

December 2025

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Wiradjuri Country, PO Box 822 ALBURY 2640

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Next Meeting

Wednesday, December 10, 2025

7.30 pm, Commercial Club, Albury

Topic: 'Show & Tell'

Speakers: Various

ALBURY LIBRARYMUSEUM

Local Threads:

**A History of Macquarie
Textiles in Albury
Until February 8**

Page 2 War Memorial Bowl.

Page 3 Crossing the Snowy
Mountains.

Page 6 Walter Cass.

Page 7 Pioneer Cemetery
Walk.



Part of the crowd at the re-opening of the Albury War Memorial Bowl listening as Wiradjuri elder Darren Wighton performs a 'Welcome to Country' ceremony [Phoebe Adams photo, *Border Mail*].

PRESIDENT'S NOTES FOR DECEMBER

This month's Bulletin encapsulates our commitment to preserving local history through community engagement, educational events and recognition of significant historical figures. Articles in this Bulletin describing revitalisation of the War Memorial Bowl and exploration by local pioneers reflect the Society's ongoing efforts to honour and share our region's rich heritage.

Our cemetery walk on October 26 proceeded in cold and showery conditions. Despite the weather about 35 stoic Alburians joined us to hear the stories of twelve of our brave pioneers. Special thanks are due to Jenny Romero who did the lion's share of preparing stories for our attentive guests.

Weather was no issue on November 8 when we played a part in the rededication of the World War Two Memorial Bowl. A cloudless blue sky and a mild morning temperature allowed attendees to sit in the sun in comfort. To mark the occasion Howard Jones had written a history of the memorial and the background stories of some who gave their lives. The booklet, 'Never Forget,' was given to all attendees as a gift from A&DHS – see page 2.

A busy four weeks was rounded off with our Christmas dinner on November 12. Good food, wine and conversation were complemented by three very entertaining tests set by Greg Ryan. In the quiz to identify a location from a photo of a very small part of a building, Steve Judd scored a perfect 18/18. We should have realised that, as an experienced valuer for forty years, Steve would have had all of those photos in his files! No protest was lodged and Steve was duly awarded his prize!

Our final meeting of the year will be at the Commercial Club on Wednesday December 10 at 7.30pm. We have a strong list of contributors to our "Show & Tell" segment which ensures another entertaining night.



Howard Jones produced a booklet for the occasion entitled "Never forget – Tragic Stories Behind the Albury War Memorial Bowl." The booklet also contained the outline below describing the evolution of the Bowl.

A Rutherglen architect, Arthur MacKnight, first proposed a War Memorial Bowl for Albury in 1946, but did not live to see it. An explosion at his winery killed him in 1948.

MacKnight floated the concept in a letter to the *Border Morning Mail* on May 10, 1946 proposing a crescent-shaped building behind the original War Memorial when viewed from Dean Street. It could have a chapel with names of the fallen inscribed on a wall.

On May 19, he instead proposed a memorial bowl that would "allow Albury to go gay" with open-air dancing and carnivals. On July 26, he and his son, Charles, produced a sketch. Urging Albury to "throw off the herd mentality," they added caves with stalagmites and stalactites adorned with art by "native artists," and dressing rooms for stage productions and shows. Mayor Cleaver Bunton was interested, but the matter lapsed until the MacKnights embellished their plan in October 1946, suggesting a grand staircase could link the bowl and War Memorial. The city engineer, Jack Sarvaas, described the MacKnight plan as "grand" and beyond the scope of Albury. He thought a more modest memorial might cost only £5000.

Meanwhile, on Sunday, February 1, 1948, Arthur MacKnight, aged 78, died when a kerosene tin exploded in the cellar of his home and winery, Myriong, Wahgunyah. An employee was badly burned.

MacKnight's son let others pursue his father's dream. Further public meetings in 1948 and 1949 kept the idea alive. It turned out the council had taken control of 2.5 acres of Crown land in the 1920s, to prevent any housing development spoiling the view of the War Memorial from Dean Street. This included the Bowl site.

