

## IMAGES OF YALLOURN

### YALLOURN GUIDES, REVEREND PERCY DICKER & ARBOR DAY

1925 -1960



This photograph, of the early years of Yallourn Guides, is part of a collection held by the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland.

It is hard to pin-point the exact year that the photograph was taken but it is probably 1925. One helpful clue is that Rev Percy Dicker, who served at Yallourn from 1920-25, can be seen in the group.

Although the image is indistinct, the lady planting the tree is probably Mrs Alice Wilson who was the inaugural leader of the First Yallourn Guide group. The new school building in the background is another clue that the photograph is from 1925; and the occasion may have been Arbor Day (see the letter below from a young girl, named Myrtle, to a newspaper in September that year).

#### A RARE FIND REGARDING THE YALLOURN GUIDES IN 1925

An extract (as seen below) published in the 'Sunday Times' (a Sydney newspaper) on September 6<sup>th</sup> 1925 on Page: 2 offers further evidence of the year. A young correspondent named, Myrtle, sent this short letter to the children's pages of the paper

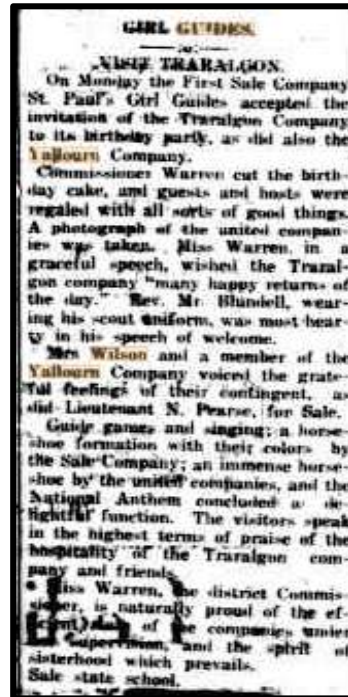
**"YALLOURN.** *There is a State school at Yallourn. The school is a big brick place of 10 rooms. There are five teachers, Miss Cross, Mrs Goyden (head teacher), Miss Firmin, Miss King, and Miss Howard. On August 15 this year we had 'arbour day.' The Girl Guides marched up in their uniforms. They had their photos taken twice. The Captain, Mrs. Wilson, planted a tree-MYRTLE."*

**Note:** A search through newspapers of that time, revealed that Myrtle may have been the daughter of William and Susan Marshall who lived in the district in those early days of settlement. Myrtle (perhaps a guide in Yallourn in 1925) was one of eleven Marshall siblings.

Another article, regarding the Yallourn Girl Guides and Arbor Day, was located in 'The Argus' (August 19<sup>th</sup> 1925 on page: 11) ....

***"BROWN COAL MINE-* Arbor Day was celebrated at the Yallourn State School. Trees and shrubs were planted according to a plan drawn up by the Electricity Commission's architect. A large gathering of parents, friends, and Girl Guides provided afternoon tea..."**

## THE YALLOURN GUIDES VISIT TRARALGON IN 1925



The above extract reported that the Yallourn Guides travelled to Traralgon in July 1925. The text, as published in the 'Gippsland Times' on July 30<sup>th</sup> 1925, was difficult to read and apologies for any errors in transcribing (Roger).

***"GIRL GUIDES VISIT TRARALGON* On Monday the First Sale Company St Paul's Girl Guides accepted the invitation of the Traralgon Company to its birthday party, as did also the Yallourn Company. Commissioner Warren cut the birthday cake, and guests and hosts were regaled with all sorts of good things. A photograph of the united companies was taken.**

***Miss Warren, in a graceful speech, wished the Traralgon company many happy returns of the day. Rev. Mr. Blundell, wearing his scout uniform was most hearty in his speech of welcome.***

***Mrs Wilson and a member of the Yallourn Company voiced the grateful feelings of the contingent, as did Lieutenant N. Pearse for Sale.***

***Guide games and singing a horse-shoe formation with their colours by the Sale Company; an immense horseshoe by the united companies and the National Anthem concluded a delightful function.***

*The visitors speak in the highest terms of praise of the hospitality of the company and friends.*

*Miss Warren, the District Commissioner, is naturally proud of the ???? (obscured script) companies under the supervision and the spirit of sisterhood which prevails."*

This is another photograph of members of the First Yallourn Guides with Mrs Alice Wilson. This photograph at the 'new' Yallourn school and, in all probability, was taken on the same day as mentioned above.



