

Albury & District Historical Society

August 2018

No 592

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www.alburyhistory.org.au

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Next Meeting

Wed 8 August

7.30pm Commercial Club

The Dowlings: From where?

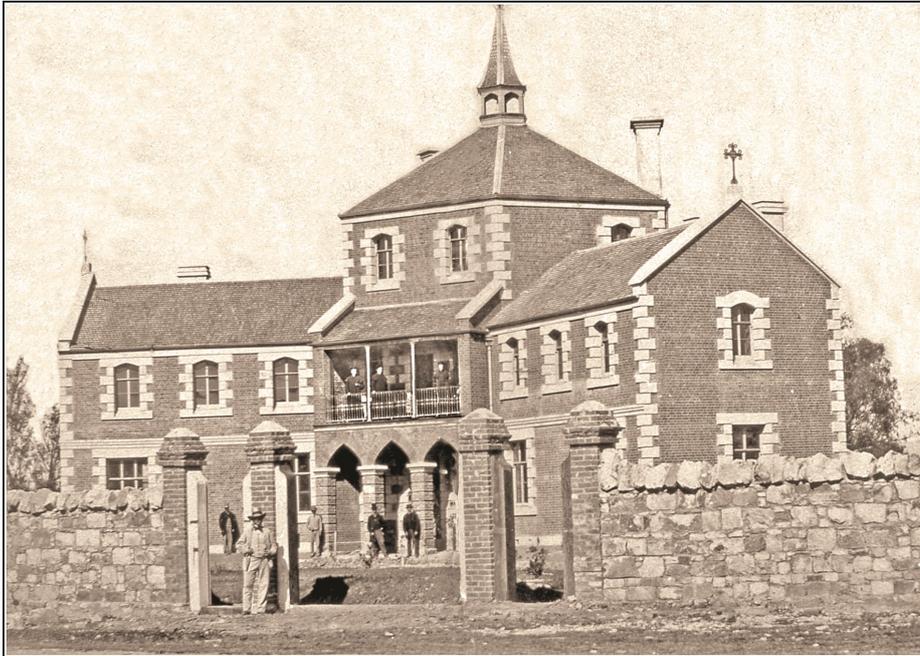
Speaker: John Dowling

ALBURY LIBRARY MUSEUM

**UNEARTHED:
WHAT LAY BENEATH
QEII**

18 AUG-13 FEB

Page 2 Sisters of Mercy
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Albury Convent of Mercy Opened 1870
Photograph Courtesy: Xavier High School Archives

REPORT ON JULY MEETING (11.07.2018)

Incoming President Greg Ryan commenced proceedings by welcoming a large group of members and guests who had braved the winter chill to be entertained with and informed by a diverse agenda of topics. Greg drew attention to the Albury Timeline compiled by Richard Lee which has been added to our website. It contains 37 pages of fully searchable historic facts. Albury City Council has received an application by developers to demolish "Meramie" (see Page 5) A reminder was given that Wodonga Family History Society is running an interesting Seminar in September. Sister Shirley Garland spoke on the history of the Sisters of Mercy and celebrating 150 years of their service and outstanding contribution to the Albury community. Current and future exhibitions were outlined by Victoria Cooper who thanked Richard, Chris and Howard for selecting display objects for "Our Favourite Things" in the Council Foyer. The next exhibition in the LibraryMuseum will be "Unearthed: What lay beneath QEII."

Victoria presented a new meeting segment, Object of the Month showing a shoe press from Clive Bohr Shoe Repairers in Swift Street. Simon Burgess gave a report on the tour of the Albury Club using photographs from Interactive Google Maps. Ed Dale reported that a second edition of "Footprints from the Yesteryear" by Yvonne Booth is available. It includes 50 more pioneering families from the Henty area and the cemetery's 250 unmarked graves including Indian hawkers, still born babies and tragedies. Books are available from Yvonne Booth 0269293236, Dales Hyway Store and Dales Electrical. Joe Wooding quizzed us with Question of the Month.

Howard Jones showed photographs of unusual places including the Bells of St Matthews and Australasia Lane. Forward notice of a commemorative service being held by the RSL on 11 November at the Pioneer Cemetery was given by Chris McQuellin.

