

ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

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NOVEMBER 2008

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REPORT ON THE OCTOBER MEETING (8/10/08)

There was a good roll up for our October meeting. Guest speaker, Gerard Hunter spoke about the history of the oldest family owned business in Albury, Hunter's Shoes of 549 Dean Street.

June Shanahan spoke about her inquiry into the many strands of her family history; their arrival in Australia and eventual settlement in the Goulburn Valley.

The question of the month reminded members of the major influence of the wool industry on Albury. Roma Freeman's recollections of attending wool sales with her father added a valuable fillip to the answer.

NOREUIL REGATTA

Doreen Widdison raised a question late in the meeting: "Did anyone remember a re-

gatta on the river at Noreuil Park in the 1930s?"

Helen Livsey said she had seen a photograph of a decorated boat. Since the meeting we have been able to view the photograph and search newspapers to obtain information. The regatta was held on what we know as Australia Day, but in 1933 called Anniversary Day.

YACKANDANDAH MUSEUM

The Society has received an invitation to the re-opening of the Yackandandah Museum on 29 November 2008. The festivities begin with a street parade at 2 p.m. followed by an official opening by Andy Muirhead, from the ABC "Collectors" program.

Members will remember the Yackandandah Museum was destroyed by fire in December 2006. The volunteers are to be congratulated on restoring the facility so quickly.

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY

12 NOVEMBER 2008

7.30pm at Commercial Club
Albury

Speaker: David Hicks: "History of the paper mill at Ettamogah."

And

Howard Jones: "History of the Albury Gaol."

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Where and when was newsprint paper first produced in Australia? Where did it come from prior to that?

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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

HUNTER'S SHOE STORE

Report on a talk by Gerard Hunter.

Gerard Hunter is the third generation of his family to run Hunter's Shoe Store in Dean Street. He started work with the family firm in 1966. Hunter's Shoes is Albury's oldest family business, having been in the family for 108 years.

There were three Hunter brothers resident in the Port Phillip District in the 1840s, Alexander, James and John. The brothers were pastoralists and they were the originators of the Saltwater, or Maribyrnong River race track which is now Flemington. In 1875 John and his wife had a son, also named John, who became Gerard's grand father.

The family moved to Barnawatha and opened a general store. It seems John's mother died and his father remarried and this prompted the thirteen year old to leave home and come to Albury to seek his fame and fortune. That was in 1888.

John worked for five years with Mate's Ltd in the shoe department for three shillings a week, then was enticed to Fallon's shoe department at five shillings a week. He stayed for 8 years then in 1900, he linked up with two brothers Roy and Sonny Quinn who had a boot repair business in Townsend Street. Gerard's grandfather leased the front of the shop and started Hunter's Shoes.

In 1917, John Hunter purchased the freehold of 549 Dean Street. The building was part of the old Town Hall Hotel that had been sub-divided. The old rooms with numbers on the doors are still in place today, but are now only used for storage. The ground floor has been renovated at least twice.



Hunter's Shoe Store 549 Dean Street photographed in 2008. Upper storey was part of the old Town Hall Hotel. John Hunter bought the freehold in 1917.

John Hunter was something of a character. He always wore a three piece suit with a gold watch chain. Apparently he was very quick at figures and often pencilled for local bookmakers. He had a number of sayings: "Look after your business and it will look after you. Neglect your business and you'll go to the zoo!"

Another was: "If you've got it, make out you haven't got it. If you haven't got it, make out you have!"

In 1937, Gerard's father Ken joined the business and worked in it for 50 years.

During the 2nd World War, he served overseas and the business was closed while he was away. When he returned from the Islands in 1943, he reopened the business. He organised a loan from the bank, but after stocking the shop he had exactly five shillings in the till to give change.

At that time there were only four shoe shops in Albury:

Whites, Moys, Morrisons and Hunters. By contrast, when Gerard entered the business in 1966, there were 32 outlets, giving some indication of how Albury had grown post war. Ken Hunter retired in 1987.

Shoes are a competitive market. Gerard believes the success of Hunters is its determination to stay in one market and stay ahead of the competition. The store has specialised in fractional fittings that cater for narrow, medium and wide feet. This is popular with the target market. Quality of leather and shoe construction is another important feature.

Hunters had always sourced about 90 percent of its stock from Australian factories, but when China came on board they went that way for a while. Now, however they deal mainly with the European countries. Italy has great tanneries that produce beautiful leathers, but the best constructions come out of Germany.