#### **BRIEF NOTES ON THE FIRST YALLOURN GUIDES**

- The origins of the Yallourn Girl Guides can be traced back to 1925. It is also known that the Yallourn organisation was officially registered with the Girl Guide movement (UK) in 1929.
- Mrs Alice Wilson, Mrs Ada Dann and Mrs Drummond were prominent figures in the association in those early years. Mrs Dann was also appointed as a Commissioner of Girl Guides for Gippsland in 1923.



**Mrs Ada Dann, the Commissioner of Girl Guides at Yallourn.**

- During the embryonic stages of the Yallourn Girl Guides, meetings were held at a garage at the rear of St John's Church of England.
- It was also reported that the Yallourn Guides travelled to a major rally at the Pakenham racecourse in 1928...

*"Troops of girl guides from Yallourn, Moe, Drouin, Pakenham, Fitzroy, North Fitzroy and Alphington held a "rally" on the Pakenham racecourse last week. They were the guests of Mrs. Mackay, district commissioner, and were entertained at luncheon, after which there were games and competitions." Source: 'The Dandenong Journal' October 25th 1928.*

- A report on the opening of the new Guide Hall at Yallourn, in December 1932, can be found at:

<http://www.virtualyallourn.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/GIRL%20GUIDES%201932.pdf>

- One of the most important occasions, in which the members of the Yallourn Girl Guides participated in that era, was the opening of the Yallourn Hospital in January 1929. The story of that historic event can be found on this website.

## OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS REGARDING YALLOURN GUIDES

While these newspaper photographs lack some clarity they are nevertheless useful additions to the Virtual Yallourn archives and help to 'fill the gaps' in the history of the Guides/ Brownies in Yallourn.



This photograph of the Yallourn Girl guides was taken when Lady Baden Powell visited Yallourn on February 13<sup>th</sup> 1948. Source: See below.



Caption text: LADY BADEN POWELL about to shake hands with one of the Guides during an inspection of Scouts, Cubs, Guides and Brownies at Yallourn on February 13. Source: 'Weekly Times' February 25<sup>th</sup> 1948 Page: 23



The Yallourn Brownies in February 1948. Source: As above.



Above: Joan Hughes from Yallourn attended the Guides Conference at the Melbourne University in August 1952. Joan can be seen on the right of the top row. Source: 'Weekly Times' August 20<sup>th</sup> 1952 Page: 40.



This 'famous' photograph of the Yallourn Brownies was taken in 1954 when Queen Elizabeth visited Yallourn. Source: Virtual Yallourn website (2010).





On parade at Yallourn ...This photograph of the Brownies and their leaders is from 1964; and can be found in the Virtual Yallourn collection (see the link below).

The Yallourn Girl Guides feature prominently on the Virtual Yallourn website; and there are at least five pages of articles and photographs which readers will enjoy. They can be found at:

<http://www.virtualyallourn.com/search/node?keys=guides>

### **CAN YOU HELP?**

In 1955, the title of Queen's Guide was bestowed upon Janet Apps of Yallourn. The Queen's Guide is the peak award for guiding; and all guides between the ages of 14-18 are eligible for consideration for selection. In later years, other Yallourn girls Annette Long, Judy Smith, Pam Adams, Jan Daddo, Maureen Neilson, Linda Milne, Sheila Martin (see below), Jenny McNair, Cheryl Smith and Janice Smith were also recipients of the prestigious award.



Janet Apps was the first Yallourn recipient of the Queen's Guide award in 1955. This photograph of Janet was taken at the 2004 Reunion at Woorabinda.



A photograph of Mrs Graham and three of Yallourn's Queen's Guides (Maureen Neilson, Pam Adams and Linda Milne) is shown above.