SISTERS OF MERCY 150 years in Albury

Sister Shirley Garland

1918 Golden Jubilee of the Sisters arrival in Albury. Mother Superior is in the centre front, three are from Wodonga and the remainder from the Albury convent. The only original Nun from the 1868 arrival is Sister Brigid (Jane) Hilly, fourth from the right, front row. Photograph Courtesy: Xavier High School archives



In Dublin in 1824 a woman named Catherine Elizabeth McAuley unexpectedly inherited a considerable fortune. Catherine wanted to spend her windfall in assisting the poor of Dublin, particularly women and children. The House of Mercy was opened on 24 September, 1827 and Catherine was joined there by a number of like-minded women.

They provided accommodation, food and care, and educated women and children in basic skills. By 1830 it was thought that for the stability of the work it would be better for Catherine and her assistants to become Religious Sisters so Catherine and two others began their training with the Presentation Sisters, and were professed as the first Sisters of Mercy in December, 1831.

Around 1821 Frances Anne Murphy had been born in Dublin. Anne's parents were Catholic, her mother being a convert. In 1845 she entered the Sisters of Mercy in Westport on the other side of Ireland where a Convent of Mercy had been established in 1842. She made her Religious Profession on 25 March 1848 being called in Religion Sister Mary Ignatius. When she left to found the Goulburn Convent in Australia she was recognised in her community for her service of the poor. "This good Mother was deservedly loved by the community, and her very attractive manner insured her immense influence with externs (people outside the religious congregation)". The sisters sailed for Sydney via Melbourne, travelling on to Goulburn by Cobb & Co coach and arriving on 28 October, 1859. In Goulburn the sisters undertook many Mercy works, visiting the sick in hospitals and around their new town and visiting the prison. They also began to establish free and pension schools, as well as a boarding school. The sisters moved into the convent in 1863. Bishop Lanigan had received many requests from the people of the Albury area for sisters and they were asked to consider setting up a founding community in Albury.

Those sisters who undertook the journey with Dr McAlroy to Albury were Mother M Ignatius Murphy (Superior); M. M de Sales Meyler (Assistant), Srs M Camillus O'Donnell and M Xavier McDonald; a Postulant: Sr Fanny McGrath who later became Sr M Joseph; a teacher: Miss Elizabeth Enright, who later, herself, became Sr M Gertrude Enright, and as housekeepers: Misses Anne Kelly and Lucinda Hogan. Two days after the group arrived in Albury another postulant, Sr Jane Hilly later Sr M Bridget, joined the community.

The Albury travellers started out from Goulburn on 17 July, 1868. W.A Bayley records: 'Travel between Albury and Sydney before 1869 was slow indeed.... There were no bridges, roads were not macadamised by the packing of their surfaces with rocks, and bogs were developed by the heavy wagon traffic on the roads which were almost in their natural state'. The sisters' journey was to take five days. Along the way they stayed with a number of families who in most cases, already knew them because their girls were students at the sisters' boarding school in Goulburn. The first night in Yass the sisters stayed at the home of Dr and Mrs Morgan. The rest of the group were accommodated by Mr Owen Hilly, father of Jane. After Mass they resumed their journey, stopping for lunch at Reedy Creek at the property of a Mr Lehane. They continued on to Jugiong and overnighted with the Sheehan family. The next night they stayed with Mr and Mrs O'Reilly in Gundagai. Having lunched the next day with Mr Edward Keane, they had the night's accommodation at "Borambola" at the home of Mr John Donnelly. The next day's lunch was provided by Mr James Plunkett of Bowna. Mr Plunkett lent two horses, supposedly named Hell and Blazes, to the sisters. Then, having arrived 12 miles out of Albury, the sisters were met by Mrs B Bell. It seems that the Bell family also provided horses, and so began the travellers' triumphal journey into Albury. At the head of the procession was Fr Laffan, the assistant priest in Albury, and the children of local Catholic families formed a Guard of Honour.

