



# ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

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## REPORT ON JUNE MEETING (14.06.2017)

The Annual General Meeting of the Society chaired by Doug Hunter was held in The Banksia Room of the Commercial Club. Twenty one members and one guest were in attendance and there were ten apologies. Doug congratulated Joe Wooding and Howard Jones on receiving Order of Australia medals in the Queens Birthday honours. Minutes of the previous AGM were read and confirmed and the President's Annual Report received together with the Treasurer's end of year report. Doug called Howard Jones to the chair where he declared all positions vacant and those duly elected were President: Joe Wooding; Vice President: Greg Ryan; Secretary: Helen Livsey; Minute Secretary: Greg Ryan; Treasurer: Ron Haberfield; Committee: Doug Hunter, Marion Taylor, Ralph Simpfordorfer, Eric Cossor and Richard Lee. After a short discussion the recommended motion that no change be made to subscription fees (except to add \$10 for posted hard copies of the Bulletins) was passed. John Coughlan's talk on 'FW Johnson to Coopers & Lybrand' reminded us how office technology has advanced in businesses since the 1950s. Balancing the books should be so much easier these days.

Ed Dale from Henty reported the sale of the Dale family Highway store and Milk Bar which has been operated by the family for the last 67 years. The incoming President Joe Wooding welcomed the new members of the Committee and thanked Doug Hunter for his fine efforts over the last year. The retiring members Ray Gear, June Shanahan and Howard Jones were thanked for their contributions and hard work on the Committee.

## NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY

12 JULY, 2017

7.30pm at the Commercial  
Club Albury

Waste disposal and  
Recycling in Albury.

Speaker: Frank Zaknich

**ANNUAL  
SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE  
NOW DUE**

**PLEASE  
REFER TO THE  
ATTACHED  
MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Page 2 FW Johnson to  
Coopers & Lybrand.  
Page 5 Question of the Month  
Page 6 OAM Congratulations.

## ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

PO Box 822 ALBURY 2640

<[www.alburyhistory.org.au](http://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.

**Public Officer:** Helen Livsey

**President:** Joe Wooding

**Vice-President:** Greg Ryan

**Secretary:** Helen Livsey 02 6021 3671

**Treasurer:** Ron Haberfield

**Minute Secretary:** Greg Ryan

**Publicity Officer:** Jill Wooding

**Committee:** Richard Lee, Marion  
Taylor, Eric Cossor, Ralph Simpfordorfer  
**Bulletin Editor:** Marion Taylor  
marion.taylor7@bigpond.com

**Publications & Stock Officer:** Ray Gear

**Meeting Greeter:** Jill Wooding

**Bulletin dispatch:** Richard Lee

**Webmaster:** Greg Ryan

**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

## **FW JOHNSON TO COOPERS & LYBRAND**

**BY JOHN COUGHLAN**

Frederick William George Johnson moved to Albury in 1948 and registered the name FW Johnson & Co, practicing from 1948 to 1953 at Belbridge Hague & Co in Kiewa Street. In 1954 he was in sole practice at NZL House, 475 Townsend St, Albury.

The partnership of FW Johnson & Co continued in NZL House from 1954 to 1969. The firm then expanded further into Johnson, Coughlan & Kay who worked from the same address from 1969 to 1974. In 1974 they merged with Cooper Brothers & Co (the Australian version) with affiliation to the Cooper Brothers in the UK. Subsequently Coopers & Lybrand then operated in Albury from 1976 to 1977. That was the result of a merger between Coopers in England and the firm of Lybrand in America. Coopers & Lybrand then moved to 520 Swift St, merging with Price Waterhouse in 1998 until demerging in 2000 and becoming Johnsons MME. This name was chosen by Ron Mullavey and Hugh McKenzie McHarg as a tribute to Fred Johnson who founded the firm.



