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Group of women in a kitchen making large numbers of sandwiches.
Photographic negatives from the Riverine Herald, State Library of Victoria
Image 3426893.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 13

7.30 pm, Commercial Club

My career as a Commonwealth quarantine officer at the new Port of Albury-Wodonga and previous to that a Fruit Fly Block inspector.

Speaker: Norm Halburd

ALBURY LIBRARY MUSEUM

**CHEERS: THE HIDDEN
HISTORY OF ALBURY
VINEYARDS**

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REPORT ON FEBRUARY MEETING (13.02.2019)

Meeting for the first time in 2019, members and visitors who survived the hot summer were treated to an eclectic agenda. Greg welcomed visitors and encouraged them to join up. A request was made to the group for a new representative on the Uiver Memorial Trust Committee. (June Shanahan would like to step down.) An April visit to Fairlight Antiques and War Memorabilia, Walla Walla is being arranged for 13 April. The Border Mail history articles have been moved from the Tuesday edition to Saturday due to their popularity. Our guest speaker Dr Jennifer Jones challenged our perception of the CWA in the 1950s and 60s as being a tea and scones organisation rather than one at the forefront of social change. Narelle Vogel, our cameo speaker described herself plainly as an Arts Officer working for Albury City. We believe that her many projects offering such diverse experiences as the wood fired oven at Noreuil, community garden development, the Yindyamurra sculpture walk and open air movies would make the defining of her job description quite difficult. Recent funding of \$1.3M from the NSW Government's Regional Cultural Fund will upgrade the Albury Botanic Gardens Curators Cottage (built 1909) and the Wonga Wetlands farmhouse into artist in residence facilities and transform the heritage listed Pump House at Water Works into a Maker Space. Narelle extended an invitation to the Society for a future visit to the Pump House. Richard Lee in presenting 50 Years Ago demonstrated again that the more things change the more they remain the same. Bruce Pennay flagged the 100 year anniversary of the first turning of the first sod at the Hume Dam. An invitation has been extended to the Governor General to attend an event on 28 Nov. After researching the number of drownings in the Albury/Wodonga area, Howard Jones was shocked to record 242 deaths with the possibility of more to be found. See the Society website.

'Assimilation of Aboriginal and Non-British Migrant Women in Rural Australia: The Efforts of the Country Women's Association of New South Wales 1952–70'

Dr Jennifer Jones

From the 1950s, Australian government assimilation policies envisaged that voluntary organisations would play a major role in facilitating the absorption of Aboriginal people and non-British migrants by organising assimilation activities. The attempts of the Country Women's Association of NSW to model feminine, rural Australian values to Aboriginal and migrant women, through a suite of gender-specific core activities demonstrates the joys and challenges of assimilation efforts from the viewpoint of ordinary Anglo-settler volunteers. The Country Women's Association (CWA) of New South Wales was founded in 1922 to assist all rural women by delivering practical social support, infrastructure initiatives and services in health and education. CWA branches provided gathering opportunities for rural women and the Association soon became renowned for their street stalls, catering at Agricultural Shows and social events including debutante balls, handicraft classes and cooking demonstrations. The Association's ethos of 'service and sacrifice' perpetuated the view that they worked with and for all country women, regardless of the manifold social distinctions that stratified rural life. By the 1950s and 1960s, when CWA membership and social influence peaked, this certainty re the role and capacity of the CWA encouraged the Association to expand their role as 'social pioneers' by accepting an active role in Aboriginal and migrant assimilation. The ideal of 'countrymindedness', focused upon volunteering, provided an arena within which Aboriginal and migrant women could prove their successful assimilation into country life.

The 'colour bar' and Aboriginal Assimilation

The CWA also became involved in activities designed to foster Aboriginal assimilation in response to lobbying by socially progressive members, and after calls by government for voluntary associations to help 'raise the status' of Aboriginal women by 'bringing them into a greater participation in the activities of the general community'.

Until constitutional reform in 1967, discriminatory government legislation legally concentrated and deprived some Aboriginal people on reserves and stations near NSW country towns, while others were forcibly dispersed into the lower echelons of white society. All were subject to entrenched, localised 'colour bar' practices or 'systems of segregation and exclusionary conventions' which achieved and consolidated racial segregation. The assimilation of Aboriginal women would only be achieved by breaking down the 'colour bar'.

