

Albury & District Historical Society Inc



March 2024

No 653

Wiradjuri Country, PO Box 822 ALBURY 2640

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

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Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

7.30 pm, Commercial Club

Topic: Ring Trees

Speaker: Pieter Mourik

ALBURY LIBRARYMUSEUM
Ice Pact—the
Antarctic Treaty System
Until May 26

Page 2 Harry Hawker at
Albury Racecourse

Page 4 Policing in Albury

Page 5 Explorers Ride 2024
Marcus Clarke

Page 6 AM for Dr Factor

Hume & Hovell Medal



Operation Border Closure operated from July to November 2020, see page 4. A photo from ABC News.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES FOR MARCH

Superintendent Paul Smith got us off to an excellent start at our first meeting of the year. The old Methodist church, itself steeped in history relevant to many of our members, set the scene for a good evening. Superintendent Smith and his staff have adorned the walls with historic objects and plans. We wholeheartedly congratulate him on preserving the history of policing in the district and sharing it with us. We will watch with interest as the fledgling museum develops.

Worth noting, in May Superintendent Smith will celebrate 110 years of his family's involvement with the NSW Police Force – in 1914 Paul's grandfather joined NSW Police, followed by his son, Paul's father, and now Paul himself. Congratulations to the family on this fantastic achievement.

We have renewed our contract with the Commercial Club to hold our monthly meetings at the club during 2024. The club very generously donate the room to us at no charge. Members of the public pay \$300 each time a room of the size required by us is hired. The club has asked us to invite our members to join the Commercial Club and members are encouraged to consider doing so.

This year, 2024, is a very historically significant year for us as we look to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the forced landing of the Uiver on 24 October and the bicentenary of the arrival of the first European explorers, Hume and Hovell, in November. We will be referring to both of these milestones throughout the year.

I look forward to spending an enjoyable day with many of you as we explore Savernake Station on Saturday 13 April.

Two new videos have been added to our YouTube Channel, *Cheers* and *Emporium*. Click on the logo to visit the channel.



FAMOUS AVIATOR IN ALBURY 110 YEARS AGO

Greg Ryan

On March 7 it will be 110 years since Australian aviator Harry Hawker displayed his flying skills for the people of Albury and district. For most, it was their first sight of an airplane in flight.

Hawker was born in Moorabbin¹, Victoria, in 1889. After working on motor car engines, he became interested in aviation and in 1911 he left for England to pursue his interest. He found work with motoring firms before securing work as a mechanic with Sopwith Aviation.


Hawker took flying lessons and had soon set a record for flight endurance of 8 hours 23 minutes for which he won a £1000 prize from London's *Daily Mail*. This and other achievements led to work as Sopwith's chief test pilot. His exhibition flights in Albury were during a 1914 promotional visit to Australia for Sopwith Aviation.

During World War I he worked designing and flight testing planes for Sopwith. After the war, Sopwith folded. Hawker with three friends formed a new company which became Hawker Aviation, a company that went on to produce some of the best known British aircraft including the Hawker Hurricane of World War II fame.

Hawker died when his plane crashed in 1921, probably due to him suffering a medical problem in flight.

Albury businessman Lionel Griffith arranged for Hawker's Albury visit in 1914. On the Wednesday prior to Saturday afternoon's exhibition, Hawker's Sopwith biplane was brought to Albury by train.

An estimated crowd of 5000 flocked into the Albury Racecourse to witness the aviation skills of 25 year old Hawker. Special trains delivered spectators to watch his aerial display, including a flight to 7800 feet breaking a record for the greatest height achieved in Australia.



HARRY HAWKER IN ALBURY!
PERSONAL DIRECTION CLAUDE KINGSTON.
ALBURY RACECOURSE, SATURDAY NEXT, MARCH 7.

One Flying Exhibition Only by **HARRY HAWKER** (The Famous Australian Aviator) winner of £1000 "Daily Mail" Prize.

