

Albury & District Historical Society Inc

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Next Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2019
7:30 pm, Commercial Club
The Clancy family's local connections and his journey to become our local member.
Speaker: Justin Clancy

**ALBURY
LIBRARY MUSEUM
Consequences exhibition
continues until Jan 26**

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REPORT ON NOVEMBER MEETING (13.11.2019)

Our November meeting had a strong attendance with a significant number of guests. After welcoming members and guests, Greg Ryan highlighted the busy timetable of events of historic interest being held in Albury in November/December, with particular emphasis on activities to mark 100 years since the start of the Hume Dam project.

Graeme Hind, who had a long career in water management including at Hume Dam and with Murray Darling Basin Authority, was guest speaker at our November meeting. His talk focused on the function of the Hume Dam within the Murray Darling Basin and on modifications made to the dam in more recent decades.

We also heard from Society member Portia Dilena – Portia is a Research Officer at Charles Sturt University looking at the history of Higher Education in Albury Wodonga focusing on CSU and its precursor, the Riverina College of Advanced Education.

On November 11, 1919, the first Remembrance Day was held across the globe celebrating the first anniversary of the signing of the Armistice to end World War I. Richard Lee's "100 Years Ago" highlighted how that day was commemorated in Albury in 1919 and told us some of the other significant events happening locally at about the same time.

Greg reminded members that in December we will have our usual 'Show & Tell' where members 'Show' items of historical interest and 'Tell' the story of the item. All will be followed by a supper provided by the Society.



Why Does Hume Dam exist?

2019 marks a century since the turning of the first sod to begin construction of Hume Dam, a significant and ambitious project which followed closely behind other major public works such as the transcontinental railway from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie. Both of these works and many others were the result of the Federation of the colonies in 1901 which managed to get the previously parochial colonial governments to the table to work on projects for the national good. The process continues to this day with varying degrees of success!

In terms of water conservation infrastructure, Hume was hardly the first of its kind. Lake Parramatta Dam which still operates in western Sydney was constructed in 1856 to secure water supplies for the young settlements around Parramatta. Many other structures had already been or were under construction, and the vision for the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area was underway with the construction of Burrinjuck Dam, begun in 1906, thirteen years prior to Hume.

The desire to construct water conservation and control structures on Australia's inland rivers was driven by the fact that our continent's rivers and catchments experience the largest variability of annual rainfall, runoff and river flows in the world.

In terms of the Murray River, the colonial governments convened a number of conferences beginning in 1857 without achieving a single result or agreed decision. Throughout the remainder of that century and into the 20th, the Colonies and then States had differing visions for what they wanted from the river. South Australia wanted structures to pond and control flow to allow for a viable shipping industry, Victoria wanted a secure water supply for permanent plantings in its fledgling irrigation areas, and NSW, who had no plans to develop anything along the river at that time, wanted simply to retain the political power it had by virtue of owning the river.

Post federation, the new Federal Government in 1914 brought pressure to bear on the three previously recalcitrant States to develop a plan for the river, and the result was the River Murray Waters Agreement Act of 1915. In that year, despite bickering between states, the deal was done after the Federal Government put £1 million on the table to get it over the line. In summary, the agreement set out how the resources of the river should be shared between the States, how the river would be managed by the new River Murray Commission (now the Murray Darling Basin Authority) and what construction works were required.

Modifications to Hume Dam

Built between 1919 and 1936, on completion the Hume Dam had no power station and there were no spillway gates as we know them today.

In the 1950s the Hume had a big renovation. Most critically, the works to achieve an almost doubling of Hume's full supply volume by modifications to the earthen embankments and work to the top of the spillway to provide a structure to lift spillway gates in the 29 slots across the top of the wall. At the same time, the opportunity was taken to build a 60 Megawatt hydroelectric power station. It was also when the towns of Tallangatta and Huon had to be moved.