## **50 YEARS AGO**

The above photograph of a Brownies' Camp at Yarra Junction in 1962 is one of a collection of photos of Yallourn Guides and Brownies which can be found on this website.

## **A LETTER FROM SHEILA BYARD (MARTIN)**

### **RECIPIENT OF THE QUEEN'S GUIDE AWARD IN 1959**

Virtual Yallourn recently received the following summary regarding Yallourn Guides from well-known former Yallourn resident Sheila Byard (Martin). As mentioned above, Sheila was one of at least ten Yallourn girls who were presented with the Queen's Guide award.

'Thank you' to Sheila for her recollections of the Yallourn Guides in the late 1950's / early 60's; and her kind assistance in adding to the website's history archives is greatly appreciated



**Sheila Byard-Queen's Guide Award in 1959 & OAM in 2016.**

## **YALLOURN GIRL GUIDES DURING THE LATE 50S & EARLY 60S**

When I arrived in Yallourn to join Form 3 at Yallourn High School, I also transferred into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Yallourn Guide Company where Mrs Evelyn Graham was the Guider or Captain. My previous involvement with the Girl Guides at Oakleigh had been rather uneventful. We seemed to spend a lot of time learning to do first aid with triangular bandages, although in 1957 I had attended a camp at Baxter beyond Frankston where much of the original native vegetation remained including an abundant of pink heath.

Mrs Graham's Company was focussed on encouraging its members to work through the graded exercises provided by the Guide program to enable girls to become responsible and active participants in a wide range of non-school activities, especially outdoors.

Mrs Graham's skill in this work continued after the Graham family moved from Meadow Lane to Morwell when she was given the role of Camp-craft Adviser for the whole Gippsland Region.

Through completing the Queens Guide Award by 1959, I was given the opportunity to come into contact with the many generous adults in the Yallourn town and beyond who volunteered time and energy to give us life experience beyond what was available in the school curriculum, not least of whom were Mrs Graham's husband. Hugh Graham was a first aid instructor for the SEC and a key figure with the Yallourn Pool taking us through the requirements for the RLSS Bronze Medallion.

Others I met were the member of the Field Naturalist groups, the nursing sister at the Yallourn Maternal and Child Welfare Centre, the Kindergarten Staff who let me do my volunteering one afternoon a week for half a year, and the many parents who willingly transported us for camps at Willow Grove, Hazelwood, Fulham, and at Guide House, Yarra Junction.

Completing the award led to me gaining a place in the Victorian contingent that travelled to Western Australia in the spring of 1959 to attend an International Camp or Jamboree. Being away from home for a month during my Leaving Year was a very formative experience, equipping me to survive the shift to Melbourne for tertiary studies at a time when many who obtained university places failed in first year, and another third failed to complete their degrees in minimum time.



## **ANOTHER HONOUR FOR SHEILA IN 2016**

Some readers may be unaware that Sheila was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her services to women in the 2016 Queen's Birthday Honours List. Congratulations Sheila from all the readers at 'Virtual Yallourn.'

## **FOOTNOTES REGARDING MRS ALICE WILSON**

- Alice Wilson (as seen above with the First Yallourn Guides) was a dynamic resident in the early years of the settlement of Yallourn. Alice's service to the town was enduring; and she played such a vital role in making Yallourn a spirited and harmonious community.
- According to 'The Morwell Advertiser', Alice was the Secretary of the Yallourn branch of the CWA. Among her other commitments, within the community, was the position of Honorary Secretary of the Housewives' Association.
- In 1931, Alice was part of deputation that met with Sir John Monash to discuss a list of matters regarding home life in Yallourn. The link to the story can be found at: <https://www.virtualyallourn.com/media-archive/document/newspapers-1931-sir-john-monash-meets-mrs-alice-wilson-housewives>

## **FOOTNOTES: REV. PERCIVAL HENSBY DICKER (1891- 1975) OF YALLOURN**



This photograph of Rev. Percy Dicker was taken in 1922 (and perhaps at Yallourn). Source: Tim Gibson, the archivist for the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland via Gippsland Studies by Linda Barraclough.