LIST OF FINANCIAL MEMBERS AS AT 15 OCTOBER

Corporate:

Lester & Sons (P Harbick)

Life:

W Chambers

N Douglas

B Geddes

Albury City Council

Commercial Club

Honorary Life:

A Davies

H Jones

H Livsey

Families of:

C & M Browne

G & D Hamilton

J & R Harrison

J & D Hunter

C & S Judd

W & B Moriarty

S & K Monte

M & B Pennay

E & K Scholz

C & P Whitbourn

J & J Wooding

Individual

D Bartsch

R Boadle

M Bollenhagen

R Braddy

A Brennan

J Bullivant

M Comitti

E Cossor

K Crossley

R Freeman

R Gear

J Henwood

F Higgins

A Holloway

L Howard

T Jelbart

A Kelso

I Krain

B Kurdian

H Leggatt

D Lindner

H Mair

J McKenzie

C McQuellin

J Marsden

D Mould

A Nugent

R Paech

P Palfy

L Passant

H Polkinghorne

D Royal

M Royle

S Schubach

P Scott

J Shanahan

C Simpson

F Stevenson

P Strachan

V Symons

G Trampusic

V Wharton

J Whitla

D Widdison

The store has never been one for high heels. "To be honest," Gerard said, "looking at the stock today there are some heels, but there are no stilettos, or anything like that."

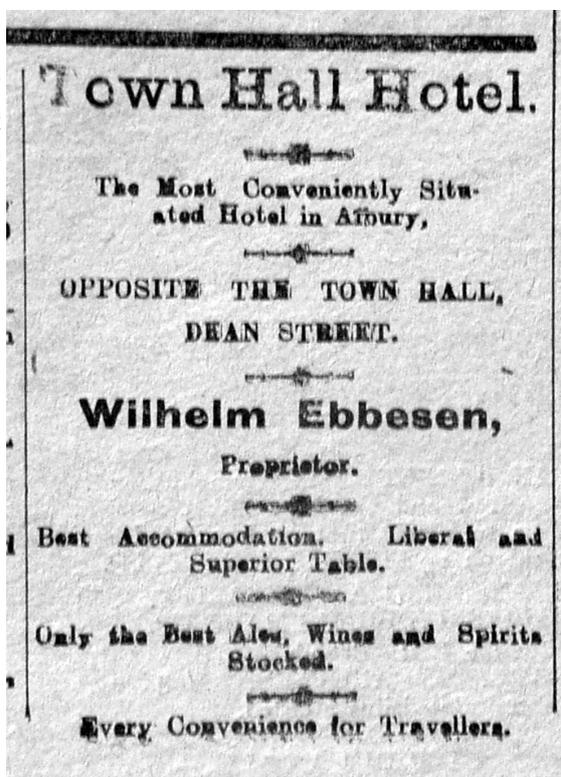
ANSWER TO THE QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Where in Albury was wool sold, stored or traded?

Members, especially older residents, had no trouble listing the large and very substantial buildings owned by the great pastoral agents that traded in wool. A change in the way wool was traded has resulted in all these buildings being closed and either renovated for other purposes, or demolished.

Clustered around the corner of Young and Wilson Streets were Dalgetys and Younghusbands. Dalgety's wool store was a multi storied building that for many years also hosted the Sheep Show and Trade Fairs. It was demolished in 2002 and replaced by Bunnings.

Younghusbands had two buildings on opposite sides of Wilson



Advertisement for Town Hall Hotel, Albury Daily News 27 Feb 1913. This was four years prior to the building being subdivided and John Hunter buying a portion for his shop.

Street, the first built in 1927 and the second in 1936. After the wool store closed, retailer, Harvey Norman purchased 430 Wilson Street. As part of land swap the ownership passed to Albury City Council. The building was sold in November 2006 and is presently being demolished for redevelopment.

Younghusbands had another

store in Young Street opposite the junction with Swift Street and backing on to the railway. It was demolished in 1986.

Farmers & Graziers wool store was a multi-storey building in Smollett Street between Kiewa and Townsend Streets. This building was renovated in 1980s and is now occupied by the Australian Tax Office.

