



ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

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578

REPORT ON APRIL MEETING (12.04.2017)

The first speaker for the evening was Ray Gear with a well researched talk on the early business people of Townsend St pre 1870. Townsend St had developed organically as Albury's main business thoroughfare influenced by the overland traffic route from the north and the location of the crossing place over the Murray River at the end of Hume Street. It wasn't until the turn of the century that Dean St took over the title of the main street of Albury. We then had two entertaining stories on heritage in my street from Harry Leggatt and Joe Wooding.

Victoria Cooper spoke on her role and the pathways she took to become the Albury Library Museum Curatorial Officer. Her interest and focus is increasing accessibility and engagement of the collection through new technology and exhibition and digital design. The upcoming wedding photography exhibition *Capturing I Do* will present the McPherson collection using digital content. After hearing Greg Ryan speak on Fires & Fire Fighting in Albury from 1860-1920 it is a miracle that we have any heritage buildings left in the town after numerous infernos were lit by accident or often intentionally in the central business district. The fire brigade at the time were under manned, ill equipped and lacking the essential ingredient for extinguishing the flames. As an introduction to the Empire Day Bonfire talk at the May meeting Doug recounted a story about Ray Harrison's bonfire building adventures. We would like to mark on a map of Albury the sites of all the Cracker Night fires. Members are reminded that nominations for Office bearers and the Committee must be in the hands of the Secretary 22 days prior to the AGM.

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY

10 MAY, 2017

7.30pm at the Commercial
Club Albury

Peard Family History

Speaker: Nancy Massey

Empire Day Bonfires

Speaker: Narda Reid

LAVINGTON
LIBRARY

BELONGING

27 MAY-22 JULY

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Businesses
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ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

PO Box 822 ALBURY 2640

<www.alburyhistory.org.au>

For your reference A&DHS account details are:

BSB 640 000 Acc No 111097776 (Albury & District Historical Society Inc)

Patron: Patricia Gould OAM

Honorary Life Members:

Howard Jones, Helen Livsey,

June Shanahan, Jan Hunter.

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Bulletin dispatch: Richard Lee

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Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month
7.30pm usually at Commercial Club
Albury.

Committee meets 3rd Wednesday of
the month 5pm at the Albury
LibraryMuseum.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Single: \$25

Family: \$33

Corporate: \$50

Research undertaken \$25 first hour.
Enquiries in writing with \$25

There were at least 30 major fires to business premises which resulted in either total destruction or severe damage in the 50 years from the 1860s to 1910s. Add to this record the homes that were destroyed by fire in the same 50 years, Albury needed an effective and efficient fire brigade, but the early efforts to form such a brigade were not very successful.

On 3 January, 1863, the Albury Banner reported:

“On Sunday the inhabitants of Albury were roused from their afternoon siesta by the cry of ‘fire’ ... the black smoke which

rose in a column, from Kiewa Street, soon told that a domestic calamity had occurred at our doors. The smoke soon burst into a flame from the premises, adjoining Fallon’s store, occupied by Mr Owen, a carpenter ... suddenly the wind veered round ... it looked as though the whole block of buildings was in imminent danger. Everyone came to the rescue. Lines were formed to the nearest wells, and buckets, unfortunately limited in number, were passed along, and speedily emptied on the burning mass. Providentially the wind shifted, and in little more than an hour the immediate danger was overcome ... Indeed, we never saw more neighbourly co-operation. We shall hope to see, from the specimen displayed last Sunday afternoon, Albury soon possess a most valuable and energetic fire brigade.”

On 14 February 1863, a meeting was held with the mayor presiding, to form the first Albury Volunteer Fire Brigade. An editorial in the Banner implored “It is the business of the officers to assist in supporting the brigade ... it is the business of the council to assist also and it is the business and interest of all to join the Albury Volunteer Fire Brigade.” On 7 March, the first general meeting of the brigade was held and a letter from the Secretary of London & Liverpool Insurers was read approving the brigade rules and promising a sum to purchase an engine and to contribute to maintenance costs. James Fallon and Thomas Gaden were appointed trustees, Alderman Kenneth McLennan treasurer, C. Phillips secretary, Albury’s town clerk, Henry Brooks elected as the brigade’s first Captain, Patrick Fallon was Senior Lieutenant.

In November 1863, the brigade took delivery of an engine that they christened fagh-a-ballagh, an Irish battle cry meaning “clear the way.” The town was said to have paid about £100 for the engine. The engine was not used until May 1865, and that was to pump water from a cellar. The Border Post of 17 May, 1865 reported that the engine proved “to be adapted for no better purpose than watering a garden. It threw a small stream of water a distance of about nine feet ... it was at least half an hour before the pumps could be got to suck.”

