

March 2026

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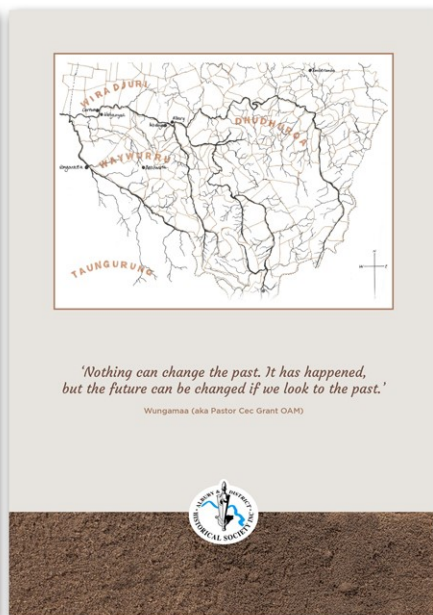
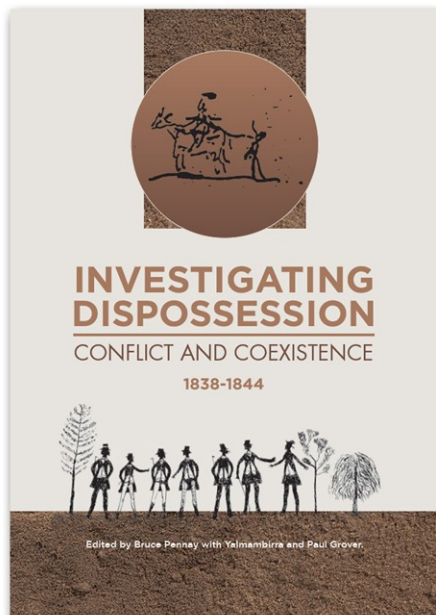
Wiradjuri Country, PO Box 822 ALBURY 2640

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BSB 640 000 Acc No 111097776

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



Front and back covers of *Indigenous Dispossession*

Next Meeting

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

7.30 pm, Commercial Club, Albury

Topic: Evolution of the Hume Hwy

Speaker: Mitchell Judd

ALBURY LIBRARYMUSEUM
Spinning a Yarn:
Macquarie Worsteds in
Albury
Until April 19

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Dispossession

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Brocklesby landing

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES FOR MARCH

The Society was saddened by the passing of Ron Haberfield on February 5. Ron was a past committee member and treasurer. We were honoured to be asked to speak at Ron's memorial. A tribute follows later in this Bulletin.

A much anticipated visit from the great granddaughter of William and Mary Brickell was welcomed early in the month. Ms Beatrice Brickell, raised in Miami but now living in Beaufort, South Carolina, came to trace the footsteps of her ancestors who played a leading role in the growth of Albury during the 1850s. Tom and Claire Doolan generously provided a welcoming lunch at their home overlooking Lake Hume. Members of our committee, our Society patron Greg Aplin with wife Jill and the mayor, councillor Mack were in attendance to welcome Ms Brickell to the city. Tom and Claire have visited the 'Brickell' sites in Miami and I thank them for hosting what turned out to be a perfect start to the visit. The following day the Mayor accompanied her to the Uiver restoration hangar where she had morning tea with representatives of the committee. Greg and Cheryl Ryan played the leading role in showing our guest the historical sites relevant to the ten-year period when her great grandparents were great contributors to the community of Albury during the town's infancy.

Our new year got off to a very good start when almost sixty people attended our first meeting of the year. A scholarly presentation by Professor Bruce Pennay about our recent publication 'Investigating Dispossession' and an informative 'footnote' by Paul Grover explained the reason the book will be a valuable tool for secondary school teachers in 2027 and beyond.

A warm welcome to our Society for new members Peter Ogilvie and Emily Cogdell. Emily, at 20 years of age, may be the youngest ever full member of our Society.

