

# Albury & District Historical Society Inc



August 2020

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Victory in the Pacific 75 years ago, August 15, 1945. Albury Town Hall was lit up with the letters 'VP' – many Albury businesses joined in the celebrations with large V's, flags, lights and bunting.

## Next Meeting

Wednesday, August 12, 2020

7.30 pm, Commercial Club

A&DHS Annual General Meeting

Victory in Pacific/War Memorial

Speaker: Graham Docksey

**ALBURY LIBRARY MUSEUM**

**'NOREUIL MEMOIRS'**

**UNTIL NOVEMBER**

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## THIS MONTH

Our postponed Annual General Meeting will be held at 7.30 pm, Wednesday August 12 at the Commercial Club. The Club has notified that we can have up to 47 in attendance in Elizabeth Room A with 1 person per 4 square metres, seated at tables. They have a Covid 19 safety plan in place and are following all the regulations and health requirements. As all are well aware, nothing is certain at the moment – if the meeting has to be postponed again, we will notify by email and there will be a note in the *Border Mail* attached to our regular 'Then & Now' article on Saturday August 8.

Reminder that subscriptions are due for 2020/21. We have already received subs from over 70 members, thank you for your continued support. Single members \$30, family members \$35. Members requiring a posted copy of the Bulletin, please pay \$10 extra. Corporate membership is \$100 per annum.

**2020/21 Subs Due**

On August 15 it will be 75 years since the Japanese surrendered and Australia and our Allies celebrated 'VP Day – Victory in the Pacific.' The end of World War II is recognised in this Bulletin with articles by Society members. Honor Auchinleck's article describes the return of her father, Thomas Mitchell, after three and a half years as a prisoner of war. Bruce Pennay reflects on Victory celebrations in 1946 and the local recovery from WWII. Richard Lee's 75 Years Ago describes some aspects of life in Albury just before war ended. Howard Jones provides a photo of the attendees at a 70 year reunion of members of Albury's Own 2/23rd Infantry Battalion.

Our August meeting will continue the theme with guest speaker Graham Docksey, President of Albury RSL, talking about the end of World War II and describing changes at the Albury War Memorial.

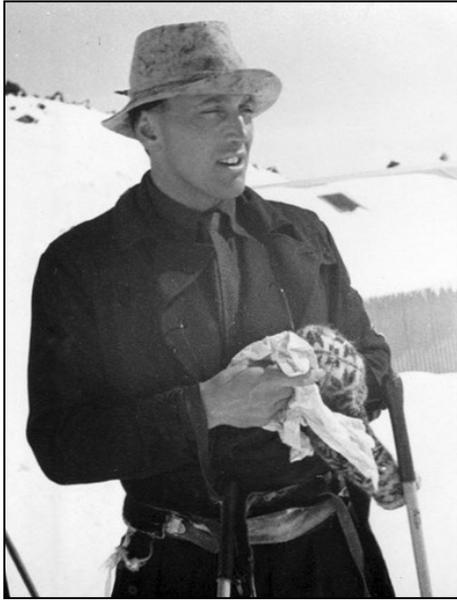
A very warm welcome to new Society member Geoff Emerson, retired Albury High School teacher.

## TOM MITCHELL: A LEGACY OF WAR AND CAPTIVITY

Honor Auchinleck

War in the Pacific ended 75 years ago on 15 August with the surrender of Japan. Honor Auchinleck is writing a biography of her father, Tom Mitchell, who spent three and a half years as a prisoner of the Japanese at Changi prisoner-of-war camp (liberated 5 September 1945). Former POWs faced a challenging time returning home. In this article, Honor describes some of the difficulties her father faced as he re-built his life after the war.

When Tom Mitchell came back to his childhood home at Towong Hill near Corryong in late October 1945 from the Changi prisoner-of-war Camp, it was entirely understandable if he had hoped for lasting world and personal peace. In the context of the necessary readjustment ahead, it was perhaps not an entirely attainable goal.



A young Tom Mitchell  
In the High Country

During the four and a half years Tom had served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF, three and a half of which he had spent as a POW, Tom and his wife Elyne had matured and changed independently from each other. By the time Tom returned from Changi, Elyne had developed her own successful career as a published writer with two books (*Australia's Alps* [1942] and *Speak to the Earth* [1945]) and numerous articles. She had also worked hard on the Towong Hill sheep and cattle station. The balance had shifted and where once as a young bride Elyne had had to adjust to Tom's life, on his return from war Tom now had to adjust to the life she had created and loved in his absence.

