca Historical Society. They came from D Moriarty Collection (dec'd estate).

### INFORMATION & MEMBERSHIP DAYS

Tables were set up and manned in Centro Albury and Centro Lavington on Friday & Saturday 12 & 13 September to raise the profile of the Society and attract new members. Jill & Joe Wooding took charge of booking the places and setting up the displays.

Photographs of old Albury scenes and businesses generated the most curiosity. There were a few expressions of interest in joining the Society. Surprisingly few people took any of the free handouts.

Greatest interest was among older people. Young people were not interested at Lavington but some looked through the photo-albums at Albury.

Results from this type of activity might take time to eventuate and will probably be connected to other Society activities.

### ANTIQUÉ & COLLECTABLES VALUATION DAY

This was a runaway success. One had to join a queue to join a queue. June Shanahan did an excellent job of organising Ken Buxton's visit and sending out media releases to publicise the event. She received excellent support from Albury City and the LibraryMuseum. A total of 280 items were valued. Ken

Buxton indicated he would be willing to come again next year.

### SNAPSHOTS OF THE BORDER MAIL.

Talk by Howard Jones

The *Border Mail* is our best source for local history. Its files go back to 1903 when the first copy was printed by brothers Hamilton and Decimus Mott.

Prior to 1924, there were two other Albury papers, the *Albury Banner & Wodonga Express* and the *Albury Daily News*. The *Mail* bought and closed the *Daily News* in 1924 and the *Banner* ceased publication in 1950.

In the early days, newspapers were the only source of news, beside word of mouth. Radio became another source of news in 1930 and TV followed in the 1960s. But the newspaper files are still the best written record for most events and happenings in Albury.

Let's look at how the *Border Mail* has changed in our life times.

### 1950

I'll give a picture of the paper in the 1950s, when the office was in Dean Street. The paper cost three pence, and was *The Border Morning Mail*. Circulation grew from 12,000 to 15,000 by 1959.

Hamilton Mott was owner, publisher and editor, and his son Milton Mott was general man-

ager. Gordon Dowling was advertising manager and John Barton handled sales.

There is a bronze bust of Hamilton Mott in the entrance foyer to the Albury Library-Museum.

Printing was by hot metal. When the office was rebuilt, the sub-editors went upstairs and proofs were passed between them and the printers in a bucket with a bicycle chain contraption.

Some of the young cadets became famous. Desmond Zwar became a Fleet Street journalist and author. Jim Eames became chief public relations man for Qantas. John Wilczek became a Family Court judge.

In the office, June Buchhorn started at the counter in 1953. She stayed until 1989. Our longest serving staff member now is Billy Everett, who started in 1963.

### 2008

Let's now jump to 2008. The paper is no longer owned by the Motts but is part of Fairfax Media. We have two companies, the *Border Mail* and *BM Printing*. Between them we have 185 staff, having lost a few through automation of the press room operation.

We produce about 8 million *Border Mail* papers each year. The average for six days a week is 25,571 copies, but 34,878 on Saturday, which gives us 87,000 readers. That's not all, because *BP Printing* prints 24 hours a day six days a week.

Every week we print 90 newspaper titles, including the *Domain* real estate titles. That adds up to three million papers a week. We use 350 tonnes of newsprint a week, costing about \$1000 per tonne. Much is sourced from Norske Skog at Ettamogah,

but some comes from Singapore. No printer operator of this size can rely on a single supplier. Thirty semi-trailers a week deliver newspapers from the press in Wodonga to Melbourne and across Victoria.

#### WEBSITE

News is no longer kept for the next morning, but breaking news is published as soon as possible on our website. For example, at 1.25pm today we published that a teenager had been hurt in a car crash at Lyne Street, Lavington. But for the rest of the news, you'll have to buy a copy.

#### THE MATE'S BUILDING: A BRIEF HISTORY:

Mate's building on the corner of Dean & Kiewa Streets is an Albury icon. It has the inscription "Established 1850", which is a little misleading. The business was established in 1850, but not on that site, or in that building.

TH Mate opened his first store in existing buildings on the corner of Hume and Townsend Streets in 1850. This was 6 years before the opening of the first bank, or the printing of the first newspaper, in Albury.

