

# Albury & District Historical Society Inc

**November 2024**

**No 661**

Wiradjuri Country, PO Box 822 ALBURY 2640

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

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## Next Meeting

Wednesday, November 13, 2024

7.30 pm, Commercial Club, Albury

**Topic:** Hume & Hovell Expedition

**Speakers:** A panel of three

**ALBURY COUNCIL FOYER**  
**H&H Bicentenary**  
**Photos and memorabilia**  
**Nov 12 – Dec 13**

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A lovely leadlight window greets visitors at Adamshurst.

## PRESIDENT'S NOTES FOR NOVEMBER

As expected, we had a truly memorable night at Adamshurst for our October meeting. It was indeed a privilege to have such freedom to roam the halls of this historic Albury mansion. It really is a living museum! Our warm thanks go to Sandra MacLeod-Miller for opening her home to our members and to Fr Peter for making us feel so welcome.

Society member David Murray and his daughter, Andrea provided Rose and Moselle and I thank them for doing so. David is a great help to Susan and Fr Peter in maintaining the property and is very familiar with its idiosyncrasies! Fr Peter told entertaining and humorous stories about the various uses to which Adamshurst was put following the death of George Adams' wife in 1944. We heard stories of caring for the elderly and of teenage flirtations from the period when it was a boarding hostel for girls from Albury High School. We learned that copies of the *Albury Banner* remain in the roof cavity having been deployed there for insulation. We also heard stories of the theatre, both in Australia and overseas, which continues to be a central interest and keen focus of the MacLeod-Miller family.

We now approach our highly anticipated Hume and Hovell commemorative week of activities. In 1824, around the date that you receive this Bulletin the expeditioners were in country between the present day towns of Tumut and Tumbarumba.

Please come along to support our involvement in the various events where you are able. I look forward to seeing many of you at our meeting at the Commercial Club on Wednesday November 13.

Finally, I remind members to buy your tickets for our Christmas Dinner on December 11. Cost is \$52 per ticket for a two-course meal and a chance to hear the very interesting personal story of our guest, Deborah Lawrie, the first Australian female pilot of a major commercial airline.

This month we give a warm welcome to new members, Rod Paton, Steven Robbins, Fr Peter MacLeod-Miller and Sandra, his mother.

## ADAMSHURST

Our October meeting was held at Adamshurst. Father Peter MacLeod-Miller and his mother Mrs MacLeod-Miller opened their home for Albury & District Historical Society members to enjoy and marvel at the amazing renovation work already done to recover the house, to learn a little about the work still to be done and to enjoy the eclectic collections on display throughout the house.

George Adams, the home's original owner was born in London in 1836 and after completing seven years of apprenticeship in the printing trade in England, he arrived in NSW at age 18. Adams bought the ailing *Albury Banner* newspaper in 1862 and guided the *Banner's* destiny for over 50 years.

After several changes in use, the home became a private residence again in 2013 when purchased by Father Peter and his mother. Since then it has become much more than a family home. Father Peter told our members: "the more people come through this house the more I find out about it."

Father Peter takes the view that Adamshurst story is about the "delicious" memories he has been told, many from the girls who lived at Adamshurst during their High School years, and he talked extensively of the years the house was used as accommodation for rural girls as part of the Albury High School hostel system during the years 1947 to 1977.

It is thought the access to the upstairs area was removed during the Albury High School girls' hostel time. The upstairs area has significant graffiti damage. There are plans to restore access to the top floor and then to restore the upstairs area. An appropriate set of stairs was sourced from Albury's former Town Hall, now MAMA. The staircase was designed by Gordon McKinnon who also was the architect for the 1907 extensions. The original location of the stairs has yet to be identified. Father Peter has found a space for the stairwell but would prefer to locate them in the original position if the location can be identified.

The cellar was found when a very leaky commercial dishwasher was removed from the kitchen. After commenting 'look at those floorboards' the workmen asked if they could lift them, which was granted revealing the cellar. Father Peter and Mr David Murray were exploring a collapsed barn near Tabletop and found a 150-year-old balustrade amongst the ruins. Mr Murray "and his accomplices" recovered the whole balustrade, brought it into Adamshurst, restored and installed it around the opening of the cellar. As Father Peter said, "it is absolutely wonderful to be able to go down there and make sense of that space."



Adamshurst House and Garden c1925



The first section of Adamshurst (a corner is visible on the right) was built c1890. In about 1907 Adams made a substantial addition, designed by prominent architect Gordon McKinnon.

