

ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

President's Report 2019

Albury is blessed with a rich history and we at Albury & District Historical Society play a vital role in helping to preserve and record our heritage.

Our monthly meetings are an important fixture in our calendar – we have heard a broad range of topics from quality speakers:

- The Sisters of Mercy celebrated 150 years in Albury in July and Sister Shirley Garland outlined their journey from humble beginnings in Ireland to their role in providing education, nursing and community support in Albury.
- Stories of the very sporty and multitalented Dowling family and their substantial contribution to the Albury community were shared by John Dowling.
- Jindera celebrated 150 years of settlement – Denise Osborne related the story of Jindera's settlement, how it came about and who was involved.
- Terry Hillman gave us an outline of some of the impacts of man on the ecology of the Murray-Darling Basin.
- A&DHS foundation member, John Henwood, introduced his book "The Days That Are No More: The Sutherlands of Thologolong Station" describing how land was acquired and developed.
- Jennifer Jones told us that the CWA was at the forefront of social change in the 1950s and 60s.
- Norm Halburd spoke about his work as the Commonwealth quarantine and his earlier roles as a Fruit Fly Block inspector and a horticultural certification officer.
- Peter Spooner from CSU described his research investigating our oldest roads, and documenting the abundance and condition of old blaze trees in the Albury region.
- Howard Jones related a story of working in cafes along Dean St in the 1950s and 60s and Paul Grover demonstrated a new website that features an interactive virtual tour of the Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre.

In addition, we have had regular segments provided by key Albury City Council personnel who have informed us of their respective areas of responsibility on Council. And there have been our regular segments, Richard Lee with '50 Years Ago' and Joe Wooding's 'Question of the Month.' My thanks to all who have contributed to making our monthly meetings both informative and entertaining.

In October a bus load of members and friends were treated to a tour of sites of interest including the 'lost' town of Bulgandry, the land of pioneer Robert Rand and Lake Urana, an area of great significance to our district's indigenous people. A picnic lunch was enjoyed on the banks of Lake Urana. Many thanks to Chris de Vreeze for his work in planning the trip and as tour leader.

Good news came in August with confirmation of a grant of \$65,473 from the NSW Regional Cultural Fund to go towards a cost of almost \$82,000 required to digitise the *Albury Banner & Wodonga Express* back as far as 1881 and the *Border Morning Mail* for the years 1938-42. Bruce Pennay has been the prime mover in making application for the necessary funds and everyone in the district who have found Trove such a great

asset, are grateful for his efforts. Work is in hand to secure funding for digitising more of our local newspapers to extend the years covered on Trove.

In July we heard that a development application to demolish 'Meramie' on Kiewa Street had been put to Albury City Council. Our Society joined the protest against this development with a strongly worded submission to Council. We also highlighted the significance of the building on our Facebook page. Council rejected the application, informing us that they expected a revised development application at some further date.

Bruce Pennay has been closely involved in planning the commemoration of "turning of the first sod" of the Hume Dam project when the centenary of the event comes around in late November of this year. In order to prepare locals for the event, Joe Wooding has prepared ten articles dealing with aspects of construction. These articles have been appearing monthly in the *Border Mail* and will continue until November. In addition, a dedicated page on our website has been created highlighting construction of the Hume Dam.

Other activities that our Society supported included:

- November saw members of our Society playing their part in commemorating 100 years since the signing of the Armistice that ended World War I.
- Hosting of a workshop that informed us of the impact both locally and nationally of the 'Spanish Flu' pandemic of 1918/19.
- Support for Jindera in celebrating their sesquicentenary last October.
- Participation in discussions with consultants considering further options with the Uiver Memorial Community Trust.
- Ray Gear completed his booklet 'Before 1880 Townsend Street North.'
- Greg Ryan's 'Xavier High School – A History of Catholic Education in Albury' was published in November.

This past year we have received generous support from the Commercial Club who provided excellent venues for our monthly meetings; from AlburyCity who provided a venue for our Committee meetings; from Coxtech who maintain our website; from KwikKopy who supply our printing needs; and financial support from sponsors Lester & Son Funeral Directors, Baker Motors and Albury North Rotary.

Our appointees keep the Society 'ticking' – Joe Wooding, vice-president for his guidance and continued support; Helen Livsey, secretary, public officer and research officer; Simon Burgess, treasurer; Marion Taylor, *Bulletin* editor; Richard Lee, *Bulletin* distributor; Ray Gear, publications stock officer; Howard Jones, guest speaker co-ordinator; Jill Wooding, minutes secretary, meeting greeter and publicity office; Bruce Pennay, grants co-ordinator; Chris de Vreeze, committee member. My sincere thanks for your competence in fulfilling these roles. Special mention must be made of our retiring Bulletin editor, Marion Taylor – Marion has been editor since July 2014 and has never failed to put together an interesting and informative monthly Bulletin.

Many thanks also for the support provided by our general membership. While not all can make it to our monthly meetings, your ongoing commitment to our Society is very much appreciated.

It has been my privilege to serve as President for the last 12 months – my thanks again to all who have contributed in large and small ways to making my role that much easier.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Ryan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "G" and "R".

Greg Ryan