INVESTIGATING DISPOSSESSION: CONFLICT AND COEXISTENCE, 1838-1844;

AN EXPLANATION FOR LOCAL HISTORIANS

Bruce Pennay

I want to review the three principal arguments that bind the materials we have collected. I want to briefly mention some early responses to our work. And to pose the question, 'Is the local community ready to investigate and share local stories about First Nations Peoples' experiences of colonisation?'

First, Albury was founded in the wild times, the turbulent times of the late 1830s and early 1840s. There was a sudden and rapid expansion of white settlement beyond the boundaries of location – north of the Liverpool Ranges, south of Yass. That expansion was met by large-scale First Nations resistance. The town's story is embedded in that story of rapid expansion and that story of fierce resistance.

We use maps to trace that rapid expansion and fierce resistance beyond Yass and the Murrumbidgee down the Port Phillip Road into the rich river lands between the Murray and the Goulburn. In his self-published history of white settlement of the Upper Murray, Dr Arthur Andrews dared the publication extravagance of a large fold-out map endpiece. The map showed how white settlement thickened and named the many land runs principally taken up in the 1830s and 1840s. That spread of white settlement was also the spread of black dispossession which met with resistance.

Violent resistance. Indeed, scholars are increasingly referring to the frontier wars as the Australian wars. The wars for Australia.

In 1921, Andrews declared 'memory of the Faithfull Massacre is not likely to be forgotten.' In April 1838, a party of First Nations warriors killed eight overlanders at Broken River (near Benalla).

Such heavy loss of colonists' lives was unprecedented. The attack was hailed as 'most furious.' it 'sent shockwaves through the entire colony of New South Wales'. Newly arrived settlers left their runs and retreated to the Murray River. First Nations warriors regained temporarily some of the territory they were losing. And the attack emboldened further resistance. Indeed, it seemed to mark the beginning of a colony-wide 'general rising of Aboriginal resistance to the white invasion of the inland' (Gapps, *Uprising*, 2025)

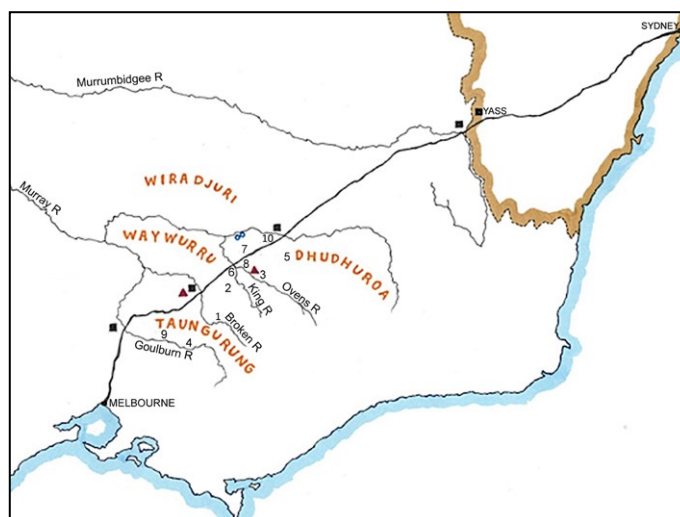
In response to the panic that followed the Faithfull massacre, Sir George Gipps, sought to protect the colonists who were venturing beyond the limits of location. Gipps followed two familiar military strategies: first, he sought to protect lines of communication tracked by Hume and Hovell with strategically placed military posts at the major crossing places. Second, he tried to ensure that newly acquired territory was secured by establishing new settlements adjacent to the outposts at the major crossings. The military posts would protect colonists travelling along the route south. The settlement towns would fortify occupation of disputed territory.