On his return, Tom's first and perhaps toughest challenge was recovering his health. As a result of a car accident on 9 February 1942 in Singapore, debilitating headaches plagued his three and a half years in Changi. His headaches continued with varying degrees of severity for the rest of his life. Due to vitamin deficiencies as a result of near starvation in Changi, kind relatives and friends sent pots of honey, Marmite and Vegemite. Tom was encouraged to have a spoonful of honey whenever he was near the kitchen. His younger cousin Roger Dunlop, who would serve as a doctor with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan, advised Tom and Elyne about his diet. Tom also had to work out which of

the many threads of his pre-war life he could reactivate with a reasonable degree of success. There was little or no help or guidance – Australia had never before experienced the return of large numbers of former prisoners of war, many of whom were traumatised and had other health problems.

Understandably it was difficult for Tom to walk away from his memories. In his diary entry for Christmas Day 1945 he wrote: 'Woke up at 0435 and wished myself the best and happiest thought of this time last year when Archie Barber caroled to the dawn in Changi "Roll on breakfast." Got the fire going and was brewing myself a celebration brew of tea preparatory to a few peaceful minutes lapping it up and thinking how lucky I was when I thought that the more scouty action would be to get hold of one of the trays and take my tea and some more up to Elyne ...'

There was another important entry in Tom's diary for Christmas Day 1945:

'Got quite a good call and a yarn with him [Dr Kennedy Burnside]. This made me feel alright.' Tom probably owed his life to great friend and Army doctor VX45320 Major Kennedy Burnside – he spoke to him every Christmas and on many other occasions each year until Ken died in 1983. Tom also mentioned in his 1945 diary that after speaking to Ken, he and Elyne then 'Had to rush to church and got there just as the old bell up the red gum tree was clanging.'

In the weeks, months and years after the war ended, and like so many of his friends and colleagues, Tom also tried to find out what had happened to other family members and friends who had served. He would have known that his cousin Captain John Massie, an Army liaison officer was still posted as missing in New Guinea. His plane had been shot down and crashed into the sea near Wewak. In Tom's archive there is a very battered cutting headed *Liaison Officer Missing*, written by 'Our War Correspondent Somewhere in New Guinea.' There is no date on the cutting. John Massie's remains were not discovered until 18 January 1946. This news and the news of the fate and injuries of other friends and acquaintances would have caused Tom and his family deep sadness.

It would be understandable if Tom felt that by returning to his childhood home at Towong Hill, it would be easier to balance some of the wartime hardships, traumas and tragedies with stories from the early history of the Upper Murray. He sought out family friends and employees whom he remembered from his childhood and

the time he'd spent at Towong Hill before the War. By early January 1946, Tom was recording in his diary his memories and his yarns with some of the older 'hands' in the district. At school and university, history had been Tom's favourite subject and now, crucially, local history was helping in Tom's recovery.

From his diary notes, Tom began writing short stories he initially named *Gillamatong* after some of the local Upper Murray indigenous peoples. Later he changed the title to *Towong Tales*. In writing his stories about earlier twentieth century Upper Murray life and its characters and events, Tom rekindled his own memories and his family's context in the fabric of the district. At the same time as writing *Towong Tales*, Tom also tried to find a publisher for *Midway Peak*, his own memoir which he had written in Changi, only to receive rather disparaging remarks about it recording the exploits of a 'playboy.'

About *Gillamatong* the renowned Beatrice Davis of Angus and Robertson commented that:

*'The present impression of tediousness and over discursiveness comes chiefly from lack of paragraphing and punctuation, and from a too-close adherence to the actual style of your old-timers.'*

Later Davis remarked somewhat more positively that *'At present I found the MS [manuscript] difficult to read with pleasure, and yet I recognize the excellence of the material.'*

Davis mentions some possible edits and says, 'I hope you will have a go at this.' If she realised that her reply would cause disappointment to a man who had already endured so much, she would have been quite correct. In the letter there was no apparent understanding of her author. Lack of understanding was not just a feature of publishing house editors but at the time it was widespread through Australian society. Apart from excerpts of stories published in the 1960s in *The Corryong Courier*, *Gillamatong* or *Towong Tales* remains unpublished.