In the 1980s, a lot more work took place. The top of the spillway section of the dam was strengthened by the installation of over one hundred large steel cables that go from the very top of the structure through the dam wall and in some cases up to forty metres deep into the bedrock below the dam. They are known as post tensioning anchors, and resist uplift pressure which is a major danger to concrete gravity dams. Every 5-10 years each anchor is checked for tension – each cable imparts about 1500 tons of vertical tension to hold the dam wall down.

Also in the 1980s, the Lerner Johnson needle valves that were fitted to the dam originally, were removed. They were replaced with 2.9 metre diameter fixed-dispersion cone (FDC) valves which can be seen on the Hume Dam today. The original valves were replaced not because they were beyond their useful life, but because they were very inefficient. As the water level in the dam got lower, their ability to pass the volume of water required became less and the FDCs have a much more lineal flow characteristic.

In the 1990s, further works included the replacement of emergency closure gates deep within the wall. The emergency closure gates are there if the valves or turbines, which normally control water flow, don't work – the gates shut off the flow to the valves and/or turbines.



Checking tension in 'post tensioning anchors'

There were also problems in the 1990s with movement in certain areas of the wall – at the bend in the earthen embankment and near the junction with the southern training wall. The works that were done to address this were extensive, costing about \$90 million. They involved completely reshaping the embankment to make it a much gentler slope.

More recently the southern training wall was strengthened. Training walls either side of outlet works or spillways control turbulence and flow of water. When Hume Dam was remodelled in the late 1990s, there was an enormous amount of new material brought in to stabilize the earthen embankments to cure known deficiencies and to upgrade them to a much higher earthquake stability. The extra force of the material caused significant static loading on the southern training wall. Interim measures were put in place but the decision was made that there needed to be permanent strengthening by construction of an extra slab of concrete buttress wall against the training wall.

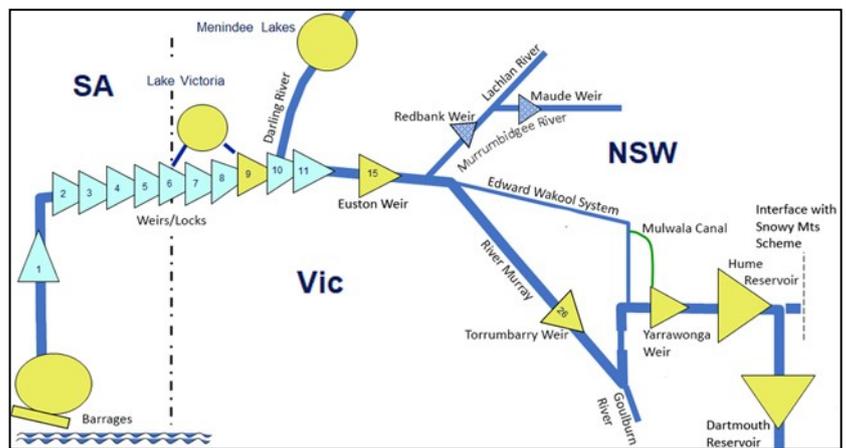
While the concrete of the foundations of the existing wall were strong enough to take the weight of a new concrete buttress in that area, downstream the foundations were not strong. To fix this, at the ‘toe’ of the training wall many vertical shafts were drilled – ‘Secant’ piling rigs excavated columns one at a time and each filled with mass concrete to provide a stable base for the buttress wall to be built over the area. This project cost about \$29 million.

So, since the original construction, the dam is very different from what was originally designed. As it stands, Hume has been re-engineered to an internationally accepted level of operations.

Operational Aspects of Hume Dam

Hume and Dartmouth Dams are ideally placed on the map of Australia for their role. While Hume and Dartmouth work as a team, they have very different roles to play.