Aboriginal CWA Branches: An 'experiment in human behaviour'

In 1956, CWA of NSW State Executive encouraged white CWA members from Boggabilla to mentor Aboriginal women in specially established Aboriginal CWA branch called Toomelah CWA on Boggabilla Aboriginal Station. Aboriginal women would thus come under the positive influence of sympathetic local white women without 'fear that they will be rebuffed by their white sisters' in the town branch. Aboriginal women also gained a rare opportunity to pursue their own agenda through the CWA, away from the restrictions and surveillance of Station authorities. Toomelah Aboriginal CWA branch harnessed CWA procedures to press for administrative and material improvements on the Station. Oral history reveals that Aboriginal women expected that steps they took towards assimilation would be reciprocated by improvements to material living conditions. Aboriginal Housing on the Station then comprised of simple, unlined structures without kitchens or bathrooms. Making a transition to modernity was difficult when facilities on Aboriginal Stations were so poor.

As Welfare Officer Reginald Snook complained, providing training in hygiene was impossible where there was, "No water on the shacks, and no sanitation adjacent [...] no proper structures, no cupboards, linings, facilities. You cannot train people in hygiene working with those facilities. To train people in hygiene and domesticity you must have the right environment and premises to do it."

'Assimilation of Aboriginal and Non-British Migrant Women in Rural Australia: The Efforts of the Country Women's Association of New South Wales 1952–70'

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This misalignment between assimilation rhetoric and policy implementation frustrated Aboriginal people and galvanised the sympathy and assistance of white CWA members in the district. By harnessing the institutional power of the CWA to mount a sustained critique of Station management and infrastructure, Toomelah CWA achieved the installation of bathrooms and laundries and painting of cottages on the Aboriginal Station. Toomelah women made strategic use of the friendships and resources in the CWA, finding a vocal and persistent ally to assist them in pressing for their share of government maintenance funding in the name of assimilation.

Volunteerism and rural values

Volunteering was central to rural Australian culture. Rural Australians of all rank understood that support for voluntary associations unified communities that were otherwise stratified by class, sectarianism and racial divisions. The expectation was that everyone, even the local 'ne'er do well', would support community functions. Aboriginal engagement with fund raising and lobbying apparatus at Toomelah, and other Aboriginal branches, was received as evidence of assimilation and capacity for self-help.

Non-British migrant assimilation in post-war Australia

Voluntary organisations were encouraged by the Australian federal government to play an active role in the assimilation of migrants in the post-war period. The Department of Immigration reached out to voluntary organisations because it experienced 'considerable difficulty' providing settlement services to migrants in rural areas. The 'reality' of assimilation policy differed considerably from rhetoric directed at immigrants and the Australian population because 'almost no resources' were allocated to assimilation activities. Endorsed bodies including the New Settler's League (NSL), later known as the Good Neighbour Council (GNC) could not articulate which values or behaviours were constitutive of the 'Australian way of life' that migrants were expected to adopt.

In areas with high migrant influx, like the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, the 'failure' of Italian women to integrate into community organisations was viewed with suspicion, even though 'newly arrived migrants might not have the confidence or the means to participate' in mainstream society. Lack of migrant recruits in local CWA branches was interpreted as evidence of the cultural limitations of migrant women themselves. CWA leaders commented that reaching Southern Europeans was difficult because, 'They are not interested in attending meetings as it has been outside their experience in Europe'. Efforts had to be made to convince migrant women that supporting community organisations held cultural congruency.

Assimilating non-British migrant women

CWA leaders encouraged CWA branch members to meet and befriend migrant women by joining local NSL branches, assisting at naturalisation ceremonies, visiting migration camps and organising social gatherings and craft classes for migrant women. CWA catering for large civic functions was envisaged as making migrants, 'aware of their civic responsibilities' because the organising committee so ably demonstrated desirable qualities of active citizenship.

Such involvement however, did not require deep or systematic engagement with migrant women's perspectives or issues that may have hindered their adjustment.

The CWA enjoyed more success attracting migrant women when they engaged with migrant women's perspectives and experiences. CWA work in the Griffith Baby Health Centre (BHC) for example, addressed issues that hindered migrant adjustment when they began offering an interpreter service staffed by bi-lingual volunteers in 1954.

The CWA of NSW had been involved in the infant welfare movement since 1923, establishing their first dedicated rural baby health centre at Moree in 1925, and expanding to 138 centres by 1946.

'Assimilation of Aboriginal and Non-British Migrant Women in Rural Australia: The Efforts of the Country Women's Association of New South Wales 1952-70' **Dr Jennifer Jones**

Building and managing baby health centres ensured that both the CWA and the infant welfare movement 'succeeded in becoming part of the cultural and social fabric' of rural Australia. In Griffith, 'leaders among the Italian women' suggested that the CWA baby health centre could also be used to incorporate migrant women into the mainstream community.

One outcome of the interpreter service at the BHC was an unexpected increase in migrant women's participation in the Learn English drive of 1959.