Albury's Local Environmental Plan describes Adamshurst (in part) as "A large town mansion situated within extensive gardens ... the original house was a conventional hipped roof brick building with cast iron verandah ... the larger later part is an exotic Edwardian building c1907 with twin Indian saracenic first floor cupolas over square pavilions joined by intricate masonry balustrading."





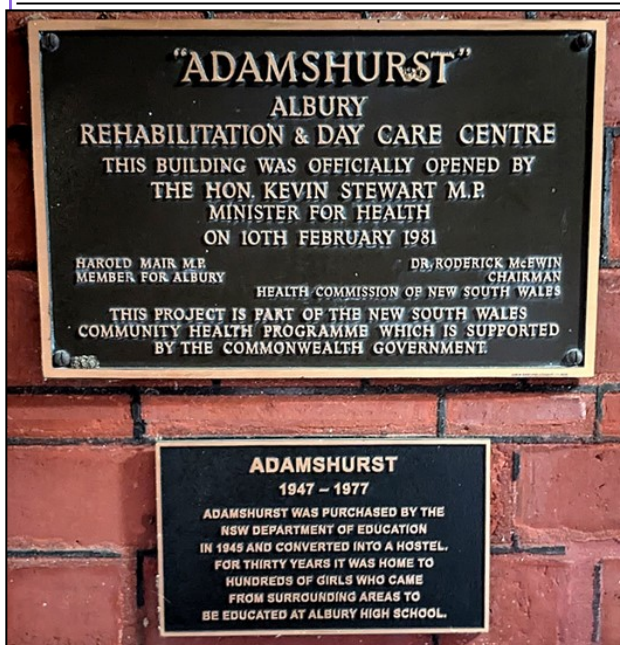
### The Organ in the Ballroom.

Father Peter was standing in front of a magnificent pipe organ. He told members that “it is believed to be the oldest working pipe organ in Australia.” After a collegial gathering with a conversation that included “if you ever want to buy an organ for that house, I have got the organ for you,” Father Peter started thinking about “how to spend some time and money” and the result was he purchased the organ. The Organ Historical Trust of Australia ([www.ohota.org.au](http://www.ohota.org.au)) claims that the organ was built in about the 1840s by persons unknown and was installed in a private house in Yorkshire UK. The age of the

organ is based on the style of casework with very detailed carving, typical of the 1840s period rather than the earlier Georgian and Regency periods. It was later installed in Baptist Churches in the UK before being restored by Henry Willis and Sons Ltd (Liverpool). It was installed at Adamshurst by Wakely Pipe Organs Pty Ltd in 2015.

### The Portrait of Peter and Leslie MacLeod-Miller

The large portrait on the wall behind Father Peter appeared in an obituary article in *The Times* on the May 20, 2024 to the artist June Mendoza AO, OBE, RP, ROI HonSWA who passed away on the May 16, 2024, one month short of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Ms Mendoza was a long-standing member of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters. She was regarded as one of the world’s foremost portrait painters. Her commissioned works included Queen Elizabeth II, Princess Diana and Margaret Thatcher. She has done commissioned works for the House of Commons and the Australian House of Representatives. The original portrait of the MacLeod-Miller brothers now hangs in Adamshurst.



Brass plaques recognise other chapters in the life of Adamshurst.

In 1944, Albury High School Parents and Citizens’ Association began negotiations to purchase Adamshurst as a girls’ hostel. By February 1945 the purchase was complete and tenders were called for alterations and additions. In 1946 there were 54 girls in residence.

The hostel closed in 1977, principally because demand for places had decreased with the increased number of country high schools.

For some time, Adamshurst remained vacant in the care of a gardener/caretaker. The Health Commission began using Adamshurst in 1978, though it was not transferred to health from education until 1986.

The Adamshurst Rehabilitation and Day Care Centre was used by a variety of groups through to 2004, when services were transferred to the Mercy Hospital.



The library which has a marble floor and spectacular example of a blue stained-glass window, is the home of two harpsichords, a fine collection of antiquarian books and modern tomes, more theatre costumes and a model of the Albury Monument, displayed on the table at left. Father Peter acquired the model but does not know anything about it and would welcome any information about the model and its provenance.





Society members enjoy refreshments before the meeting. In this room is an amusing and extensive collection of Bossons Chalkware Plaster Heads – a small sample can be seen on the wall to the right.

Adamshurst has provided hospitality for many significant events. For some time early in the twenty-first century the venue was a function and reception centre.