Although Tom's commission to write Volume III of the *Official War History* must have cheered him, it wasn't without its bittersweet moments. On 22 July 1946 he wrote to his mother apologising for not having typed his letter and explaining that 'my bloody type mangle [typewriter] has just given up the bloody ghost, due probably to the strain of just having to write a polite letter to Gordon Bennett about the history!' At heart he was probably remembering the 'General' who pinched his slit trench in December 1941, not to mention his memories of learning as a POW that Major General Gordon Bennett (Commander of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division AIF) had escaped from Singapore. It is also likely that Elyne would have told him that shortly after Gordon Bennett arrived in Australia he had contacted her parents (General Sir Harry and Lady Chauvel) and told them that the last he had seen of their son-in-law Tom was trying to escape. Tom had been injured on 9 February 1942, six days before the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 so he would not have escaped even had he wanted to and been able to do so.

Before the war, Tom had had some writing experience. In 1937 he published a ski handbook *Ski Heil* (Ski Greetings). The same year he also published articles in *The Argus* and in the *Border Morning Mail*. In his enlightened article *A Highway from Adelaide to Orbost: Plan to Open Upper Murray Crossing the Alps from Corryong*, he wrote, 'It is the aim of the Upper Murray Shire to extend the road as far as Groggin, ultimately to get it pushed through to connect the system of roads running from Orbost, thus completing the long river highway from Adelaide to the Pacific coast.' Tom correctly points out that 'tourist possibilities of such a road would be far reaching!' Despite the potential benefits the dream has gone unrealised, probably due to the difficulty of the terrain and expense.

At the time when Tom enlisted and subsequently embarked for Malaya, he and Elyne were working on what became Elyne's *Australia's Alps*. Throughout 1941 and during his service in Malaya, Tom's letters to Elyne were filled with advice and helpful hints on mountain exploration, photographic and writing techniques. Nearly two years later and aware of the healing power of the hills and High Country, on 26 February 1943 Tom recorded in his diary: '... Had a very successful meeting of the Changi Ski Club, over 20, and resolved to approach the Repat through RSSL (Returned Sailors and Soldiers League) for grants of land in the snow areas plus finance to develop them. Also to train ski troops.' After the war Tom explained, 'the "ski" club assumed an unbelievable reality in our lives of unreality and uncertainty on the edge of – the very near edge – of that which lies beyond all human existence.'<sup>A</sup>



Tom and Elyne prior to WWII

Undoubtedly Tom was proud of Elyne's writing successes, but perhaps the fact that Elyne dedicated *Australia's Alps* to Tom never really compensated for the fact that the war had come between him and accompanying Elyne on her High Country expeditions and his role in co-authoring the book. Although Tom never spoke about it, it could have added an unspoken undercurrent to his already accumulating disappointments.

In 1946 Rohan D Rivett<sup>B</sup> published *Behind the Bamboo: An Inside Story of the Japanese Prison Camps*. Although Tom never mentioned it, he was well aware that Oxford University Press had published greatly respected fellow POW, W S Kent Hughes's *Slaves of the Samurai*.<sup>C</sup> Tom's copy is dated 21 February 1947. On 4 March 1948 Wilfrid signed the book for Tom, kindly adding the inscription, 'From one Changi Old Boy to another.' It wouldn't have passed Tom's notice that other POW friends and colleagues, Leslie Greener and Russell Braddon, published their books in 1951 and 1954 respectively.<sup>D</sup> Tom's bookshelves were filled with works by authors such as Paul Brickhill, Lucas Phillips, Chester Wilmot and others. Once again Tom never mentioned it to me but he could well have wondered why success had eluded him.

When he was elected to Parliament in the elections on 7 June 1947 and less than two years after he returned from Changi, Tom resigned his commission to write the official history. Success heralded other disappointments. Perhaps before age took its inevitable course, his electoral success brought an end to his ski-racing and writing careers. Tom often found a way to work a compromise and a way to mix politics and skiing and he remained involved in various aspects of politics relating to ski racing and he used his position as a Member of Parliament to foster the development of the resort at Falls Creek. He continued to write articles for the *Corryong Courier*, *The Ski Year Book*, *Ski Horizons* and other ski magazines. In 1983 Tom published the then controversial and now sought after *Corryong and the 'Man from Snowy River' District*. He died the following year on 4 February 1984.