Sarvaas drew plans for a bowl with rockery, shrubs and statues. Bunton launched fundraising in February 1950, proposing annual floral festivals to fund it. The first such festival in 1951 took the bowl fund to £5800. But in 1952, some citizens demanded the fund be diverted to a new hospital ward or homes for aged war veterans. Bunton insisted the fund was raised specifically for a memorial bowl.



A&DHS President Geoff Romero addresses the audience at the re-opening of the Bowl. Geoff described the evolution of the concept, the building of the Bowl and explained its significance for the people of Albury.

Architect Bill Purtell and Alderman Clive Marshall, a former prisoner of war of the Japanese, were on the project committee. The council contracted a former Army captain, Ben Mudford to build the Bowl for £5400 over the summer of 1953-54. Mudford's son, Jimmy, 22, had drowned when Japanese "hell ship," the *Rakuyo Maru*, was torpedoed in the South China Sea in 1944, killing 1159 Australian and British prisoners. He had survived working on the Burma railway.

On Sunday, November 26, 1954 the Bowl was dedicated in the presence of about 450 people. The Albury RSL president, Squadron Leader Ron Umphelby, aged 44, a former air gunner at Port Moresby, led the service and Bunton led a prayer. A Boer War veteran, Angelo Francis Buzzini, aged 86, and the oldest former alderman, George Williams, aged 82, unveiled a plaque.

Rain forced the crowning of the Floral Festival Queen, scheduled for the Bowl next day, to be postponed twice, and it was eventually held at the Royal Palais. For several years on Anzac Day wreaths were laid at Memorial Bowl

simultaneously with the service at the main memorial. A few functions were held there in the 1950s and 1960s but it gradually ceased to be used for any formal occasions.

Revitalising the Bowl in 2025

By 2020 the council's Albury War Memorial upgrade had been largely completed. The next focus was how to revitalise the War Memorial Bowl.

The Memorial Bowl has been part of the Monument Hill heritage conservation area since 2010. This meant a detailed heritage impact statement was required for any alterations. Biosis Pty Ltd produced this in December 2020. The council envisaged revitalising the Bowl with a playground and outdoor fitness equipment for a range of ages and abilities. In 2021 Jeavons Landscape Architects, of Ettamogah, produced a master plan linked to a landscape design by Spiire Australia. As well as the play spaces, it left a large open lawn that could be used for ball games as well as functions such as memorial events or film shows.

Significantly, the original rock and mortar wall of 1954 would be retained. Interpretive panels describing the Bowl's historical significance as a war memorial would be incorporated in a garden setting.

Albury sub-branch of the RSL and the Albury & District Historical Society have supported the project. The NSW Government provided a grant of \$740,000.

On February 24, 2025, the council accepted the tender of Enviro Cultural Services in the sum of \$1,981, 989. The company had recently completed play spaces at Fredericks Park, North Albury, and Belvoir Park, Wodonga.

The official re-opening of the War Memorial Bowl took place on a lovely Saturday morning, November 8, 2025.

CHARLES HUON: ALBURY/WODONGA PIONEER – THE FIRST EUROPEAN TO CROSS THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS

Robert Green

This paper discusses the first recorded crossing of the Snowy Mountains by a European and the likely route he took. Charles Huon pioneered the Wodonga Run and his sister Elizabeth Mitchell and her sons were pioneers of the Mungabareena Run which included the future site of Albury. Robert V Green is the author of "Exploring the Jagungal Wilderness: A Bushwalker's Guide to Kosciuszko National Park," Deakin, ACT, the author, 2015.

During their 1824/25 expedition, Hamilton Hume and William Hovell were the first Europeans to see the Snowy Mountains, passing west of them as they travelled south from Sydney towards Port Phillip. But it was another ten years before the first European crossed them at a high altitude. That person was Charles Huon. Charles Huon was born in the colony in about 1810, the youngest son of Gabriel Huon and Louise Le Sage. Gabriel Huon de Kerilleau was a French émigré, former soldier, tutor to the sons of James Macarthur and a person who was well regarded by successive governors. He arrived in the colony in 1794 on the ship *Surprise*.¹ Later he received rights to several properties at Fairfield, Narellan and Bungonia, near Goulburn.