Since becoming a private home in 2013, Father Peter and his mother have hosted receptions for leading national figures including the Governor-General of Australia, his excellency General David Hurley and Mrs Hurley.



Father Peter said “in every single room there is something beautiful and interesting.” His interest in the world of theatre is on display. In the Dining Room is a beautiful display of costumes in glass cabinets. The red costume in the centre was worn by Dame Peggy Ashcroft in the production of *Romeo and Juliet* with John Gielgud and Laurence Olivier in 1935. The National Portrait Gallery in London has a portrait by Howard Coster of Dame Peggy, dressed for her role as Juliet. Father Peter was contacted by The Royal Shakespeare Society asking if there was any way the dress and the portrait could be brought together – his response was “of course there is, send me the painting.”



There are three long halls in Adamshurst. They lead to the many ground floor rooms of the house. The halls are used to display the collection of portraits, antique hall furniture, crystal vases and other items from the collection. Displayed in the hall leading to the library is a framed collection of Giclee Prints of Michael Stennett’s costumes for Dame Joan Sutherland and a stunning Franco Zeffirelli print of a costume he designed for Dame Joan for her performance in *La Traviata* in the 1960s.

In the rooms, there are fine, rare and beautiful examples of antique furniture. There is an extensive collection of crystal, glassware, ceramics, stoneware and porcelain. On the many walls are portraits, and fine examples of antique gilt edged mirrors.

There was so much more to see at Adamshurst – for example the beautiful garden.

We are very grateful to Father Peter and Mrs MacLeod-Miller for the privilege of exploring their home and garden.

We also welcome Father Peter and his mother Sandra as new members of our Society.





In the collection at Albury LibraryMuseum is the framed article and photos from the sesquicentenary commemoration in Albury. The article by 'Miranda' and photos were published in the Weekly Times newspaper of December 4, 1974.

The caption for the left hand photo: "Members of Albury and District Historical Society present at the celebrations. Left to right: Mrs Frank Boyes, Mrs Lila Quiggan, president, and Mr and Mrs C C Hazelwood, Mr Hazelwood being a senior vice-president of the Society."

The caption for the right hand photo: "Descendants of Hume and Hovell and party (left to right at back): Mr Ron Angel, Oaklands Junction, Mr Ross Hovell, Aranda, ACT, Mr Stuart Hume, Goulburn. (Front): Mrs Ralph Ellis (a great, great, grandniece of Hume), Mrs Ross Hovell, Mrs Stuart Hume, Mrs P Fitzpatrick, Campbelltown, and Darryl Guy, Canberra, a great, great, great grandson of Captain Hovell."

The article 'Hume and Hovell remembered at Albury' by 'Miranda' reads:

In the many times I have traversed up and down the Hume Highway in my lifetime, I can't remember ever giving a thought to the intrepid explorer it was named after. I will sometime in the future though, for sure.

The week before last I was in Albury for a function to commemorate the overland expedition made by Hume and Hovell and their party in 1824. They were the first white men to tread the area they covered, as at that time the only explored land south of Sydney was about as far as Yass.

The Albury City Council and the local historical society combined to present a slide evening, "The Hume and Hovell Story," with Mrs Frank Boyes as narrator. Descendants of both Hume and Hovell were in the audience, which made the evening even more interesting.

Rosemary Boyes was the ideal person to tell the story. She has just researched and written a book for Albury and District Historical Society called "Overland to Port Phillip Bay," and she really made the story of the expedition come alive for us.

In case you are a bit hazy on your history, Governor Brisbane at that time was anxious to learn what type of country lay between Westernport (discovered by Bass) and Sydney, and he proposed a plan for an overland journey from Westernport to Sydney.

This proposal was abandoned, but in 1824 Hamilton Hume offered to lead a party overland from Lake George to Westernport. Governor Brisbane accepted this offer, but gave little assistance. Hume and Hovell had to provide almost everything they needed for the expedition from their own pockets.

Captain William Hovell agreed to accompany Hume as second in command, and six other men made up the party. They were Claude Bossawa,<sup>1</sup> Henry Angel, James Fitzpatrick, Thomas Boyd, Thomas Smith and William Bollard.

