

Albury & District Historical Society Inc

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Corroboree by the Murray River by Gerard Trefft, 1857

Next Meeting

Wednesday, October 11, 2023

7.30 pm, Commercial Club

Topic: Sandy, the War Horse

Speaker: Bryan Smith

ALBURY LIBRARYMUSEUM
Finding Dr Woods, his films
of Albury & Beyond
Albury LibraryMuseum
Until December 3

Page 2 Skeletons in the
Family Tree

Page 7 Menzies in Albury

Page 8 Christmas Dinner
Beyond the Book

PRESIDENT'S NOTES FOR OCTOBER

We had a very high attendance at our September meeting to listen to Society member, Sheridan Jobbins, speak about her four times great uncle John Jobbins. Only fifteen years after Hume and Hovell came through this area evidence appears to show that John Jobbins led a violent clash with the Wiradjuri inhabitants. Sheridan is on a personal journey dealing with Jobbins' violent past. She has written to me following our meeting thanking the Society for the opportunity to speak about it. It was the first time Sheridan has delivered her talk to an audience and she is grateful for the support she received after it.

On a lighter and brighter note I want to alert members who do not have the opportunity to attend our monthly meetings that you may wish to travel to Albury for our Christmas Dinner on Wednesday 13 December at 6.30 for 7pm at the Commercial Club. Our speaker will be Justin Clancy MP, Member for Albury who will speak on "The History of Parliamentary Representation in the Seat of Albury." This is a ticketed event. Tickets are on sale to members at present – you can pay online. Tickets are selling strongly so if you want to come I recommend that you buy your ticket or tickets without delay. Bring your partner if you wish. Our aim is to make it a true Christmas celebration. At a later date, tickets will be offered to sponsors and stakeholders with whom we have regular interaction.

Thank you to all members who have paid their subs for 2023/24. A reminder to members who have not yet paid, your subscription is now overdue. You can pay by cheque to Albury & District Historical Society, PO Box 822 Albury, or direct deposit to BSB: 640 000 Account: 111097776, singles \$30, family \$35, an extra \$12 for a posted Bulletin.

2023/24 Subs Overdue

Sheridan is a journalist, a television presenter, a producer of film, and now mainly a screenwriter. She attended Ascham School, in Sydney. In the 1970s, she had a brief career as an actor, appearing in *Glenview High*, *The Restless Years*, and *The Young Doctors*. With friend Amanda Keller, she produced music videos for Australian bands, *Mental as Anything*, *Mondo Rock*, and *Cold Chisel*. Sheridan won bronze medals at the New York Film and Television Festival. She was a director of a film company which produced, *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert*. She now directs her considerable talents to screenwriting and is a member of the Australian and the American Writers' Guilds. Sheridan's talk is presented here in the first person and has been edited by her for factual accuracy and narrative clarity.

Thank you to the Albury & District Historical Society, an invaluable resource for me to understand what happened in my family. There are some remarkable sleuths in this Society. I particularly want to acknowledge Helen Livsey, whose work indexing Arthur Andrew's *History of Albury* has been a real time saver. Just a marvellous resource.

I am particularly grateful to Geoff Romero for inviting me, and to Greg Ryan for observing that I should give this talk before I write the book so I could organise my thoughts. If my thoughts are disorganised – take it up with Greg.

Thank you to other locals who may be here tonight, Sarah and Stephen Crooke from Gundowring, Sue and Harry Ryder from the Kiewa Valley Historical Society, and Felicity MacDonald for her website *Finding Merriman*. You have all contributed to my understanding of local history.

I also want to thank Professor Bruce Pennay, who gave me some early pointers when I was first looking into the family tree. Thank you to Emeritus Professor Lyndall Ryan and Peter Schneider from the University of Newcastle for their work on the Map of Colonial Frontier Massacres. It is an extraordinary resource, and valuable to First Nations people that this information is recorded.

I would also like to acknowledge Frank Zaknich, CEO of Albury Council, who has created a pathway to Indigenous reconciliation, which means the Albury LibraryMuseum is a healing place that brings community together. That includes Mark Dodd, the Aboriginal Community Development Officer, somebody who has been generous in helping me navigate this space.

However, I mostly want to thank Auntie Edna, Uncle Tunny and Auntie Ruth and the Dyiraamalang group of Wiradjuri Elders. They have been so gracious in welcoming me, hearing my story, encouraging me to tell others and actually the reason that I am here tonight. So, yindyamarra to you all.

