

Albury & District Historical Society Inc

February 2024

No 652

Wiradjuri Country, PO Box 822 ALBURY 2640

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

For Your Reference A&DHS account details are:

BSB 640 000 Acc No 111097776

Registered by Australia Post PP 225170/0019 ISSN 2207-1237



Next Meeting

Wednesday, February 14, 2024

7.30 pm, Albury Police Centre,
former Methodist Church

Topic: Policing in Albury

Speaker: Superintendent Paul
Smith

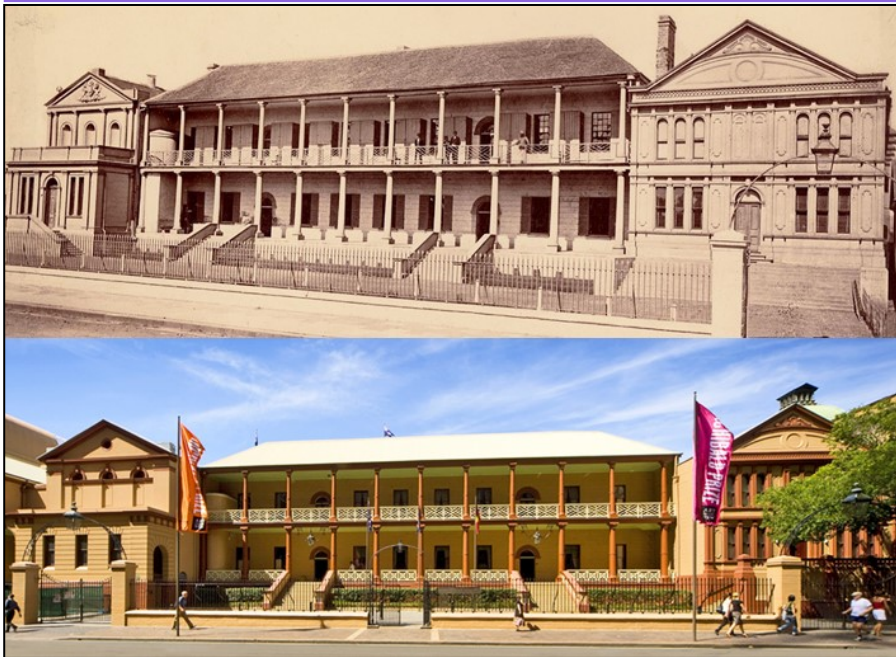
ALBURY LIBRARYMUSEUM
'50 Years of Rock'
Photos by
Ian Hood & Paul Temple
Until March 3

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Top: NSW Parliament House in December 1870 [NSW State Library photo].

Bottom: from a similar position in the 21st century
[Commonwealth Parliamentary Association photo].

PRESIDENT'S NOTES FOR FEBRUARY

Fifty members and guests attended our Christmas Dinner to end the year on a very positive note. Our Society demonstrated what an energetic and busy group we are and what a broad reach we have in our community. We were very pleased that Justin Clancy MP was able to make time in his busy schedule to speak to us about the history of parliamentary representation in the seat of Albury. We were even given a behind the scenes look at Parliament House, itself steeped in history. Justin thanked us for the work we do in history and heritage and is always a strong supporter of ours.

Our Mayor, Kylie King also attended and since the dinner has given us a very strong letter of support for our application to the Royal Aeronautical Society in London for a Heritage Award in favour of Sir Macpherson Robertson. I thank the mayor for her ongoing support.

It will be a busy and historically significant year for us with two major events to be commemorated in 2024. The 90th anniversary of the Uiver landing in October will be followed by the bicentennial of the Hume and Hovell expedition in November. A field trip to Savernake Station has been arranged for April 13, so look out for booking details.

Please note the change of venue for our first meeting. It will be held at the Police Training Centre, Olive Street Police precinct on Wednesday February 14.

Our Society continues to grow in strength and to start 2024 we extend a very warm welcome to new Society members Kristie Ivone and Paul & Robyn Muntz. It is Kristie's voice providing the narration for the three railway videos produced by Bruce Pennay in 2023. Click on the icon to view the films at our YouTube channel.