The engine was of no use and spent several years behind the Rose Hotel in Kiewa St before the landlord offered it for sale by auction. It was said to have sold for £7.

In October 1868, fire destroyed Albury’s oldest hotel, the Hume Inn, built by Robert Brown. The Albury Banner reported that “The hotel, with store, stables, etc have been completely gutted — the brick walls alone remaining.” During a three day inquest, the jury heard that prior to the fire, the windlass and bucket had been removed from the well and water tanks overturned. The jury also questioned why the landlord (not Robert Brown) had completed an inventory of the property before the fire. They concluded “whether by accident or design, there was not sufficient evidence to show.” There was no mention in the newspapers of the fire brigade attending.

The first brigade folded in about 1873 and a new brigade formed in 1875 with Thomas Waller as captain. The Border Post reported that “the entrance fee for members was fixed at 2s.6d.”

In March they advertised in the Melbourne Argus for a “second hand fire engine in thorough working condition.”



Albury's First Motorised Fire Engine George Hodge 1916
Courtesy: Albury LibraryMuseum Collection

FIRES & FIRE FIGHTING IN ALBURY 1863-1916

It was reported in the Leader (Melbourne), that to pay for the engine, each of the forty volunteers "has had to canvas for subscriptions. Each member has had to pay for his own uniform." The same newspaper reported that insurance companies had not contributed and "neither has the local municipal council lent a helping hand."

On 8 May, the Australian Town and Country Journal reported

"The Albury Volunteer Fire Brigade may now be considered fairly organised ... The brigade consists of about 40 effective members. A very good engine has been purchased, and the brigade consider themselves after a few weeks drill, fully prepared to cope successfully with any ordinary fire. It is intended to have a grand demonstration on the 24th inst. The Chiltern band has been hired for the occasion; there will be a torchlight procession in the evening, followed by a grand ball."

In March 1875 the workshop of Frederick Selle at the rear of his furniture store in Dean St was destroyed by fire and a young man, Charles Henry died in the fire. The Albury Banner reported "another striking proof of the need of a water-supply for Albury was afforded by a fire attended unhappily with loss of human life ... as it happened, the large tank at Mr Higgins' was full of water, and the top being removed, a ladder was brought and buckets handed along from one to another and dashed on the roof and sides of the store. Another supply of water was obtained from the well; but both sources were soon drained to the last drop. Limited however as was the quantity of water available, it happily proved sufficient to prevent the fire from spreading."

A new engine, christened The Rescue, was tested in June 1875. The Albury Banner reported that the engine threw a stream of water over the Bank of NSW in Townsend St and over the Globe Hotel. The water "was provided gratuitously by water carriers in the town."

In March 1876 a fire broke out in William Hill's store in Wodonga. It was reported that as the flames were "plainly visible in Albury, the Volunteer Fire Brigade at once set off." Arriving too late to save Mr Hill's store, they were successful in "preventing the spread of the conflagration."

On 3 January, 1879 fire gutted the coach building factory of G E Robinson in Townsend St. The Border Post commented "the origin of this fire appears to be most suspicious, and call for something more than ordinary investigation by the police. No work was done in the factory the day previous, nor was any person resident on the premises, and it stands to reason that with the description of articles in the factory at the time, spontaneous combustion was hardly possible ... the Fire Brigade did not put in an appearance." This is hardly surprising given that the fire started at 4 am and Albury had no firebell.

Just two weeks later, a fire completely destroyed Higgins and Baker's coach factory in Smollett St before spreading to and destroying the Exchange Theatre. The Albury Banner reported that "The pluck displayed by several of those who got upon the roof, and at imminent peril of their lives tore down the rafters of the theatre whilst the flames were actually bursting through the roof, was simply beyond all praise and there is not the least doubt in the world that to their exertions is due the saving of the hotel, and, indeed, of the entire block adjoining ... at the first alarm several water-carts started off for the river, but it was necessarily a considerable time before they could get back with their loads."

The paper went on to report losses of several thousand pounds and also commented

"The cellar was rushed by a crowd, who had done nothing to stay the progress of flames, and the liquor stolen wholesale. To give one example, 60 bottles of case whisky of the most expensive brand were taken away bodily, while champagne, wine, brandy, &c., were removed in an equally wholesale manner." A jury found "that there was no evidence to show how the fire occurred."

In spite of significant losses due to fire, for want of funds and frustration with poor water supply, in February 1879 this second brigade also disbanded and all their equipment sold.