If Tom ever felt that he had not managed to realise his dreams sufficiently, for a returned POW, he made a wonderful attempt in his service to his electorate, Scouting, skiing and local history. He had done his best and for most that has to be good enough. For a man who hitched his chariot to the stars, it probably wasn't good enough. As Tom's daughter and as an Army wife having some insight in what service involves, I look back on his post Second World War life with admiration for the way he met his challenges and served his country and community.

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- A. Mitchell, Tom, 'Changi "Ski" Club' *Ski Horizon*, p23
  - B. Rohan D Rivett (1917-1977) Educated at Melbourne University and Oxford University although he didn't finish his Oxford degree. On returning to Australia he began working as a cadet for the *Argus*. Rivett enlisted on 7 June 1940 and was seconded to the Department of Information. After the Japanese entered the war, he volunteered to work for the Malaya Broadcasting Corporation and was discharged from the AIF. It was in that capacity that he announced the Fall of Singapore to the world.
  - C. Kent Hughes, W S, *Slaves of the Samurai* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1946). During the First World War Sir Wilfrid Kent Hughes served with 3<sup>rd</sup> Light Horse Brigade on Gallipoli, in Sinai, Palestine and Syria. In 1917 he was awarded the Military Cross for his work as a staff captain, promoted major and deputy adjutant and quartermaster general of the Australian Mounted Division. He wrote his first book *Modern Crusader* (1918) describing the exploits of the Light Horse. In 1927 he won the seat of Kew in the Legislative Assembly which he returned until 1949. Notably in 1947 he was awarded an OBE for his 'inspiration to all ranks during his incarceration'. He held the seat of Chisholm in the House of Representatives until his death in 1970. (Reference I R Hancock, Kent Hughes, Sir Wilfrid Selwyn (1895-1970) <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kent-hughes-sir-wilfrid-selwyn-billy-10723>)
  - D. Greener, Leslie, *No Time to Look Back* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1951) and Braddon, Russell, *Those in Peril* (London: Hutchinson, 1954)

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## HOWARD JONES' JOTTINGS

Albury has hosted classical music concerts by many famous singers and musicians. Think of Nellie Melba (1908 and 1927), Percy Grainger (1903), Joan Sutherland (1950), Marjorie Lawrence (1939), Daniel Barenboim (1958), Peter Dawson (1914), Fr Sydney MacEwen (1951), Harold Blair (1949) and Leontyne Price (1957). In popular and country music, visitors have ranged from Roy Orbison (1972) and Kris Kristofferson to Gerry & The Pacemakers (2013) and Slim Dusty (multiple times over 50 years). Does anyone have old programs or tickets that would show dates of other stars? Email: [hcampbelljones@gmail.com](mailto:hcampbelljones@gmail.com)

The first Aussie Rules football club in Albury was formed in 1876 before there was any local league. A medical practitioner, Dr J C Duncan, was captain when Albury twice played Beechworth, where a club had been formed in 1875. After a year or two, the Albury club folded, and in 1878 the good doctor, a splendid goal-kicker, was called upon to resuscitate it. As a result, he was elected president and another player, solicitor John Wilkinson was secretary. *More on Page 10.*

This month marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Bruce Pennay makes ten points on a report of the local Victory Day celebrating the end of war and outbreak of peace. He draws on work he is doing with Wodonga Historical Society in preparing an online exhibition on the impact of the war on Wodonga and its surrounds.

A report in the Border Morning Mail on the way in which Victory Day was celebrated in 1946 suggests something of the nature of war on the home front, the expectations of peace, and ideas about the kinds of places Albury and Wodonga were becoming with the transition from war to peace.

1. There was nothing unusual about the way Albury and Wodonga joined in the British Empire and Allies celebrations of Victory in 1946. There were speeches, processions and festivities, similar to those in other large New South Wales country towns, like Wagga Wagga, and small Victorian country towns, like Benalla. Town bands, fire brigades and mayors were all involved in trying to make this a memorable occasion. The Last Post was sounded. The Recessional was sung.
2. The local celebrations were different from those on VE Day and VP day. VE Day had been celebrated as a British victory, aptly reported with pictures of the Royal Family acknowledging the crowd at Buckingham Palace. VP day was a victory against the Japanese. It prompted expressions of thanksgiving, recognition of the sacrifices made by service personnel and spontaneous outbursts of joyous relief — illustrated pithily with the tearing apart of an effigy of Tojo, supplied by the girls of the Victory Vanities . The celebrations of Victory Day in 1946, by way of contrast, were reflective and comparatively sober. The two principal speakers in Albury looked back and forward. Cleaver Bunton, the Mayor of Albury, gave thanks to God, acknowledged the contribution to victory made by war-time leaders and the sacrifices of those who had served. E M Phiddian, President of the Albury sub-branch of the RSL, spoke of the task ahead. He looked to the role played by ordinary people. He explained this had been ‘a people’s war and must lead to a people’s peace’. In 1946 the focus of the celebration was on peace, the future, children.