In Bridge Street South Albury, the three companies had three large timber and fibro sheds. Two were used for classing and one for storage. There was also a skin store. Norman & Heath was another skin buyer. They had premises at various locations: the old Federal Theatre cnr Kiewa & Stanley Streets; Wodonga Flats between the causeway and the river; and cnr Townsend and Nurigong Streets South Albury. Norman & Heath also traded in rabbit skins.

Albury was one of several regional centres that had wool sales dating from early in the 20th Century. A decorated float in a 1931 parade was inscribed: "Albury the Premier Inland Market. Albury's sales last year totalled

£1,650,000.”

The *Border Morning Mail* of 31 Jan 1933 reported:

“Tomorrow afternoon at 2 o'clock, the Albury wool selling firms, Dalgety & Co Ltd, Younghusband Ltd and the Farmers & Graziers Coop Co Ltd will offer the largest selection of wool ever sold in this town. The three firms will have for disposal 17,000 bales.

“Each year the possibilities of Albury as a wool-selling centre are becoming more and more recognised.”

Sales were conducted at the respective wool stores, with the order of selling determined by drawing lots, until November 1935 when the first sales were conducted in the Wool Exchange Dean Street.

The Commercial Club built the Wool Exchange as part of their club rooms. Sales continued at the Wool Exchange at least till the 1970s when a number of factors brought about the demise of wool sales and stores in Albury.

WOOL IN ALBURY IN DECLINE

In the early 1970s the price of wool collapsed to about 1/10th its 1950/51 high, so many graziers turned from sheep to cattle. This greatly reduced the amount of wool produced.

Another factor was the introduction of core sampling which did away with the need to have bales available for inspection by the buyers. Core samples were assessed in Melbourne so buyers no longer visited Albury. Selling became computerised so buyers could operate from anywhere, even overseas.

Improved road transport and the practice of dumping, whereby bales were compressed to a smaller volume, meant wool could be trucked direct from shearing shed to the wharf.

The change was momentous for Albury where wool stores had been the city's largest employer, and the railway em-

ployed hundreds more to handle wool consignments.

During wool sale time it was impossible to obtain hotel accommodation in Albury. So the passing of an era was felt keenly by Albury's commercial life generally.

GOING TO THE WOOL SALES

Roma Freeman remembers as a child, attending wool sales with her father Hubert Odewahn. First they went to Farmers & Graziers store to see how their wool looked after the bales were opened for inspection by the buyers. Lots grown by various farmers were identified by catalogue numbers.

Then they went to the Wool Exchange in Dean Street to hear their wool sold at auction. At mid-day all adjourned for lunch. If prices were good then it was to the George Hotel, but if prices were down then the Hume Weir Café got their custom.

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MATE'S LTD 98TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

(*Border Morning Mail* 26 May 1948)

“To mark this unique occasion,” the advertisement ran, “TEN HEADS have planned Ten Days of Grand Surprises!”

The departmental heads were:

- Mr L Haskins, drapery, toiletry, handbag, wool, footwear;
- Miss E Perry, women's and girls' fashion & underwear;
- Mr F Farmer, men's and boys' wear, tailoring;
- Mr A Campbell, kitchenware, hardware, paint, brushware, gardening requisites;
- Miss M Adams, crockery, glassware, silverware, pottery, travel goods, toys;
- Mr F Potter, grocery, delicatessen, biscuits, wine and spirits, smokes;
- Mr G Cruickshank, floor coverings;
- Mr G Mainwaring, furniture and bedding;
- Mr A Duffy, electrical and

sporting goods;

- Mr I Reiher, timber yard & joinery workshop.

The surprises included:

British figured headcloth 2 coupons 3/10½ yd; Namco Pressure Cooker 95/-; 27" bordered Axminster hall carpet in green floral pattern 35/- yd; Pyrex casseroles 8/- and 9/7.

Mate's Timber yard was sole Albury and District distributor of Masonite—the wonder board of 1000 uses.

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ALBURY COMMERCIAL CLUB

Notes from souvenir brochure for the official opening of new building 11 July 1957. The brochure was dedicated to Arthur G Colquhoun Esq who served as secretary from 1918 to 1955.