Later that same year, there were other serious fires. In April a fire destroyed D'Alpuget's hairdressing salon in Townsend St and the adjoining Australian Hotel was also damaged. Just two days later, in the early hours of 1 May, the Albion Temperance Hotel in Swift St, belonging to

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FIRES & FIRE FIGHTING IN ALBURY 1863-1916

James Fallon, was almost totally destroyed by fire.

Then in August, the most severe of the year's fires, the Imperial Hotel in Townsend St was totally destroyed and next door the Bank of NSW was completely gutted (the bank building became Kia Ora, a private home and the bank rebuilt in Dean St). Newspapers reported that at the inquest the verdict was returned that "The burning ... was the act of an incendiary, but there is not sufficient evidence to attach the crime to any individual."

One week later, a fire destroyed the premises of Nathaniel Whight, baker & confectioner, at the back of the Border City Hotel in Townsend St. Also in August, Mr Fraenkel's store in Townsend St was damaged by fire "the second time this store has been on fire, and the third fire which has happened to property belonging to Mr Fraenkel." Then in November 1879, Stassen's store on the Sydney Rd was completely destroyed.

In December a fire caused severe damage to the Albury Club Hotel in Dean St - newspapers reported that "it fortunately happened that a large body of water was in an adjacent pond, and the cellar door being burst open and plenty of water being thrown in, the flames were extinguished. The hotel had a very narrow escape of being utterly destroyed."

The Ovens & Murray Advertiser headed its report with "Another mysterious conflagration took place in Albury on Thursday morning" when reporting a fire in October 1880. The fire in Kiewa St, close to the Rose Hotel, destroyed Mr Finney's boot shop, Mr Armstrong's fruit shop and Mr McDonald's butchery. Newspapers commented "the need of a water supply was severely exemplified by this fire, as with a good head of water, more than half the damage might have been prevented."

In January 1882, the Ovens & Murray Advertiser reported a fire at the rear of the Dean street ironmongery and hardware store of George Hunter, "but it was fortunately noticed in time. As we have no water and no fire-brigade, the central block in the town would have gone if the flames had got headway." And in the same edition it was noted "It is surprising that a large and rising town like Albury has not its fire-brigade ... Corowa are a long way ahead in this respect. But Albury was never noted for its public spirit in anything tending to the advancement of the place, and I suppose it will always remain a 'sleepy hollow.'"

The January fire and perhaps the comparison to Corowa, prompted another effort to establish a fire brigade in Albury. In February 1882 a meeting was held at Charles Schmiedt's Albury Hotel where a unanimous vote supported the move to form a brigade. At subsequent meetings, difficulties arose when it was suggested that Albury Municipal Council lend financial support. In March, a council resolution was passed that a fire brigade was necessary, that council contribute and that a committee of five take steps to enrol members to form a brigade.

At an April council meeting a motion was put that council contribute annually "a sum not exceeding £100 for the support of a volunteer fire brigade" – the motion was lost with only the proposer and seconder voting for the motion. Councillors argued that it was the responsibility of insurance companies to support a brigade. Three days later the Australian Town & Country Journal reported "in consequence of the refusal of the borough council to contribute towards the establishment and maintenance of the projected Volunteer Fire Brigade, the movement to organise such a body has fallen to the ground. The various insurance companies plainly intimated that unless the municipal body took the matter in hand they would give nothing."

Also in June, two fires occurred at James Devene's Racing Club Hotel on Wagga Rd (about 1055 Mate St, owned by Dr Andrews), the second destroying the building. A jury concluded "that there is nothing to show how such fires originated either in the first or second instance."

In December of the same year, three adjoining buildings in Townsend St owned by Patrick Kelly, James Curran's saddler's shop, Mr Fagan's fancy goods warehouse and Francis Sigg's bakery were all destroyed by fire. At an inquest, the jury returned the verdict "we find that the premises situated as aforesaid were on the said night feloniously and wilfully set on fire by some person or persons to us, the jury aforesaid, unknown."

In June 1884, before a new brigade was formed, a fire destroyed the building and stock of William Darke's furniture store in Kiewa St. The fire spread south, destroying two houses occupied by a Miss Williams, dressmaker and Mrs Richards. An inquiry was held and the Ovens & Murray Advertiser reported that "after hearing evidence, the jury retired, and five minutes afterwards said that eleven of them were in favour of a verdict 'That the place was wilfully set on fire, but there was no evidence to show who did it.' The other juryman (an insurance agent) held out for a verdict of accidental causes.