Hume Dam when full contains 3000 GI, which is about three quarters of the average annual inflow. This means that if Hume Dam was to be empty at the start of winter then in an average year, inflows will fill it to 75% (but with massive variability). It is the main operating storage for the Murray River – Hume is where all the key decisions take place and without Hume, the Murray as we know it would not be the same.



Conversely, Dartmouth is one third bigger in capacity than Hume but it is four times the size of its average annual inflow. It is a bigger dam, but on a much smaller catchment area. If Dartmouth was to start off a year empty, it would take on average four years before it would fill. Dartmouth was built as a drought reserve storage in response to the 1968 drought when it was determined that there needed to be additional water storage in the Upper Murray. It was completed in 1979.

So Hume takes the brunt of the work in supplying the River Murray’s needs and water is kept in Dartmouth as long as possible. Water is only released from Dartmouth to supplement Hume when it is getting too low.

In the Murray-Darling Basin Agreement the three States and the Federal Governments decided how water resources would be shared. In essence, all water that flows into Hume or Dartmouth Dams and comes down the Kiewa River is 50/50 owned by NSW and Victoria. Downstream of Doctors Point, any inflow coming from Victoria tributaries, such as the Ovens or Goulburn Rivers, is owned by Victoria. Whereas any water into the Murray from tributaries such as Billabong Creek and the Murrumbidgee River is owned by NSW. Inflows into Menindee Lakes are in theory shared 50/50 between Victoria and NSW.

South Australia is the only State under the Act to have a guaranteed right to water. Victoria and NSW are only entitled to a fifty percent share in whatever opportunistic water is in the system at any moment in time. Under the Act, Victoria and NSW agree to ensure that South Australia gets its fair share under a formula.

When operating the river there are three overlapping periods typically in a given year. At the beginning of summer, the system is in SUPPLY mode, which typically occurs from October to May when water in storages is released downstream to meet demand for irrigation, stock and domestic and at rare times environmental needs.

This is followed by STORAGE mode which is typically winter and spring, where demand is low, and inflows are captured in storages. During this time releases are made for environmental flows, typically to mimic natural flow regimes that would have occurred at this time prior to regulation. During some years, the system is in SPILLING mode when flows in excess of storage capacities is passed downstream.

Characteristics of the Murray system which make it a challenge to operate include:

- long travel times of one to three months for water to travel from headwaters to the sea;
- the majority of stored water is held in headwater storages with little storage capacity below Hume;
- there are significant channel capacity constraints which limit the volume of water that can flow along the length of the river;
- most important, the variability of annual rainfall and runoff – the flow of the Murray is such that the wettest year has a flow volume of over 50 times the driest!

The Hume Dam has a critical role in the nation’s future, but not without challenges. Operation of Hume and the Murray has become far more complicated with changes to irrigation practices varying the traditional supply seasons, operating for environmental flows, greater need for more accurate flood forecasting, better real-time rainfall/runoff modelling of tributaries, seasonal streamflow prediction, higher expectations and accountability with water accounting and environmental accounting, and shared decision making.

100 YEARS AGO, November 1919

Richard Lee

Armistice Day to honour the gallant dead was to be celebrated in silence. The King had chosen to have a two-minute silence at 11.00am and to reflect and remember the happenings of the last few years. Albury celebrated with flags (Union Jacks) flying on government & municipal buildings as well as over many businesses. The streets were quiet at 11.00am, the doors of businesses were closed, vehicles came to a stop in the streets and pedestrians halted. St Matthew’s Church of England had a special service. Schools followed the instructions of the Education Department. In Dean Street, when the town clock struck the hour, a returned soldier promptly saluted, removed his hat and stood at attention. His example was quickly followed by others in the vicinity.

On November 14, Albury Municipal Council resolved that the area previously known as Bean’s Baths be christened ‘Noreuil Park.’ At the same meeting, Mayor Alf Waugh suggested that the Government be asked to change the name of Mitta Mitta Dam to Hume Reservoir – after all, the dam will soon submerge the spot where Hamilton Hume crossed the Murray River in 1824.