3. The procession in Wodonga was different from that in Albury. Mighty Matilda and General Grant tanks clanked down High Street followed by a parade of military vehicles, ex-servicemen, servicemen and servicewomen. Albury and Wodonga had proudly proclaimed themselves garrison towns, but it was Wodonga that hosted the bulk of the military presence. Floral floats were decorated and attended by business girls and girls from the new textile factory. The business girls wore fashionable broad-brimmed hats which flamboyantly contrasted with the austere millinery of the war years. The girls from the Supreme Hosiery factory decorated and appeared on a pageant float representing ‘Peace’, ‘Britannia’ and ‘Legacy’.



*Border Morning Mail* photo of June 11, 1946, captioned: ‘These attractive Wodonga girls, who took part in Victory Day celebrations at Wodonga yesterday, did not seem to mind the cold in the pleasure of the occasion.’

4. There is sufficient of the main street backdrops in the photographs to show that Albury was the dominant commercial centre. Albury had recovered quickly from the depression and boasted of a new array of renovated or newly built hotels and grand insurance company offices completed just before the war or, like the T&G and AMP offices, in the early year of the war before building restrictions were imposed. The commercial world confidently anticipated how Albury would serve not only its wool and wheat surrounds, but also the increasing motor vehicle traffic, evident in the photograph of the procession. Nearly all this investment came from Melbourne based breweries and insurance companies. Dean Street was a Victorian investment. Wodonga’s commercial centre was humbler. The tanks trundled down a single strip of macadam in High Street. The Shire Council held hard to its first priority of completing a sewerage scheme before it worried too much about roads and drains.
5. Report of the local celebrations was uncommon in that the whole page display and the first key sentences blended two town celebrations. *Border Morning Mail* was true to its mission of creating a print community

which embraced both sides of the state border. Both Wodonga and Albury were proud of the ways that through the war their citizens had made contributions to the war effort independently of each other. That self-reliance even stretched to setting up a volunteer air observation post in Woodland Grove and another in Billson Park. Wodonga volunteers would protect their town from air raids. Albury volunteers would protect their town. Each town vied with same state towns on the numbers of recruits they volunteered and the amounts of money they raised for Victory or Liberty loans. The councils had worked separately to secure independently a military camp and a munitions factory. Yet there was a growing consciousness that Albury and Wodonga were 'sister towns', as Doug Padman, Albury's war-time mayor, told the visiting Lord Mayor of Melbourne. Through the war there had been calls for Albury and Wodonga to work more closely together to win, for example, an inland killing centre. But the New South Wales centre was established in Wagga Wagga and the Victorian centre in Wangaratta. There were calls for 'the brains of Albury and Wodonga' to work together in the best interests of both. Citizens of Wodonga and Albury found common interest in challenging state devised urban development plans which minimised their claims on state government largesse on the grounds of their border location. Wagga Wagga and Wangaratta with their full moons of influence within each state were preferred for government sponsored facilities by Sydney and Melbourne based state governments. Both the local councils opted to join in the planning of a post-war cross-border, river-long Murray Valley region, rather than a Riverina region centred on Wagga Wagga and a North-east region centred on Wangaratta. War changed the way a border community situated itself in relation to others. It marked the awakening of a cross-border solidarity. The celebrations referenced the challenges and achievements of the war years and heralded those of the peace.