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The coroner said he could not take that finding, and locked the jury up for five hours. At the end of that time, the jury, being of the same opinion, were discharged.”

The next attempt to form a brigade was more successful. A meeting was held in January 1885 to form an Albury Fire Brigade. Walter Billson became the brigade’s first captain. On 1 January, 1885, the Ovens & Murray Advertiser reported:

“A Fire-brigade for Albury. — Mr F. Simmons, late of Corowa, and a member of the fire-brigade in that town, has taken the first step towards the organisation of a fire-brigade for Albury.

His ideas are to form a band of good working men, such as bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers, etc. who have a thorough knowledge of buildings in general, into a salvage corps, and get a captain capable of giving them the necessary drill and keeping discipline, until the reticulation of the streets with water is an accomplished fact. Mr Walter Billson, formerly of the Beechworth Brigade, will be asked to act as captain; and from his experience, and the well-known activity of the working-men of Albury, no doubt a fire-brigade and salvage corps will be formed that will be a credit to the district. The uniforms will be found for each member as soon as possible; and now the New South Wales Fire-brigade Bill has passed, Albury may be sure of a subsidy from the Government, and with the help of the borough council, the public and the insurance offices, a fire-engine may be purchased within a few months.”

The Sydney Mail reported on 24 January: “The Albury Volunteer Fire Brigade is now a very substantial fact ... (with) 40 or 50 active and strong young men.”

There was plenty of work for the new brigade. In late January 1885 fire destroyed Steel’s boot shop and the adjoining warehouse of Griffith & Co in Dean St. In March a large fire broke out in James Higgins coach building factory. The Sydney Evening News reported “The Albury Fire Brigade, by its exertions, confined the fire ... although a six-roomed house and a shop adjoining the Royal Hotel, was burnt down.” The Ovens & Murray Advertiser reported that at an inquest “The jury, without retiring, found ‘That the premises were burnt by fire; but whether accidental or otherwise there was no evidence to show.’”

In August 1885 a fire broke out on the premises of Messrs Temby and Co, grocers of Kiewa St, above James Fallon’s wine cellar. The brigade stopped the fire from spreading, but the roofing shingles were found to be saturated with kerosene and Fallon’s cellarman reported that a number of casks were covered with kerosene. An inquest was held with a jury returning the verdict “We find that the premises occupied by Charles Temby, situated in Kiewa-street, were wilfully set on fire on the evening of August 4, by some person or persons unknown.”

It was not long before the largest fire Albury had seen, tested the new brigade. In December 1885 a gas jet ignited lace on display in the shop window of draper Joseph Johnson on the ground floor of the AMP building in Dean St. The fire destroyed that building and when the roof collapsed, the fire entered the third floor window of the next door Albury Banner office and worked its way to the ground floor. The fire was said to result in an estimated loss of £15,000 (almost \$2,000,000 in 2017 terms). The Ovens & Murray Advertiser reported “The fire at Fallon’s [the eaves caught fire] was soon put out, and the firemen, working like tigers, saved half the town from being burnt down. The men at the pumps worked well, and Father O’Connell and other sympathetic gentlemen kept their spirits up, by handing spirits round.”

In the December fire, again the brigade had to rely on water carts for delivering water from the river. Newspapers reported that the firemen worked with buckets of water passed along a line. Albury’s reticulated water supply was turned on in January 1886 and this perhaps prompted council to consider it now worth lending its support to the new brigade.

Several serious fires involved the brigade in these first few years including J Howard’s upholstery business in Olive St destroyed, March 1886, W T Kelly’s draper’s shop Dean St in February 1887 and a number of house fires.

In January 1886 the Border Post announced that “the fire alarm bell purchased by the fire brigade has arrived.” It cost £23 and was said to weigh 200 pounds (about 91 kg) and could be heard for three miles. It was yet to have a bell tower. At this time the brigade operated out of a shed adjoining the Rose Hotel in Kiewa Street.

In January 1888, Walter Billson resigned as brigade captain and Thomas Chubb, his Lieutenant, took over. By May 1890, Chubb had handed the position over to Thomas Ryan.

It wasn’t until 1888 that the council granted the brigade land to build a station. What they got was a galvanised iron shed that was officially handed over to the brigade in February 1889.

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The station was in Market Square (which became Dean Square and much later Queen Elizabeth II Square), next to the Mechanics Institute and fronting Dean Street. The Border Post reported “a banquet was given in the newly erected fire station to celebrate.” Captain Thomas Chubb stating “for the first time the brigade has been placed on a sound footing.”