- 1902 New Club formed to superseded “The Border City Club” at meeting 7 May.
- 1904 First poker machine purchased £5.
- 1904 First billiard table purchased £65.
- 1907 Entrance fee of £1/1/0 introduced.
- 1908 Telephone installed.
- 1916 Electric light installed in Club Rooms at a cost of £14.
- 1922 Shelter shed for members' cycles erected.
- 1935 Wool Exchange erected.
- 1936 Bowling green officially opened.
- 1940 Set of 15 drums purchased and presented to 2/23rd Battalion (Albury's Own) at a cost of £134.
- 1955 Club membership 900. Value of property £100,000.
- 1957 Building extensions opened. Included bowling green, billiard room, locker rooms, kitchen, board room and secretary's office and re-designed entrance.

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ANNIVERSARY DAY 1933

The Noreuil Park Festivities for Anniversary Day 26 January 1933 were advertised in the *Albury Banner* 25 Jan 1933. Admission Adults 1/-, children 6d.

The *Banner* of 3 February



Decorated boat at Anniversary Day (now known as Australia Day) celebrations held at Noreuil Park, 26 January 1933. This prize winning craft was entered by Dalgety Ltd and highlights their travel section.

1933 reported that attendance was limited probably owing to some rain and generally dull weather. However gate takings were £63.

The chief attraction was the procession of decorated boats and canoes. The Noreuil Park Lifesaving Club gave a display of rescue techniques from a pontoon anchored on the river.

The decorated watercraft remained on the water after dark and were lit by powerful electric lights while the Town Band played and a concert was held.

BASIC WAGE 1933

Converting pounds, shillings and pence to decimal currency is a problem when writing about the past. Often the conversion

gives a very misleading and somewhat ridiculous picture.

To say it cost 1/- (10 cents) to attend the Anniversary Day at Noreuil Park in 1933 can be put into some perspective by quoting the weekly basic wage at the time as £3/6/7 (\$6.66). The minimum wage in 2008 is \$546 so on that basis, the 1/- admission charge would be \$8 in today's money and the gate takings \$10,330.

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ANCESTORS OF JUNE MARY SHANAHAN

Notes from a talk by June Shanahan
June Shanahan's ancestors were typical of nineteenth century migration from Great Brit-

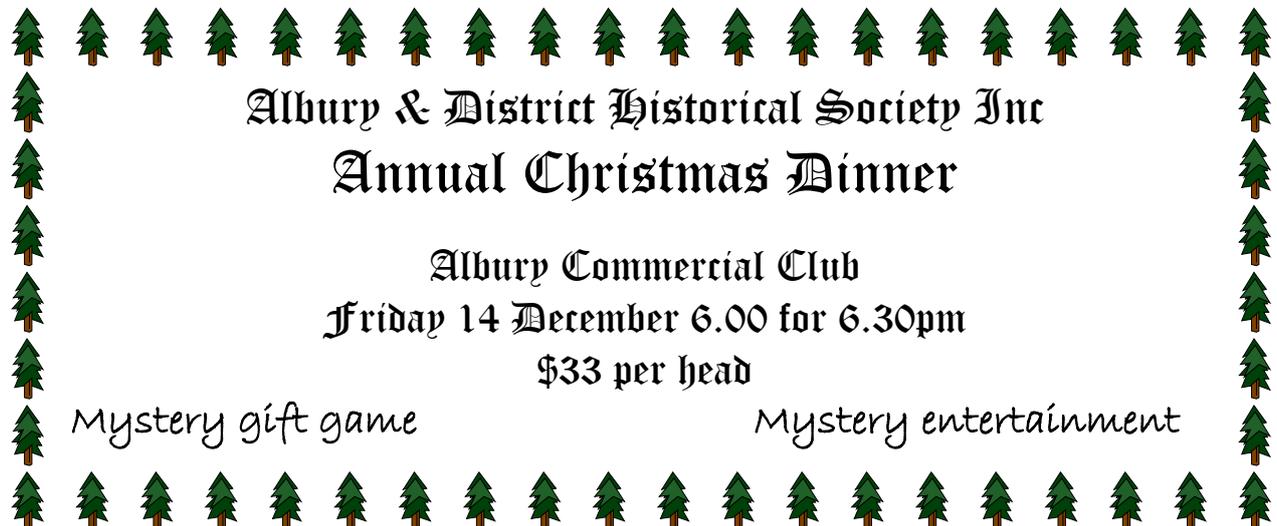
ain and Ireland to Australia. Only one came as a child with her sister and parents. All the others came as single young people who met and married in the colonies.

June's earliest ancestor in Australia, Caroline Gumbleton arrived with her family from Dorset, England in 1837. Her father had contracted to work for seven years for pioneer Camden Park pastoralist John Macarthur in return for the family's passage and keep.