The Albury Repatriation Committee Carnival on Saturday 22, included a magnificent high jump event. A large crowd gathered with equestrian events, Victoria Cross races, flag races. The highlight was ‘Sundowner,’ the horse owned by Mr A Judd that had set a world record a few weeks earlier at the Albury Show, jumping 7 ft 9³/₈ inches (2.37m), at 9.00pm under illuminated lights.

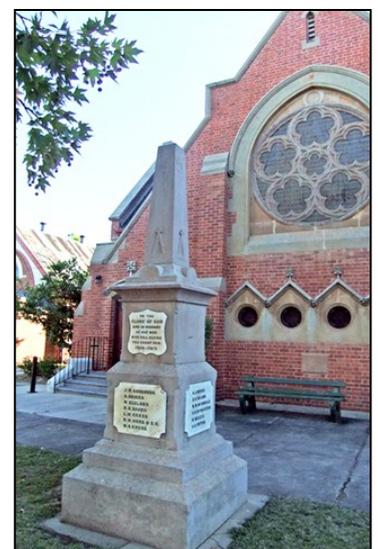
In tune with the ‘The Consequences Exhibition’ at Albury Library Museum, two of Albury’s own who had served two years at Salonika War Hospital, Sister Ruby Collins and Matron Pritchard, were on their way to Furlong, London. Back at Albury Railway Station, 500 soldiers passed through town in one night and each was served a meal – they arrived at the station at 6.45pm and left 30 minutes later for Sydney.

On Friday November 28, the first sod was turned by the Governor-General Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson to open the Mitta Mitta Dam project. The day’s paper had a long list of dignitaries from State and Federal Governments as well as mayors and officials from up and down the Murray River. The day had started with the unveiling by the Governor-General of a war memorial monument, built by Thomas Greenfield, at St David’s Presbyterian Church.

The following Monday’s paper mentioned that Mr Paul Newman brought a portion of the ‘first sod’ of the dam project, handed it to Mayor Alf Waugh who handed it to Mr J E R Fellows, curator of the Botanic Gardens, for it to be embedded in the bowling green or some other appropriate spot in our beautiful Gardens.

Albury was progressing well, and regulation of pedestrian traffic was to be introduced. The council had decided to place ‘keep to the right’ notices along footpaths. The ‘keep to the right’ would avoid “a deal of hustling, especially on Friday nights.”

And you wouldn’t believe it, the ‘express train’ had broken down near Benalla and was half an hour late. No change today!



Commissioned in 1984 to create a development plan for the Albury-Wodonga Campus of the Riverina College of Advanced Education (RCAE), Sam Phillips remarked that he was heavily criticised on his first draft of his report for apparently focusing on the political and not just the academic issues within the college. Yet, he argued, it was impossible not to. The context of higher education on the border, he contended, was not as simple as some had made it out to be – rather he found it to be a tale of “a mix of politics, civic pride, [and] parochial rivalries.”

Phillips' comments may be 35 years old – but for me they still hold truth. Over the past seven and a half months that I have been working on this project, I have found that the history of higher education in Albury-Wodonga may not be simple, but influenced by a range of factors and events. I will focus on three factors:

- William Merrylees and the Riverine University League (RUL), and how they defined the arguments for a regional university;
- how Wagga Wagga came to have RCAE;
- the students of the Albury Study Centre and what that tells us about wider changes globally.

At the Carrathool Family Hotel in 1951, the entire town of Carrathool had gathered to welcome the mock Captain Sturt expedition that was traveling through Australia. As ‘Captain Sturt’ mounted the stage and read out the original commission that had announced his expedition some 100 years earlier, a local grazier took to the stage with a message for Sturt to take back to the Governor. Reported in *The Age*, Merrylees, speaking only partly in jest, condemned the inequality of amenities between city and country towns, demanding that they receive electricity and decent schools.