Justin Clancy was elected in March 2019 as Member for Albury in NSW State Parliament. He is currently Shadow Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. Justin was after-dinner speaker at our Society's Christmas Dinner, December 2023. The following is a transcript of his address to members.

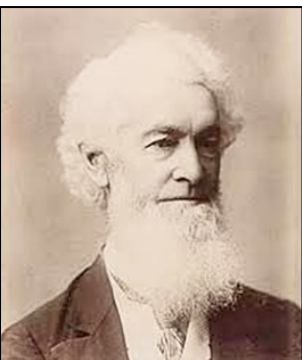
Introduction

The Parliament of NSW is steeped in history as an institution, and as a building – the building itself being part of the original Rum Hospital.

Just outside the Legislative Assembly are portraits of the members of the 1953 Parliament including the Member for Albury, Dudley Gordon Padman. It is a reminder for me of the privilege of serving in Parliament as a representative of the people of Albury, and also a reminder that it is only a moment and then you are no more than a fading photograph on a wall.

Conversations with people in our community are a special moment, and part of the privilege of being the local Member. Just this week I met with Pat Freyer at the Albury RSL sub-branch Christmas function. Pat is a remarkable person who I always enjoy catching up with. Talking to Pat, she spoke of how she was raised at Mitta Junction, her father having worked on the construction of the Hume Weir wall and also the barracks at Bonegilla. I mentioned to Pat how I met Joan Balsarini earlier in the year as she celebrated her 100th birthday. Growing up in Bonegilla, Joan recalled the first aeroplane landing at Bonegilla. This had Pat wondering when that was, as her father paid 10 shillings for her and Pat to fly at Bonegilla in 1934 with a circuit flyer, none other than Charles Kingsford-Smith.

We have so much history to celebrate in our community and I am grateful for the Albury & District Historical Society for the role it plays. In regards to this evening's presentation, I am indebted to Bruce Pennay, Howard Jones and others such as Jim Hagan and EW Hines.



John Hay, Member for Murrumbidgee then Member for Murray (1856-1892)

The Albury Electorate

The Murray Region has been represented in Parliament through electorates known by general district names: Hume, Murray & Sturt, and/or by town names – Wentworth, Balranald, Deniliquin, Corowa and Albury.

At the introduction of responsible government in 1856 the electorate of the “Pastoral District of Murrumbidgee” was created. This encompassed one of thirteen squatting districts established in 1847 in the unsettled Crown Lands. A large and sparsely unpopulated electorate, Charles Cowper, an early Premier, dismissed John Hay, one of the first two members, as “the representative of gum trees.”

In 1859 the Murrumbidgee electorate was divided into five electorates matching town-based police districts including Hume, centred on Albury.

Our identity and how it shapes our politics – a border community

It was Gary Saliba who said to me in a discussion when I was first elected that each community has its own identity. Our identity is very much shaped by the Murray River. Aunt Nancy [Rooke] – and I thank Victor for the Acknowledgement of Country this evening – spoke often as the river being a place for coming together, not as a separation. However, in Western political eyes the Murray River is very much a boundary, and we on the frontier.

Bruce Pennay writes “All electorates in the Region shared a common interest in the awkwardness of their location on the periphery of NSW.” In the 1860s, George Mott, owner and editor of the *Border Post*, stated “It is a physical impossibility for us to be properly governed from a centre so distant as that of Sydney.”

All took interest in two movements in the 19th century and another two in the first half of the 20th century that tried to reshape or alter the nature of political boundaries to overcome border difficulties. Separation in the 1860s and 1870s, championing of federation in the 1890s, new states in the 1920s and 1930s, regional development planning in the 1940s.

In the 19th century the Riverina Association was formed with pastoralists seeking self-government based on western river system – but excluded Wagga & Albury. This upset Mott who was critical of their “preposterous” territorial claim, and created perceptions of an “oxocracy” in the west versus “mobocracy” of Wagga and Albury. A petition to London for self-government was rejected. Debate in the NSW Parliament on matters arising from it closed without resolution.

