Albury & District Historical Society Inc

May 2023

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No 644

The Barham Bridge (see page 2) First photo is the team during bridge construction, September 1904. The second photo on completion of restoration, November 2018.

HSTORICAL SOCIEIT

Next Meeting

Wednesday, May 10, 2023 7.30 pm, Commercial Club Topic: Stan Heppner plus more Speaker: Jenny Romero

ALBURY LIBRARYMUSEUM The Bowerbird & The Bride (Marion Boyce Collection) Until May 21

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES FOR MAY

We received the news of the continuation of funding for Trove with relief and appreciation. Funding has been made recurrent which will ensure certainty. Trove has become a vital tool for researchers everywhere and has provided us here at the A&DHS with very interesting insights about our own city's history. We announced at our last meeting that our own project to digitise the *Border Morning Mail* has been advanced to 31 December 1951.

Our April meeting was treated to a very thought-provoking talk by Mitchell Judd, an experienced engineer with Transport for NSW. Mitchell talked about the many competing factors which need to be considered when decisions are made about the restoration, repair and maintenance of heritage bridges. Mitchell especially concentrated on bridges along the Murray River. You will enjoy the precis of Mitchell's talk in this Bulletin.

We also heard from Victor Selway who provided us with a fascinating "teaser" of the 8mm films which will form part of an exhibition at Albury LibraryMuseum later in the year. The films, produced by Dr Sam Woods in 1937/38, show Albury and its citizens engaged in various recreational pursuits. The exhibition will certainly wow audiences when it opens on 29 September.

As part of our contribution to Heritage Month we hosted a visit by the Goulburn Valley Drivers' Club at the Albury Railway Station. Victor Selway and Jenny Romero spoke to 33 driving enthusiasts about our iconic building and the vital role it has played in our nation. The sight of magnificent vintage vehicles arriving at our heritage building turned the heads of those about to board their V-Line train to Melbourne.

MANAGING OLD BRIDGES IN MODERN TIMES

Mitchell Judd

What is the Problem?

Communities often want to preserve their old bridges but at what cost and for what purpose? Firstly, there is constrained funding and that has to be balanced with other community priorities. Will the old bridge be able to meet current and future needs? Do the communities want to keep the old bridge for tourism? Is it the best place to cross the river and has the community built around the old bridge? These are all questions that are raised when considering which bridge to conserve.

Old Bridges are special. They reflect how the land was used and developed. They are prominent in how towns were created and grow. Sometimes they are the "main street" – Swan Hill, Corowa and Wahgunyah.

Old bridges represent technology from a different era. For example:

- Lifting bridges along the Murray River supported river transport.
- Bridges demonstrated the prosperity of the district and colony.
- They are a tangible example of changes in technology over time.

There have been different ideas about how to preserve this type of heritage. One suggestion is to "put it in the park" or "leave it there and build around it." The problem with this strategy is that the bridge will still need constant maintenance, or it will continue to deteriorate. Once the bridge is no longer in use the community is responsible to provide its maintenance and this is beyond them both in cost and the skills required to conserve the old bridges.

It has been found that the best way to conserve old bridges is to keep them in active use, but old bridges have limitations. They do not cater for safe pedestrian and cyclist access; they are often narrow and have load limitations and the ongoing maintenance can be costly and interrupt communities whilst the work is carried out.

The NSW Government is planning to conserve 27 of the 450 original timber truss bridges. Conservation of old timber bridges relies on old growth forest hardwood species like ironbark and tallowwood. There are only 14 species suitable for use in critical members. A feature of Australian bridges is the use of large cross section timbers weighing over 5 tonnes. Governments and communities want to preserve old growth forests and using laminated members is not an option because local timbers are not suitable for laminating. This is one of the many challenges arising from the conservation of old timber bridges.

Another major problem with conserving timber bridges is the diminishing number of people with the skill set required to manage these structures. There is high demand for engineers and tradespeople, but they are not going into this type of work.

Conserving old bridges produces waste which is often contaminated. When the timber is safe to use, or when it can be treated to make it safe, it is recycled. Otherwise, it has to be disposed of safely and that adds to the cost.