Within this small, rather comical act of dissent, Merrylees not only began the fight for tertiary education in the Riverina, but dictated on which arguments it would be fought. In that short speech Merrylees introduced the three main arguments that were to support his, and all future, tertiary education campaigns in the Riverina:

- the inequality between regional and city services;
- the need for regional economic development;
- and the community importance of these items being addressed.

Merrylees believed a rural university crucial to addressing these points. A rural university would enable country students to study and thus remain in their communities, stopping the migration of young people to the cities. A rural university would promote economic growth through the jobs it would create, but also research catered to the region's needs. And, most importantly, Merrylees argued that a rural university would “ensure that people of the area [would] look upon it as their university, interested in their welfare and ready to help solve their problems.” He believed that if the university were fully integrated into the local community, unlike the city universities, it would work to create a well-rounded ‘man on the land’, who would uphold rural values and be dedicated to his community and the commonwealth.

Establishing the RUL in 1952 to petition State and Federal governments, they saw a rural university crucial to regional development and progress. They believed that a rural university would produce individuals who were intellectually, physically, socially and culturally aligned with rural Australia. Graduates would then remain in the regions, promoting growth and development, and creating a community culture that rivalled that in the cities.

Unlike campaigns before him, and you could argue after him, Merrylees sought to bridge the parochial divide between country towns, by simply calling for a university outside of the major cities. Merrylees often ignored State borders, and believed that rural individuals should identify more with their rural counterparts, than with the State they lived in. This is a concept that has been at the heart of Albury-Wodonga for a long time.

For Merrylees the real ‘enemy’ were those in the city, who often turned a blind eye to the needs of regional Australians – again something that still holds relevance today. He believed that a rural university was something that should be fought for, for all rural peoples and their way of life.

Moving forward to 1968, a joint State and Federally funded College of Advanced Education (CAE) was offered to south-eastern regional NSW. This was the result of a failed campaign for a rural university by the NSW State Country-Liberal Party coalition, led by NSW Education Minister Charles Cutler and his assistant, Member for Wagga Wagga, Wal Fife. They had been campaigning for a rural university since 1965, when they rejected the Federal Government's first offer of a CAE. Over the next three years, Fife and Cutler systematically downgraded their application from a university, to a university college, and finally to a junior university college – each rejected by the Australian Universities Commission (AUC) and the Federal Government as too expensive and unnecessary.

Still actively campaigning at this stage, Merrylees was furious with the actions of Wal Fife, who he perceived to be underselling the Riverina. Merrylees believed that a junior university college would not work, as it was still controlled by a metropolitan university, which did not understand the needs of regional communities.

At the end of 1967, Merrylees took matters into his own hands and invited the AUC's Chairman Martin on a tour of the region in a bid to convince him of the need for a university. The tour concluded with a meeting in Albury attended by 800 locals, with multiple speakers presenting on a range of topics from irrigation, to forestry, to culture. The meeting presented a holistic argument for the need for a Riverine university, going back to Merrylees' three arguments of equality, development and community.

While Martin was impressed by Merrylees' tour and the obvious community support and desire for a university, he was unable to convince the Federal Government and the AUC to agree to fund it. So when the Federal Government offered a joint funded CAE, Cutler and Fife readily accepted.

To determine the location of the new CAE, the Heath Committee was established. Releasing their findings in 1968, Wagga became the preferred location. While at first glance the report appears to demonstrate that Wagga had the largest demand for a CAE in terms of population size, workforce, and rate of growth, this was in fact due to the way the report was written. Initially when establishing the four main regions of the Riverina, Albury and Wodonga are separated into Upper Murray and Victoria, while Wagga is included in an almost super region of the whole Murrumbidgee. The denial of the existence of a cross-border region distorts the resulting numbers, making the Murrumbidgee seem densely populated compared with the small Albury and small Wodonga.