Exploration of the area south-east of Goulburn took place during the 1820s. Captain Currie reached the northern Monaro in 1823. Lhotsky reached and named the Snowy River in 1834. McKillop crossed the Snowy River in 1835 and, by a route east of the Main Range, went as far south as Omeo.

Late in 1835 or very early in 1836, Charles Huon, then aged 25 and a capable bushman, was taken by Aboriginal guides from the Monaro to the upper Murray, a trip which necessarily involved a crossing of the Snowy Mountains.

So far as is known, Huon left no notes of his route, but in his book *The First Settlement of the Upper Murray 1835 to 1845* Albury historian Dr Arthur Andrews gave a brief description of it sufficient to indicate the likely route that Huon had taken. At page 8 Andrews says: "They crossed the divide between the upper Murrumbidgee and the Murray, and struck the latter at what is now known as Welaregang." The Snowy Mountains were not mentioned and, possibly as a result, the trip has been overlooked by those with an interest in the high country.

Why Did Huon Make the Trip?

At page 8 Andrews says: "Charles Huon ... [was] in search of this inland sea." But the reference to the 'inland sea' was not repeated at page 52 and by 1836 it was clear that no inland sea was to be found anywhere near the upper Murray. The reference to the 'inland sea' appears to be an unlikely embellishment by Andrews.

1. G P Walsh, 'Gabriel Louis Marie Huon de Kerilleau (1769-1828).' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* volume 1. Canberra ACT, ANU, 1966.

A better guide as to why he made the trip is to look at what he actually did. Andrews reported at page 8 that on arrival at the upper Murray, Huon “had some thought of settling there, but did not carry out his intentions,” and continued downstream to what is now Albury/Wodonga where, at page 41, Andrews said “[he] within a few days established the Wodonga, or Woodanga, run, on the south of the river, opposite Mungabareena ... He acted for, and in conjunction with his brother, Mr Paul Huon, of Bungonia.” In so doing he was the first European person to settle on the southern bank of the Murray River and only the second European settler in the Albury/Wodonga region.

The reasonable inference from his actions is that he was looking for good grazing land on behalf of himself and his brother. In that respect it is worth noting that there was a close connection between the family of Hamilton Hume, the explorer, and the Huon family. Emma Mitchell, Charles’ niece, the daughter of his older sister, Elizabeth, was only four or five years younger than Charles. In October 1830, at about the age of 16, Emma married Francis Rawdon Hume, the younger brother of the explorer, Hamilton Hume.

The Huons and the Humes (both Hamilton and Francis) were graziers. Given the family connection and their common grazing interests, it is likely that the good grazing land beside the Murray River found by Hume and Hovell was the subject of family discussions.

Not only did Charles take up land on behalf of his oldest brother Paul, but other members of the family were involved too. In the year following Charles Huon’s arrival at Wodonga, he was joined by another brother, Aime, and Aime’s brother-in-law, Robert Brown. Soon after, on the death of her husband, his sister Elizabeth Mitchell joined her brothers and was given by Charles the Mungabareena Run, which included the site of the present-day Albury.

At pages 8 and 52, Andrews gave conflicting dates for the trip but in an article published in 1916 Andrews noted that late in 1835 “William Wyse ... [was] the first actual [European] settler on any portion of the main Murray River” and that “it was not long before Wyse had neighbours, as very early in 1836 Mr Charles Huon arrived, and formed the Wodonga run for his brother Paul.”

Geographical Considerations

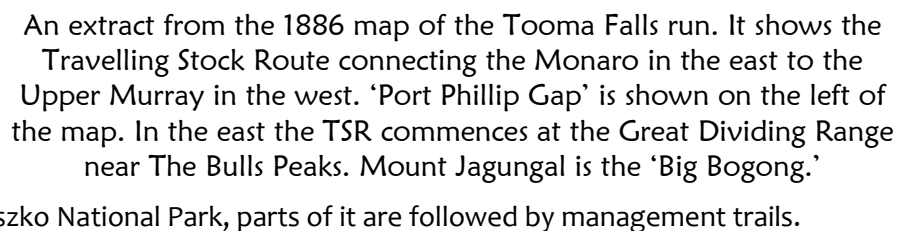
Huon’s actual route from the Monaro to the upper Murray at Welaregang/Tintaldra, has been the subject of speculation. In essence, in that part of what is now Kosciuszko National Park, it was the terrain which dictated where Huon’s Aboriginal guides would have taken him. The western fall of the mountains from Mt Kosciuszko north to the Dargals, Jagumba and Maragle Ranges has a western fall which is so steep that the Round Hill Parish map (2nd edition, 1915) described an area between the Jagumba Range and the Tooma River as “The World’s End.”

