

ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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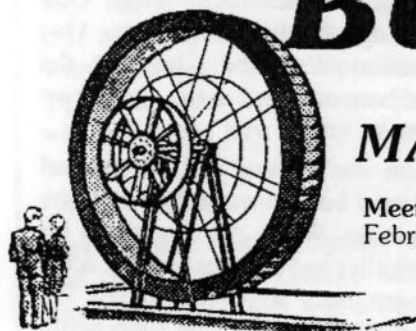
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MAY 2005

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Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the month,
February to December

Albury Regional Museum: (02) 6051 3450
Turks Head, Wodonga Place, Albury
Open every day, 10.30a.m. to 4.30p.m.
Website: www.alburycity.nsw.gov.au/museum

MAY HISTORY MEETING

8pm Wed. May 11

Commercial Club,
Dean St, Albury.

GUEST SPEAKER:

Mr Graham Stocks will present
'Church Music in Albury'.

? QUESTION for MAY:

Who were the Music Teachers in
Albury up to 1950's

JUNE MEETING: 08/06/05
Annual General Meeting -
the Monthly Meeting will
follow.

FUTURE EVENTS

① 27/05/05 to 17/07/05;

"Works Wonders" stories about
home remedies will be on display at
the Albury Regional Museum

**SOUTHERN STAR
ENTERTAINMENT IS
LOOKING FOR STORIES
FOR A HISTORICAL
DOCUMENTARY SERIES.
IF YOU HAVE A TALE TO
TELL.**

Contact Chris Gerrans.
email:
cgtv@optusnet.com.au

Dear Readers,

Owing to other commitments Editor
Michael was unable to compile the
May Bulletin, so you have been
landed with yours truly.

June Shanahan

INTRODUCTION TO "CHINESE WHISPERS"

by Bruce Pennay

The Library asked me several months ago if I would give a talk about the Chinese in early Albury for Chinese Whispers this month. I protested very vigorously because I did not know all that much about the Chinese of Albury, but I have collected a few stories.

I would talk about the ways we can find out about the Chinese in Albury. As the occasion has come closer I found it wasn't necessarily appropriate. Tonight just quickly I want to talk about one particular source that I have found in our Library because I think that it will interest you. I was put onto this source from a Publication that John reviews for us from the Public Records Office in Melbourne where they had a magazine about forgotten faces "Chinese and the Law". There were some pictures that were taken by the Melbourne Jail photographers, so lo and behold a search in the Albury City Library shows we have a reel from the State Record Office which is photographs taken at the Albury Jail.

It's very interesting to go through photographs of the Albury Jail up come the crims and you can measure the shape of their skull and "doesn't he look a villain" or "whatever" as you go through the roll and then you will come to some Chinese features. There is two things that I want to talk about with Chinese features. There were some real villains in the Albury Jail. 2. There was a large number that were caught for not paying the toll tax

when they crossed over from Wodonga. Their part of the story is what I am going to tell on Sunday at the Library. The other thing I would like briefly to mention. If you look down the list of the names of the Chinese in Albury Jail you will notice how many are called ah Fat, ah Koo, ah Put, ah whatever. Chinese usually have two names, family name and a given name and as you know they put the family name first and the given name second. Ah, look at all these ah's said me, then I found an explanation when they arrived in Sydney or Melbourne the Custom officer would want to record their name and often they would only give their given name but because out of politeness they should have two names, they said ah and the Custom officer from then on wrote that it was simple and easy to write down ah.

If they said their name was Fah he would then write down "Fat" because it was like an English word, so it was how they negotiated the customs that gave them the name. My boy who is currently in China learning Chinese wrote to me and said 'not so Dad, good theory'. What you will find is that ah is diminutive and it's like saying the given name with an e on the end of it in Australia so ah Fat was Fatty, ah John was Johnny and ah Charles was Charlie. It was just that they said it that way. So what you really have is the given name and not their two names.

This is what I will be talking about on Sunday as part of celebrating our Sister City Nanping you will see that I was very dutiful a day which was the 5th April, I went to the Chinese cemetery. They go twice a year, they clean up around the graves and >>>>

they leave some fruit or some food for one of their ancestors. I didn't think it was for me to honour the ancestors, but I think it was for me to pay respect to people who do occupy a place in our Pioneer Cemetery.

John Craig is here and I hastily say I didn't leave bury Council the oranges there because that's against the regulations of the Albury Cemetery.

Guest speaker at our April meeting was Lindsay Poy

Thank you for the invitation to be here tonight.

When Bruce Pennay showed his slide, straight away it has thrown me off track... The name Willie Ah Poy appears with a police record. He was my grandfather and I was about to say down the track in my speech that the Poy's had never had a criminal record, they were squeaky clean, & they were model citizens.