Albury township was officially surveyed and established as a settlement town adjacent to a police-protected crossing. No police hut, no police protected crossing place, no settlement town, no Albury. Indeed, it is salutary to note that the police-protected Murray River Crossing may have been sited at Barnawartha rather than Bungambrawatha. Both George Stewart, the magistrate at Goulburn, and Lieutenant Richard Waddy, officer in charge of the mounted police at Goulburn, recommended a military post at Barnawartha for the Murray. But Gipps settled on the locations for military posts recommended by Samuel Augustus Perry, the Deputy Surveyor-General.

Memory of those town beginnings enlarges our understandings of where we are from and where we are at.

Second, the conflict involved in contact leads into a second argument, which is perhaps more complex, about the kind of law and order that came with the colonists. We flesh out at a regional level the contention of the *Truth Be Told* report of the Yoorrook Justice Commission which held, 'control was maintained not just by the mounted police or the gun, but by the quiet, bureaucratic sanctioning of violence'. It was a law and order introduced to secure dispossession.

We look at the two kinds of police who enforced the law. The mounted police posted to Bungambrawatha by Major Nunn were volunteer soldiers seconded as mounted police for 3 or 4 years. The border police,



Mounted police barracks Lake Moodemere Major battles
First Nation Peoples' language countries (approximate)
and a selection of licensed runs Southwest of the limits
of location beyond Yass.

commanded by Land Commissioners, like Henry Bingham based at Tumut, were convict soldier policemen. We explain their duties and tell how the soldier police, the convict police together with volunteer stockmen were involved in two military escapades. They pursued suspects involved in the Faithfull Massacre in April 1838 and in a large-scale attack on Whorouly, near Beechworth in May 1840. Police were to help settlers take possession of the land. Police employed violence to impose peace.

There was a quiet bureaucratic sanctioning of violence illustrated in the story of the arrests of two suspects involved in an attack on Whorouly station. At Melbourne gaol in 1840 Robinson met two prisoners. Each complained he had been dragged by a neck chain from the Murray River to Melbourne. One, Jaggerrogrer (aka Harlequin) died from 'excessive exertion'. The other, Minnap (aka Merriman) survived a separate, slower trip and described how they had been conveyed. Robinson protested about the cruelty and La Trobe ordered him to investigate Jaggerrogrer's death.

Robinson's sketch gathers force when framed as an entry in his journal. It gathers even more force in the report of the consequent court proceedings. Robinson initiated charges against the escort troopers. The court was told the escorts were kindly and hurried the prisoner along to get him to medical help. Summarising proceedings, Justice Willis told the jury that there were no 'culpable excesses' in the way the escorts had carried out their orders. Indeed, they had 'conducted themselves very fairly and creditably throughout the journey'. Without retiring, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty, 'at the same time deeply regretting that the life of a human being had been wantonly sacrificed'. This was an unfortunate death in custody.

The British justice system did insist on investigating the violent deaths of First Nations Peoples. However, courts sat under the jurisdiction of squatter magistrates. They could not hear First Nations peoples' evidence. They did not allow for trial by peers. White juries were reluctant to find whites guilty of murdering blacks. It was not a fair go. 'Control was maintained not just by the mounted police or the gun, but by the quiet, bureaucratic sanctioning of violence'

Third, the last argument explores coexistence rather than conflict, for the Crossing Place was a contact zone that is a place 'where people geographically and historically separated, encountered each other, and were beginning to establish ongoing relations' (Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 1992). The third argument is less crisp than the other two, and is, indeed, kaleidoscopic, presented in a scatter rather than a sequence of images. It moves into working unofficial personal records about personal encounters. It is possible, we argue, to gather glimpses of First Nations experiences of colonisation by carefully reading the letters Lady Franklin wrote, the journals George Augustus Robinson kept and the drawings Tommy McRae made.

Two important threads that run through those accounts appear in Tommy McRae's 'Picturing Civilisation' which mocks accounts of how colonists saw First Nations people learning to live in the new colonial economy and colonial society. Words beneath the picture appear to quote Tommy McRae:

"Civilisation. This picture represents a few natives who have been employed at the shearing time on some stations and taken their wages in 'plenty good fellow clothes' and made themselves 'along a white fellow swell.' The Australian natives are very fond of copying 'white men' manners and dress when they can manage to do so."