- Reverend Dicker was the first resident Anglican clergyman in Yallourn; and his photographic collection gives an insight into those early years at Yallourn. Reverend Dicker was an energetic member of the clergy and his work for all the people of the parish was far-reaching.

- It is recorded that Rev. Dicker conducted the first church service at Yallourn under a pine tree in January 1922.
- Many community assets and organizations stemmed from Rev. Dicker's dynamism. The photograph with the First Yallourn Guides was emblematic of his interest and involvement in the life of the community. Rev. Dicker was a central figure in raising funds to build St John's Church.
- In 1925, Rev. Dicker left Yallourn and after stints at St Andrew's in Brighton, Geelong Grammar School and England he accepted the position of Rev. Canon of Wangaratta in 1934.

### **FOOTNOTES REGARDING ARBOR DAY IN YALLOURN IN THE 1920's**

- Arbor Day is held in many countries; and is set aside for tree planting and associated celebrations.
- The first-ever recorded Arbor Day was celebrated in Nebraska in 1872; and the inaugural Arbor Day in the Australia was thought to be in 1889.
- The first reference to Arbor Day in the Yallourn district seems to be in 1921 when Mr Chas Crawley, Honorary Secretary of the Morwell and District Progress Association, outlined a proposal to plant trees along the Princes Highway on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 1922.
- In 1929, students from Yallourn participated in an essay writing competition entitled 'Why We Hold Arbor Day.' Unfortunately, the article, as printed in the 'Morwell Advertiser', was indistinct and details of the winners were impossible to read.



A photograph of tree planting day celebrations in earlier times.

**Extract summary as provided by the SLV: "Line of horsemen on dirt road, horse and buggy displaying the Union Jack in front of procession, men on horseback all dressed in matching, riding pants, shirts, bandanas and wide brimmed hats, road in background stretching up through paddocks. Possibly celebrating Arbor Day." Source: SLV: ID-1805481**

- The above photograph was taken sometime in the early 1900's and is obviously not at Yallourn but is said to be at Kangaroo Ground (near Diamond Creek).

- It is known that in the 1930's, there was an official organisation known as Tree Planters Association; and in April 1936, seventy delegates visited Yallourn as part of the group's tour of Gippsland towns.
- Since in its inception in 1996, National Tree Day is held in the last weekend in July. It is recorded, that since then, more than 26 million trees have been planted.



This photograph was published in 1976. It was part of an article regarding the preservation of the trees of Yallourn. The photo shows Kevin Heinz (right hand corner), a popular personality from an ABC television gardening program of that era entitled 'Sow What', talking to SEC Parks and Gardens Overseer, Keith Randall, and two students from a local school. Source: Virtual Yallourn website.

### **CAN YOU HELP?**

The Virtual Yallourn website would like to post stories and recollections of other Queen's Guides from Yallourn. Furthermore, any photos of Guides/ Brownies groups and memories/anecdotes of rallies, camps, parades etc. would be welcomed by Julie. Thank you.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & APPRECIATION**

1. Thank you to Sheila Byard for her article regarding her time with the Yallourn Girl Guides and receiving the Queen's Guide award.
2. The photographs of Reverend Dicker, the First Yallourn Guides and Alice Wilson are part of a collection held by the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland and are posted on a website administered by eminent historian Linda Barraclough.
3. For those readers interested in the history of Gippsland, here is a link to a list of studies by Linda Barraclough. Linda's investigations and research are most impressive...

[https://egsl.libsvic.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en\\_AU/egsl/search/results?qu=Linda+Barraclough&te](https://egsl.libsvic.ent.sirsidynix.net.au/client/en_AU/egsl/search/results?qu=Linda+Barraclough&te)

4. Various articles from the series 'The Newspapers' written for the Virtual Yallourn website (2015-2019).
5. Photographs of the Guides and Brownies of Yallourn are from the Virtual Yallourn website.
6. The Arbor Day photograph was part of a collection of the State Library of Victoria website.
7. NLA-for various extracts (as referenced) regarding the Girl Guides of Victoria.

This article was researched and prepared by Roger Spaul and presented and posted by Julie George for the Virtual Yallourn website in the hope of furthering interest in the history of Yallourn.