

ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

President's Annual Report 2023/24

Our monthly meetings are the most visible part of our mission but there are other elements as well. First let's reminisce on our speaker program.

- In July Jill Aplin told the story of the "Life in a Box" left in Albury by John Winter-Cooke. Jill and Greg subsequently returned the box to John Winter-Cooke's family in the Western District of Victoria.
- In August Greg Ryan took us on a road trip from Sydney to Albury tracing the origins of Highway 31. Excellent photos from the Mitchell Library collection were featured showing the road under construction.
- Sheridan Jobbins enthralled us in September as she spoke of the involvement of her great uncle John Jobbins in a massacre of aboriginal inhabitants at Dora Dora. It was of interest that Sheridan's four times great grandfather had been assigned to Charles Throsby who explored the Southern Highlands and beyond with his young guide, Hamilton Hume.
- In October Bryan Smith told us the story of Sandy the Warhorse and the installation of a bronze statue in Tallangatta.
- Well-known local builder Gary Zauner spoke to us in November about how his father, Rudy, escaped war ravaged Europe with no money but in possession of an incredible drive. He built one of Albury's most respected building companies.
- We celebrated Christmas in style at our December Christmas dinner meeting and were privileged that Justin Clancy, Member for Albury, addressed us about the history of parliamentary representation of our area.
- 2024 got underway with a change of venue. We met at the Police Training Centre (the old Methodist Church) in Olive Street. Superintendent Paul Smith drew back the curtain to share the inner machinations required to successfully implement the border closure mandates of government during the Covid epidemic.
- Pieter Mourik spoke in March about the developing discussion around aboriginal ring trees and their significance to indigenous culture.
- The April meeting, quite appropriately, focussed on military history. Simon Burgess told the story of his grandfather's active service at Kokoda. Simon then shared photos of his own experience of walking the 132 kilometres of the historic Kokoda Trail Walk.
- In May Wayne Doubleday of Charles Sturt University gave us pause for thought when he detailed the pros and cons of the move towards digitisation of historical records.
- Our June presentation was a very entertaining evening presented by Victor Selway and Kat Kitch explaining how they use a "touch trolley" to introduce history to the 1500 children who visit the museum each year in school groups.

The popularity of our speaker program is a testament to the work of our speaker coordinator, Jenny Romero with able assistance from others.

Other elements of our mission involve conducting research for members of the public and a group of activities which could broadly be described as community outreach in the areas of history and heritage.

- August – we participated in community consultation with the Hume and Hovell walking track management. Greg Ryan addressed a group of Scots School students at the Albury

railway Station.

- September – we did a Central Albury historic buildings walk for the *Write Around the Murray* festival and Bruce Pennay delivered a lecture for history week on Border Railway Achievements.
- October – we held a central Albury Walk for A&DHS members. Also in October Bruce Pennay was the keynote speaker at the RAHS Conference in Wagga and Greg Ryan also spoke about the great achievements we have made in our Trove project. We took our stall to the UMCT Open Day which attracted a lot of interest, and we attended a Connected Communities function at Bendigo Bank.
- December – we were approached by the family of Sir Macpherson Robertson to consider making an application for a Heritage Award from the Royal Aeronautical Society to recognise Sir Macpherson’s contribution to the early development of aviation both within Australia and in the wider world. We subsequently made the application and await the outcome.
- February – we were proud to launch the Hume & Hovell Explorer’s Bike Ride connecting the Hume and Hovell monuments erected along the route the explorers took from the Hume (Murray) River to Port Phillip two centuries ago. The substantial amount of work done by Peter Harper in developing the project is well recognised. Also, in February Greg Ryan gave a talk to Albury Probus Club.
- March – we conducted a Central Albury Street Walk for Seniors Week and for the first time we took our stall to the Wodonga Show where we received a very good response from the public.
- April – we took a bus load of 23 A&DHS members on a field trip to Savernake Station for a very enjoyable and memorable day.
- June – Bruce Pennay and Greg Ryan conducted Trove workshops at Albury LibraryMuseum and Lavington Library. Simon Burgess and I spoke to a group of 20 students from Indie School at the Albury Monument as part of their study of world wars and in early July Greg Ryan addressed the Albury Wodonga Orchid Club.

Our Trove project continued at a pace. To date we have digitised over 80,000 pages from 1860 to 1953 and plans are well advanced to scan the *Border Morning Mail* for 1954.

Our A&DHS website averages about 1000 views a month which has grown from 400 views just a couple of years ago. Our YouTube channel is now five years old and has had 17,062 views at last count. Our fortnightly column in the Border Mail has continued thanks to the efforts of Greg Ryan. We added two new publications to our Society Papers this year – “The History of the 8/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles” by Jan Hunter and “Malcolm McEachern, Master of Song” by Howard Jones. We also recently printed a series of postcards featuring the splendid drawings of Marie Lee which showcase our beautiful historic buildings. The postcards are of high quality and are available at the Visitor Information Centre and a number of commercial outlets.

To continue our community education program we received assistance from the team at the ALM to produce two new banners “Albury Timeline” and “Becoming Albury” printed by our sponsor, FoxDigital.

Ongoing involvements of our Society have been regular meetings with the LibraryMuseum to prepare for the bicentenary of the arrival of Hume and Hovell. Jenny Romero has also been attending regular meetings of the Community Consultation group with Albury City Town Planning leaders who are working towards a new heritage plan for the city. Jenny also

answered a request from the Rotary Club of Lavington to write their history, which Jenny has just completed.

Thank you again to our generous corporate sponsors: the Commercial Club (venue for our monthly meetings); Albury LibraryMuseum (venue for committee meetings); Coxtech (website maintenance); Kwik Kopy (supply of our printing needs); FoxDigital (for digital printing including new Society banners) and financial support from sponsors Lester & Son Funeral Directors, Baker Motors, Hume Bank, ThinkPilates, Armstrongs Financial Advisers, Elders Real Estate (through Manny Gonzales), Zauner Construction, Martin's Travel Group and Rotary Clubs of Albury, Albury North and Albury Hume.

Many of our members contribute to the smooth working of the Society. They include: Richard Lee as Bulletin distributor and volunteer at ALM and the Thurgoona facility. Chris McQuellin and Helen Livsey help at the ALM with scanning and cataloguing objects, photographs and documents. Claire Doolan and Narda Reid represent us on the Archive acquisitions and De-accessions committee. Simon Barlow generously prints the paper copy of the Bulletin for those members who need one. Col McAulay looked after our publications, brought them to meetings and kept records of sales. Howard Jones and Jenny Romero represent us on the Heritage Community Working Group also with our member Paul Grover.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to your hard working committee who work together to make our Society so successful in what it does, and to the large number of our members who attend our monthly meetings thereby making our gatherings so enjoyable for all of us.



Geoff Romero