Frederick William Johnson  
Photo Courtesy: John Coughlan

Fred was born in Parramatta in 1917 and schooled at Shore until 1933. He commenced his accounting training with the Perpetual Trustee Company. Fred often said his interest was more to play tennis than to study and then in later years his sport of choice was golf. Fred joined up in 1940, enlisting in the Australian Survey Regiment posted to Bonegilla. He was transferred to the 2/11th Gunners Field Regiment, switched to the 2/9th Gunners Field Regiment and served in Syria, Palestine and PNG. He was discharged in 1945 on VP day. Fred graduated in accountancy doing two years of study after the War and became a member of the Commonwealth Institute of Accountants. At that time Doug Hague, the senior partner of Belbridge Hague & Co was looking for a tax section manager. Fred's father Harold managed a life insurance company office in Albury and he recommended Fred for the job. Fred registered a taxation agency in Albury in 1948 and his office was in the front room on the ground floor of Belbridge Hague & Co. His first client was Tommy Barnes who ran a delicatessen in Dean St. His first employee was Warwick Gould a former bank officer. The receptionist was Rose Bernadue. Another employee was Bill Stirling whose son Jeff is now with Johnsons MME. The sons of Belbridge Hague partners Kevin Tracey and HJ (Did) Simpson joined FW Johnson & Co. Other early employees were Kevin Burns and Bruce Stanton. After five years with Belbridge Hague & Co Fred purchased the firm's tax practice. In 1954 Fred moved to NZL House, Townsend St. On the ground floor was the New Zealand Loan Mercantile Agency with Sammons Edwards. Fred was on the first floor eventually sharing with Victoria Insurance Company. Tony Pike from Sydney entered the firm in 1954 as the first partner. Later in 1954 John Coughlan joined the staff. NZL House was home for 25 years and eventually FW Johnson & Co took over the whole top floor. The firm specialised in fields of accounting not normally seen in the country. The 1950s and 1960s were a time of rapid expansion.



By 1958 the firm leased all of on the first floor of the Hume was in charge. In 1959 John FW Johnson & Co Pike left to open an office for association with a big six firm commenced. When NZLMA expanded into the ground Additional space needs saw to a 1st floor space at the rear Bank Commercial Club Lane. partnership in 1964 then left practice. In 1968 three new firm: Alf Armstrong, Bruce



John Coughlan

the first floor and had offices Chambers where Bill Stirling Coughlan was admitted to the partnership. In 1960 Tony Coopers in Port Moresby. An as they were known then had closed FW Johnson & Co floor offices.

the administration staff move of Burdines in the National Lloyd Lange joined the in 1968 to form his own partners were admitted to the Dunkley and Brian Dunlop.

The firm had a large clientele in the Berrigan/Finley district so talks commenced with Bill (Ian Louis) Kay. In 1969 Bill's practice merged with FW Johnson & Co and was renamed Johnson, Coughlan & Kay. Bill Kay had been instrumental in the original set up of the West Corugan Irrigation Scheme, a privately owned scheme which was a huge benefit to farmers in the district. After two years Bill moved to Albury and the Berrigan office later closed with work done in Albury and Yarrawonga by Alf Armstrong. Offices also opened in Wodonga, Wangaratta and Corowa. Peter O'Halloran and Graeme Richardson joined the partnership in the 1970s. Latest technology and systems were introduced seeking to benefit clients. The firm was one of the earliest in the country to use computerised accounting. In 1974 Brian Dunlop left and set up his own Albury practice. Fred Johnson and John Coughlan were admitted as partners in Cooper Brothers and Johnson Coughlan & Kay merged with them and became Coopers & Lybrand. Bill Kay didn't join that partnership but retained responsibility for clients until his retirement in 1989. Around 1974 Coopers & Lybrand moved to the 2nd floor, 520 Swift St where the firm and its successors have been for over thirty years. They were appointed to administer the Riverina regional offices and there was a merger with two firms in Deniliquin and one in Wagga. In 1976 Fred Johnson moved to Sydney to head the Australian firms business services division. Each of the big firms have a varied list of sectors of interest including insolvency, auditing, business services, human resources and technology. It became necessary to liase with the overseas branches much more and we were starting to have input into what happened in the other business services divisions around the world. Fred and John had the opportunity to go to many of the international partners meetings and kept up to date with new legislation and regulations, many of which would flow on to Australia.