In January 1893 the store of Charles Stassen in Wilson St was completely gutted by fire. Also in January 1893, a fire destroyed three properties in Olive St owned by Dr Kennedy, including the premises of draper and tea merchant Joseph Moses. The same premises were the scene of an earlier fire, the subject of an inquest just days before. At the inquest for the second fire, “the jury returned a verdict that the premises were wilfully set on fire by some person or persons unknown.”

In January 1897 fire damaged the grocery store of Francis Sigg on the corner of Dean & Olive streets - an inquest was told that the premises and stock were insured for £9500 and that four years earlier police had been warned “to keep a sharp lookout at Sigg’s shop.” The jury returned a verdict “that the premises had been wilfully set on fire, but there was no evidence to show by whom.”

Major fires destroyed properties on consecutive days in November 1898. A row of three shops were destroyed and another two severely damaged on the eastern side of Olive St on November 21. Destroyed were the shops of Mr Wood, greengrocer, Mr Puttick, tailor and Mr Mitchell, baker; damaged were the shops of J Brann, draper and Mr Maxwell, heavy machinery. The fire was said to have started when Mrs Wood’s apron caught fire. The next day fire severely damaged stock at the coach building business of E C Ellis & Son of Townsend St.

Kruger’s tannery in Atkins St was totally destroyed by fire in December 1898. A jury returned a verdict that “how the fire originated, whether accidentally or otherwise, the evidence does not enable us to say.”

The brigade remained a volunteer brigade into the twentieth century. As support from the government was not sufficient to run the brigade, fund raising activities occupied a lot of the brigade’s time.

In December 1908, the Albury Banner reported “the new fire engine, recently procured by the local brigade out of the special grant of £250 from the Government, was publicly ‘christened,’ and a demonstration given on the Market Square. A staunch pair of lorry horses were attached to the engine.” The paper went on to say that the engine will be known as The Champion.

By the early twentieth century, the Dean St fire station was proving inadequate. In 1910, NSW Fire Brigades’ Board Superintendent Webb described the station as “a two storey barn of weather board and iron with earth flooring, and a disgrace to the principal street.”

In June 1912, Albury received a motorised turbine for pumping water. The Border Morning Mail of June 10, 1912 reported “The new engine for the Albury Fire Brigade arrived yesterday in spite of the protests of Captain Ryan, and the municipal council ... the new engine is like the brigade’s old one with the addition of a turbine at the back for pumping purposes. It too, will need horses to draw it — but the brigade hasn’t any horses.” Protests asking for a motorised vehicle received a promise from the Board of Fire Commissioners, but it was another four years before such a vehicle arrived.

Major fires tested the brigade in 1909, 1910 and 1915. Hayes Flour Mill in Townsend St was severely damaged by fire in May 1909. An inquiry found that “the fire originated accidentally.”

In December 1910, Abe Nathan’s store on the corner of Townsend St “was burnt to its foundations.” The Albury Banner reported that “The whole of the apparatus of the Fire Brigade was in work on the fire in an almost incredibly brief space of time. The regular members of the brigade were all at work under Captain Ryan, and their efforts were ably supplemented by a number of men from the military camp, members of the police force, and a regiment of civilians.” An inquiry concluded that “the evidence showed that the cause of such fire was accidental.”

The fire that destroyed Mates building in December 1915 was probably the largest fire that Albury had ever experienced.

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The Border Morning Mail reported that the fire caused damages estimated at £62000. They went on to comment on firemen "having to haul by hand the turbine fire engine and its appliances to Mate's fire." The brigade received much praise for confining most of the damage to the Mates building. An adjoining jeweller, Abraham Hart, whose stock received some damage, told the Mail "that he could not say enough in praise of the firemen, who did their work in a most admirable manner. He recognised that the firemen had made 'a splendid save,' and in recognition of this he stated that he would present each fireman with a gold medal." It was reported that at the conclusion of an inquest into the cause of the fire "The coroner said there was nothing at all to indicate the origin of the fire. He then returned an open verdict, but how the fire occurred he was from the evidence unable to say." The management of T H Mate & Co thanked the firemen in a letter to the editor of the Mail "Will you kindly grant us space in your columns to publicly thank the captain and men of the Albury Fire Brigade for their splendid efforts against the fire which demolished our Dean street premises last night. All those who saw the conflagration will agree with us when we say that the pluck and tenacity of the firemen were beyond praise, and thanks to their untiring efforts, portion of our offices with important books of record were saved."