This grand entrance indicated the eagerness with which the small community awaited the sisters' arrival. By four o'clock on the 22 July the sisters were installed in the Presbytery in Albury, the priests having vacated it to provide accommodation for the new community. To the chagrin of the local women of the parish some of the rooms had not been adequately prepared. The room to become the school room had been used for chaff. One other room was to be the boarders' room. Mother M Ignatius and M.M de Sales were to occupy one bedroom and the others were to occupy the verandah. Another room was also designated as the community room. The sisters were to begin their mission under much difficulty. There were native cats in their home and church. They even found dead cats on the altar in the church. At first the sisters had no candles except for one rather miraculously supplied by M. M. de Sales from her pocket and they had no table cutlery. However, they were determined to begin their ministry the next day after their arrival. The Sisters' new Convent was completed and opened on 1 February, 1870. This building was to house both sisters and school. The school, under the name of St Joseph's, included a boarding school and a pension school for girls. Postulancy was the name given to the first period of approximately six months which a woman entered into when starting her training as a Religious. From this early stage the members of the Albury Catholic community were to find themselves participating in the rituals of Reception and Profession of women who had come to join religious life as members of the order of the Sisters of Mercy. Reception was the name given to the ceremony when the woman became a Novice and Profession when she made her vows as a Religious. On 14 February, 1869, along with family and friends the local people were to witness in the old church the Reception as novices of Sr Fanny McGrath to be known as Sr M Joseph and Sr Jane Hilly to be known as Sr M Bridget. These two women professed their vows as Sisters of Mercy on 12 March, 1871. The first Reception after the convent building had been completed was of another sister from Ireland, Mary Holohan, who took the name of Sr Mary Evangelista. Most of the early Receptions and Professions were of women coming from Victoria, even as far away as Ballarat. The first sister from the local area, from Beechworth was Sr M Lucy Langford who was received in 1882. The first sister registered as having been born in Albury was Sr M Magdalen Driscoll who was received in 1893. Over the years as the number of women choosing to join the sisters increased, Reception and Profession ceremonies were to be public events which were frequently reported in the local newspapers, and seen as significant for the broader community. Meanwhile the Sisters entered fully into the challenge of establishing schools, particularly for the girls of the neighbouring area. A Catholic Denominational School had already been established in Albury in 1855 with Mr and Mrs Michael Tuohy being in charge and under the parish priest of that time, Fr J. Maher. In 1858 Fr Twomey, the new Parish Priest, established a church/school in a building behind the T H Mate premises on the corner of Townsend and Hume Streets. In 1859 the location of the school moved to the corner of Olive and Smollett Streets to St Brigid's Church/School. At the time the sisters arrived, Mr Peter Cullen was the school master and his school was subsequently to cater for the boys of the area. The sisters began their free school for the girls, while at the same time undertaking another fee-paying school under the auspices of St Joseph. Classes continued to be held in St Brigid's. In 1882 an effort was made to obtain the services of the Christian Brothers to undertake the education of the boys, Mr Cullen having resigned his position. However, this was not to eventuate. From 1885 the Patrician Brothers were engaged in the education of boys, but, after they left Albury in 1898, the sisters took up the role of teaching both boys and girls. This situation continued until 1917 when the Christian Brothers arrived in Albury. From the beginning, the local newspapers were to report to the community the achievements the girls of St Joseph's had gained in educational pursuits that covered such areas as Religion, English, French, Needlework, Art and Music. Frequently recorded are the entertainments, including music and drama, presented by the girls, sometimes as a fund raiser, like that of 3 January, 1896, to raise funds for the school itself. It can be said that the extent of the townfolks' appreciation for the arts, particularly music, was substantially the result of the work of the sisters in the early years of the colonies. The work of the sisters was not confined to education. They were to be found ministering pastoral care to the sick, poor families and prisoners in the local gaol. Going 'down the flat' was the frequent rejoinder from sisters leaving for residences by the banks of the Murray, to visit someone in need.