But it is not only the mountains which restrict movement. Both rivers which drain the western side of the mountains, the Tooma, (which flows to the Murray), and the Tumut, (which flows to the Murrumbidgee), are in such difficult terrain and have such steep sides that, downstream from their headwaters, neither has a track



Cooma is in the south-east corner of this 2025 map. Greg Greg/Welaregang is in the north-west corner. Port Phillip Gap is the location of the only gap in the western ranges of that part of Kosciuszko National Park. It lies on the direct route between the Monaro and Welaregang.

Besides which, those earlier accounts have overlooked Andrews' description of Huon's movements on arrival at the Murray River. Andrews said "He camped at the mouth of the Greg Greg river. Swimming the Murray, he inspected Tintaldra, and recrossing examined Welaregang and decided to secure both."



That sequence is revealing. It is consistent with an arrival from the east through Port Phillip Gap, because, coming from the east, one would reach the Tooma (Greg Greg) River first with subsequent events following a logical progression from east to west. An arrival from the north is less likely because the likely sequence on arrival would have been to inspect Welaregang first because one would reach it first. Crossing the Murray to inspect Tintaldra would more likely be done after, rather than before, an inspection of Welaregang.

Unless some notes made by Huon are found we will never know for sure which route he took, but most likely Huon's Aboriginal guides took him from the Cooma area to the Upper Murray along the route which went through Port Phillip Gap. That route is consistent with Andrews' description of his route and the sequence of events on Huon's arrival at the Murray.

But whichever route was taken, the evidence remains that late in 1835 or very early in 1836 Charles Huon, with Aboriginal guides, crossed from the Monaro to the upper Murray and in so doing was the first European to cross the Snowy Mountains.



Tooma River and Hellhole Creek

Postscript

Four years before Strzelecki reached the summit of Mt Kosciuszko, Huon was likely only a day's ride away near Mount Jagungal, already at a high altitude and above the tree line. Assuming that this was the route he took, Huon may have been within sight of the Main Range. Had he been keen to bag Australia's highest mountain and asked his Aboriginal guides to take him there it would be his, rather than Strzelecki's, which would now be a household name.

BRIGADIER WALTER EDMUND HUTCHINSON CASS CMG

Jenny Romero

In recognition of the 175th anniversary of Albury Public School in 2025, we have been publishing in our Bulletin articles describing some of the achievements of noted alumni who attended APS. The following is an account of the military career of one of their alumni.

Walter Cass was born in Albury in 1876. He was the son of Charles and Katherine Cass. His father Charles was the licensee of the Turks Head Hotel and Katherine was later licensee of the Newmarket Hotel. He attended the Albury Superior School and completed his education at the school before commencing training as a teacher in Victoria.

Cass had several teaching posts in rural Victoria before enlisting as a Corporal in the 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles in February 1901, to fight in the Second Boer War. During the Boer War he was promoted to Sergeant. He saw action in the Transvaal, Orange River Colony and the Cape Colony.

Walter Cass was discharged following the Second Boer War and returned to teaching. He joined a Militia with the rank of Lieutenant. In 1906 he joined the permanent staff of the Australian Military Forces and held administrative and staff positions until the outbreak of World War I. He was promoted to Captain in 1910 and to Major in 1913.

On August 18, 1914 he was appointed Brigade Major of the 2nd Brigade of the Australian Imperial Forces and took part in the landing at Anzac Cove on April 25, 1915. His unit was transferred to Cape Helles to advance against the Turks at Krithia on May 8. It was the first time an Australian brigade had attacked in open country. It was reported that Cass dauntlessly led the 7th Battalion across moorland. He was wounded in the chest and as he lay wounded on the roadside, he was wounded a second time. He re-joined his brigade in July 1915 and was promoted to lieutenant-colonel in August 1915.