Summarising, of the thirty major fires in Albury between 1865 and 1915, 7 were adjudged to have been deliberately lit, several others considered "suspicious." Many however were quite accidental. All heating, lighting and power sources for industrial needs was provided from a burning source - wood, gas, coal, kerosene etc. Add to this the fact that much flammable material was used in construction, it is not so surprising that there were so many fires.

The Albury Municipal Council and the Board of Fire Commissioners took a long time to agree on plans for the new station. Finally, tenders were called for the new station in June 1915.

A decision was made to move to a site in Kiewa St, several blocks north of Dean St. Not all were happy, opponents citing "four fires in the main business block in the last few months" as reason not to stray too far from Dean St.

The new Kiewa St station opened on August 18, 1916. The building cost £3,160 and included an engine room, watch room, recreation room, workshop and living quarters. At last Albury Fire Brigade took delivery of a motorised fire engine, built in the Board of Fire Commissioners workshops in Sydney and costing £750, the Banner pointing out that "It is a large 25 hp engine painted in red and gold."

James Grinton was the first resident fireman, living in the adjoining residence until his retirement in 1930. Grinton took over as fire captain from Tom Ryan, who retired after 31 years with Albury Volunteer Fire Brigade and over 20 years as captain. Paying tribute to Captain Ryan at the opening of the new station, the president of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Mr Farrar MLC was quoted in the Border Morning Mail "He has given the best part of his life and vigour to the brigade ... Captain Ryan has not only looked after the town's protection in the event of fire, but he has also looked after the men who have been under him and the Albury brigade to-day, under him, has attained to the highest standard of efficiency."

Moving ahead to 2017, Albury has three stations, Albury Civic in Kiewa St, Albury Central in Mate St and Albury North in Nagle Rd.

JOURNEYING THROUGH THE JOURNALS

E – Muster – NSW Central Coast – April 2017, No.17 – (Online)

Trench Art. (i.e. decorative items made by soldiers, be they prisoners of war or civilians)

FAHS e-Bulletin – No161, 24 March 2017 – (Online)

National Library of Australia has been given funding for digitisation of material including newspapers.

National Library Community Heritage Grants now open, closing 8 May.

Prahran Mechanics Institute Newsletter – Prahran – No 96, April 2017 – (Online)

How did our bus and tram route numbers come about?

Royal Australian Historical Society e-Newsletter – 30 March 2017 – (Online)

Arts NSW Cultural Grants applications will open 4 April 2017.

WWDHS Newsletter- Wagga Wagga – No. 424, Apr/May 2017 – (Online)

Advises that the adopted 'Copyright Amendment Bill' will end on the 1 January 2019, copyright for unpublished material, resulting in historical manuscripts being freed into the public domain on 1 January 2019.

Bill Tearle at their meeting to talk about Dame Mary Gilmore and Sheila Tearle.

BEFORE 1870: EARLY BUSINESS PEOPLE OF TOWNSEND STREET NORTH.

BY RAY GEAR

The story of Townsend Street begins in October 1839 when the first sale of land took place. Of the twelve allotments offered for sale, one fronted Townsend Street, corner Allotment 18 Section 1 where Thomas Mate later built his Union Store the purchaser being John G Lennon. One of the earliest business persons in Albury after Robert Brown, was Manchester born William Conley who in early 1849 was offering for sale or let, his 'Albury Store' in Townsend Street. According to the Sydney Morning Herald in December 1850, Albury contained 'a steam flour mill, boiling down establishment, national school, Royal Hotel and four other inns, three stores, a few substantial brick cottages and, a goodly arrangement of slab huts'.

Stores in Townsend Street at that time included the 'Albury Store' then operated by Morris Asher, a store just north of the Royal Hotel operated by Messrs John Alston and Co., and the recently established T H Mate & Co., Union Store on the south-west corner of Townsend and Hume Streets. Of the five inns or hotels, four were sited in Townsend Street, James Layton's 'Royal', Donald Mackay's 'Victoria', William Conley's 'Squatters', and William Wyse's 'Albury Inn'. Located just south of Mates Union Store, the Albury Inn was the first hotel in Townsend Street. It closed soon after. In later years, it became part of the Chinese Camp. During the 1850s Townsend Street, north of Hovell Street began to evolve as Albury's main business thoroughfare influenced by the overland traffic route from the north, the location of the crossing place over the Murray River at the end of Hume Street and, the arrival of steamships from 1855. In 1855 two watchmakers and jewellers, S Lasker & Co., and, Joseph Wertheim & Co., opened opposite and next to Layton's Royal Hotel that was located on the cross streets of Townsend and Hume. Adjoining and adjacent occupiers of premises on the hotel site in 1856 included The Border Post Printing Office run by London born George Mott, and Chemist Edwin Botterill.

