

ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc. President's Report 2020

The first eight or so months of this past year was very busy for the Society. Unfortunately for all, the COVID-19 pandemic has curtailed our activities since early March, but we can be grateful to have avoided the worst of it. A measure of our progress over the last twelve months has been the increase in Society membership, with eighteen new members and well over 100 in total. Our website continues to be a key source of local history information, attracting 18,000 page visits in the last twelve months.

Sad news for all members was losing vice-president Joe Wooding in February. Joe and Jill Wooding joined the Society in 2004, both joining the committee in 2007. Joe was passionate about local history and made a huge contribution to its research and documentation. He was Society president in 2017-18, and about 11 years as vice-president.

At our monthly meetings we heard a broad range of topics from quality speakers:

- After our AGM closed in June, Charles Stitz gave us an account of his research into the life and achievements of Albury doctor and historian Dr Arthur Andrews.
- Ray Gear on attempts to establish a local silk worm industry at 'Glenmorus.'
- Editor of the *Border Mail*, Xavier Mardling with details of the changing landscape of newspaper publishing.
- Chris de Vreeze talked about his arrival in Australia in 1952 as a young boy and Dutch immigrant.
- Dr Penny Vine spoke of some of the hurdles faced by newly arrived refugees from African countries and Bhutan as they adjust to life in Australia.
- Graeme Hind focused on the function of the Hume Dam within the Murray Darling Basin and on modifications made to the dam in more recent decades.
- Justin Clancy spoke of the Clancy family's Irish origins and their long association with the Albury District.
- Claire Doolan gave us an informative trip around rock art of various sites in Victoria's north-east granites.
- Cathy McGowan challenged us to consider what can be done to recognise the displaced indigenous communities of north-east Victoria.

Each meeting had extra segments including presentations by Team Leader at Albury LibraryMuseum Carina Clement, remembering the Apollo 11 moon landing 50 years on, an explanation of DNA analysis and a presentation on the history of Higher Education in Albury by Portia Dilena. Richard Lee's '50 Years Ago' and Joe Wooding's 'Did You Know' were always informative and entertaining.

A major highlight was November's commemoration of 100 years since the turning of the first sod on construction of the Hume Dam. This defining moment was commemorated with an exploration series 'Living with the Hume Dam, 1919-2019,' presented by Charles Sturt University. WaterNSW commissioned two interpretative panels telling the story of the dam, unveiled at Hume Dam to commemorate the anniversary. A&DHS were consulted to help provide material for the panels. Thanks to Bruce Pennay for his key organising role and to Joe Wooding for the eleven *Border Mail* articles outlining the stages in dam construction.

The *Albury Banner & Wodonga Express* on NLA's Trove website now goes back as far as 1873 and the *Border Morning Mail* now covering the years 1903-1920 and 1938-46. Again, thanks to Bruce Pennay, the prime mover in making fund applications – funding support came from the Public Record Office, the Royal Australian Historical Society, Inland Rail, the Commercial Club of Albury, Charles Sturt University and generous private donors.

In September we heard that a revised Development Application to demolish 'Meramie' on Kiewa Street had been put to AlburyCity. Again, our Society joined the protest against this development with a strongly worded submission to Council. Council considered the application on May 25 and the application was refused.

Together with the Uiver Memorial Community Trust, the Society continues to participate in discussions with consultants considering further options proposed to Council and in particular the best site for permanent storage and display of the restored plane.

We welcomed Miami historian and author, Cesar Becerra to Albury in September and assisted him with his research into William & Mary Brickell, pioneers both in Albury and in Miami.

This past year we have received generous support from corporate sponsors: the Commercial Club (venue for our monthly meetings); AlburyCity (venue for committee meetings); Coxtech (website maintenance); KwikKopy (supply of our printing needs); and financial support from sponsors Lester & Son Funeral Directors, Baker Motors, Hume Bank, ThinkPilates and Rotary clubs of Albury, Albury North, Albury West and Albury Hume.

To Albury LibraryMuseum Team Leader Carina Clement, museum curator Emma Williams and all the team, a very sincere thank you for the many ways that they have contributed.

It is a privilege to serve as President and my task is made easier with the support provided by our general membership, your ongoing commitment to our Society is very much appreciated. My sincere thanks to all committee members for your continued enthusiasm for the role we play in helping preserve our local heritage.



Greg Ryan