The party did not reach Westernport, but came out at Corio Bay<sup>2</sup>, 10 or 12 miles east of Geelong, after two

1. Recent research by A&DHS members and others can find no convict named Claude Bossawa. However, a convict named Claude Barrois had been assigned to Hume. Other anomalies found in convict records: Boyd is spelt Boyde, Smith was more likely Benjamin Smith and William Bollard more likely Samuel Bullard, a convict assigned to Hovell.
2. Research by Lance Pritchard reveals that the termination point was more likely the mouth of the Werribee River.

months of travelling through the most rugged country with a minimum of provisions and in face of incredible difficulties including hostile aborigines, broken instruments, and miles and miles of ridges and gullies covered with trees and shoulder high with vegetation.

Albury folk have several monuments in their city to the brave men who made the expedition. The Hume Memorial stands in Albury Botanical Gardens with an inscription honouring Hamilton Hume as the discoverer of the Hume River – later called the Murray.

Also in the Gardens<sup>3</sup> you find the Hovell Tree, where Hovell carved his name and the date he discovered the river – November 17<sup>4</sup>, 1824. About 400 people gathered at the Hovell Tree a fortnight ago to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the expedition.

Historical societies throughout the country are doing a wonderful job, I think, in reminding us of our history and helping us to preserve it. Mrs Lila Quiggan, president of the society in Albury, said they started in 1960 and now have 150 members.

“Running a museum and collecting items for it is another thing we do,” she said. “An old hotel here, ‘Turk’s Head,’ was to be bulldozed for parkland, but our society saved it, and we now have our museum in this historic old building, which is council property.” A long term project of the society is to contact the owners of all buildings in Albury that have historic interest, and try to persuade them to preserve their homes intact, and not to destroy or alter them.

At the slide evening I went to at the Civic theatre, the member for Benambra, Mr T W Mitchell, presented two pen sketches by Hunter Rogers, relevant to the explorers, to the Albury City Council and the historical society.

It was a most enjoyable two days for me in Albury, and I was pleased to see so much interest being taken in commemorating important events in our history and for people who figured in them. There should be much more of this kind of thing, don’t you agree? Goodbye now, Miranda.

3. The tree is not in the Gardens, this line should start “In Hovell Tree Park you find ...”

4. The date they arrived at the river should be November 16. The party did not rest for long, heading downstream looking for a place to cross. They camped about 3-4 miles downstream. Next morning, November 17, they went on as far as what is now called Dight’s Hill. They returned to the site of the Hovell Tree on November 18 before heading upstream, camping near today’s Waterworks. They crossed the river on November 20 at a point now under Lake Hume.

## GEORGE PETROU TALK / CHAUVEL BORDER LIGHT HORSE TRAIL

Geoff Romero

The Society was well represented at a function at the Albury Club on Friday October 11 organised by Honor and Mark Auchinleck to promote the important work of commemorative portrait artist George Petrou OAM. George spoke of his personal experiences which lead to the publication of his beautiful book “The Art of Sacrifice.”

George also brought along portraits of three people with strong Albury connections who have made significant contributions to Australian society:

- The first was Dr Isabel Ormiston, a courageous World War I doctor, who was born in Albury.
- There was also Dame Jean Macnamara DBE who was born in, and is now buried at, Beechworth. She worked tirelessly for the development of a vaccine to be given to children in the fight against polio.
- The third portrait was of General Sir Harry Chauvel GCMG KCB Commander of the Desert Mounted Corps and a principal in the development of the Australian Light Horse. Sir Harry is the grandfather of Honor Auchinleck.



Honor Auchinleck addressing the audience.

We also heard about the recent developments associated with the Chauvel Border Light Horse Trail linking Albury with smaller towns and the two larger centres of Wagga and Shepparton. We will play a role in promoting the Border Light Horse Trail.

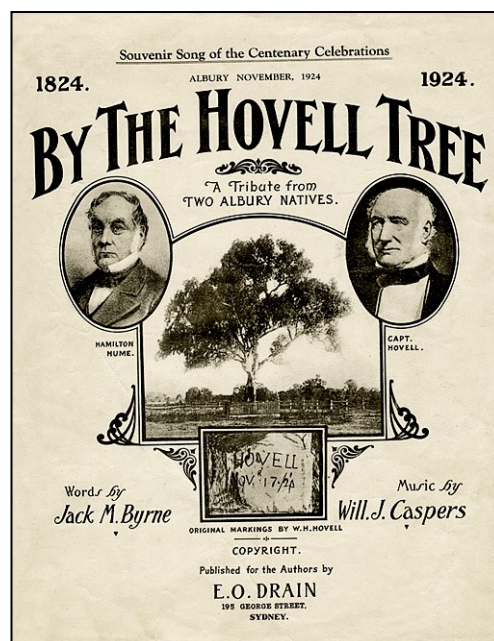


## 1924 SOUVENIR SONG

'By the Hovell Tree' was produced in 1924 as a 'Souvenir Song for the Centenary celebrations.' It was written by Jack Byrne, with music by Will Caspers. Both men were Albury born.