Iron bridges, or where iron has been used on timber bridges to allow longer spans and heavier loads, also create conservation challenges. Iron when in tension or bending is prone to crack and break and there is now a lack of manufacturing capability for iron bridge parts.

Compromises have to be made to conserve old bridges. Adopting steel wherever it can be sensibly and



The old bridge at Gundagai had to be demolished due to its deterioration.

sensitively used and by using concrete wherever approved and possible are two strategies used to meet the challenges posed by the old bridges. Pedestrian and other safety measures are added during the conservation process.

The Barham Bridge

The Barham bridge is one of the oldest lift span bridges over the Murray River and it is listed on the NSW Heritage Register. It has to be retained for its heritage value. Transport for NSW commenced a restoration of the bridge in 2012. It was completed in 2018 with a follow-up project to strengthen the bridge in 2021. The work completed will guarantee the bridge is able to meet the needs of the community well into the future. During the conservation process a pedestrian walkway was attached, lighting was installed, and maintenance ladders were installed (see photo page 1).

DR LESLIE (SAM) WOODS/WOODS FAMILY - AN UPCOMING EXHIBITION AT ALM

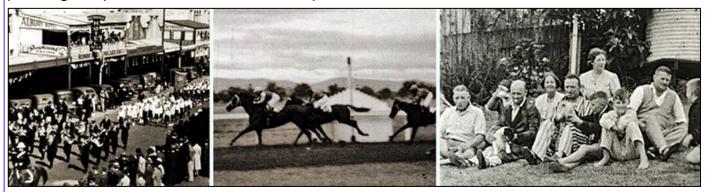
Victor Selway

Later this year an exciting exhibition featuring Albury's past will open at Albury Library Museum (ALM) with a focus on the Woods family.

How has this come to fruition? Recently, ALM was gifted a large number of family 'home' movies from the late 1930s and through the 1940s and beyond. Filmed by Dr Sam Woods, they revolve around his family, events in Albury and his travels – family holidays to Merimbula and a study to Europe in 1937. The ALM team will be digitising and conserving the collection.

Exhibition curator Sandra Endresz has been collecting and preparing several items from the Woods family to be on display. These include items from ALM's collection and other local museums.

So, who are the Woods family? Dr Cleaver Woods was a doctor in Albury at the turn of the 20th century. He and his wife built their famous *Valetta* home in Swift Street where the Albury Entertainment Centre now stands. Dr Woods also ran a private hospital, adjacent to *Valetta*. He was an active member of the community and loved music. He was credited for saving Dame Nellie Melba's dad's life. An extremely grateful Dame Nellie Melba agreed to come and perform here in Albury after an invitation from Dr Woods. The exhibition will display a poster signed by Melba for her 1908 visit to Albury.



Three stills from the Woods' film collection—a Dean Street parade west of Kiewa Street led by mounted police and the Albury Town Band, action at the Albury Racecourse and a backyard Woods' family photo.

Dr Woods and his wife had eleven children, including still-born twins. Their third child became Dr Leslie Samuel (Sam) Woods. He worked with his father and became an eye specialist. A couple of other siblings also become medical practitioners.

Sam Woods and his wife Rita had two children John and Frank. The children feature heavily in his movies and it is apparent what delightful and happy children they were. They play in their backyard, now part of QEII square – football, athletics, and cricket – a 'six' over the fence lands in St Matthew's Church yard! The T&G tower is clearly visible over another fence. John and Frank loved sport. John was a natural at any sport and he wins at a large athletics carnival. Frank has a great smile, and I am sure many people will think he would have been a magic kid to have in the family.

Sam Woods travelled to Europe in 1937 to train and work alongside other eye specialists. To pay for his travels to Europe he was the working doctor on the voyage vessel, and then worked at several hospitals around Europe. Of particular interest are his films and notes of Nazi Germany in 1937. ALM has been in communication with the Melbourne Holocaust Museum who have great interest in these films and notes. Why? To have footage and observations recorded by a tourist about being in Germany at that time is quite rare. Sam Woods' notes and letters record the subtle rules that were designed to control movement of people and money. He spoke on many occasions after the war about the atrocities inflicted upon the people in the Holocaust.