In late 1855 Scotland born James McLaurin was advertising that his new steam flour mill, the 'Fanny Ceres Mill' which was operating on the south-eastern corner of Dean Street.

Later businessmen to run this mill were George Day and the Hayes Brothers.

In 1856 Americans Adam Kidd and William Brickell opened a retail and wholesale store in Townsend Street. In the following year English immigrant John Solomon was advertising he had commenced business in premises he called the "Beehive Stores", on the south-eastern corner of Hume Street opposite the Denominational school behind Mates. Solomon in the following year, removed to premises north of Hume Street, with premises that he vacated let to Scottish born Flora McEachern as a new hotel under the name 'Gold Diggers', a name her husband and herself used in 1853 for that hotel originally known as the 'Victoria'.

During 1857 John Darby of Mullengandra replaced James Layton, a native of Campbelltown, at the Royal Hotel. Subsequent licensees of the hotel have included Richard Kelly (1861), William Wyse (1862), and Irish born Arthur Walker (1866). Walker died in 1871 aged sixty-nine.

Opening on the 14 September 1857 at daylight was Morris Asher's Imperial Hotel, sited opposite Dr Jeffrey Keatinge's cottage. Asher, a Londoner became in 1859 the first member for Hume in the initial Parliament.

In June 1858 the Bank of New South Wales opened permanent premises in Townsend Street with J Walker Jones as Manager. Other businesses within Townsend Street North in 1858 included, Agencies run by Henry J Ibbotson, William G Price, John Solomon, Hotels ran by Morris Asher, Kidd & Brickell, Flora McEachern and John McGall, Manufactures like James Sawtell, Professionals like Robert Jordain and R H Mills, Shopkeepers, T Brownell & Co., Evans Brothers, Kidd & Brickell, T H Mate & Co, Riles and Robinson, Francois de St. Omer and tradespersons like John Bennett, William J Hobbs, and Moor & Hatfield. Christopher Moor and Weston Hatfield were editors, printers and publishers of the Albury Telegraph newspaper.

Adam Kidd and William Brickell who arrived in Australia in 1852, opened the Exchange Hotel in July 1858 on the south-east corner of Townsend and Smollett Streets. The site was previously known as Conley's 'Squatters Hotel'. Six weeks later the license of the Imperial Hotel was transferred from Morris Asher to John McGall. Later licensees of the Imperial have included Edwin Botterill (1862), John Kilfoil and Ralph Powell (1865), John Kilfoil (1865) and Eliza Kilfoil (1868). A native of Limerick Ireland, Eliza arrived in Australia in 1857 aged around 15.

BEFORE 1870: EARLY BUSINESS PEOPLE OF TOWNSEND STREET NORTH.

BY RAY GEAR

Hibberson Brothers in 1859 occupied the Albury Store. In March the Commercial Bank also opened a branch in Albury in premises on the north-east corner of Townsend and Smollett Street. Richard Swete was the first Manager. In July, Thomas Field occupied premises once known as the Gold Diggers Hotel renaming it the Horse and Jockey Hotel.

Also in July 1859 Edwin Botterill, Chemist, opened new premises he called 'Apothecaries Hall'. Two years later, this premise was leased by William Burnes (Chemist). Other shops on this corner were 'Manchester House' occupied by Daniel Henderson, and a shop known as 'Albury Emporium' leased by William J Hobbs, a Tailor.

The start of the 1860s saw Mrs E Golland take over Miss Hawkey's, Milliner & Dress Making business that was opposite the Imperial Hotel. Other businesswomen in Townsend Street in the 1860s included, Mrs Brady, Mrs Horsfall, Mrs Lakeman, Miss Mills and, Miss White a Milliner & Straw Bonnet Cleaner, who was located near the Royal Hotel.

In 1862 four hotels in Townsend Street had new licensees. William Wyse had replaced Richard Kelly Jun. at the Royal, Canadian Clement Negro had reopened the old Victoria Hotel under the name Empire Hotel, Edwin Botterill took over the license of the Imperial and, East London born Lewis Jones was at the Exchange Hotel. Jones had arrived in Albury via Goulburn in early 1857 taking over the lease of the Criterion Hotel, in Hume Street.

In late 1863, John Solomon, Auctioneer and Commission Agent who came to Albury in 1857 removed to Sydney, his business being taken over by his brother Lewis Solomon. A native of London he arrived in Albury around 1860 and established, Solomon Brothers. At one stage his brothers Joseph and Mark, worked in the store.