Newly arrived Southern Italian women reportedly objected to having a Northern intermediary privy to their discussions with the clinic sister, and hence were motivated to attend English classes because 'they wanted to be able to talk to the Sister directly instead of through an interpreter'. Groups of Southern Italian women 'met in their own homes one afternoon a week to talk English' with a CWA volunteer, rather than attending formal classes in public settings. Eight English classes for migrants had previously operated with meagre success in the Griffith district, closing due to poor enrolments by 1958. Inquiries later found that these classes were held during peak harvest period when labour was most needed on-farm.

The CWA therefore provided services that were accessible and relevant to the needs of new arrivals, but only after the intervention of members of the second generation: women who had grown up in the district were bi-lingual and understood mainstream rural culture. Australians were prepared to 'accept Italians to the extent to which these conformed to their own cultural pattern'.

Conclusions: Joining the crowd in post-war rural Australia

Participation in community organisations signified the most basic fulfilment of civic duties for rural Australians and involvement was expected of all social classes. The prevailing perception was that migrants were responsible for their own assimilation, to be achieved by adapting their cultural values and practices and conforming to settler-Australian norms. Participation in street stalls and attendance at CWA meetings provided these women with opportunities to demonstrate their assimilation and group belonging and to establish cross-cultural contact that had been hampered by white-Australian fear of migrants and Aboriginal people. Encouraging amenable white Australian CWA members to meet and mingle with migrants and Aboriginal women in these smaller social settings underpinned CWA success in assimilation endeavours. CWA members were less willing to participate in assimilation activities that required direct or ongoing encounters with migrants or Aboriginal women, or to participate in activities that accommodated either group's actual needs.

Migrant and Aboriginal women themselves, or their children, were ultimately held responsible for negotiating acceptance in mainstream rural Australia.

From ABC Sunday Extra Website:

Some of the relationships built during the branches' heyday, however, stuck around even as those branches closed down. Jones says she was occasionally brought to tears while researching the stories of families who met through the CWA and stayed in touch. 'People bonded across quite a significant social divide and formed lifelong friendships that have even survived the grave, where their descendants are still very fond of each other and maintain close connection because of their mothers' interactions,' she says. 'I spent more than one minute crying while writing this book, because of the essentially human interaction.'



Sister Gladys Hack with infants at the Baby Health Centre at Kempsey.
(National Archives of Australia)

HUME DAM ANNIVERSARY:

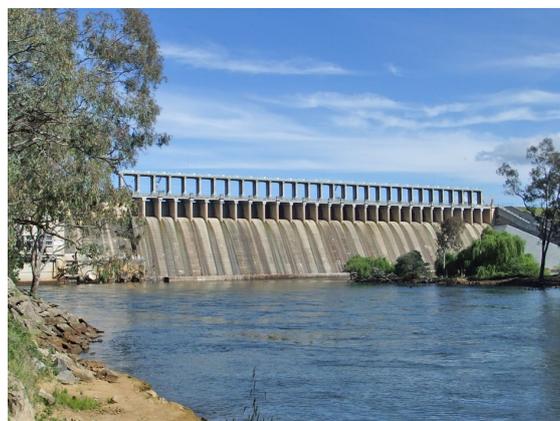
100 YEARS SINCE THE COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION

In November 2019 it will be 100 years since Australia's then Governor-General, Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, turned the first sod to construct the Hume Dam. The Dam was not officially opened until 1936. In 2001, the then president of Albury & District Historical Society, Gerry Curtis produced and narrated a Powerpoint presentation outlining planning and construction of the dam, the machines used and the people involved.

The Powerpoint presentation has been restored and converted to an 83 minute video. You can view the video on YouTube by clicking on this link:

https://youtu.be/lGo4A0Q_MzE

The centenary will be celebrated later this year but in the meantime, the Border Mail will be publishing a ten part series on construction of the Hume Dam, researched and written by Albury & District Historical Society member Joe Wooding. The second part of the story will appear in the Border Mail on Saturday, 9 March and then further parts every fourth week until November.