Throughout her life Mother Mary Ignatius was constantly engaged in endeavours for the benefit of those less fortunate, particularly the poor and orphaned. Education of the young was a prime task undertaken as a way of giving others the skill to better their own circumstances. When the local mission seemed secure and the need arose, the spreading of these endeavours beyond to those in other regions seeking assistance was notably a welcome challenge for Mother M Ignatius. In 1882, after some years in the planning, she was responsible, along with Fr John Dunne, the then Parish Priest of Albury, for establishing an orphanage for girls in Newtown, now more often referred to as Thurgoona, just outside Albury. This project had been dear to the heart of Dr McAlroy who had died in 1880 and so unable to see it to its conclusion. Dr McAlroy was buried in St Patrick's Church. Mr John Frauenfelder, a local farmer, was a revered benefactor of this undertaking. He had already arranged and paid for the building of a church/school in the Newtown area. Mr Meehan was the principal of the school, which had 32 pupils when the sisters (Mother M Bridget Hilly and Sr M Veronica Coll) arrived at Newtown. The sisters, worked in the school, but in 1884 set about establishing an orphanage as well, which for many years was referred to as the Newtown Orphanage, but eventually was to be known as St John's. St John's was to continue as a Catholic school for the children of the local area and as an orphanage for girls for many years. The people of Albury, surrounding areas and beyond, no matter their religious belief, were always great supporters of St John's, and the sisters remained grateful for that support. Mother M Ignatius remained at the Albury Convent till 1899 taking up the position of Superior for three separate periods during that time. In 1899 she went to live in the convent at the Newtown Orphanage to work there with her beloved orphans. Back in Ireland in the Westport Annals the sisters speak of Ignatius as "labouring with superhuman strength, and extraordinary courage". I think that her inspiring accomplishment of many pioneering tasks and responsibilities which were beyond the expectations of her peers, commanded their admiration. It is, I believe, quite appropriate to include her companions as well with similar esteem. Mother M Ignatius was seriously ill for a couple of years and died on 9 July, 1901. Many wrote of her at the time of her death and funeral. Perhaps, one of the most eloquent descriptions of her life was given by Bishop Gallagher of the Diocese of Goulburn, and published in the Albury Banner and Wodonga Express. Here she is attributed with "admirable efficiency and (the) splendid organisation", "extraordinary tact and resourceful mind", "a liberal and charitable mind". She was praised for her "keenest interest in the welfare of the town and district", "her care for the sick and sympathy for the suffering", "a clear and intelligent grasp of the many vital questions of the day". She was honoured for her "magnetic personality" and the fact that she "numbered among her friends some of Australia's famous statesmen". Mother M Ignatius had a last wish which Fr Griffin, the then Parish Priest of Albury, announced to the people of Albury on Sunday, 14 July. Along with praising her for her strong simple faith and her ardent charity, the sermon that day included an outline of the request MM Ignatius made as she lay dying. Her immediate concern was that the orphans would not be forgotten. She was peaceful when she received Fr Griffin's assurance that he would institute a fundraising activity for the orphanage which would take place every July. This annual event was later transferred to the month of November and became known as "Band Sunday". Mother M Ignatius is buried in the little cemetery attached to the building that she knew as St John's Newtown Orphanage. However, her legacy which depended upon the committed support of her companions can be experienced in the ministries still undertaken in the community of Albury and District. These ministries, such as Mercy Connect, Mercy Health Services, Mercy Place, the local Catholic Schools and, more recently, Along the Murray ministries, reflect strongly the values and goals of Mother Catherine McAuley and Mother Ignatius Murphy and their sisters. In these ministries management and staff are engaged in educational, health, mental health and well-being ministries which provide professionally respected services for many in need, and they aim to encourage others, particularly our young people, in these same goals. The sisters themselves are part of the legacy, and in this present day you will find these women working with many established services, sometimes as volunteers, but always aware of the challenge to carry on the spirit of the sisters as they set off "Down the flat, on the hills ...and beyond". (Abridged version.)



Most members will be aware of the plans of developers to demolish the historic home, Meramie pictured left. The Committee of the Albury and District Historical Society met last week and agreed unanimously to object to the Development Application to demolish the 1890s building and replace it with two four-bedroom houses. In their submission the Society argued against the conclusion of a heritage impact statement prepared by Noel Thomson Architecture on behalf of the developer that demolition was appropriate in this case.

"Meramie is listed in its own right in the gazetted 2010 Albury LEP, and also is part of the Bonegilla heritage conservation area in the same LEP. These listings are consistent with the council's objective of conserving the environmental heritage of Albury. Indeed, the city's heritage controls are supposed to "encourage the conservation and enhancement" of listed items. The application claims that the building has been too much altered and left empty to justify its restoration as a beautiful home in the Federation style. We believe the recent conversion and restoration of former CSU buildings in Olive Street into up-market residences is an excellent example of what may be achieved, and with a successful economic outcome for the developer. The Thomson report focuses almost exclusively on architectural merit, without giving sufficient weight to historical significance. We can cite some reasons why it is important to Albury's social history. Thomas Griffith, a grazier who was Mayor in 1887 and 1891, built the house and called it Delaware. This was about the time (1898-1904) he was a pro-Federation member of the NSW Legislative Assembly. As Mr Thomson notes, the house became a private hospital called Meramie. It was there that in 1936 former Prime Minister Billy Hughes was treated for several days after crashing his car at Ettamogah – an accident of which Billy Hughes Bridge is a reminder. Thirdly, in 1949, Meramie became one of Australia's earliest "travel lodges," the predecessor to motels, when owned by Murray Valley Coaches." (Abridged version of letter.)