PROGRAMME: 2.30—PRIZE FLIGHT. 3.00—SPECIAL DISPLAYS, including Nightingale and Biplane. 3.15—THE END. 4.15—SOPWITH FLIGHTS. 4.30—FREE LUNCH. BANQUET—Dinner and Play. 4.45—SOPWITH FLIGHTS.	CHILDREN'S TICKETS. Children under 14 years may purchase admission tickets from adults at a special rate of 1/6 each. Admission for 100 yards, including 100 yards of motor race to the public, at 1/6 each to be flying 8 p.m. only.	TRAIN ARRANGEMENTS. Special Trains from Sydney, leaving Sydney 11.15 a.m., returning Albury 1.15 p.m. Special Trains from Albury to Sydney, leaving Albury 1.15 p.m., returning Sydney 11.15 a.m. Passengers should arrive at Albury 15 minutes before departure.
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Grandstand, 2s. 6d. Passenger Flights, £20 Each.

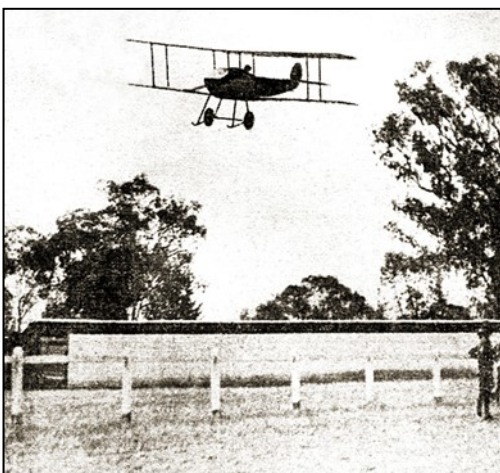
An advertisement in *The Border Morning Mail*

Local newspaper journalists wrote colourful accounts of what they witnessed. The *Albury Banner* reported that "the exhibition was the greatest treat Albury people had ever witnessed. They were simply astounded. Some of the old hands had tears in their eyes. They were grateful they had lived sufficiently long to witness this triumph — this mastery of the air."

A *Border Morning Mail* journalist elaborated further in "An Eagle in the Clouds," his version of the spectacle. To read the full article follow the link to [An Eagle in the Clouds](#). Below is part of the article:

"In much the same way as a native companion, or other large bird, runs a few steps with outstretched wings before commencing flight, the biplane ran along the ground for perhaps 40 yards and then sharply rose. A murmur of surprise was wafted up to Hawker overhead when the wonderful feat could no longer be contradicted ... At one hundred, at two hundred, at five hundred feet the great bird circled round and round above the course, with a grace unsurpassed by the most graceful flight of bird.

"Now the silent biplane dipped, with engines shut off, in a beautiful volplane, as lightning slimmering down a cloud. Now the pilot draws his control wheel towards him ... Up, up, up, circling in what must be a radius of several miles, the biplane wings its steady way, performing intricate aerial manoeuvres such as surely eagle never attempted ...



Harry Hawker prepares for a landing at Albury Racecourse, March 7, 1914

"Half an hour later Hawker announced his second, and, alas, his last flight of the day. Rising as before, the biplane soared and dipped, soared and dipped, and soared and dipped again in extraordinary proximity to the assembled many. Now it would apparently fly over a fence, now a tree was the target of his joyous frolic ...

"And now, as if determined to get as far away at as fast a speed as possible, Hawker climbed to the clouds, a thin trail of vapor from the exhaust in his wake. Circling and ever circling, mounting and ever mounting, at a speed not less than ninety miles an hour, the wonderful triumph of mechanical man winged

THIS PLAQUE WAS UNVEILED ON 22 JANUARY 1989 TO COMMEMORATE THE 100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH IN MOORABBIN OF THE H. G. HAWKER ENGINEERING CO. FOUNDER

HARRY GEORGE HAWKER

PRESENTED JOINTLY BY
HAWKER DE HAVILLAND (VIC) LTD.
HAWKER PACIFIC PTY LTD.
AND THE CITY OF MOORABBIN

1 This plaque was unveiled at Moorabbin Airport on Harry Hawker's 100th birthday when the airport was renamed Moorabbin (Harry Hawker) Airport.

its glorious way. Lesser and lesser to the eye it grew, now in size as a swan; eventually as a swallow; to those of aged eyesight invisible ...