Sam Woods was also heavily involved in Rotary and there are many Rotary events filmed.

Those that enjoy local history will love his films from 1938 which include street processions – you can see what Dean Street looked like in 1938 and what shops were open – ANZAC day services, Grand Prix car race, the Albury Cup Races, golf tournaments, athletics and cycling events and footage of the Botanic Gardens.

The Woods family visited Merimbula each year for their annual holidays – there is footage of the township, beaches and a life-saving carnival. The family loved the beach, fishing and relaxing in the NSW coast.

Relatives of the Woods family have been invited and will be opening the Woods' exhibition which opens on September 29, 2023 for three months through to the end of the year.

The curator, our very own Sandra Endresz, will also be present, and the museum team will be preparing tours

throughout the exhibition. Make sure you find time for several visits – as the movie footage will take a couple of hours to watch and is worth every minute that you view. Of course, you will also need time to look at the many physical items and photos that have been collected that will also be on display.

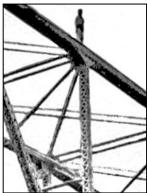
The Museum Team also relish the chance for many locals to recognise relatives and provide stories and collection materials from this era that are sitting in homes in Albury.

HIGH DIVE FROM BETHANGA BRIDGE

Greg Ryan

Information for this article was provided by Kevin McDonald's son Neil and from digitised copies of the 'Border Morning Mail' on the Trove website.

Les Jabara, a jeweller in Albury's T&G building and Border Morning Mail racing tipster, was driving to Wodonga in February 1943 when he "noticed a lad probably about 18 years old, do a perfect swallow dive from the top span of the Union Bridge, a distance of nearly 60 feet [18 metres]" – he was referring to the old Union Bridge with the high trusses.



Jabara looked for some time for the lad and discovered months later that he was Kevin McDonald, an apprentice typesetter at the Mail. Jabara offered a challenge, published in local and metropolitan newspapers, for any diver willing to go "head-tohead" with eighteen year old Kevin in a high-diving competition, the winner taking £200.

Kevin was Albury born and went through Albury Public School and Albury High School. He was born Kevin Jacob but changed his name by deed poll, taking his stepfather's name.

On Bethanga Bridge preparing to dive dive from the top of a span of the Bethanga Bridge on February 6, 1944, watched by an estimated crowd of 2000. When it was suggested that the wind was a trifle strong, he shrugged his shoulders

saying "We'll manage it all right." With head and ear protection, he executed a perfect swallow dive – using simple school-room Physics, it can be estimated that he would have hit the water travelling at about 26 metres per second (over 93 km per hour).

Les Jabara's challenge to compete against the young diver was never taken up and Kevin McDonald completed his typesetting apprenticeship at the *Mail* where he continued working for about 30 years. Kevin died in January 1976.



A 'grainy' *Border Morning Mail* photo of Kevin in flight (arrowed).

'SANDY THE WAR HORSE' UNVEILING, SATURDAY MAY 20 AT 1.30 PM, TALLANGATTA

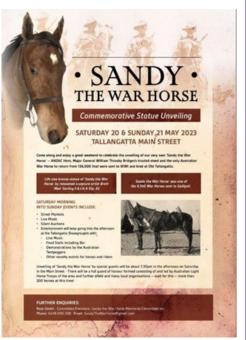
Kevin completed an exhibition 120 feet

There were 136,000 Australian war horses sent to serve military roles During World War I. The only one to return was 'Sandy the War Horse,' the trusty steed of Major General William Throsby Bridges. 'Sandy' was bred in Old Tallangatta and one of 6,100 horses sent to Gallipoli.

A life size bronze statue of 'Sandy the War Horse,' the work of renowned sculpture artist Brett 'Mon' Garling will be unveiled in Tallangatta on the weekend of 20/21 May 2023, two days of celebration. The unveiling will take place at 1.30 pm on Saturday in the main street of Tallangatta. There will be a full guard of honour led by Australian Light Horse Troops and many local organisations will participate with 200 horses.