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE

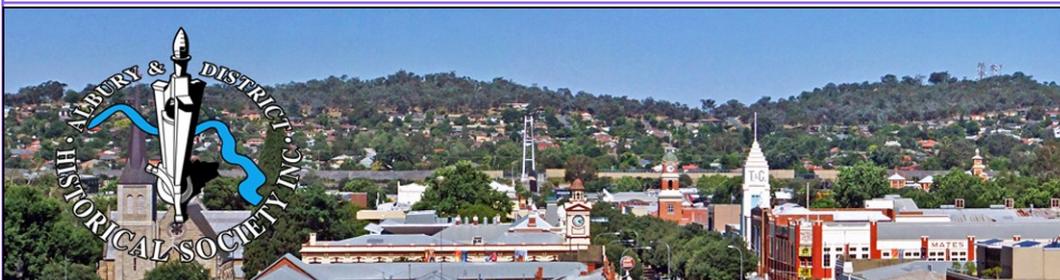
Membership Subscriptions are now due for the 2018/19 year.

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HISTORY NEWS IN AND AROUND THE REGION

Re-activating Heritage Places: Waterworks Pump house

AlburyCity has received funds to re-frame the waterworks pump house as a creative artists 'maker space'. It will cater for artists, start-up businesses, do-it-yourself clients, family, school and community groups. It will offer equipment and skills training related to woodwork, metalwork, ceramics and printmaking. Narelle Vogel is in charge of the development and has run open days for those interested. Narelle is interested in collecting stories of the pump house, the waterworks and its nearby reserve and, of course, about Albury's water supply. So far she has retrieved memory from the family of the pump house caretakers. They stored their pianola in the building. It seems the sounds of rushing water were sometimes blocked out by "Knees up Mother Brown".

Re-activating Heritage Places: Wonga Wetlands farm house; Curator's cottage, Albury Botanical Gardens

Albury City is also preparing a farm house in Wonga Wetlands for use by the Hothouse Theatre as a performing artist workshop and venue. It is similarly preparing the Curator's cottage in the Botanical Gardens for use by artist-in-residence program sponsored by MAMA.

Virtually visiting local heritage place on Google Maps

Simon Burgess used Google Maps to source the pictures he showed of the interior of the Albury Club. Members might go to Albury Wodonga Interactive Google Map, Albury Club, Photos to check it out. Click on the yellow person icon in the bottom right and you will then be able to click on the rooms. There is a range of tourist-interest place photographs, but the only other similar click on items seem to relate to restaurants and pubs, except the Bonegilla Migrant Experience which provides a digital tour of the introductory foyer and pavilion.

Chinese Diggers

Cameron Auty manager at the Burke Museum Beechworth is reported in the Border Mail on 6 July 2018 as having arranged an exhibition related to Richard Wesley Wong as part of a story honouring Chinese Australians who fought in the First World War.

New Microfilm readers

Albury LibraryMuseum has installed a batch of new microfilm readers. They are comparatively simple to use and improve the access provided previously to microfilmed material.

Albury and Wodonga in Pix pictorial magazine

Trove now holds digitised copies of the popular *Pix* pictorial magazine, 1938-52. They can be viewed by going to Trove <https://trove.nla.gov.au/> then searching "nla.gov.au/nla.obj-389050162" "Albury". Or instead "nla.gov.au/nla.obj-389050162" "Wodonga". Or any other search word. The first brings up 51 results, starting with the Victory Vanities. The latter brings up 9 results including a story about being a truckie. A cruder search can be done by typing in "Pix" "Albury".

Award

Barry McGowan, author of *Tracking the Dragon*, and speaker at a Society meeting on the Chinese in the region, received an award of OAM in the latest Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Fairlight Antiques and War Memorabilia

Situated 1.8km west of Walla, this enterprise has recently opened for business. It stocks farm machinery as well as antiques and war memorabilia, 0409 445 937.

Henri's Giant Rolling Pin, Wodonga

Guinness Book of Records credits Henri's with the world's biggest rolling pin. The bakery business was started by Henri and Joan Rogalski. It has been owned by Ian and Donna Shirley since the early 1990s. They have now retired and sold the business.