Tongue in cheek, McRae was portraying First Nations men being assimilated with employment and with Western clothing. Elsewhere, McRae demanded respect for a disappearing way of life. He showed how in the olden days people eked a living and worked with country, and he showed the interconnections and interdependence that helped sustain their lives.

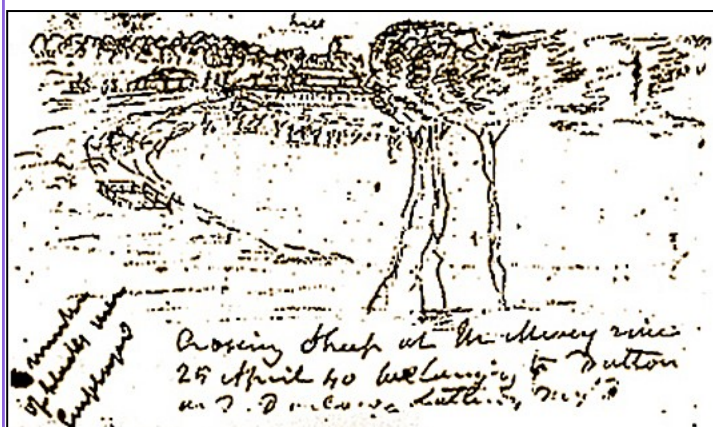
Among the most observant of other contemporaries was George Augustus Robinson, the Chief Protector of the Port Phillip district. On his first visit to the Murray in 1840 Robinson sketched the way First Nations men were employed helping settlers cross the river with their livestock (see page 4). For Robinson it was important that First Nations Peoples were being employed to help with crossing livestock. And being paid in kind with the bodies of drowned stock.

On his fourth and last visit to the north of the Port Phillip district four years later, Robinson observed coexistence being worked out further, 'The Wiradjuri' he wrote, 'are the original inhabitants: they are in general well conducted and are employed by the Settlers ... From all the respectable Settlers I received attention and



Tommy McRae, 'Civilisation,' Sketchbook held by the National Museum of Australia, no date, M4, 9. Re-printed as a postcard, Museum of Sydney, no date. Moral permission Jean Morgan-Kelly.

civility and was glad to find sympathy evinced on behalf of the Aborigines, and a desire for their general amelioration, a feeling I felt it my duty to foster and encourage, and I am happy to state that the Country generally as far as the Aboriginal and European Inhabitants were concerned was perfectly tranquil' (Mackness, *Robinson's Journal*, 1844).



Robinson's sketch 'Crossing sheep at the Murry (sic) River' shows the crossing place as a contact zone in which First Nations Peoples were being integrated into the colonial economy.

Why draw attention to the violent conflicts and the attempts to negotiate coexistence back in the 1830s and 1840s?

Coexistence is still being negotiated. Australia at the national level firmly rejected the idea of privileging an Aboriginal voice in the national referendum in 2023. At the same time, and since then, there has been increased attention given to forging reconciliation at the local government and individual organisational level. My own university sees reconciliation as involving 'the historical acceptance of the impact of colonisation'. Thus, we three from Charles Sturt University, invite schools to investigate Aboriginal peoples' experiences of colonisation, as required within the national curriculum.

We have provided a collection of materials to help schools localise that mandatory topic, in much the same way that Paul Grover and I tried to help them understand the migrant experience of post-war Australia – and the same way this Society has helped schools localise this border community's experiences of federation, and two world wars.

At the state level a Victorian statewide treaty is to help First Nations people find and tell the truth. The future lies in classrooms and in storytelling at the local as well as at the state and national levels.

At the local level, I would argue, there is a greater measure of community readiness for sharing stories of dispossession. Our museum has moved beyond including references to First Nations Peoples BC, that is 'Before Colonisation' and now looks to how they have experienced colonial Australia and modern-day Australia.