A substantial building was constructed on the site in Hume & Townsend Streets in 1884, and business continued to be operated from there.

Thomas Mate retired in 1887 and his son-in-law, Mr D A Thompson took over as Managing Director.

In 1900, a new building was erected on the corner of Dean & Kiewa Streets. This location was originally the site of the National School. When the school moved to Olive Street in 1861, TH Mate had purchased the Dean Street site.

The building had two storeys along the Dean Street frontage only, and had large arched windows along the upper storey. This building was destroyed by

fire in 1915. Business was conducted from other buildings including the Mechanics Institute until rebuilding was completed the following year, 1916. Again, the second storey was limited to Dean Street until 1929, when it was extended along Kiewa Street as well. The architectural style of the 1916/1929 building was modern, having strong horizontal and vertical lines.

D A Thompson's son died in WWII and this might have precipitated the sale of the company to Burns Philp in 1946. Little changed however, so that in 1948, Mate's had the Department Store, a Bulk Store, a Timber Yard, a Brickyard, and a subsidiary company: Tawonga Timbers Pty Ltd. The company employed approximately 200 people.

In 1952, a furniture store was built on the western side of Kiewa Street between Dean & Smollett Streets. In 1960, Mate's was extended south along Kiewa Street. A glass & concrete structure was erected over a large basement.

Mate's closed in 1976 when Burns Philp sold to Waltons which in 1987 became Venture Stores.

In 1988, the entire Dean & Kiewa Street building, comprising three levels, was refurbished at a cost of \$3.5 million.

#### JOURNEYING THROUGH THE JOURNALS

By John Craig

*Murrumbidgee Ancestor: Wagga Wagga FHS Journal*, Jun 2008.

•The Shearers and their Bicycles.

*Links'N'Chains: Liverpool G.S. Journal*, Aug 2008.

•Redcoats on the Northern Coast: the establishment of Fort Dundas 1824.

*The Argyle Bulletin: Goulburn HS*

*& FHS Journal*, Aug.2008.

•Hail! Black Caesar: Bushranger, Explorer, Discoverer of route to Southern Tablelands.

*Richmond River HS Bulletin*, Sep 2008.

•"My early school days." Sylvia Singh/Grewal.

*Wagga Wagga HS Newsletters* Jun/Jul & Aug/Sep 2008.

•Wagga's first fire brigade, est. June 1880;

•Loss by fire of the Wagga Drill Hall in 1908: home of 6<sup>th</sup> Coy.

*Borderline News: Wodonga FHS Newsletter*, Aug 2008.

•Congratulatory letter from Helen Livsey on Society's 21<sup>st</sup>.

•Bedella writing awards: Open: Barry Pinkerton; Novice: Robin Gross.

*Insites: Historic Houses Trust NSW Magazine*, Sep 2008.

•Lost Gardens of Sydney from mid 1800s.

*Memento: National Archives of Australia Magazine*. Sep 2008.

•Alias Smith and Jones: soldiers that fought and died under a false name.

*Ances-Tree: Burwood*

*FHS Journal*, Jul 2008.

•German ships list part II; "Solon" from Bremen to Morton Bay 1859.

*Parramatta Packet: Parramatta FHG Newsletter*. Oct 2008.

•Parramatta buildings and people 60 years ago.

*History: RAHS Magazine*, Sep 2008.

•Special edition of "War Cry" celebrating 125 years.

*Inherit: Heritage Council of Victoria Magazine*, Jul 2008.

•Bullets, Buildings and Ashes: remnants from the Glenrowan siege.

*Heritage: Heritage Council N.S.W. Magazine*, July 2008.

•Australia's Naval Gallipoli Hero: Submariner Captain Henry Stoker.

#### OUR WEBSITE

The A&DHS web site has been updated with information about Society activities. Some back copies of the *Bulletin* can be downloaded from the site. A more comprehensive Timeline will be added as soon as it is finalised.

[alburyhistory.org.au](http://alburyhistory.org.au)

#### CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

**We have booked for Friday evening 12 December. More details next Bulletin.**