“And here was a human soul swifter than swiftest bird, higher than the loftiest Alpine peak, frolicking at tremendous speed one and a half miles above earth! Only through the great spread of the wings of the machine could he be located; the man himself would be invisible. For many minutes, it seemed hours, Hawker revelled joyously above the clouds, and then commenced one of the most audacious and awe-inspiring displays to which man could set his mind. Steadying almost in the centre of the racecourse, dipping one plane and tilting the other, the machine, head foremost, climbed down a giant staircase, perhaps half a mile in length, erected in mid-air, and of nought but air.

“At times the biplane, owing to the aspect presented to earth would be invisible, until, swinging round and down, the rays of the sun touched up the yellow varnish on the circling planes, and its outline once more came into view. The spectators held their breath. The feat, though of wonderful simplicity, was appalling.

Another half a mile towards the earth was clambered down in a similar way, but this time the spiral staircase ran in the opposite direction. Volplaning, figure eights, aerial gyrations without number, did Hawker perform above the astounded spectators now scurrying away as if pursued by ten thousand devils; now rushing back as if compelled like hunted hare to double. Hither and thither, backwards and forwards, up and down, fast and slow, floated and soared, glided and slithered, this human machine with wings of bird and sinews of steel.

“And now it was decreed that all this should come to an end. As we sat in the grandstand, the biplane flew overhead, hidden from view by the roof ... As he volplaned gently down, the machine was obscured for some moments by a big gum tree. Appearing again at a distance of a quarter of a mile, skimming along close to the earth, it appeared as if Hawker was going to steeplechase, a two-rail fence being in his foreground.



Harry Hawker

“Suddenly a dense cloud of grey dust shot high into the air, obscuring machine and even its planes. A groan of horror arose from the shocked onlookers, and as the dust subsided it was seen that the biplane was standing upright on its nose, its tail planes and rudder poised aloft, and supported in this position by the leverage of the side planes.

“A moment, and Hawker jumped out, the least concerned of all that vast multitude; and a great burst of cheering arose. How the accident occurred there were various explanations ... Hawker’s own explanation was “It was either stand her on her nose or run her into the fence,” and he chose the former alternative.

“The spot where the biplane stood on her splintered walnut propeller, stated to have cost £40, with two of the revolving cylinders of the £600 engine covered with grey dust, with the landing chassis wrecked, with several of the ash uprights which support the frames shivered, with the metal casing round the car crumpled, and with a hole torn in the cloth-covered tail, was in Wynack’s paddock, 48 yards from the fence ...

“The dismantled machine was packed in its case for railing to Melbourne, for which city it will leave this morning, and the band having played ‘God Save the King,’ the spectators took the hint that there would be no more flying that day, and dispersed, by motor, train and buggy, on their several ways. There was not perceptible, in all that vast throng, a shadow of annoyance at the sudden termination of the display. The feeling was, indeed, even with him who had motored 80 miles to see the flights, that the aerial manoeuvres of Hawker were well worth all the trouble and expense, and deep sympathy for the hero of the day on account of the untoward accident stirred his breast.”

The *Albury Banner* reported later that when asked about the cause of the mishap, Hawker said “Carelessness on my part. I was volplaning, from a great height when I went to use the motor. It was spluttered up, or overcharged with petrol, which had accumulated while the engine was at rest, and I ‘lost the motor.’ I misjudged the landing, which was in ploughed ground.”

For almost all of the crowd it would have been the first flight of a plane that they had seen. The aviation industry made amazing progress from those early days. It was only another twenty years until the landing of the Uiver DC2, also at the Albury Racecourse. Thirty years on and the jet engine had been invented and once fifty years had passed, international flights had become common place.