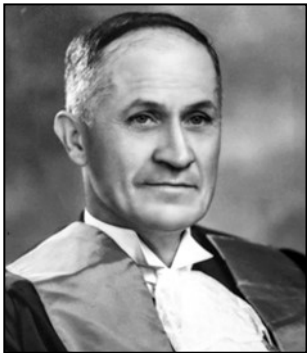
Land ownership and land utilisation dominated politics until the Land Act of 1884. After this more attention was given to the tariff question.

Pre-Federation tariffs and cross-border customs charges inflamed farmers along the Murray. NSW and Victoria went tit-for-tat in predatory and retaliatory stock taxes through the 1880s-90s. Border residents again petitioned NSW Parliament on this. For, as Pennay writes, “On the border colonists had first-hand experiences of the costs and inconvenience of colonial disunion. Farmers could see across the river the mill to which they could not afford to take their crop. Shopkeepers and consumers were aware of the different price of goods on the other side of a bridge.”

At the 1898 and 1899 referenda on Federation the border district showed an unparalleled enthusiasm: NSW voted 52% then 56% in favour of federating, while over 90% voted in favour from Murray, Wentworth and Deniliquin.

Beginnings of regional planning followed Federation’s new opportunities: new railways, changes to land laws, large numbers of settlers arriving regionally, Border customs duties and railway rate hikes ended, Victoria and NSW were linked by rail; closer settlement resulted.

Changes didn’t move fast enough to satisfy this region. The New State Royal Commission of 1924 heard a lot about regional disadvantage and its report advocated a greater devolution of authority to the disaffected regions. That was 1924, one hundred years ago.



Dudley Gordon Padman as Mayor of Albury

In 1931 the Riverine Movement took up the idea of a new state; however Pennay writes that “Wagga Wagga seemed determined to be the regional capital and the boundary changes offered no relief to Albury from its border discomforts.” New state boundaries were drawn and readied but no referenda took place.

During the Second World War efforts took hold to foster regional development. In 1943 the NSW government began to consider appropriate regional boundaries, but Albury City Council declined the state’s invitation to link with Wagga Wagga in a southern region. Instead Albury Council sought involvement in a cross-border Murray region. This was supported by Professor Macdonald Holmes promoting the view that rivers unite rather than divide people (echoing Aunt Nancy’s words).

Doug Padman, as Mayor of Albury, was instrumental in the 1944 establishment of the Murray Valley Development League for cross-border regional planning.

Members of the NSW Parliament representing Albury

Introducing Doug Padman to the story at this point gives us an appropriate segue to explore some of the members of NSW Parliament who represented Albury.

Who were our MPs? Many lived on and worked the land. This drove their politics. Graziers, stock and station agents, farmers, a winemaker, and a squatter in Griffith, McLaurin, Lawson, Manning, Mate, Asher, Ross.

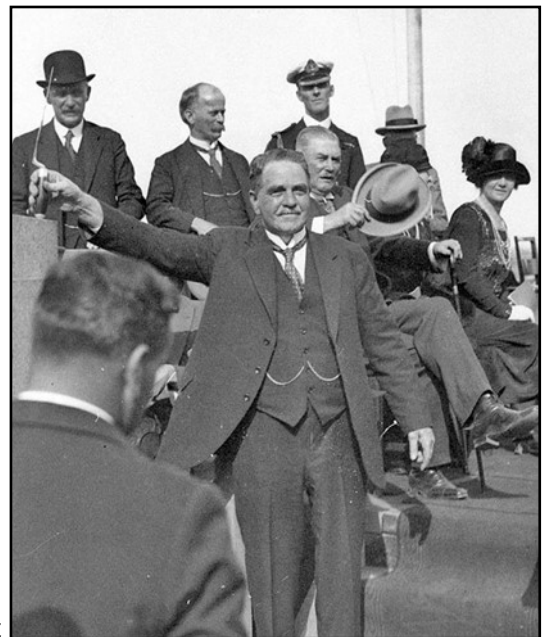
Of note:

Richard Thomas Ball – Member for Albury 1895-1898; Member for Murray 1920-1927 and Member for Corowa 1927-1937 (in 1932 he won by one vote). Ball died whilst in office, which might be okay for my predecessor Greg Aplin, but not a precedent I want to follow! Speaking in Parliament, the Deputy Premier Lt-Colonel Bruxner commented that the late Richard Ball’s family “must be comforted by the fact that he died in harness.”