6. Albury and Wodonga were proud of their British heritage. There were just as many Union Jacks as Australian Ensigns waved. 'Britannia' was represented. A challenge of the war years had been to live in a community which included small numbers of non-British people, even, some enemy people with the Italian prisoners-of-war at Hume Camp and at Bonegilla. That challenge was to be magnified when Albury and Wodonga became the immediate host community for the first contingents of displaced persons fleeing war-torn Europe when they arrived at Bonegilla as part of Australia's post-war mass migration program.
7. The procession in Wodonga was organised in part by the newly reformed and energetic Wodonga and District Progress Association. Progress associations at the four points of the compass within Albury and in the surrounding district were vigorous in the post-war years demanding neighbourhood roads, drains and basic amenities such as water reticulation, sewerage, and electricity. Houses were in short supply and the post-war years were ones of temporary makeshift houses and concrete-mixers in nearly every yard.
8. The festivities in Wodonga were organised by the State School Mothers Club. Parents on both sides of the border were actively looking for improved education services, including kindergartens, technical colleges and hostels for country students. The children of the war and post-war years were coddled with employment and education opportunities denied their older siblings.
9. The Albury sub-branch of the RSL was heavily involved in organising the festivities in Albury. Its members distributed the ice cream, lollies and fruit to children. The sub-branch was active in fighting for the rights of returned service people and for the dependants of all those who had served. In 1945 the sub-branch had flirted with the idea that the best way to fulfil its aims was to affiliate with the Victorian rather than the NSW Returned Soldiers League. After all, local Army recruits, regardless of place of residence or birth, had been issued with VX numbers.
10. The procession in Wodonga featured two groups of young women indicative of the way increased notice was being given to young women in public life. Their war-time and post-war activities were newsworthy, as members of YWCA, younger sets of the CWA or entertainment groups, such as WAGS and Victory Vanities. The war on the home front had been a young woman's war. The presence in the procession of business and factory girls suggested something of ways that post-war the district was able to retain, even attract, youth. 'Business girl' was a comparatively new occupation category in the district. The number of women employed as clerks, stenographers, telephonists, bookkeepers and office assistants had increased in the war years. The number of women in factory employment had increased also — indeed three-fold in Wodonga. War had broadened the employment opportunities of women. The 1947 Census Report had found in large country towns a steep increase of female residents aged 15 to 25 years deemed to be of marriageable age. The explanation was that they could find employment and a 'full life' in sizeable communities.

Expectations of the people's peace to follow the people's war were high. With peace, normal patterns of life would be resumed in improved circumstances – better houses with superior amenities, full employment, greater social welfare protection and a higher standard of living. Peace promised jobs, houses and better deals

for all.

Civic progress was among the expectations. The population of the town of Wodonga had doubled to 2 806 by the end of the war. As at the end of the First World War, there were claims that Wodonga was 'no longer a Struggle Town.' It had become 'a prosperous and progressive country town', with improving roads, drains and water supply, a sewerage system and the prospects of its own hospital. The town serviced a productive farming district enjoying favourable seasons and prices. War had stimulated the local economy by establishing a military presence that continued long after the war had ended. Progressive Albury had increased its population from 11 000 pre-war to 14 270 in 1947. That was still short of the 15 000 threshold deemed necessary to provide the rate base to develop city functions. Wagga Wagga and eight other country towns had met the 15 000 threshold and were declared cities in 1945 and 1946. Belatedly Albury argued that it served nearby Lavington, a newly declared urban development area in Hume Shire, with a population of about 1 000. Albury was gazetted as a city in December 1946 and proclaimed a city in March 1947.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

Declaration of Annual General Meeting open.

Apologies:

Minutes of AGM June 12, 2019

President's Report

Treasurer's Report and Audited Accounts

Special business:

Confirm Membership subs: \$30 single, \$35 family (extra \$10 for posted Bulletin),  
corporate \$100

Election of Office Bearers & Committee:

Society patron Greg Aplin has agreed to act as interim chairman to conduct election of committee.

Nominations received:

President: Greg Ryan

Vice-President:

Treasurer: Simon Burgess

Secretary: Helen Livsey

Minute Secretary: Jill Wooding

Committee of up to seven

Marion Taylor, Dennis Hickey, Ashley Edwards, Colin McAulay, Ralph Simpfendorfer

Closure of Annual General Meeting.

**Note:** retiring committee members are Bruce Pennay, Howard Jones, Ray Gear and Chris de Vreeze. A very sincere thank you to each for their time, energy and enthusiasm.



## 75 YEARS AGO, JULY 1945

Richard Lee

Time to look at our new pages on the Trove website for the *Border Morning Mail* of 75 years ago. The Mail is still a broadsheet, not changing to tabloid until 1948. The weekday papers had six pages and Saturday's eight pages. Many of the pages on Trove are very hard to read, some illegible.