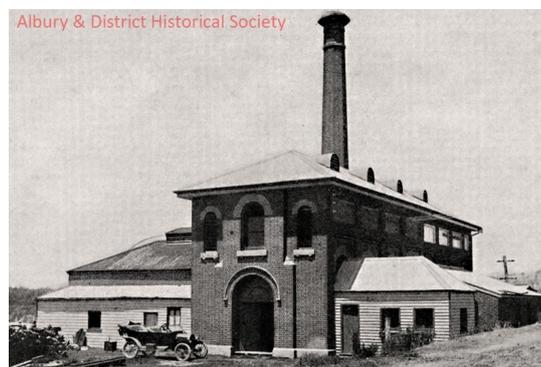


Hume Dam Wall Photograph Courtesy: Greg Ryan

ALBURY PUMP HOUSE MAKER SPACE

This heritage listed building will be re-purposed into a Maker Space for artists, start-up businesses, do-it-yourself community activities, school groups and families. It will offer equipment, skills and workshops across woodwork, metalwork, ceramics and printmaking. The current floor area will be extended to allow for reception/entry, office space and toilet facilities. Once operational, the facility will become a financially sustainable enterprise through paid memberships. These memberships will allow access to the facility and equipment, plus a suite of educational programs catering for both school groups and individuals across the community. A small outdoor courtyard will be installed as a space for pop-up cafes, and an area for hosting pop-up events such as small markets, artist talks and networking functions.

"Albury had one of the earliest town reticulated water supply schemes in New South Wales. The scheme was turned on in January 1886. The 1884 pump house and the two storey pump house-keeper's residence is shown in a Thomson card titled *Water Works, Albury, NSW* which has no borders and was postally used in 1910. It gives a glimpse of the change in the way services were provided to the community. In particular the 22 metre brick chimney stack, demolished in 1961, indicates the pumping machinery was steam driven. The pumping station was converted to electricity shortly after supply became available in 1916."



Ray Gear

A&DHS Bulletin No 521

Drownings in the Albury District

A list of drownings in the Murray River and Hume Weir is now on our website. Go to Resources then Downloads. Because of gaps in records, there are sure to be omissions from the list. If you can add to it please contact the Society – go to <https://alburyhistory.org.au/contact/>

Jindera

Jindera held a 150th anniversary series of events over the Australia Day weekend.

Border Barbarisms

Andonis Piperoglou has published an article under the title 'Border Barbarisms' which explores the way Greeks were twice prevented from crossing the border at Albury in 1902, just ahead of the introduction of immigration restriction legislation, best known as the White Australian Act. It is in the *Australian Journal of Politics and History*.

He argues that Greeks were white but not-quite-white-enough.

Wagirra Trail

AlburyCity has advertised for a consultant to explore Aboriginal connections with the next extension of the Wagirra Trail beyond Wonga Wetlands.

Alf Waugh Memorial

AlburyCity has cleaned the Waugh memorial in Dean Street.

Shooting the Past

Beyond the region but available within it and interesting to local historians is Claire Wright's ABC radio show, 'Shooting the Past'. It involves close reading of a single photograph in each of the broadcasts. There are ten programs dealing with ten photographs covering topics such as the polio scare, aliens, bushfires and shattered ANZACs. The program explores the potential and limitations of using visual evidence – a theme taken up in History Week 2013.



Shooting the Past
Photographs

The program is broadcast on Saturdays 5.30pm and on the ABC App. All ten can be binge watched at <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/shootingthepast/>

Good News About Banks

Kim Eberhard has explained in the *History Magazine* of the RAHS, December 2018 that the bank records of the Bank of NSW are now located in state-of-the-art premises in Lane Cove West. They provide, among other things, access to the reports from bank managers on the economies of places wherever there was a branch. I have found it very rewarding to access the bank managers' views on places such as Albury and Wodonga and their surrounding townships like Beechworth and Henty.

Biography

Barrie Dyster reports in the NSW's *History Magazine* that the Australian Dictionary of Biography staff are currently working on reducing suggestions for biographies of people who died between 1991 and 2000 from 3000 to 300. The editors are also reviewing biographies which first appeared in 1966. How many Albury and Wodonga people who died between 1991 and 2000 will be deemed worthy of national notice in the ADB?

The *Australian Journal of Biography and History* has articles which are described as 'lively, engaging and provocative, and are intended to appeal to the current popular and scholarly interest in biography, memoir and autobiography. They recount interesting and telling life stories'.

Flu Pandemic

The RAHS has launched a new website, [An Intimate Pandemic: The Community Impact of Influenza in 1919](#). This website offers an overview of pneumonic influenza in Australia, especially its effect upon communities throughout New South Wales. It also contains the important [Research Guide](#) that will help researchers and historians conduct their own investigation into the influenza and assess its impact.

Nationally the Vietnam war dominated the paper at this time. This was followed by car accidents, there had been 100 road deaths by 7 February and 128 deaths by 12 February. The first murmurs were reported about an Alcohol Breath Analyser being used by NSW police. Interestingly Courage Bitter beer was introduced this month and it had far more coverage. The Southern Aurora rail disaster took place at Violet Town at 7.10 am on 7 February. The initial report stated there were 10 dead, 46 hurt and 64 un-accounted for. (Later reporting said only nine died). The train was travelling at 70 mph and collided head on with a goods train. The article took up six pages with aerial views of the damage. Many reports followed in the ensuing days with funerals, memorial services and tributes featuring.