Dora Dora Massacre

While doing family research, I discovered that one of my ancestors, a four times great uncle, led a massacre against the Wiradjuri at Dora Dora, near Talmalmo. It was in 1839, so within the first few years of the colonisation of the Murray. That would have remained a secret – and did in fact for a hundred years – until in 1936 when, to celebrate the centenary of colonisation, C A Smithwick wrote a story in the *Border Morning Mail*, in which he told the local histories of all the different homesteads, all the different settlers. One of those stories was about John Jobbins and the massacre at Dora Dora.

When I first read it, I wanted to dismiss it as hearsay. John Jobbins had no children. He had left the area by 1855. It seemed convenient to pin the crime on somebody who was no longer there to defend themselves and a hundred years after he died.

But I could not do that because back in 1839, at the time of the massacre, the Indigenous Elders wrote a corroboree song about John Jobbins and his crime. It is a hate song about the terrible things he did. They then taught that song to his neighbour's son, an eight year old J F H Mitchell, from Mungabareena. It was he who, as an old man, 80 years later, wrote this corroboree song in his dictionary of Wiradjuri language. Can we just stop for a moment and marvel at the wisdom of that – the wisdom of recording this crime and the way the Elders went about it.

Mitchell's "Dictionary of Woradgery Tongue" is a precious record of all the words and customs he learnt as a boy, and is now kept in the State Library of Victoria, along with the first license to depasture in the newly formed colony of Victoria [see page 3]. It says John Jobbins of Nanima at the top, because that is where he lived, but the property he bought was Talgarno.

Cumberoona, Talgarno, Tawonga

John Jobbins, from 1836, had taken up runs on both sides of the Murray. He had Cumberoona and Talgarno, and, it is recorded, he also had Towangah (Tawonga) about 45 miles south of the Murray in the Kiewa Valley.

Peter Jobbins – My 4x Great Grandfather

John's father, Peter Jobbins, my four-times great-grandfather, was assigned to Charles Throsby from 1812 to 1826 the same time that Throsby explored from Cowpastures to the Southern Highlands, Lake George, Gundaroo, and beyond. The man Throsby travelled with, his guide on those journeys, was Hamilton Hume.

Throsby's stepson, Charles Barber (or Barbour), married Isabella Hume, Hamilton's sister. Charles Barber also travelled on these expeditions and eventually took up the first license on Gundowring. Already we have three families in tight consort traveling south to the Murray.

Along the way, at Boronia, they picked up the Mitchell family who ended up on Mungabareena and Table Top where they were John Jobbins' neighbours at Cumberoona on the Murray.

I see other families on their way south, properties in the Murrumbidgee owned by the Reverend Redhall, who owned Dora Dora at the time of the massacre, and John Hore, who was born in Cowpastures, and then travelled to Monaro and then the Murray, and was Jobbins' stockman at Talgarno.

They were following each other and following the water as they expanded the frontier of settlement, with John Jobbins, presumably, buying their fatted cattle for market.



View of Talmalmo from Dora Dora – much of which is now drowned under Lake Hume

The Appin Massacre

Taking a step back to Peter Jobbins, the father. In 1816 there was a massacre in Appin. One of the first led by the British here. Many of these characters in Jobbins life played a part in that. Charles Throsby wrote a letter to Wentworth for Lachlan Macquarie, trying to dissuade him from pursuing the Indigenous people in the area. The sweep, he said, would include people who had helped him in his explorations, as well as Indigenous friends who were innocently camping on his property. He and Hume tried very hard to stop that massacre.

One of the difficulties the Colonialists had in arresting 'individuals of interest' is that they could not track the Muringong people who were too knowledgeable about the terrain. What they discovered in Appin was that they could sneak up on them and attack in the middle of the night while they were sleeping. The result was mayhem. When they woke, the soldiers ran them off the cliff – men, women and children. Those that did not run were slaughtered.

Cynically, this massacre is viewed as being successful in that it ended the hostilities on the Cumberland Plain behind Sydney. Worse though, it became a method of 'quelling dissent' that has played out time and time again, to come in the middle of the night and to kill mainly women, children and the elderly. That is certainly what happened at Dora Dora. I know because of the corroboree song that was taught to young Mitchell.

Corroboree Song – A Blood Curse

Often, when we hear these stories, I think the first reaction is similar to mine: "Well, of course you are going to pin it on Jobbins. He cannot defend himself." But here I have a receipt. Here I have extant proof from the time and that is extremely rare and unusual.