News is all about World War II. Photos feature more prominently compared with 100 years ago, the majority relating to the war. Many pages are devoted to returning soldiers and prisoners of war from Europe as the war there had finished. But Australians are still fighting the Japanese to our north. The Americans are bombing Tokyo heavily and an outcome is starting to look close.

**EVERY EMPTY TIN IN THE HOME  
MEANS A GAP  
on the  
GROCER'S  
SHELF**



If housewives fail to return their empty Arnott Biscuit Tins they reduce the supply to everyone because the tinplate ration will not permit their tins to be replaced by new ones.

*So please return your empty tins*

**Buy War Savings Certificates  
and National Savings Bonds**

Many pages are devoted to Prime Minister John Curtin dying on July 5. He is replaced by Mr E M Forde as Prime Minister but after six days, Mr J B Chifley is sworn in and Forde moves to the Deputy's position.

Conditions are rather bleak. Ration coupons are for almost everything: tea, sugar, butter, meat. Clothing has different rations assigned for different cuts, styles and materials used. Petrol is heavily rationed.

Page one in bold type: 'Save this paper for the controller of salvage.' Second page: 'War Saving Certificates are a sound patriotic investment,' – everything is going into the war effort. Arnott's Biscuits advertise the return of their tins to re-cycle. Charitable organisations are raising money for the war effort, led by the ladies of town.

A single column in each day's paper details Albury's upcoming events, including stalls to raise money in Dean Street for various organisations, usually opposite the court house, selling cakes, homemade jams (bottles were in high demand), clothing, fruit and veg.

Red Cross had not only Albury branch but also North Albury, East Albury, Lavington and Thurgoona. Every town had a branch and most included a Junior Red Cross. Albury branch raised £5871 for the year.

The Country Women's Association (CWA) and their hall is well patronized. A big clothing drive for the 'War Orphan Appeal' in Europe is lead by CWA, Rotary and Raie Langley (hairdresser and organizer of Victory Vanities). Legacy was also active and other organisations raised money for the District Hospital.

The district had been in serious drought, but June had half of the year's rainfall, breaking the drought.

Excitement comes from sport, theatre and dances, Aussie Rules football, rugby, hockey and basketball. The large army bases have their own inter competitions in these sports plus soccer. Not to overlook horse racing, golf, pigeon racing, Albury harness racing, coursing, croquet etc.

Of course local dances are held frequently and always at 8 pm, usually at the Ritz and the Royal Palais ballrooms. The Regent and Hoyts theatres provide movie entertainment.

Constance's gossip articles feature everybody's movements about town, including names, address and what is happening to everyone – 'More exposure than New Idea or People Mag.'

A new Junior Free Library opens, hours 3-5 pm weekdays and 10 am-12 noon Saturday. The first practice of the new Albury Municipal Choir takes place, conductor Mr A C Sellars, July 25. There is talk of a new clothing factory with great employment opportunities for girls (later becomes Adelyn).

## SPANISH INFLUENZA IN THE BORDER DISTRICT

Bruce Pennay

Two relatively new studies provide important insights into the way the influenza pandemic was handled a hundred years ago.

First, Alison Moir, 'Into the West: The movement of Spanish Influenza into Far West New South Wales Border Towns and beyond', *History RAHS* September 2017 (Google Alison Moir 'Spanish Influenza')

Alison Moir explains how the virus spread, principally in the summer of 1919 with passengers along railway routes, hence the closing of the border from 30 January to 18 April.

Then, about three months later during the early winter it returned, spread principally by shearers working the countryside. The shearer-spread second wave hurt the rural areas around Albury.

Second, Peter Hobbins, 'An Intimate Pandemic: The Community Impact of Influenza in 1919.'

<https://www.rahs.org.au/an-intimate-pandemic-the-community-impact-of-influenza-in-1919/>

Peter Hobbins labels it as an 'intimate pandemic' and emphasises the way in which communities responded. He finds local town and neighbourhood groups, nation-wide, volunteered assistance to those who were in isolation camps, makeshift hospital or at home sick. Everyone was all in this together.

So for example in Albury and its district, Red Cross members and neighbours helped nurse the sick in temporary hospitals at the School of Arts in Walla Walla and in Henty and the public school in Culcairn. They tended the needs of those in the isolation camps at Hawkview and Albury Sportsground. Wodonga councillors helped put up the army bell tents at the Wodonga showground. Women took clothing and food to Union Bridge for those who were caught in Victoria.

It was also an intimate pandemic in that it affected so many. The estimates were that every household in Walla Walla was affected. About one in three people in Culcairn were sick with influenza.