John 'Joker' Byrne had been an altar boy in Albury for Father Patrick Hartigan (famous poet 'John O'Brien' author of the 'Around the Boree Log' collection). He became a well known reciter of O'Brien's poetry throughout NSW.

The music was written by William John Caspers, a member of a talented Albury musical family. Will's father, Henry Caspers, was German born and coming to Albury, he married Eleanor (or Ellen) Smith, daughter of William John ('Coffin') Jones, twice Mayor of Albury, builder, undertaker and furniture dealer. Henry was a well-known as choir master at St Patrick's Church, music teacher and piano tuner in Albury and beyond. Will's sister was Ella Caspers, described as "the girl with the voice of gold." Ella performed in London including a performance for King George V and Queen Mary. Later, Will was for many years the conductor of St Mary's Cathedral choir in Sydney.



### By the Hovell Tree

Jack M Byrne

We're sending out a message –  
To friends of long ago,  
A calling them to Albury  
And let their country know  
How we lead a grateful nation  
In a fitting celebration  
of the finding of the Murray  
Just a hundred years ago.

Replies have come from Castlemaine  
And some from Narrabri  
Others came from Deloraine,  
And some from Gundagai.  
From Katoomba to Toowoomba,  
From Perth and Bendigo,  
Gilgandra and Narrandera,  
And Kiandra in the snow.

We honour Hume and Hovell –  
A grateful people we,  
So let us sing their praises  
From the Murray to the sea,  
Now we're calling you from near and far –  
To join us in our cheers –  
To the gallant Hume and Hovell  
And the grand old pioneers.

CHORUS:  
So they're all coming back, to Albury,  
Where the Hovell Tree still grows –  
Yes, they're all coming, back to Albury –  
Where the grand old Murray flows –  
You'll be there, I'll be there,  
School mates, pals, we'll see  
There's a big welcome back home to Albury,  
By the dear old Hovell tree.

There was a week long program of events in 1924, with a very different focus compared with the commemoration events of 2024. There was only token recognition in 1924 that the land had been occupied by First Nations people for thousands of years before arrival of Europeans. The focus was very much on the history of the previous 100 years. Events and entertainment were on the program for locals of European descent.

You can download the 1924 program at the [Hume and Hovell Expedition](#).



Click on the link or use the QR code:

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## TIMETABLE FOR BICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION 2024

**November 12 to December 13** – display of memorabilia and images relating to the expedition of 1824. Foyer, AlburyCity Administration Building.

**November 13** – Q&A type panel of three at 7.30 pm in the Banksia Room at the Commercial Club Albury, Dr Bruce Pennay, Peter Harper and Kat Kitch, moderator Greg Aplin.

**November 14** – Dr Bruce Pennay previewing work on a digital educational resource looking at the impact of European colonisation. At Albury LibraryMuseum, 4.30 pm to 5.30 pm.

**November 14** – Peter Harper and Keith Wiencke present their stories and experiences of the Explorers' Bike Ride 2024. At Retro Café, 11am to 12 noon.

**November 16** – unveiling of new information panels and upgrade around Hovell Tree surrounds. A community event.

**November 17** – North Albury Rotary Club organised charity walk to top of Table Top. Departs 9.00 am.

For more details, go to [Hume and Hovell Expedition](#).



Council workers rejuvenating the area around the Hovell Tree, Thursday October 17.

## MORE STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA BLOGS

Football fans lamenting the end of the AFL season can read a number of blogs on the SLV site relating to the early days of Australian football. Try these three (there are more on the site):

[Origins of Australian Football](#) – published 2013

[From Rectangle to Oval](#) – published 2023

[Students in the Big Time – University, the VFL and 'Doc Park'](#) – published 2024

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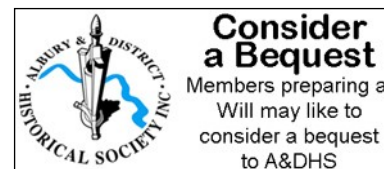
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02 6021 3671

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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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Single: \$30 Family: \$35

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**Research** undertaken, \$25 first hour. Enquiries in writing with \$25.