Yet, when you group together Albury and Wodonga to form the one-community, Albury-Wodonga is shown to be the more logical location. Albury-Wodonga:

- had a larger combined population size in 1966 than Wagga, 37,079 to 29,811;
- had a larger industrial centre than Wagga, and better suited to growth in industry due to its location along the highway and train line between Sydney and Melbourne;
- most importantly, had experienced the highest levels of growth, and would continue to do so.

Years later, the author of the report disclosed that Wagga had already been selected as the site of the new college prior to the report being undertaken. As Wal Fife stated in his autobiography, Federal duties permitting, he made sure that he serviced his electorate.

On October 27, 1969, the Interim Council of the Riverina College met at the Wagga Wagga Teachers' College for the first time. Tasked with setting up the new college, the council established an 'Other Centres Committee' (OCC) that was to set up study centres of the college in other Riverina regional centres. By December 1, the Council had already identified Albury as a top priority area.

At the inaugural meeting of the OCC, Albury local and interim council member, Mrs Aynsley stressed "that it was important that people in the other centres did not feel that it was a Wagga College." Instead, just as Merrylees had intended from the very beginning, the Riverina College should be there to "serve the needs of the whole of the Riverina area."

Merrylees did not live to see the Riverina College in Wagga, having died on August 17, 1969. In apparent appreciation of his work, Wal Fife suggested to the Interim Council that a building at the college be named after the late scholar. Responding against the proposal, council member Mr Hale stated that while remembering Merrylees was important, to name a building after him was "quite inappropriate." He argued that everyone knew that Merrylees never wanted a college, instead campaigning for a university right up until his death. The placing of the college in Wagga in rather dubious circumstances was to have far reaching impacts – fuelling the rival attitudes between the two towns – something that Merrylees had actively sought to avoid.

Yet higher education had still come to the border and March 27, 1972, David Fairbairn, Member for Farrer and Minister of Defence, was at a new building in Swift Street Albury. Gathered in front of him stood members of the local community, who in one way or another, had all contributed to what Fairbairn described "as a milestone in the history of Albury and a step which would encourage decentralisation." Mr Fairbairn was opening the new Study Centre of RCAE, which had been operating for the previous two weeks out of St Matthew's Parish Hall. Hopeful for the future of this border-city, Mr Fairbairn asked the community to support the fledgling institution so that it could grow and have a lasting presence in the regional city.

Prior to establishing the Study Centre, the college conducted a survey and investigation into the needs of the community. While the survey found that many school leavers were disinterested in the Study Centre, instead preferring to go to a university, school teachers were not. The 1970 survey noted an enthusiastic response to the



prospective Study Centre by primary school teachers – many of whom were looking to upgrade their two-year qualification to a three-year qualification. Of the three recommendations made to the college council, the primary one was that the Teacher Extension course be offered and that it be applicable to Victorian teachers too.

The desire of adult learners to upskill their qualifications shaped the newly opened Study Centre. All classes offered were night classes, held Tuesday evenings between 4.30 and 9.30pm. The Study Centre was located centrally in town so that students were able to arrive straight from work. The subjects were all part-time and were in courses catered to an adult market, including teaching, accounting, and business administration. By the end of 1972 there were 33 students enrolled in teaching, with 36 predicted for semester one in 1973, while business studies had 18, rising to 22 at the start of 1973.

A profile of the typical first students to attend the Albury Study Centre is provided by former student Eileen Clark. She enrolled at the Study Centre in 1972 after leaving work as a laboratory technologist to have her first child. Eileen was looking to re-enter the workforce in a different role. Many of her friends were enrolled at the Study Centre, upskilling their teaching degrees from a two-year to a three-year, Eileen decided to join them. Eileen's motivation to study fits in with the wider student population at the Albury Study Centre who saw it as an opportunity to upskill themselves in a changing labour force.