Unlocking Rutherglen and Corowa

Two councils have combined to allow visits to a wide range of local heritage places ranging from the Rutherglen Convent, wineries and old homesteads on Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 August. There are talks by architects and heritage conservation offices. For booking details go to www.visitcorowaregion.com.au

Report on the Albury Club Visit

Simon Burgess

The first 100 years of the Albury Club was introduced to us at the April meeting by Tony Brandt. Tony hosted a guided tour for members on 18 June. It was attended by Greg Ryan, Doug Hunter, Sue Haberfield and Simon Burgess. The Club is located 519 Kiewa St. The site was purchased in 1876 and the first clubhouse was built there in 1877. The oldest remaining building was constructed around 1884 with additions including the old billiard room built in 1920s. Buildings and land area now take up at least 3,000 m². The Club at one stage also owned the site of AT Jones to the North. Two commercial properties were built in the 70s on the North and South sides. The small standalone building in the backyard is the original squash court which is still used by members today. Land for the car park was purchased in 1934. The Commercial Club now own the airspace above the parking lot which they can utilize for future extensions. The Foyer contains the original safe from 1913. The present Billiard room has only one table, originally there were four tables in a separate room. Two tables went to the Commercial Club and one was sold to a local surgeon. The Members bar is off limits to ladies during Friday nights and some club functions. This room is full of memorabilia. It has a magnificent stained glass ceiling which has holes in it to let the cigar/cigarette smoke escape. There is a second lead light ceiling in the Functions bar which was in the Mates building lift ceiling and salvaged by Maurice Chick and donated to the Club. The Presidents Room – The Old billiard room is now used for functions. The Strangers Room is a card room or visitors room which was originally designated for ladies when they visited the Club.



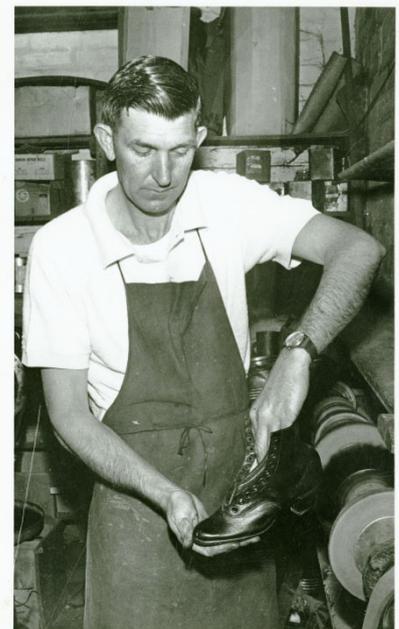
Object of the Month

In early 2018, the Albury LibraryMuseum and social history collection was donated equipment used at Clive Bohr Shoe Repairers in Swift Street, where Jones the Grocer is now.

Clive Bohr started the business in 1932 and Albert (Andy) Carter and Barry Freyer took over management of the Swift Street business in July 1977. These objects are great examples of working life, small business and lost or dying skills in Albury. The items came via Albert (Andy) Carter's family from his home that he built in North Albury. The items are from various decades of the shoe repair business, including a 1932 MHC shoe press (pictured), 1960 ESTO shoe finishing machine, a 1980 homemade last stand, and, supporting equipment.



Also included in the donation is a Border Mail photograph of Albert (Andy) Carter from 1977 when he took over the business.



Photographs Courtesy: Albury LibraryMuseum

QUESTION OF THE MONTH FOR AUGUST

In 1947 Murray Valley Coaches opened a state of the art bus terminal with upstairs accommodation for long haul passengers, on corner of Kiewa and Swift Streets. To overcome the problem of not including a dining room, the company acquired Meramie in 1949, touting it as a travel lodge.

Q1 What areas did MVC service?

Q2 What did patrons do for meals?

ANSWER JULY QOM

O'Neill's Motor Service operated 3 passenger cars between Albury and Wodonga, commencing in 1939 and expanding to buses in 1941.

During the War, the business grew rapidly due to the Army bases at Bandiana and Bonegilla. O'Neill's Motor Service was based in Kiewa Street, now Target Car Park, next to the Rose Hotel. They serviced the Victorian High Country, east of Albury to Omeo onto Bairnsdale, Yallourn, Moe and Warragul, in Gippsland.

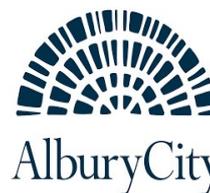


ALBERT BORELLA VC Albury LibraryMuseum commemorated the centenary of Captain Albert Borella's deeds of exemplary bravery and leadership near Villers Bretonneux, France on 18 July 1918 which resulted in the award of the Victoria Cross. The display features a self-portrait of Captain Borella on loan from the 8th/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles Regimental Collection.



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

The Committee meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 3 pm at the Albury LibraryMuseum.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Single: \$25 Family: \$33

Corporate: \$100

Note: There is a \$10 surcharge for mailed Bulletins.

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