The first people I contacted were the creators of the Colonial Map of Massacres. Lyndall Ryan was very generous in telling me that John Jobbins as a butcher, probably used his large butcher's knife, a cutlass, as he rode on horseback. He gathered other locals with him to create a cabal of secrecy. There is no other way it could have stayed a secret in the community for a hundred years, and a secret within our family, without other people being involved. Apparently it is not uncommon for these secrets to come out long after everyone is dead.

So what do you do? It is not like I can go to the police and say, "Hey, I have a crime. I can't give you a body or any real details, but here is a piece of paper." Professor Ryan suggested I present this information to the local Indigenous community. This meant finding out who they were, and who were their representatives.

I made mistakes along the way. I confused the Wurundjeri with the Wiradjuri. I forgot Linda Burney's name and called her "That lady in the House of Reps." I had to educate myself about language and family groups, about different nations and customs and beliefs. I had to educate myself about the inter-generational trauma that effects not only Indigenous communities here in Australia, but black communities around the world. I had to

learn why so many black people are sick of talking to white people about race. Mostly though, I had to learn patience. My piece of exciting news was neither unusual, nor rare. Only wanting to talk about it was.

Eventually all of that led me to the Albury Library Museum and to Mark Dodd and to the Dyiraamalang Group of Wiradjuri Elders. It turned out they had not heard of the Dora Dora massacre, but they could read the 200 year old song and understand its meaning.

At the top it says, "A man named Jobbins was hated by the blacks because he cut a piece out of a black-fellow's leg, with his cutlass for stealing milk, so they made this song up about him."

That is not what the song says. That is what you tell an eight year old boy about why you want him to learn it. It is possible Jobbins did whip an old man with his cutlass. It is possible he was that cruel. But I also think this is an allegory, the story a kind, decent person tells a child when they don't want to corrupt their innocence.

A man, named Jobbins, was hated by the Blacks because he cut a piece out of a black-fellow's leg, with his cutlass, for stealing milk, so they made this song up about him.

Nein-mudder, bel-mudder hong-a-lay
Calergin a-mine Jobbin Jobbin jole qui-
Nar bun day, nar-r-r merijole-ah-qui-
Nar bun day, nar-r-r, &c.

S O N G W H E N I N G R I E F.

Mulleh mulleh g'nar-r worrah-r-goomah-r
Currah-mulleh mulleh g'nar-r-worrah-r
Goomah currah-mulleh-mulleh, &c.

Was Jobbins' involved in any other massacres?

After presenting the story to the Wiradjuri Elders, the first thing I wanted to know was, did they have stories of other massacres in the area? They did. One of their stories was about Dederang, specifically about a mound by the river. Many may be aware of it, a large anomaly at the bend of a river known as 'the home place' just beyond the bridge. You can see it on Google Earth. White people have a story about it too, about the poisoning of Aboriginal people there. You can read about it in Desmond Martin's local history "A Tale of Twin Cities."

The story goes: a white woman was home alone when a group of Aborigines came and asked for food. Impatient for the bread to cook, they went to her storeroom and stole some flour, but accidentally stole poison, perhaps arsenic or strychnine. They ate it and died. When the men came back they buried the dead and the mound is part of that.

Now there are things about this story that do not quite make sense. Why would you build a mound rather than dig a hole? It is not the right place to bury a lot of bodies, so close to the river. Why would you commemorate something you are ashamed of? Why wouldn't you report their death if it was innocent? But that is not what bothers me. What bothers me is that John Jobbins had the property next door. Tawonga is next door to Dederang.

1839 – Myall Creek Massacre

There is one other event that is relevant to the year 1839, it's the year after the Myall Creek Massacre. The year in which eleven white men were tried and seven hung for the massacre of Indigenous families at Myall Creek.

In that same year, letters began to appear in the press from the Murray saying that farms were under attack. As someone following this one man, he appears to be setting up a defence for a crime. The letters are all in different names. He has given himself a couple of sock puppets, but they are plainly from him. In all of them he was saying he is under attack. That he has only ever been kind to the locals. Has given them breastplates. Has given them food and blankets. Then the letters stop in December 1839.

See examples of Jobbin's letters : [The Australian, Oct 26, 1839](#) and [Sydney Morning Herald, Feb 22, 1839](#)

I think he was poisoning them. I think he was spreading disease. I think he was committing genocide.

Whether the mound on Dederang is or is not a funeral pile, the fact is that the original owners of the land left in great numbers after the Dora Dora massacre, faded away, moved on to Mungabareena, died of smallpox, is in no small part due to my family.