There are lots of other activities over the two days of celebration:

- Live Music
- Street Stalls
- Demonstrations by the Australian Tentpeggers
- Novelty events for horses and riders.



EARLY DAYS OF AUSTRALIAN RULES FOOTBALL ON THE BORDER

The Border Post of June 7, 1876 reported a meeting at Day's Commercial Building, Dean street. It was resolved "That a football club be established to be designated the Albury Football Club … the committee agree to adopt the Victorian rules of football."

Newspaper reports imply that matches were arranged in a fairly random fashion. Local matches were played on the Albury Cricket Ground, later renamed the Albury Sportsground. On July 11, 1878 the Ovens & Murray Advertiser reported "Last Saturday a match at football was played at Wodonga, between twenty members of the local club and a similar number from Albury and after a capital game, victory inclined to the visitors, who kicked two goals to their opponents none."

FOOTBALL. MATCH (20 a-side) between the BEECHWORTH and ALBURY ME-CHANICS' FOOTBALL CLUBS, will be played on the Beechworth Ground ON MONDAY, 24th INST. Play to commence at 2.30 o'clock. E. N. MOOBE, 121 13 Hon. Sec., B.F.C.

O & M Advertiser, May 22 1880

The following week, Albury Mechanics FC also travelled to Wagga, winning 4 goals 13 behinds to 2 goals 3 behinds. The Albury team listed in the *Banner* was "Forwards, Parker, Chubb, Reau, Kelso; central, Burnett, Haslem, S Ringwood, Scott; backs, Allan, Bray, Brown, Howard; followers, J McDarra, J Cochrane, Travers."

Keeping football teams fully manned was a challenge. In June 1882, Albury FC and Mechanics FC amalgamated to form Albury United FC. As late as 1899 the club was still being referred to as Albury United FC.

In April 1883, a meeting at the Salutation Hotel in Dean St formed the Federal City FC. "It was decided that the colours of the club should be blue guernsey, knickerbockers, and cap; blue and white hose."

Ovens & Murray Football Association

Delegates met in Wangaratta in April

By 1880, Albury had a second team, Albury Mechanics FC. The *Albury Banner* reported three matches in 1881 between Albury FC and Mechanics FC, each won by Mechanics.

In August 1881 Albury travelled to Wagga and with 4 goals 16 behinds defeated the home team 1 goal 11 behinds. Albury's team list in the *Albury Banner* for the 1881 clash: "Centre players, Jackson (captain), Battye, Lemarchand; forwards, Bamber, Steele, Warden; backs, Watson, Day, Dawson; followers, Holden, Hodgson, Chauncey, Futter; goal-sneak, Buckley; goal-keeper, Moore."



Albury United Football Club 1884 Back Row: W Bray, J McDarra, J Howard, B Brown, H Eisenhardt, G Fratz, G Ballard, A Lamport, G Clarkson, J Reis Front Row: W Papsett, A Taverner, J Allan, J Laughton, J Eck, J Doughton

1893 to arrange the first matches of the newly formed Ovens and Murray Football Association. Under president John Dodsworth and secretary Tom Hishon, the competition had teams from Rutherglen, Beechworth Wanderers, Wangaratta West End, Wangaratta City, Chiltern and Eldorado.

Until 1911 the team on top after home & away matches was the Premier, a play-off only required if teams finished on equal points at season's end. The first premiership was won by Beechworth Wanderers defeating runners up Rutherglen in their final match 6 goals 9 behinds to 1 goal 2 behinds. Beechworth won again in 1894 and 1897 but the new competition was dominated by Rutherglen, winning 10 times from 1895 to 1910.

Both Albury United FC and Border United (Corowa) were admitted to the Ovens & Murray Association in 1895. The Corowa Free Press reported that "The eight clubs now forming the association are Rutherglen, Albury, Beechworth, Border United, United Miners, Lilliput, Chiltern and Wangaratta."

Albury lost their first match in the Ovens & Murray Association against reigning premiers Beechworth Wanderers, played in Albury on May 4, 1895, Beechworth 2 goals 5 behinds to Albury 6 behinds. The Albury Banner noted that "For Albury, Hanlon, Clarkson, Ten Brink, Barber, and Quirk were prominent." Albury had to wait until 1902 to win their first O&M flag, finishing with 40 points from ten wins (they lost twice).