In May 1864 English born Richard Henry Mills who ran a Chemist Shop to the north of the Imperial Hotel removed to Kiewa Street. He died on the 30 June 1864 aged 31 years.

In November of the same year, Evans Brothers ceased trading from premises opposite the Bank of NSW, and Alfred Evans removed to Dean Street with William Burd Evans, remaining in Townsend Street calling his new premises, that were opposite the Bank of NSW, the 'Federal City Store'. South of the 'Federal City Store' on the south-east corner of Hume Street, English born Samuel Mudge, ran a Custom and Commission Agents business. He is remembered as starting tree planting in Albury's streets in 1875.

In October 1865 Daniel Babbington removed his General Blacksmith business from Kiewa Street to premises next door to the Hume Drug Store run by William Burnes. Burnes some six months later gave up his shop to Charles Murphy who renamed it, the 'Hume Boot Store'.

During 1866 James Mitchell who migrated to Australia from England in 1844 took over Samuel Mason's bakery business in Townsend Street. Also in 1866 Isaac Davis who was once partner with John Jennings at the Lavington Hotel at Black Springs purchased Samuel Lane's Fancy Repository and Hairdressing business. To the north-east, the 'Federal City Store' in 1867 was occupied by Scottish immigrant James C Middleton, as a bread and biscuit bakery. Soon after H G Thomas removed his Photographic Establishment to premises adjoining Middleton.

After being briefly occupied by butchers Tietyens & Kelly, the former Horse & Jockey Hotel that closed in 1867 on the corner of Hume Street was converted February 1868 to a Custom House. Opposite the Imperial Hotel, Messrs Munday and Swan in early 1869 opened the 'Federal City Soda Water and Cordial Manufactory' in premises previously occupied by Thomas H Freeman. Not long after, John Munday was the sole proprietor of the business.

Businesspersons that were operating in 1869 included: Thomas Affleck, Daniel Babbington, George Brunner, William Burnes, Thomas Cottrell, Thomas Field, Charles Frauenfelder, Alexander Frew, Charles Gladow, Lewis Jones, Jeffrey Keatinge, Eliza Kilfoil, Samuel Lane, Masson and Affleck, T H Mate & Co, James C Middleton, J W Millson, James Mitchell, Robert Morton, Samuel Mudge, Munday & Swan, John Munday, Charles Murphy, Clement Negro, Solomon Brothers, John Swan, Photographer Henry G Thomas, Robert Thomson, F W Tietyens and, James Wilson, a Tailor and Habit Maker.

Townsend Street as Albury's main business thoroughfare was to exist for another half a decade, before sharing then losing the description of, being Albury's principal thoroughfare.

References: Albury Advertiser, Albury Banner and Wodonga Express, Albury Telegraph and Federation Journal, Argus (Melb.), Border Post, Empire (Syd.), Goulburn Herald & Chronicle, Goulburn Herald & County of Argyle Advertiser, Ovens and Murray Advertiser, Sydney Morning Herald, Wagga Wagga Express.

NOTICE OF MOTION FOR THE AGM TO CHANGE A&DHS CONSTITUTION

Doug Hunter will move the following motion at the Annual General Meeting 14 June 2017: that existing clause 16 d): 'No media statements on behalf of or in the name of the Society shall be made except by the President. Any statement shall be made based on the view of the Committee' be deleted and replaced with:

'No media statements on behalf of or in the name of the Society shall be made except by the President or their delegate.'

The change is to be dealt with by a Special Resolution at the Annual General Meeting.

The mover's reason in seeking the change is he believes it would create a more workable situation in which a president can operate. It is ludicrous to be contacted by the media on a matter which requires an immediate response and have to say I can't comment till I have discussed the matter with the committee. An email to obtain the opinions of the committee members allows no opportunity for discussion or a vote would not be timely enough.



A large black snake suddenly coiled itself around the leg of Father Cornelius Twomey when he was conducting a burial at the Albury Cemetery in February 1866. The press reported: 'Books were suddenly dropped and scores of people went scampering about in all directions.' A few brave men tried to hit the snake with a stick but it ran off. After that, the mourners left Patrick Tighe to rest in peace.

Empire Day and bonfires in Albury. Can you remember these bonfires?



Come along to the May Meeting and contribute to the discussion of where the bonfires were held and how they were built and conducted.

Pioneer Cemetery Walk, Sunday 21 May.

Meet at the Lychgate entrance, north end of David Street, at 2.00 p.m. Following the walk share a BYO afternoon tea in the Lychgate.

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