Following the evacuation from Anzac Cove, Cass was transferred to the Western Front. In February 1916, he was appointed commander of the 54th Battalion. In July 1916 they took over a section of the line at Fleurbaix just in time for the Battle of Fromelles. It has been described as a bloody initiation for Australian soldiers to



warfare on the Western Front. His brigade captured several lines of enemy trenches and Cass crossed no-man's-land to establish a headquarters in one of them, maintaining command in the forward area and from that position he prepared the final plans for the withdrawal. His battalion lost 500 men.



His health broke down after Fromelles, and he was evacuated to England where he remained as AIF administrative command. Cass was mentioned in several dispatches during 1916 and was awarded the Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (a typical medal pictured left).

Cass was demobilised in April 1917, and he returned to Australia where he became the director of military training from 1917 to 1921. He remained in the Army serving at several different posts as base commandant. He was made temporary brigadier in December 1929.

He returned to Melbourne in September 1931 as base commandant and died on November 6, 1931 following an appendix operation. Brigadier Cass was buried with full military honours in the Melbourne General Cemetery. His wife, Helena and his five-year-old daughter survived him.

Military historian Charles Bean wrote of him:

The leaders of the AIF were mostly generous men, and marked for their sense of duty; but there were perhaps few in whom the recognition of duty was quite as strong, or sympathy with the rank and file so keen, as in Walter Cass.

One of the men who served under him was Alf Adams from Albury. In a letter home he wrote of Walter Cass: *Our Brigadier and Brigadier Major (2nd brigade), Colonel McKay and Major Cass are two of the finest men I've met. They were both slightly wounded on Saturday too.*

ALBURY PIONEER CEMETERY WALK, OCTOBER 26, 2025

We chose a mid-Spring day for our cemetery walk and anticipating that the sun could be quite hot we mapped out a path mostly under the tree canopy. But the weather gods had other ideas and at one point the rain belted down – below left. We found shelter beneath the Lychgate that our Society, under Gerry Curtis, restored in the early 2000s. But as the photo below right indicates, the weather did settle – continued over ...



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Albury Pioneer Cemetery Walk (continued)

We had 35 hardy locals braving the conditions with us to enjoy the afternoon. The theme for our walk was people who have made significant contributions to our local community. The graves visited, in no particular order, were:

- Hugh & Rebecca Moffitt – foundation members of the Methodist/Wesleyan Church, local drapers.
- Katherine Barnett – daughter of Police Magistrate Marcus Brownrigg, wife of local doctor Joseph Knight Barnett.
- Henry Alfred Brooks – newspaper journalist, Albury's third Town Clerk.
- Thomas Affleck – proprietor of *Albury Border Post*, businessman.
- Samuel Mudge – Albury Town Clerk and surveyor.
- William N M Edmondson – early manager of Mate's Store, Alderman and Mayor of Albury.
- George Arthur Thompson – manager of Mate's Store, Alderman and Mayor of Albury.
- George Adams – proprietor of the *Albury Banner*, businessman.
- Conrad Ten Brink – AMP manager, auctioneer, long term Alderman, served as Mayor of Albury.
- Canon Frederick Bevan – 22 years as Rector of St Matthew's Church of England including during WWI.
- Burt family – Nurse Burt of Meramie Private Hospital and her father, William Burt of the CBC Bank.
- James Soden – long-time owner and publican of Soden's Advance Australia Hotel.

Throughout 2026 the story of each of these significant Albury residents will appear in one of our Bulletins.

Many thanks to Jenny Romero for all her research with help from Howard Jones and Greg Ryan, with presenters Paul Grover and Val White at the cemetery.



Some of the crowd in the Lychgate listening to Jenny as the rain tumbled down.

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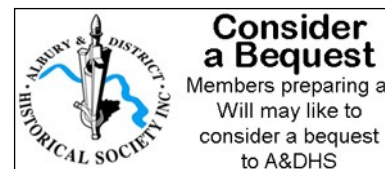
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The Committee meets on the third
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