Our first meeting for 2024 was held in the historic former Methodist Church in Olive St, now a part of the police precinct and their police training centre. It was the first time in quite a few years that our monthly meeting was not held at the Commercial Club.

Members took the opportunity to have a look at this heritage building. Around the walls of the building are displays relating to policing in the Albury district and we had the time to look at and learn form the items on display.

Our guest speaker was Superintendent Paul Smith, Commander of the Murray River Police District. Superintendent Smith joined the NSW Police Force in 1987 and was initially posted to the Albury Police Station. He has performed general duties and criminal investigation at Albury, Mulwala, Dareton, Hay, Deniliquin, Broken Hill and Griffith.

In early 2020 he returned to Albury, transferred to become Superintendent of the Murray River Police District which takes in six Local Government Areas including AlburyCity, Greater Hume, Federation, Berrigan, Murray River and Edward River.

In July 2020 Superintendent Smith was appointed as the Forward Commander for the New South Wales/Victoria border closures which concluded in late November 2020.



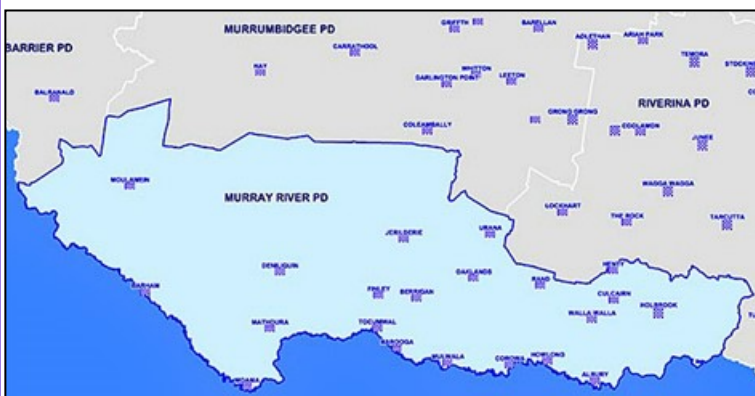
Superintendent Paul Smith and some of his audience in the former Methodist Church

Paul drew attention of the audience to the police memorial board at the back of the room, recalling local police officers who died while on duty. He mentioned three police officers remembered on the honour board:

- Sargeant David Maginnity was killed in June 1864 near Tumberumba by bushranger Daniel Morgan.
- Army Sargeant George Thomas Whitely was seriously injured by shrapnel at Gallipoli. After returning to Australia he joined the NSW Police Force. In 1931 police Sargeant Whitely was stationed at Berrigan. He attended a fire at the Berrigan Hotel when a gas cylinder exploded, shrapnel struck Whitely in the head and he died at the scene.
- Constable Cecil Howe was murdered near Oaklands in 1963 while in pursuit of a wanted man.

Murray River Police District (MRPD)

New South Wales has three metropolitan police regions and three country regions. The Murray River Police District is one of eight police districts in the Southern region. It was formed on March 25, 2018 with the amalgamation of Albury and Deniliquin Local Area Commands.



The MRPD comprises approximately 74,000 square kilometres of southern NSW, bordering Victoria to the south, Riverina Police District to the east and north, Murrumbidgee Police District to the north and west and Barrier Police District to the west.

The district includes: Albury, Corowa, Culcairn, Henty, Holbrook, Howlong, Mulwala, Oaklands, Rand, Urana, Walla Walla, Deniliquin, Moulamein, Barham, Moama, Mathoura, Barooga, Tocumwal, Berrigan, Finley and Jerilderie. Albury is the only 24 hour station in MRPD.

The MRPD has 250 police officers including Inspectors in charge of each local district. Other Inspectors take charge of specific areas such as crime and domestic violence.

Operation Border Closure (OBC)

Given just 48 hours' notice, on July 7, 2020, 'Operation Border Closure', the NSW Police Force response to the NSW Health Minister's 'Covid-19 and Victorian/NSW Border Control Order' commenced. OBC put into operation the Health Minister's intent by setting up checkpoints or hard closures at identified roadways/crossings between

NSW and Victoria incorporating five Police Districts, namely MRPD, Monaro, South Coast, Riverina and Barrier.