Another thing about 1839. It is the year Jobbins took possession of Talgarno, on the first of August, the middle of winter on the Murray. His beautiful land and neighbourhood was on the confluence of two rivers, the Little River and what was the Hume, is traditionally called the Millawa, but is now the Murray.

It is exquisite land, beautiful open grassland, wide trees – and given that they wrote a corroboree song about him, it was probably shared corroboree land. According to his letters, around October that year, hundreds of

people came into the area, as many as 300 – plainly coming to do business. They were slaughtering Jobbins' cattle because that is the way of families coming together. He may well have assaulted somebody for stealing milk from a cow. At the same time, the trials for Myall Creek Massacre were all over the papers. Everyone was talking about it. I think he used the time between August and December to write letters, gather conspirators, create a plan. By the time he executed the plan, the corroboree season was over, and all that was left were the women and children of Dora Dora.

Mapping Early Settlers and Assigned Servants

So one of the other things that I find people ask, or like to say is, he was a convict and therefore he was a bad person. I do not see a lot in his history that shows this. He had black friends, former slaves from Jamaica. He adopted their daughter after they died. Their daughter married into his own family. He took in orphans from other families. Granted, they came with property and cows and all the rest, but he educated them at Reverend Redhall's school in Campbelltown.

He educated women in 1840. He taught himself to read and write. He set his brothers and cousins up on properties. He gave a flat in Sydney to his sister-in-law. He left all his fortune to the women in his family. And yes, he learned from every crime or sin that he committed. The worst thing for me is what he learned from the aristocracy, burning the Indigenous people off their land. Sneaking up in the middle of the night to slaughter them. It is too convenient to say that the convicts were all bad people. I do not think that absolves us.

He led a massacre. But he did not do it by himself. He did not keep a secret by himself. He *led* a massacre.

Shame and Secrets

When I took all of this information to my family they rolled their eyes as though, "She's done it again. Gone where she doesn't belong." One of them actually said "What are you going to do? Give them your flat in Bondi?"

Which, is a bit rude. Nobody expects that. I think it is a sign of shame and guilt. It is like – we recognize our family has done really well living in Australia. While it might not be unreasonable to think retribution might come in some way – that is not how truth and reconciliation work.

I have been going through documents, newspapers, oral histories and identifying all the landowners, the stockmen and shepherds who lived here, and putting the information into spreadsheets. If you can contribute to this, if you wish to use this as a resource, please contact me. It is an open document and I would love it to be as accurate as possible.

What Can be Done?

I am really aware that this complicated man, who is plainly a murderer, operated from his position as a butcher where he could divorce himself from animals and humans. That means he could not have seen the people in front of him as humans – and for that I am ashamed and deeply saddened. But there is no point in me carrying that forward, it is now up to me to recognise the humanity in all of us and to spread that wherever possible.

The first way I would like to do that is by recognising that for all the beauty and scenery of life in the country, working a farm is neither simple, nor easy. In 2017, I travelled around Australia, and in every country town I visited, the local Woolies was sold out of their number one best-selling book, Scott Pape's *Barefoot Investor*. I became so curious I finally bought a copy when I found one. I think that man single handedly save rural Australia during the bushfires of 2019 with his advice on insurance. I heard on the radio today that cattle sold at market for \$1 a kilo. I pay at least \$36 per kg for it in the shops in Sydney. The way the big supermarkets – Woolies, Coles, Harris Farm – screw the price on staple food does no-one any favours. So I'm aware that for many, what I'm saying sounds like just one more stone to carry – but I'm hoping you can hear something different. Something a lot gentler, and friendlier.

All of we Europeans, post-war settlers and immigrants in Australia have benefited from our possession of this land. I think we should consider how we can redress that.

So my job at the moment is to tell this story and to ask everyone to be open to it. I have been meeting landowners from around the district. I have met so many generous, intelligent, kind people who want to know what they can do. Some have come up with pretty good ideas. The Crookes, who make Gundowring Ice-Cream, have endowed a scholarship at the local university. They added a bursary for accommodation so that Indigenous people can share in the Aboriginal name Gundowring – a recognition.

Felicity MacDonald is writing her blog *Finding Merriman* and is providing an open resource for all of us doing research and she is extremely generous about sharing it.

Near Shepparton, there is Rumbalara, an Indigenous Elders' aged-care facility which allows for Indigenous

practices such as smoking ceremonies that don't set off the fire alarms, and a space for large rowdy families to come together.

Moving forward from story telling, I would like – this is me personally, and I am certainly not asking you to do it or to share in it – to create a fund to buy back missionary churches and missionary land so that Indigenous people can be buried with their ancestors. I have recently buried my mother and it is an expensive process.