By 1899 the competition was reduced to seven teams, Albury, Chiltern, Wangaratta, Rutherglen, Excelsior,

Greg Ryan

Border United and Southern. These teams competed until 1904 when the competition was reduced further to Rutherglen, Border United, Excelsior and Lake Moodemere.

The O&M folded in 1911. Rutherglen & District Football Association (R&DFA) formed in 1911, admitting Wahgunyah, Lake, Lake Rovers, Chiltern, Springhurst, Christmeadows, Great Southern, Excelsior, Corowa, Barnawartha and Howlong.

Albury and Rutherglen were admitted in 1912 and in 1913 R&DFA had six teams – Albury, Balldale, Border United, Howlong, Lake Rovers and Rutherglen. Albury defeated Rutherglen in the 1913 final at the Albury Sportsground.

The Ovens & Murray Football Association reformed for seasons 1914 and 1915 then after a three-year break due to World War I, they reformed for the 1919 season. The *Border Morning Mail* reported in March 1919 "Now that the war is over and the boys are rapidly coming back, it has been decided to reoganise the Ovens and Murray Football Association, when lovers of the great winter pastime should be treated to many a stirring encounter on local grounds. With this end in view a meeting of all interested in re-forming the Albury Football Club will be held ..."

Albury was not admitted and the competition got underway with Corowa, Lake Rovers, Howlong and Rutherglen the only clubs competing – Lake Rovers defeated Howlong for the 1919 flag.

The Association struggled to get going in 1920 with the Albury Banner reporting that "It seems strange that the old Ovens and Murray Association has apparently been allowed to die a natural death ... only two clubs were represented at the annual meeting this year." Teams competed in the Albury Border Association with Albury, St Patrick's, Wodonga, Diggers and Mitta Dam [Hume Weir] while the Chiltern Football Association had eleven teams.

The following year saw the O&M Association reformed with Corowa, Rutherglen, Lake Rovers, Wahgunyah and Springhurst. St Patrick's (from Albury) was a late team to enter the competition, starting a dominance of the competition with six flags in seven years. In 1922 The photo shows the Albury Football team outside the Globe Hotel as they prepare for a trip to Balldale. There are two versions of the date of the photo, the most likely correct being the one written at the time in the *Border Morning Mail*, August 1912: "The long journey [to Balldale] ... being got over by the enterprise of Mr R Whitehead, with his 45hp motor waggon, which was fitted with seats for the journey. The motor acted splendidly averaging almost 12 miles an hour."



An article, also in the *BMM*, by "Half-Back" in September 1938 reported that Fred Blacklock provided his 'motor lorry' to transport Albury players to Balldale in July 1913. The newspaper included the photo and identified many of the players and officials:

"The driver, with his head thrust forward, is Mr R Whitehead, and his three companions in the front are 'Joker Byrnes', C Waterstreet, and the late Bill Strang. In the second row the man with the beard is a Mr Laird, and next come Arthur Burton, Fred Bohr and Clive Burt. The two outside men in the next seat have not been identified, but the centre man is George Eames. The boy on the extreme left of the next seat is Ollie Cox, now of Mangoplah, and next to him the late Norman McDonald, with Ernest McDonald, now manager of the New Zealand Loan and MA Co in Albury, on the outside. In the next seat the two men visible are Mick Larking and the late Lieut Colonel Simpson, MC. In the back row, the only man visible, with his hand raised, is Bill Howse. Right below him, on the ground, we see W J Delaney in the boxer hat, with Paul Curran the boy in the cap in front of him. The lad on his left, with the panama hat turned up in front, is Joe Adams, showing an early interest in football."

In spite of what must have been a bone-rattling ride, Albury won the 1912 match 8 goals 11 behinds to Balldale 4 goals 4 behinds and the 1913 match 9 goals 8 behinds to Balldale 5 goals 7 behinds.

Wahgunyah and Springhurst were replaced by Wangaratta and Benalla, with Beechworth joining in 1923.