At a personal level, my breath is running out at 87. I find my endings with my beginnings. On 17 October 1987, I penned a letter for the Society requesting Albury City to establish a stand of trees at the police hut site to mark the sesquicentenary of the founding of Albury as part of the celebrations of the Bicentenary of European Settlement of Australia in 1988. That request was ignored, perhaps because it did not fit with other ideas about 'Celebrating the Nation' in 1988.

Last year, with Yalmambirra, a Wiradjuri elder, I wrote again to Council pointing out the heritage value of the police-protected crossing and the site of the police barracks. I do not expect the current cash-strapped Council to erect signage – yet. But I am cheered with the 'Lavington through the ages' set of images in Lavington Square refurbishment includes reference to the Police post. The police post has become part of local storytelling. Those words 'police post', 'police hut' 'mounted police barracks' signal recognition of dispossession.

Our task has been to remind not only schools but also local historians (1) No police hut, no police protected crossing place, no settlement town (2) the inequalities and injustices that accompanied the British law and order system. And (3) to increase awareness of how colonisation was experienced. Our work is to help schools and local story tellers investigate dispossession.

The Dyiraamalang Wiradjuri group have advised they find our work too academic with too much jargon. Yet I am pleased with the way we have drawn on and tried to find a place in scholarship of these times.

Is the local community ready to investigate and share local stories about First Nations Peoples' experiences of colonisation?

Click the link [Investigating Dispossession](#) or use the QR code.



The illustrations on the front cover of *Investigating Dispossession 1838-1844* edited by Bruce Pennay with Yalmambirra and Paul Grover (see page 1) show how First Nations suspects were force marched from the Murray to Melbourne, and how a Wiradjuri artist portrayed what colonists called 'Civilisation'. The back cover features a reworking of Arthur Andrews' map of the thickening of white settlement in the upper Murray to also illustrate the spread of dispossession, which was met with resistance.

ALBURY'S FIRST FLORAL FESTIVAL, MARCH 13-17, 1951

An Albury Floral Festival was first suggested by Mayor Cleaver Bunton in 1949. The first festival was held 75 years ago, in March 1951. The festival became an annual event in Albury, lasting until 1972.

The Mayor proposed the festival "to engender a greater community spirit among the citizens" and to help raise funds to build a memorial bowl on Monument Hill. The festival also recognised 50 years since federation. The whole of Dean street was decorated with flower boxes, coloured lights, bunting and flags.

Over five days, the festival included a street parade with decorated floats, a Festival Queen competition, a Dean street mardi-gras, a re-enactment of the arrival of Hume and Hovell and a parade to the Albury Sportsground where a final judging of the Queen competition took place.

Crowned Queen of the Floral Festival was Zita West, representing motor traders. Other Queen candidates were Yvonne Lester (Football), Betty Ward (G J Coles), Marie Byrne (Mate's), Nancy Vincent (RSL), Joan McBrien (Radio 2AY), Veronica Nowland (Commercial Club), Lesley Lalor (City Band), Marjorie Fuller (Local Government), Carmel Roach (Stock Agents), Shirley Thomson (Motion Pictures), Maureen Hogan (Adelyn), Joan Talbot (Electrical and Radio), Valerie Brain (Chamber of Commerce), Patricia Roche (Big Store), Colleen Roach (United Licensed Victuallers' Association).

KODAK CAMERA/BROCKLESBY CRASH LANDING

Howard Jones



For a Show & Tell segment, Howard Jones produced a 100-year-old fold-up camera linked to an extraordinary event in local war history. A *Border Morning Mail* journalist, Tennyson Mott, used it to capture an astonishing scene at Brocklesby on a Sunday morning, September 29, 1940.