Yet it also fits in with the larger changes occurring nationally. The 1960s and 1970s saw a rise in New Left ideas, including feminism, civil rights and gay rights. Nationally, the Whitlam Labor Government was elected, bringing in a raft of progressive policies, including the abolition of conscription and eventually free tertiary education in 1974. Locally, this saw a rise in mature age students, especially women, accessing tertiary education for the first time, no longer constrained by finances or society's expectations of women as homemakers.

Female enrolments at Australian universities increased from 25% in 1961 to 34% in 1974, while at the colleges, women made up the largest proportion of students in areas such as teacher education, creative arts and paramedical studies. In fact, CSU has always had a higher female to male ratio throughout its almost 50-year history. For Eileen Clark, seeing all these women, who were originally excluded from further education as it was seen as a waste of time, was very inspiring. Stating "all these women who lived on the farm for twenty years, now were doing something ... it was the beginning of feminism."

This was a sentiment that was expressed multiple times throughout my interviews. Free and accessible higher education provided many mature age women in Albury-Wodonga with a new independence – economic independence in that many of them were able to pursue their own career, and an intellectual independence. While nothing compared with the Women's Liberation movement in the cities, I believe that the high number of female students who passed through the Study Centre, worked to bring many of the ideals of Women's Liberation to Albury-Wodonga.

In conclusion, this is only a snippet of everything that I learnt while completing this study. I recorded over 25 interviews with past students and teachers. I searched through the Victorian State Library archive and CSU's archives in Wagga. Not to mention going through all the material that was kindly donated to me by so many lovely people. In the end I have produced a 30,000-word history that attempts to explain higher education in Albury-Wodonga.

Correction to Memorial Uiver DC2 story in November Bulletin

A&DHS member Noel Jackling asked me to correct last month's article: "The memorial Uiver (construction number 1286) was acquired from the Douglas Corporation by Eastern Airlines Inc in October 1934 as NC13736. On 30 March 1941 it came to the RAAF where it served in Squadrons 36, 34 and 37 as A30-11 until being sold to Marshall Airways on 3 October 1946. [Source: S. Dudek, M. Ovčáček & K. Susa (2004), Douglas DC-2]"



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Further information relating to November's '50 Years Ago'

In our November Bulletin, Richard Lee pointed out that 50 years ago there were efforts to save *Valetta* in Swift St (pictured), the former home of Dr Cleaver Woods. The house was built in 1898 and demolished in 1970. Society member John Henwood provided follow up information:

“*Valetta* was an outstanding early example of the Queen Anne Style of architecture. I chaired the committee which opposed the demolition of *Valetta* and the fight went well beyond regular protest letters to the Council. It lasted for over 18 months. The Council even gave us the house, but it had to be moved!

“The campaign to save *Valetta* began one Easter when I wrote a letter to the Council. I was at the meeting where the Mayor Cleaver Bunton gave my letter a lengthy verbal ‘serve’ and in doing so he ignored the time limit for such comments. After the meeting I saw Clif Mott, then editor of the BMM and he encouraged me to fight the proposal to pull down the building. The importance of *Valetta* as an example of the Queen Anne Style was discussed at a public meeting held in Albury by the Save *Valetta* Committee, of which I was the chairman. The speaker was George Tibbits, a Senior Lecturer in Architecture at Melbourne University and a member of the National Trust (Victoria) committee which classified historic buildings. Before it was demolished I had the *Valetta* interior and exterior photographed by Gustav Pottyondy of McPherson Studios.

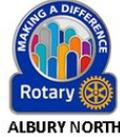
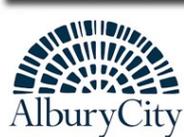
“It was the second campaign over a building pulled down for Cleaver’s dream of a new Civic Centre. The first campaign was to save the old Mechanics Institute building and theatre in Dean Street. Sadly it failed too. Albury’s appreciation of its historic buildings has not always been a notable feature of civic life in Albury.”



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