The next to arrive was James Dockart in 1856. James came from Perthshire Scotland. He married Catherine McCoy from Limerick Ireland. She had arrived in 1856 also. The couple married at Bathurst in 1858. James was 27, Catherine 25.

John Beaufort was next to arrive. His family were from Guernsey, Channel Islands. The youngest of 9 children, he went to sea at an early age and was serving as cook on the *Helen Wallace* when he arrived in Sydney in 1862. He obviously decided to stay. John married Mary Neve the granddaughter of Caroline Gumbleton at Lake Albert near Wagga Wagga.

More of June's ancestors arrived about 1866. James



Albury & District Historical Society Inc
Annual Christmas Dinner
 Albury Commercial Club
 Friday 14 December 6.00 for 6.30pm
 \$33 per head
 Mystery gift game Mystery entertainment

Dr. Cleaver Woods'
PRIVATE HOSPITAL,
" BURNLEY,"
SWIFT-STREET, ALBURY.

Skilled Nursing. Home Comforts.

DR. CLEAVER WOODS wishes to intimate to his patients that he has of late **ENTIRELY CHANGED HIS NURSING STAFF** And, having renovated and re-furnished the Hospital, has placed it under the care of thoroughly Competent Nurses.

Advertisement in *Albury Banner* 4 March 1898.
 But what was the story behind it all?
 "Burnley" was demolished in 1964 to make way for the Albury Library which was in turn demolished in 2007.

Smith, who was born in Hertfordshire England in 1836, migrated to Victoria where he married Kate Myers, a native of Tipperary Ireland. Their first child William was born at St Kilda in 1868. Another son James (Jr), born in 1870, moved to the Goulburn Valley near Shepparton where he ran several hotels and trained trotters.

Hugh Nawn arrived at Moreton Bay settlement on the sailing ship, *Queen of the Colonies*. He was from London. He married Catherine Dockart, daughter of James and Catherine, at St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Bourke NSW in 1879. Hugh was licensee of the Post Office Hotel at

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nearby Enngonia. Lawrence Houlihan was 30 years of age when he migrated to Victoria from Tipperary Ireland. He married Mary Myers at St. Frances Church, Melbourne in 1877, and then took up residence at Tongala in the Goulburn Valley.

Thus at the end of a half-century of migration from distant parts of England, Scotland, Ireland and the Channel Islands, descen-

dents of the families had gravitated to the Goulburn Valley of Victoria and the stage was set for the next chapter in June's family history.

NEW BOOKS

Two new books on Albury history have been received from the printer: *12 Squadron Air Training Corps RAAF: a unit history*, by Chris McQuellin, and *Just a local builder... Maurice Chick looks back*, by Jan Hunter.

12 Squadron Air Training Corps, traces the history of this unit that trained local 16-18 year old boys between 1941 and 1946. When cadets turned 18 they were able to enlist in the RAAF and their ATC service

accelerated their progress to ground, or aircrew training.

The Squadron Commander was Lester Harley Davison and Edgar Passant, who had served in Royal Navy airships in WWI, was an instructor.

Chris has gathered personal recollections from former ATC cadets including Jack Larkin, Doug Atchison and Kevin Monte.

The very attractive book is available from Chris who is asking a donation to Australian Airforce Cadets, Albury Squadron training funds.

Just a local builder..., is the history of Albury building firm, AB & MA Chick Pty Ltd through the eyes of the principal, Maurice Chick. Maurice began his apprenticeship with his father A B Chick in 1941. This was interrupted by 3 years in the AIF after which he returned to the firm eventually buying his father out in 1955. AB & MA Chick built many commercial and industrial buildings in the Albury region including the Albury City Offices, Clyde Cameron College (now Murray Valley Private Hospital), Wirlinga Ammunition Depot, Sanyo, McDonald's (8 in total) and Viscount Motel. The book contains a comprehensive photographic archive of buildings.

The book is for private distribution, but there are copies of both books in the Albury Library.

The Treasurer

Albury & District Historical Society Inc

PO Box 822 Albury 2640 OR at Meeting 12 November 2008

I /We will be attending the Christmas Dinner.

Name/s

Cash/Cheque \$..... Final numbers needed by 9 Dec at latest!

Also, please bring to the Dinner a mystery gift, value not exceeding \$5