Albury did not re-enter the competition until 1924, along with Hume Weir, forming an eight-team competition. In 1926 the Association became the Ovens & Murray Football League and began to grow in strength.

After Albury defeated St Patrick's for the 1928 premiership, O&M administrators decided it was time to change the League structure. Of issue was the uneven nature of the competition with Albury, St Patrick's and Wangaratta being dominant over some struggling clubs.

Within Albury there was a further problem, with sectarian divides (Catholics and Protestants) causing much bitterness between St Patrick's and Albury Clubs. Cleaver Bunton, champion Albury player and later Albury Mayor, wrote in his autobiography that "there was keen rivalry between the players of both clubs, but it was civil war between so called supporters ... citizens being verbally and physically assaulted."

Bunton went on to say that a solution to the bigotry had to be found. It was agreed that both Albury Football Club and St Patrick's Football Club should disband. Two new clubs were formed, West Albury and East Albury with Olive Street being "the line of demarcation."



Albury Football Club—O&M League Premiers 1928 Back: C King, G Bunton, F Beggs, W Mellor, B Obst, S Grenell, K Pollard Middle: N Mau, R Cookesley, F Howard, H Hunter (Captain), W Thomas, G Osborn, R Chisholm

Front: W Sinclair, H Bunton, Mascot "Boxer" Newton, W Speakman, Inset: C Bunton, H Jones, W Strang R McIllree

Seventeen year-old Haydn Bunton played a prominent role in the final, He went on to be considered by many the best Australian Rules player of all time, winning many awards including three Brownlow Medals.

The following year West Albury were premiers, defeating East Albury 17.16 (118) to 15.14 (104). Details of all O&M premierships back as far as 1893 can be found at O&M Premiers.

Other Border Clubs in the O&M League

- Albury re-entered the League in 1933. The Albury Banner reported that "there will be no East and West Albury teams this year. Owing to dismissals at Hume Reservoir, Weir United found it impossible to field a side, so that club and East Albury amalgamated. The new club will play as Border United and wear green and white uniforms. West Albury has changed its name to Albury ... their colours will be maroon and blue, which were worn by West Albury last year." Border United were runners-up in their first year and Premiers the following year (note that the earlier Border United team was Corowa based). Albury and Border United Football Clubs amalgamated as Albury Football Club at the start of the 1936 season.
- Hume Weir (Weir United) joined in 1924, premiers in 1930.
- Wodonga Bulldogs joined in 1936, first premiership 1967.
- North Albury joined in 1946, first premiership 1948.
- Lavington joined in 1979, first premiership 1983.

Find us on

Wodonga Raiders joined in 1989, first premiership 1998.



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https://www.facebook.com/Albury.DHS/ **Facebook** Have you visited our YouTube Channel? https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDzIPypinJegksrO-l2ssVg



TROVE FUNDING

Our Society welcomes the news that Trove's future has been secured with the commitment made by the Albanese Government pledging \$33 million over the next four years to maintain Trove, to be followed by ongoing annual funding.

Launched in 2009, Trove is a free online research portal to Australian materials, including over 14 billion digitised artefacts, newspaper pages and oral histories.

In announcing the funding, Minister for the Arts Tony Burke said "Trove is, in many ways, Australia's digital memory: It records and retains some of our most important stories, moments, challenges, controversies and successes in one accessible location. Whether you're using it to look up a bit of family history, or for academic research, Trove is an incredibly important part of our national cultural institutions."

A quick scan of the *Border Morning Mail* of 1951 showed locals were very conscious of knowing more about their past. For example, there was :

- A tribute to George Sunderland Adams, long term proprietor of the Albury Banner who died on June 1, 1951.
- Tennis was a major preoccupation and Frank Sedgman was a national hero.
- Wodonga had a great 'Back to Wodonga' series of events in November.
- Big floods in June/July flooding Noreuil Park and the Wodonga Flats
- Bonegilla welcomed a cohort of British migrants.
- There is a photo and adverts (November 1951) for a new car wash at Baker Motors Baker Motors is one of our corporate sponsors.

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