Overall, Ball served as an MP for 37 years; minister for ten of these. Instead of following the family to a life on the land, Ball was encouraged by his mother to go into commerce. He started work in an engineering firm in Sydney, established an engineering works in Goulburn, before helping to found the Institution of Engineers of Australia. From there to politics, being elected in 1895 to represent the people of Corowa and Albury.

As Secretary for Public Works he was the NSW Minister responsible for the Hume Dam going ahead, and importantly, the legislation to build the Sydney Harbour Bridge – just as well he didn’t become a farmer!

Alexander Mair served as Member for Parliament from 1932 to 1946, and was Premier from 1939 to 1941. Appointed Treasurer in



Richard Thomas Ball, trowel in hand as he lays the foundation stone of the Sydney Harbour Bridge



Alexander Mair

1938 and in 1939 he succeeded Stevens as Leader of the United Australia Party to become Premier. His government fell in 1941. In 1946 Mair resigned to try unsuccessfully to win a Senate seat. At the by-election, the seat of Albury voted a Labor representative, John Hurley, a farmer from Henty. At the general election five months later Hurley was defeated by Doug Padman.

Padman was a farmer and also manager of the local wool scour. He had served on Albury Council for 23 years and was Mayor during the war years. Padman was regarded as a credible advocate of soldier resettlement; and in 1947 he won on a margin of 28 votes.

Albury's role in the formation of the Liberal Party

Briefly, it is worth noting the role that Albury played in the formation of the Liberal Party. In December 1944 the *Border Morning Mail* was reporting on "the biggest political event in Albury since Federation," a conference held at Mate's store on Dean Street Albury, in an upper room.

Sixty delegates, men and women from all over Australia, met to form the Liberal Party of Australia and to "formally adopt a constitution, establish an administrative organisation, and set up a Federal Council and executive." The Albury Conference did not create the Liberal Party – but it did put into words a vision: what the party would be about.

As Menzies put it, in an address, the party would represent "the forgotten people"... small business employers and employees, office workers, shopkeepers.

On December 16, 1944 the delegates wrote a constitutional and organisational framework. The Liberal Party if not born in Albury was certainly conceived in the appropriately named Mate's Building.

Conclusion

The course of political representation for the community of Albury has reflected the identity of Albury – and in particular an identity of a border community. We do see things differently to other parts of the state, including Sydney. It can be challenging, but it can also allow a dynamism that is not seen in other communities. These themes are well evident over the course of the past 150 years, and no doubt will continue to shape our political landscape well into the future. Thank you.

CHRISTMAS DINNER 2023

Our Christmas Dinner was an evening of fun and Christmas cheer.

The committee ensured that our Society put on its best face for the night. We were joined by Justin Clancy MP and our Mayor, Kylie King and many senior representatives of our sponsorship organisations.

Sporting results used to come to Albury by telegraph to the Rose Hotel but fifteen minutes before our meeting modern communications allowed Col and Ann McAulay to watch 'live' their granddaughter win the fifteen years NSW State title in breaststroke at the Sydney Aquatic Centre to the delight of all attendees.

Victor Selway entertained us in his usual lively and entertaining style in his role as MC. President Geoff gave a wonderful address covering the many activities of the Society. He went on to thank our sponsors for their support in the work we do.

We enjoyed interesting contributions to our traditional 'Show & Tell.' Connor Fedorowysch described finding a Hume & Hovell Medallion, and there were contributions from Simon Burgess, Peter Harper and Narda Reid.

Jill Wooding donated three magnificent panorama photographs of Albury which were auctioned. Victor Selway once again captured the audience as auctioneer. Spirited bidding raised \$450 for our Trove project. Thanks Jill for your generous donation. Jill has also donated five more items which will be offered for sale throughout the year with proceeds also going to the Trove project.