John Coughlan was a senior partner until he retired in 1987, the baton being passed on to Alf Armstrong. At that time the Riverina offices staff numbers exceeded 100 people.

The firm prided itself on being a good training office and over thirty staff left to establish sole practices over the years. Coopers & Lybrand contributed greatly to the development of a modern and vibrant accountancy culture in the region.

Johnsons MME Office  
520 Swift St  
Albury



**Some trivia and memories:**

Commuting to the Deniliquin office with Austin Ellerman in his Piper Arrow aeroplane. Fred Johnson, Doug Hague and Ray Kidd (Radio 2AY) played a big part in obtaining the licence and organising the public float of the AMV 4 TV station. A big step forward for Albury.

The firm had five terminating building societies which provided low interest finance for housing for local people. There was a company called the Hume Finance Company that was involved in the early days of hire purchase.

There were many more female members of staff than males but in those days it was very difficult for women with families to become partners due to the limited availability of child care, less flexible working hours and limited technology existing to work from home.

This was unfortunate as there were many very talented and intelligent women on the staff who would have been capable of filling those positions. Many office romances ended in marriage but the rule was that only one person from the family could work in the company.

Office supplies included red ink and round black rules to rule off the balance sheets.

Typists did a lot of work with carbon paper making up to six and seven copies.

An early copying system was the Kodak wet copy photographic system where you had to guess the exposure time, this led to lots of ripped up copies! Therma Fax machines using brown waxed paper which would ignite if you weren't careful and after a couple of years the copy would fade.

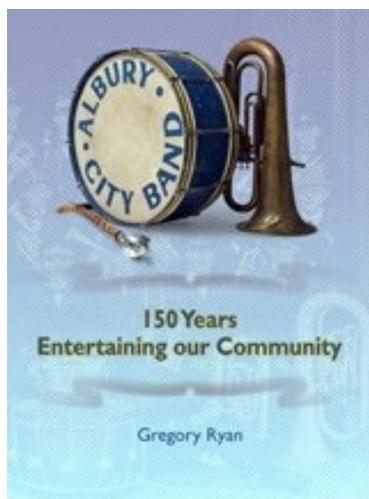
Slide rules were used for tax calculations. Hand cranked adding machines and the bell punch machine with rows of numbers was very difficult to use. Biro's that leaked everywhere.

Hand written books of accounts and manual balancing.

The great excitement of moving from manual to electric typewriters. Dictaphones and celluloid cylinders and mini tape recorders. Electric calculators and adding machines were a wonderful step forward. They even had a printed tape output.

Early mechanised accounting practices included the Burroughs punched tape. The computers had to be in temperature controlled rooms or they would break down. Data storage disks were the size of dinner plates, they held minute amounts of data and regularly crashed. The Albury office was instrumental in developing a computer accounting software package that was used Australia wide by the Coopers & Lybrand business services division.

John acknowledged Howard Jones's contribution to his presentation and suggested that local businesses should be encouraged to preserve and maintain their historical records.



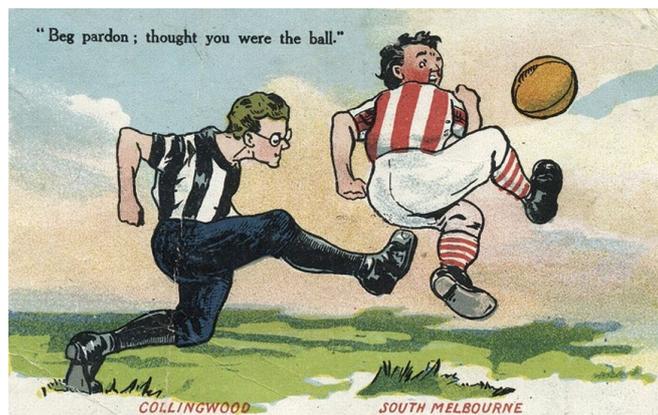
A&DHS has published a book to help celebrate and remember 150 years of band music in Albury. Written by Greg Ryan, it chronicles band music from the first record of a local band in 1855 to the present Albury City Band. The history of the band mirrors the history of Albury itself as the band has been present for almost every major event in our city's past. The book, containing about 130 historic photographs, lists over 800 men and women who have been band members in Albury. It is available for \$35 from Albury Library-Museum, Dymocks bookstore or directly from ACB.