Twenty-seven checkpoints operated between the South Coast and the South Australian Border supported by police and Australian Defence Force resources. Fifteen of the checkpoints were in MRPD. These resources were coordinated out of the Border Incident Management Team based at Albury in the former Methodist Church building.

Back to the future 1919 - 2020



Drawing parallels with border closures during the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1919 and Operation Border Closure 2020.

building.

The deployment continued for several months, concluding checkpoint duty at 12:01am on November 23 when the Public Health Order was repealed – no vehicles were stopped at checkpoints post this time.

Other than to say the Health Minister's intent was achieved, another measure of the operation's success is that members facilitated the movement of over five million vehicles through the 27 checkpoints without major injury to police, ADF or public being recorded during the twenty-week operation.



The official launch of the 'Explorers Bike Ride 2024' was held at QEII Square at 9am on Wednesday February 28. Local riders came along with their bikes kitted out for a promotional ride and received their ceremonial gumleaf bookmark. They then rode from the Square down to visit the Hume Memorial at the Botanic Gardens with some riders choosing to make this the start of their epic ride, Stage 1 to Yackandandah.



WHO WAS MARCUS CLARKE?

Nineteenth century Melbourne author Marcus Clarke's most famous and enduring work is his powerful indictment of the brutality of the convict era, *His Natural Life* (later *For the Term of His Natural Life*).

He was less well known as a witty and provocative journalist, bohemian, and State Library of Victoria librarian. Learn all about his eventful but short life by following this link from the State Library of Victoria: [Marcus Clarke](https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/marcus-clarke).



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Have you visited our YouTube Channel?

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



MEDAL OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA FOR DR JUNE FACTOR

Congratulations to June Factor. She received an AM in the recent Australia Day Honours List. June was our guest speaker in October 2022, telling the story of how the Australian Army took into its ranks men who were nationals of Germany, Italy, Austria, Greece, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and many other countries. Some of these countries were enemies of Australia and many served our country in the Albury district.

‘SHOW & TELL’

At our Christmas dinner, Connor Fedorowytch showed members a medallion found in a paddock on Chant street Lavington. He speculated that the area may have been a resettlement area for returned soldiers, or perhaps occupied by squatters. Parish maps do not indicate the lot being owned by any individuals.

Connor described the medal as enamelled brass reading “1824-1924 Hume & Hovell Centenary Race Meeting 20th & 22nd Nov 1924.”

Prominent at the top of the medallion is the Hovell Tree, with a hole for attaching to a ribbon or similar within its branches. On the left side stands a figure of an Aboriginal man overlooking what may be the Murray River. He holds two spears and a boomerang. Opposite are Dean St buildings, the Town Hall and Mechanics’ Institute. An illustration from the *Albury Banner* of May 23, 1924 provides a glimpse of a design that the medal was based on.

The reverse shows a number 1193C which may be the medallion number or member number. Below that is the maker’s mark ‘Simpson.’



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Patron: Greg Aplin
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President: Geoff Romero
Vice-President: Greg Ryan
Secretary: Helen Livsey
 alburyhistory@bigpond.com
 02 6021 3671
Treasurer: Simon Burgess
Minute Secretary: Yelly Evenhuis
Publicity Officer: Helen Livsey

Public Officer: Helen Livsey
Committee: Jenny Romero, Victor Selway, Peter Harper.
Bulletin Editor: Greg Ryan
 gmjryan@bigpond.com
Publications & Stock Officer: Colin McAulay
Bulletin dispatch: Richard Lee
Meeting Greeter: Yelly Evenhuis
Web Editor: Greg Ryan
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.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Single: \$30 Family: \$35
 Corporate: \$100
 Note: There is a \$12 surcharge for mailed Bulletins.
Research undertaken, \$25 first hour. Enquiries in writing with \$25.