Bruce has proved me wrong. Willie Ah Poy appears to have had a criminal record, he had his photo taken on 23rd Sept 1896 and his photo is on reel 5082. I will have to get together later with Bruce to get all the facts to see what he was obviously wrongly convicted of.

I really am honoured to be here, at the Commercial Club, as I am the President of the SS&A Club and it is a privilege for me to be here speaking in this venue.

I am happy and honoured to speak about the Poy family history in the area because basically the Poy's have not been famous, they have not been wealthy, they have not been extraordinary business entrepreneurs, not acclaimed sportspersons... They have not gone into politics or the media, not into local government, they have kept a pretty low profile and have been typical average Albury citizens, but with an interesting past. Uncle Billy was the exception to the rule as he was born in Chiltern but he and his family found fame and fortune overseas.

I would have liked to have been here for Bruce's presentation at the Albury Library on Sunday. Unfortunately I will be in Melbourne. I did cut out what Bruce is going to speak about

and that is Four Funerals and a Wedding, I would like to hear more about the early Chinese settlers in relation to the Poy family.

I gave you two handouts about the Poy's.

I spoke in Sydney back in 2000 about my Uncle Billy Poy and how he became a very successful businessman in his own right in Canada as a stockbroker. I spoke about his daughter Adrienne being the current Governor General of Canada. My speech made the front page of the Sing Tao newspaper. The whole front page of that newspaper is 100 per cent Chinese and is quite mind blowing to be on the left hand corner of page one, along with Gabby Hollow's photo in the middle of the front page. That was an honour to me to be speaking to the Hong Kong Australian Business Association in Sydney about Billy Poy who was born in Chiltern, Australia.

The other handout is really my notes on the Poy family. The notes are spread down the page, and on the bottom line is the Poy children, my Uncles, Aunties and father. So I just go straight down the line. Box 1 is really the beginning, but then it's not the beginning because with the help of family historians, the Poy family tree has been traced back to villages in China.

I can start back in the King Valley in 1880 where **Lim Coon married a real aussie, Mary Jones**. They had four children and in those days it was one of those rare mixed marriages. They prevailed in the racial prejudice which was running rife at the time, at the gold fields especially. The Chinese were not popular at the time. It is a wonder that the marriage & four children eventuated.

One of those four children was **Louisa Coon, my grandmother**, affectionately known later on, after a second marriage, as Nana Mahlook. She married **Willy Ah Poy** who was 13 years older than her, and he was born in China. They lived in Chiltern where they rented a Fruit and Vegetable store. While living there they had nine children.

In the Border Mail some time ago there was a photo of some of the family outside that particular fruit and ve-

gie store in the main Street of Chiltern. Eight of the nine children were given English christian names. One was called Wah and he was the second born and died at the age of two years.

Racism was running riot, so you had to do your best to assimilate into the community. Willie Ah Poy was a bit of a traveller and a ladies man he actually went back to China to see his own mum and dad and he supposedly had a wife or two and children over there, hence the number of trips that he made. On his last trip he didn't return and he was presumed dead and my poor grandmother Louisa moved to Albury with those eight children which was quite a feat at the time, it is even quite a feat these days moving from a town to a city with eight children in tow and not knowing where the next meal was coming from.

There was a light at the end of the tunnel when she met and married Edward (Teddy) Mahlook in 1928. As mentioned by June he leased some premises at a market garden in Wodonga place where the Paddle steamer Motel is today. He sold top quality fruit and vegetables around Albury for quite a number of years from his horse and cart. That is how the baker, butcher and milkman made all their deliveries. Later he worked on the railways to supplement the family.

The eight children regarded Teddy as their father and they loved him dearly, even though they were Poy children. Teddy's one regret before he died was that the Poy children didn't have the Mahlook name. They always lived at 431 Macauley Street in Albury. Louisa was known to all as Nana Mahlook.

None of my Aunts and Uncles could speak Chinese except for a few common words which my brother and I picked up on, and we even laugh about it now. We just recently had a large reunion out at Murray Gardens when Uncle Bill's son, Neville out here from Canada last February. Even then we were laughing and joking about the Chinese words that would get thrown around by my relatives. Fooz was a funny way to talk about lady's underwear. There was another, fujook was just a thin white rice noodle. Another one, >>>

Chinese fashion, was what Nana Ma look use to cook as a main meal and call it simply Chinese fashion which would always include lop chongs or loppies, which is Chinese sausage which you can buy in any supermarket now.

Anyway to my Aunts and Uncles ...

Auntie Doris went to Sydney to live and she married a George Moy, the funny part about that was a Poy married a Moy.

Wah he was aged two when he died, he is buried at the Chiltern cemetery.