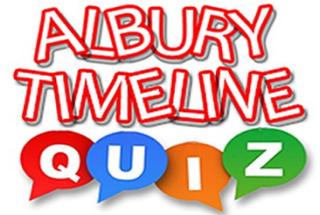
It was not until August that the emergency had lifted.



BORDER RESTRICTIONS



**RAY GEAR'S AUGUST QUIZ** – answers can be found by referring to Richard Lee's timeline at <https://alburyhistory.org.au/about/albury-timeline/>



1. Gold was discovered at Black Range in what year?
2. In the early 1900s the first Catholic Church at Black Range was opened. What street was this church located in?
3. In the mid-1900s the foundation stone for St James Anglican Church, Black Range was laid. What year did this ceremony happen?
4. Albury's first public company was formed in the early 1960s. What was the name of that company?
5. Albury's second Industrial Exhibition ran from September 7 to November 2 in 1896. Where was this exhibition held?
6. The Black Range Gold Field Number 1 was proclaimed in what year?
7. In what year did a census reveal that Albury's population was beyond 50 000?
8. Parts of Hume Shire merged with Albury City on May 26, 2004. What major impact, did it have on Albury City?
9. MAMA in Dean Street was previously known as the Albury Regional Art Gallery. What was the building's use, before it became the Art Gallery?
10. Thurgoona Golf Club opened eighteen holes and clubhouse, in what year?

Answers to last month's quiz:

1. Mervyn Lincoln
2. St Thomas Aquinas Christian Brothers College & St Joseph Ladies' College
3. 1963
4. John Roach in 1982
5. Apex Club's Women's Rest Centre
6. Albury Grammar School (boys) & Woodstock Girls' School
7. Village Shopping Centre
8. Paul Jarvie in 1970
9. 1969
10. 1960s.

### HAVE YOU STARTED USING THE UPDATED VERSION OF TROVE?

In December 2019 Trove, the National Library's Treasury of digitised materials, was ten years old – a major update was launched on 26 June. It now contains 6.4 billion records of Australian history and culture. Changes have been made to design and navigation making Trove clearer, brighter, and easier to understand and use.

There are now 11 million newspaper pages on Trove. With Wodonga Historical Society, we will have contributed 80,000 pages before the end of this year. Our next order will take the *Albury Banner* back to 1860 and the *Border Morning Mail* forward into 1951.

It may take a little while to get used to the new format, but persist and you will find it is quite user friendly.

To get started, open Trove at <https://trove.nla.gov.au/> and click on the down arrow beside 'Advanced Search' (see below) and select a category – most choose 'Newspapers & Gazettes.'



If for example you are researching ex Prime Minister Billy Hughes having an accident near Albury, type both *Albury* and *accident* into 'All of these words' and *Billy Hughes* (or *W M Hughes*) into 'The phrase.'

Your search can then be refined by ticking the appropriate boxes under the heading 'Refine Your Results.'

### IT FIGURES

Take your house number and double it. Add 5. Multiply by 50. Add your age (if your under 100). Add the number of days in a year. Subtract 615.  
The last two figures of your answer will be your age and the others your house number!

Try it!



Visit our website for photos of old Albury, history articles, past Bulletins and much more.

Go to: <https://alburyhistory.org.au/>



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## MORE HOWARD JONES' JOTTINGS



### 2/23rd INFANTRY BATTALION REUNION

Surviving members of the 2/23rd (Albury's Own) Infantry Battalion attended a reunion event in Queen Elizabeth II Square on August 22, 2010, an incredible 70 years after the battalion was raised at the Albury Showgrounds in Young Street.

Back row: David Geekie, Ken Kearney, Bob Iskov, John Sedgley, Rex Stoffell, Don Tibbits, Jim Price, Keith Chrystal.

Front row: Rupert Sloan, Bill Woods, Ken Bartel, Morrie Amooore, Ted Kelly and Vic Favell. Absent: Roy Bryant.

Picture: John Russell (*Border Mail*).

### ALBURY STREET NAMES

Albury has numerous street names honouring past mayors, but there are also some named for paid city officers. Collings Park in East Albury honours Roy Collings MC, who was town clerk from 1935 to 1959. Sarvaas Park in North Albury recalls a former city surveyor and town planner from 1938 to 1971.

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**Web Editor:** Greg Ryan

**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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