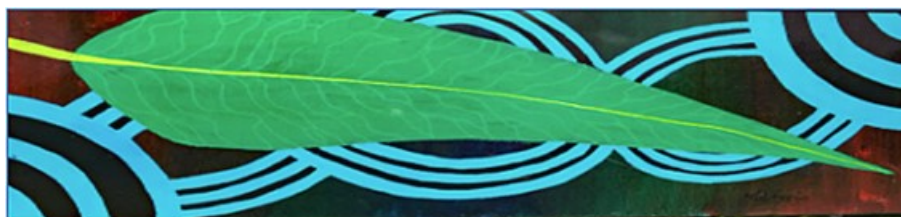
Left: Justin Clancy MP delivering his after dinner speech; Right: MC Victor Selway

THE EXPLORER'S BIKE RIDE 2024

The Explorers Bike Ride 2024 is one of the Society's major projects for this year. The Ride recognises the bicentenary of the Hume and Hovell Expedition. It's early days, but to date, 45 riders have registered for the ride. It is free for participants but there is an option of a donation to the Trove project of our Society.

A major donation received so far came from Hume Bank and we thank Hume Bank for their sponsorship. Stephen Capello, CEO of the bank, was our guest at our Christmas Dinner.

Jim Brodie and Mike Frey were the first riders away, departing from the front of QEII Square at 7am on New Year's Day. They took seven days to complete the ride through the back roads of Victoria to Werribee over a distance of 620 km. The route could become permanent, much like the Hume and Hovell Walking Track in NSW.



Aboriginal land ownership has been acknowledged by the carrying of a bookmark with an illustration of a gum leaf. The bookmark represents a ceremonial gum leaf that if looked after on their journey would mean the riders would respect the land they cross.

The project is the work of our Society's Peter Harper. Peter has produced a website with lots more information – go to [Explorers Bike Ride 2024](https://www.alburyhistory.org.au/explorers-bike-ride-2024)



Jim Brodie and Mike Frey acknowledge the Hume and Hovell plaque at the front of QEII Square as they prepare to set off on January 1, 2024.



Crossing the Werribee River just 5km from the finish line at Port Phillip Bay.



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



ANOTHER MYSTERY SOLVED WITH HELP FROM TROVE

Greg Ryan

The naming of Pemberton St was 'Question of the Month' in our October 2006 Bulletin. In the Bulletin of the following month the comment was made "Pemberton Street continues to frustrate us. Who, or what is the former stock route, once known as 'Old Howlong Road,' named after? The name first appears on a 1927 Albury Lands Department map."

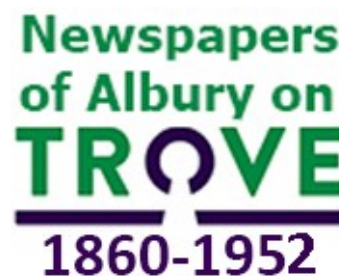
John Craig commented that "a James Pemberton died in Albury in 1887 [should be 1897], but whether he had anything to do with the name of the street is unknown."

Now that we have Trove, finding an answer had continued to frustrate. The answer came using the search term *Pember** – substituting the asterisk for the last few letters will find all words starting with *Pember*. So now the answer has been revealed – the scanned image of the *Albury Banner* had Pemberton spelt 'Pembertoii.' After correcting the spelling on Trove, we now read in the *Banner* of July 22, 1921 that "The Victorian Commercial Travellers' concert party, of thirty performers, arrived in Albury yesterday for the purpose of providing a concert in aid of the Albury Hospital." The president of the group was J T Pemberton.

The concert was a huge success, the Melbourne *Argus* reporting "a sum of £650 was raised on behalf of the Albury Hospital, removing the entire debt on the institution." Two weeks later we read in the *Banner* "that in recognition of the splendid effort by the Commercial Travellers' Concert Party in aid of the hospital, the name suggested [for Old Howlong Road] be Pemberton street after the president of the association."

This example also illustrates the importance of correcting key words that have not scanned correctly in Trove articles.

A reminder that Trove now includes Albury newspapers for most years from 1860 to the end of 1952.



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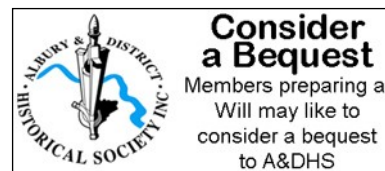
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Meetings: Second Wednesday of the month
(except January) at 7.30 pm usually at the
Commercial Club Albury.

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

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