It showed two Avro Anson RAAF planes in a paddock after they had become inter-locked in the air. A trainee pilot, Leonard Graham Fuller, landed the planes gently after the second pilot and two other airmen parachuted out. An injured airman was admitted to Albury hospital. In the next bed was a *Mail* reporter, Robert Coleman, 17. When Coleman learned what had happened, the cub reporter sensed a scoop! He got a nurse to phone the paper.

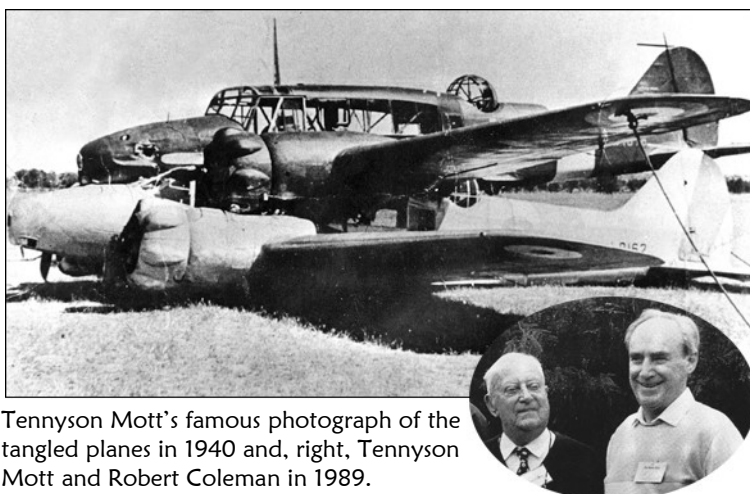
Mott not only had an exclusive picture in the Monday paper but supplied news agencies to send it around the world.

Mott kept the Kodak Pocket Camera, Model

1A, leaving it to his daughter, Libby Mott. She recently gave it to former *Mail* photographer Peter Merkesteyn, as her father had wished. It still had its leather bag and is probably restorable.

The camera was made at Rochester, New York, probably in 1926. It used a roll of film, producing negatives 2½ by 4¼ inches. The *Mail* printed five Mott pictures of the planes, but numerous pictures were taken by Brocklesby locals before RAAF investigators arrived.

More detail at: [Brocklesby Landing, BMM](#)



Tennyson Mott's famous photograph of the tangled planes in 1940 and, right, Tennyson Mott and Robert Coleman in 1989.



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VALE RON HABERFIELD

Geoff Romero

Ron Haberfield, a past committee member and treasurer of the Albury and District Historical Society passed away peacefully on February 5, 2026 at his home in David Street surrounded by his family. Ron was an active member of the Society delivering his last presentation in August last year about the five generations of the Haberfield family who attended Albury Public School. Ron took part in the commemorative celebrations for the 175th anniversary of the school where he was photographed with the Member for Albury, Justin Clancy. Ron and his wife Barbara attended our annual dinner last November and Ron was also at our December meeting despite being unwell.

Ron was born into a well-known dairying family. Following his graduation from Hawksbury Agricultural College he joined the family business working on the factory floor. He started on the bottom rung of a very long ladder and worked assiduously to the top. By the time he became Managing Director of Haberfield's Dairy he had worked in every part of the business. He then became a leading figure in the Australian dairy industry which led to extensive overseas travel.

While being comfortable dealing with the leaders of industry he never lost the common touch. Despite his exalted position on the international dairy scene, he saw himself as a boy from South Albury.

When he attended our events at the Historical Society he brought his wide smile and a keen engagement with the history of Albury. He was a constant contributor. Ron Haberfield earned our respect and admiration and will be greatly missed.

Vale to a fair dinkum, true Albury legend.



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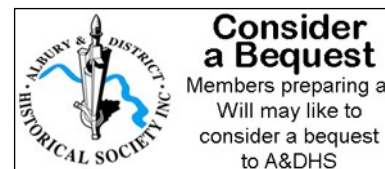
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Meetings: Second Wednesday of the month (except January) at 7.30 pm usually at the Commercial Club Albury.

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

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