Billy Poy went to Sydney and then to Hong Kong to seek his fortune, he actually fought the Japanese in World War 2, he was captured, and he escaped. He was a bit of a trickster himself, he used to steal from the Japanese, cigarettes, food provisions and then he would sell it back to the Japanese and make money out of them. He was awarded the Military medal by the British government. As a despatch rider under fire, he rode a Harley Davidson through gunfire disregarding his own safety in delivering messages from one site to another.

At the end of the war he took a Chinese wife and 2 children across to Canada. They had nothing with them, they were refugees, but he happened to come across some diamonds and sewed them into his underpants, got them out of Hong Kong across the waves to Canada and that was his start in life. He invested in the stock market and became a wealthy businessman. At one stage he was commuting weekly between Canada, New York and Hong Kong, and visa versa. He made it as a businessman in the world and his daughter became the face of Canadian TV, current Governor General. The first Governor General of Chinese descent, but it wasn't without controversy because some of the Canadian population didn't want her to be governor general as she had a pretty controversial career in television and it was said to be a political appointment, which was the way the newspapers wrote it up. Her brother Neville who was over visiting in February, was a world famous plastic surgeon, he specialised in repairing hands.

Lesley Poy moved to Sydney from Albury and he created a family circle of

jockeys, racehorse owners, trainers and professional punters. They certainly had an interesting lifestyle around the Sydney race courses and the provincial races. They were connected to the horse Better Loosen Up who was the Japan Cup winner in 1996 that is when Michael Clark rode it, it was a sensational win. At the time the Japan Cup was on there was a reunion of the Poy's being held down at Noriuel Park. Billy Poy came across from Canada every year and organised the reunion's at Noriuel Park.

Ruby Poy moved to Melbourne and married a Greek coffee shop owner, Leo Ganas. That was a mixed marriage a Greek marrying a person of Chinese background. They used to entertain in their Flemington home some of the greatest jockeys in the world, George Moore, George Podmore, Billy Cook & Malcolm Johnston..

Roy Poy, my dad he was a hard worker he rented a Housing Commission house in Kestrel Street opposite Sarvass Park. At one stage he was a bookmaker in partnership with his brother Lindsay, then in tough times he went out to work at Bandiana as a storeman to look after the family unit. He did save enough to get his own book makers license, he still used to work at Bandiana Monday to Friday and go to the races on a Saturday. On Saturday night he would play cards up stairs in Abikhairs building in Dean Street to the early hours of the morning. His wife, my mother Kath, never worked because her job was to be a full time and caring mother. She was a social butterfly and with her sister in-law, Rene Sennett, they had a great time together, playing tennis, ten pin bowling, having a few drinks at the Astor, out at the Garrison, which was called McWhites or Sars Hotel then.

Rene Poy married Bob Sennett who was also a Bandiana worker during the week and a bookmaker at the weekend he lived in Rau Street East Albury. He named the house in Rau Street 'Towong' as he made enough money at the Towong races to put a deposit on the house. Rene never had to work because she was a full time mother and inseparable friend of my mother Kath, As far as sister's in law's go you couldn't wish to see two more devoted people.

Lindsay Poy is the sole survivor of the eight Poy children raised by Teddy and Nana and he is the youngest. He retired from bookmaking and purchased a taxi and had it for a number of years, then retired again and moved from Regina Avenue to Murray Gardens and he and Hazel have two children. Kay in Ballarat and Roy Poy Junior sort of followed in his father's footsteps, He worked at Murray River Electricity, then decided to become a full time bookmaker. He owned the Commercial Hotel, which was also known as Waterstreets,. Roy recently retired from book making and sold the pub and has bought a taxi himself.

In summary, contrary to what Bruce has said, the Poy's were good Albury citizens, never had police records and also raised many children who stayed out of crime's way.

Billy, Roy and Lindsay fought against the Japanese in World War two and they survived prisoner of war camps in China and Changi and Uncle Lindsay survived the jungles of New Guinea.

When two brothers Roy and Lindsay returned from the war they promised each other that they would name their first born sons after each other. So my father Roy named his son Lindsay and Uncle Lindsay named his son Roy. So it has been total confusion in Albury ever since. I receive telephone calls about bowls and he used to get phone calls at his place relating to soccer and he has no ties with soccer what so ever. He has even taken some of the credit for me getting on the SSA Club Board. Because a lot of people voted thinking they were voting for him, so I have sort of got the job under false pretences! He doesn't look forward to elections at the SSA club because he gets harassed in the street by people who think that he is running for the SSA Club Board. Confusion has reigned but I wouldn't change a thing in any way shape or form about the History of the Poy family.