The Railways Union had just returned to work after a January strike and went on strike again over the incident and by the end of the month a further strike had occurred.

An exciting report revealed that the 'Hume Highway by pass' was to be announced shortly. Thirty eight years later, the new road was opened. Roll-over corner (Corner of Young and Hume Street) featured with a truck rolling over containing highly inflammable vinyl chloride gas in a tanker. This sparked a demand by Council to the Department of Main Roads to have big warning signs erected.

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife gave the go ahead for the first stages of the Hume Park Sanctuary consisting of 25 acres and to cost \$35,000, located 7 miles from Albury. The money was to be raised by the public. ('Ettamogah Sanctuary' as it was known is now closed.)

Can you believe this, 'Weather reports not reliable from Albury?' The meteorological bureau's weather station at the Army survey control, Bonegilla stated that the maximum temperature at Albury was 101 degrees, and Bonegilla 96.5 degrees. Lieut Col H M Hall reported that on one trip when returning from Albury he checked the temperature when he returned to Bonegilla and it was ten degrees cooler.

The old Fluoride debate was rife. A letter to the Editor stated 'Here is a few more details about ten sheep that died from fluoride poisoning at Tamworth..., such is the deadliness of the substance.' The Dairy Industry and Haberfield's Dairy had numerous articles about the Victoria Milk Board not wanting dairy farms from Victoria to supply the Dairy in NSW, even though they supplied Milk back into Wodonga and Victoria.

A stormy debate at council was reported involving a 10-minute clash between councillors. Ald. Garland demanded that a potential new industrial site be disclosed to the public. Mayor Ald Bunton said the company details should remain a secret.

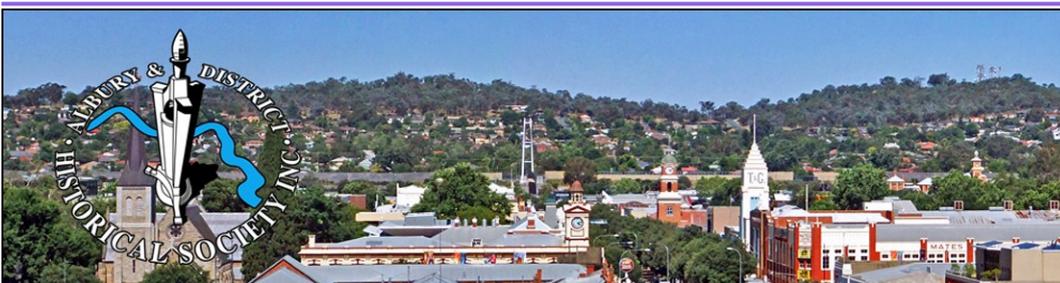
Ald Garland described Ald Roach as a 'squirt' Ald Roach accused Ald Garland of trying 'to buster council' into disclosing confidential information.



QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Apart from being cities in NSW, what do Albury and Gosford have in common?

Answer: On 13 April 1839, both were gazetted as sites for townships with land available for a minimum of £2 per acre.



Visit our website for photos of old Albury, history articles and much more. Go to: <https://alburyhistory.org.au/>



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Narelle Vogel

Narelle Vogel is the Cultural Development Coordinator at Albury City. As the meeting cameo speaker she outlined what she does in that role.

Narelle says she acts as an Arts Officer helping people to share their stories and connect with the rest of the community via arts projects. She gave example of several projects which she has been involved with. She has helped indigenous people who live in the local government area to share something of their traditions in several ways, but most particularly with the trail of eleven sculptures on the

river bank just above Kremur Street. Narelle has helped young people who may feel disconnected to find some fun cultural events that interest them. She has arranged open air film showings in which the audience participate in the film story. She instigated the idea of having a wood fire oven in Noreuil Park and it pleases her to see it being used for events, like those organised by the Albury Wodonga Indian Australian Association.

Her current big project is to get the Pumphouse used as a professional artists' workshop and hub. She envisages artists advancing their skills in woodwork, metalwork, ceramics, needlework and graphics and conducting classes for example in jewellery. The Pumphouse is being generously equipped and she invited the Society to visit and see what is happening.

Narelle congratulated the Society on the way it has protected local heritage and the way in which it started and still fosters the work of the museum.



Narelle promoting starlight movies.
Photograph Courtesy:
The Border Mail: Kylie Esler

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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.

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