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

The A&DHS has operated continuously since 1960, but for a short period since then, had no President. What were the circumstances surrounding this event ?

Special thanks to the Commercial Club Albury Ltd for supplying a meeting room for many years and also for their continued support.

Please click on the logo to access their website.



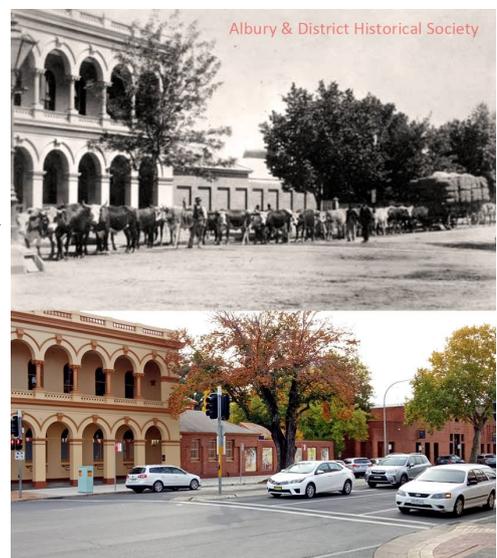
FIGHTING on the football field is nothing new, but an interesting case occurred on 26 May 1928 when arch rivals St Patrick's met Albury. Two players came to blows and rolled about the ground fighting. Uniformed police ran on to separate them. The umpire promptly ordered the officers off the field. Inspector Constantine took the players and umpire to court, declaring: "The object of this prosecution is to prove that the law is supreme, and that police can and will enter a football ground to maintain good order." Players Mau and McInerney were each fined £1 for behaving in a riotous manner. The umpire John Smith, of Melbourne was fined £2 for hindering an officer in the execution of his duty. Smith told Magistrate A.G. Hardwicke that in Victoria, umpires had complete charge of the ground. The police could not interfere unless called upon to do so. When the police came on the ground at Albury the unusual uniform confused him, and he thought they were tramway men.

**This week we reached 2000 likes on our Facebook Page!**

**On the right is one of the many featured "Then & Now" photographs from our district. This one is showing a load of wool pulled by a bullock team outside the Albury Telegraph office in Dean St.**

<https://www.facebook.com/Albury.DHS>

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**Facebook**



**PLEASE PAY YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUBS!**

Membership Subscriptions are now due for the 2017/18 year. Single Members \$25 and Family members \$33 p.a. remain the same since they were last changed in June 2010.



Corporate membership is now \$100 p.a. and includes recognition on our web site and in the Bulletin.

Membership includes the monthly Bulletin emailed to your preferred email address.

Members requiring a posted copy of the Bulletin now have to pay \$10 per year extra for this service.

The attached renewal form is provided for your convenience.

For members renewing by direct deposit please ensure you include your name when making the deposit. The completed renewal form is not necessary unless you have changed your email or postal address.

**CONGRATULATIONS!!**

Congratulations to our Society Members Joe Wooding and Howard Jones on receiving Order of Australia Medals in the Queens Birthday awards. Joe received his medal for services to the sport of cricket. He played in the Albury and Border Cricket Association for 29 years, was a selector for 20 years, umpire for 26 years and Albury Sportsground curator for 12 years. Joe also wrote a book called "150 Not Out" on the history of cricket in Albury.



Joe Wooding



Howard Jones

Howard Jones has been recognised with an Order of Australia medal for service to the print media, to historical societies, and as an author. He is a prolific writer having written books on the history of his hometown in Wales to the story of Albury's RSL sub-branch. Photographs Courtesy: Border Mail.

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