My family has flourished in Australia. I want to remain a proud Australian. I want to come home and know that I am welcome on country.

If we want to grow as a nation, I think we have to know who we are. The Bible says “The sins of the father are visited on the child threefold.” I have always taken that to mean the trauma of the grandfather affects the son, and the trauma of the son is healed by the grandson. We see it with the generation who went to the First World War, and their sons who went to the Second World War, and the fact that we are finally recognising post shock trauma and what that inter-generational trauma does to people. I think after seven, eight, ten generations of inter-generational trauma, it is time for us, as a unified Australia, to start working towards healing that.

I do not think it is about blame. I do not think it is about names or pack drills and certainly not about forcing people to do things they don't want to do. I would very much like to hear from you, hear your stories and corrections and do my best to tell this story as accurately as possible for everyone. Thank you.

Sheridan can be contacted at sjobbins@ozemail.com.au

MENZIES EXPLOSION

Howard Jones

Two completely different stories about Robert Menzies, Leader of the Liberal Party, were printed the morning after he addressed a big crowd in Albury on November 14, 1949.

“Menzies in explosion” was the headline in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, explaining that a press photographer's flash-bulb exploded two metres from Menzies inside the Palais Royal (site of Westend Plaza, Kiewa St Albury). “Women screamed and men gasped but when Mr Menzies waved his hand and laughed the audience of 1400 people cheered,” the paper said.

However, the *Border Morning Mail* headline was “Menzies given great reception at Albury.” It dutifully reported his main points. He was supporting David Fairbairn, Liberal candidate for the new seat of Farrer. Menzies warned the Chifley Labor Government intended to “nationalise medicine” and “nationalise banks,” and he promised to ban the Communist Party if he won power. Perhaps his most telling comment showing 1949 attitudes came in answer to a question on immigration. He said he was “in favour of it in big licks, giving as much preference as possible to British stock. By that he did not mean hostility to foreigners who, if they could be properly assimilated into the Australian community, would be very welcome.” Menzies' one-hour speech was loudly applauded and not once (said the paper) did anyone interject. Fairbairn won Farrer and Menzies won the federal election and was Prime Minister until 1966.

Menzies in 'explosion'

ALBURY, Mon. — A photographer's flash-light bulb which exploded six feet away from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Menzies) at an election meeting tonight caused a momentary panic.

Women screamed and men gasped, but when Mr. Menzies waved his hand and laughed the audience of 1400 people cheered.

Then they laughed as he said: “It's high time we really had full production of good bulbs in Australia.”

The crowd roared delightedly when Mr. Menzies cowered in mock fright as the photographer again approached him.



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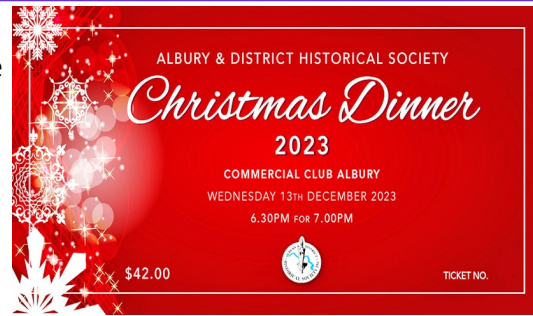
Have you visited our YouTube Channel?

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDzIPypinJegksrO-l2ssVg>



A&DHS Christmas Dinner is back

Come along to the Commercial Club and enjoy a three course meal on Wednesday 13th December, 6.30pm for 7pm. Local MP Justin Clancy will be our after dinner speaker, his topic being Albury Parliamentary representatives. Following dinner we will also have our usual December 'Show & Tell.'
Tickets \$42



Beyond the Book: Visit Online a State Library of Victoria Collection



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Explore a treasure trove of rare books and thrilling tales from British history in their new, online-only exhibition, *Beyond the Book*.

From King Charles I and the English Civil War to Prince Rupert's pet poodle and life during the Plague, *Beyond the Book* takes you back in time to shed new light on a bygone Britain where the books were as beautiful as the days were bloody.

See impressive works from the internationally renowned John Emerson Collection through 3D models that bring each item to life in stunning detail.

Look through pages of some incredibly historic and rare books, investigate the material elements and crafts involved in making books, see and read hand-written letters from 15th to 17th century Europe and much more.

Go to State Library of Victoria's [Beyond the Book](#)

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The Committee meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 3 pm at the Albury LibraryMuseum.

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Single: \$30 Family: \$35
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