If I ever get the opportunity to come back here to speak again I would like to talk about Billy Poy and his two children especially Adrienne Clarkson. What she went through as a child in Canada coming across from Hong Kong and to fight all the adversity that was put in front of her and finally

come out a successful woman in her own right and a leader in Canada is very interesting. I am very proud of the Poy history and the Chinese heritage and thank you for inviting me here this evening to share it with you.

Answer to the Question of the month on the location of Chinese Market Gardens in Albury.

June Shanahan.

1. Where the Paddlesteamer Motel is, opposite the Turk's Head Museum. Mr. Mahlook his business from there.
2. Between the the old Union Bridge and the Turk's Head Museum, right on Oddie's Creek.
3. Where the football oval is now at corner of Wodonga place and Ebdon Street, opposite the Australia Park Motel. The three market gardens were within a block of one another in South Albury.

Doug Hunter – A photo in the Museum shows a couple of huts tucked in under the embankment at the approach to the Union bridge.

John Craig- In Kremur Street, West Albury, there were old sluices between the (present) ment works and the river.

Joe Wooding- Mungabareena they had a channel from where they watered their gardens by hand.

Gerry Curtis-They lifted water from the river in two 4-gallon kerosene tins on a halter across their shoulders. A gallon of water weighs ten pounds so they would have lifted eighty pounds.

Bruce Pennay- Records of the 1917 flood mentions that bridges built by the Chinese at Mungabareena were

LAVINGTON FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

Audrey Summerill is a member of the Wodonga and Lavington Family History groups and is also a member of the Genealogical Society of Victoria.

The Lavington branch is trying to obtain all records that are available, so it will make it easier for people in this area to trace their roots.

Audrey said the group are hoping to compile a book on Lavington. So if there is anyone out there that has any old photographs of Lavington, doesn't matter what they are, the Lavington Family History Group would like to

hear from you.

Audrey gave us a very informative talk on how she has traced her family history since 1951. Records then were not readily available like they are now. In some cases it can take quite a number of years to trace Family History.

Jean Whitla from the Wodonga Historical Society brought some items from the estate of Grace & Jack Hamilton-Smith which was given to her by their daughter Marilyn Hamilton-Smith. There were some interesting maps, leases etc. that were of interest to this side of the Border

Thank you Jean for thinking of us.

ALBURY CITY announced in the Post of April 7 that it has approved demolition of 638 Dean street, being the former Jacob's Foodliner/Mid-states Radio/Cash Converters building and, more importantly, 640 Dean street, the 1874 building which was Davidson's Saddlery and, more recently, the Ray Drummond Golf shop. The Commercial Club extensions do not include the Rural Bank building

H. Livsey

PRESIDENTS DOUG'S COLUMN

Haydn Bunton

On 16 April 2005, a statue of former Albury footballer Haydn Bunton was unveiled at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. It is the seventh statue in the Parade of Champions which includes Don Bradman and Betty Cuthbert as sports people who have graced the MCG with their skill and flair.

Haydn Bunton was born in Albury, and played football with his brothers Cleaver and George at the West Albury Club. In 1931, aged 19, he went to Melbourne to play with Fitzroy. He won three Brownlow Medals in the Victorian Football League and later three Sandover Medals in the West Australian Football League marking him one of, if not the greatest Australian Rules footballer ever.

He also excelled at cricket. Following a match between a NSW country representative side and the NSW Sheffield Shield team commentator

said: "The country side had three potential Test batsmen in Donald Bradman from Bowral who scored 90, Archie Jackson who scored 50 and Haydn Bunton of Albury who notched a century." Bunton did not pursue his cricket career, choosing to concentrate on football. Haydn Bunton died in a car accident in 1955

VALE IAN GLACHAN

We note with sadness the sudden death of our member and patron Ian Glachan on 20 April 2005. Ian and Helen joined the Society in 1986 and Ian accepted a position of Patron in 1991. Ian was elected to the NSW Legislative Assembly in 1988, representing the seat of Albury, and retired in 2003. This year he was elected to the Council of Greater Hume Shire and was chosen as its inaugural Mayor. His plans for that task were ended sadly and suddenly by his death.

Annual General Meeting and Elected Positions.

Members are reminded that our AGM is scheduled for Wednesday 8 June. All positions will be vacant.

They are: **President, Senior and Junior Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, Minute Secretary and six Committee members.**

Also the positions of **Auditor, Public Officer, Bulletin Editor, Membership and Bulletin Dispatch Officer, and Journals and Stock Officer.** The latter five positions can be held concurrently with a Committee position.

Nominations in writing, signed by two financial members and the nominee are to be in the hands of the Secretary 22 days before the AGM, by Tuesday 17 May.

Members please give this your attention, it is important for the smooth running of our Society.

D & J Hunter

Bulletin 446: editing assistance by Helen Livsey; transcription by June Shanahan. Distribution by Claire Simpson.