

YALLOURN YEAR BY YEAR 1929



The first sod in the Victorian Government's ambitious scheme to generate electricity at Yallourn was turned more than a century ago (sometime around 1920); and for the next six decades the unique township of Yallourn 'took root, prospered , bloomed, withered and died'....

"Yallourn was swallowed by the coal mine it was built to serve"...
'The Herald Sun' May 2016.

In this history series for the Virtual Yallourn website, various years in the life of the Yallourn have been researched and posted on the web site. The monthly news items, listed below, attempt to highlight some of the stories, about the township and its residents that made the local and national newspapers during 1929.



1929

JANUARY: A long awaited and important occasion took place in Yallourn when Sir John Monash officially opened the hospital on Sunday, 13th January. Approximately 2,000 people witnessed the event; and it was a grand occasion with 'flags all aflutter' and a procession of the fire brigade, scouts and guides, and the Yallourn Band. During his inspiring oration, Sir John Monash said...

"...that the hospital, with equipment ...had cost over £32,000 had been given as a gift to the people of Yallourn, by the people of Victoria, through the Electricity Commission. It was however, the duty of the residents to support and maintain the Institution. He also urged that working bees be arranged to carry out necessary work in improving and beautifying the hospital grounds, which comprised 15 acres.." Source: 'Morwell Advertiser' 18th January 1929. Page: 3.



Opening of the Yallourn Hospital on 13th January 1929
Source : J.P. Campbell Collection

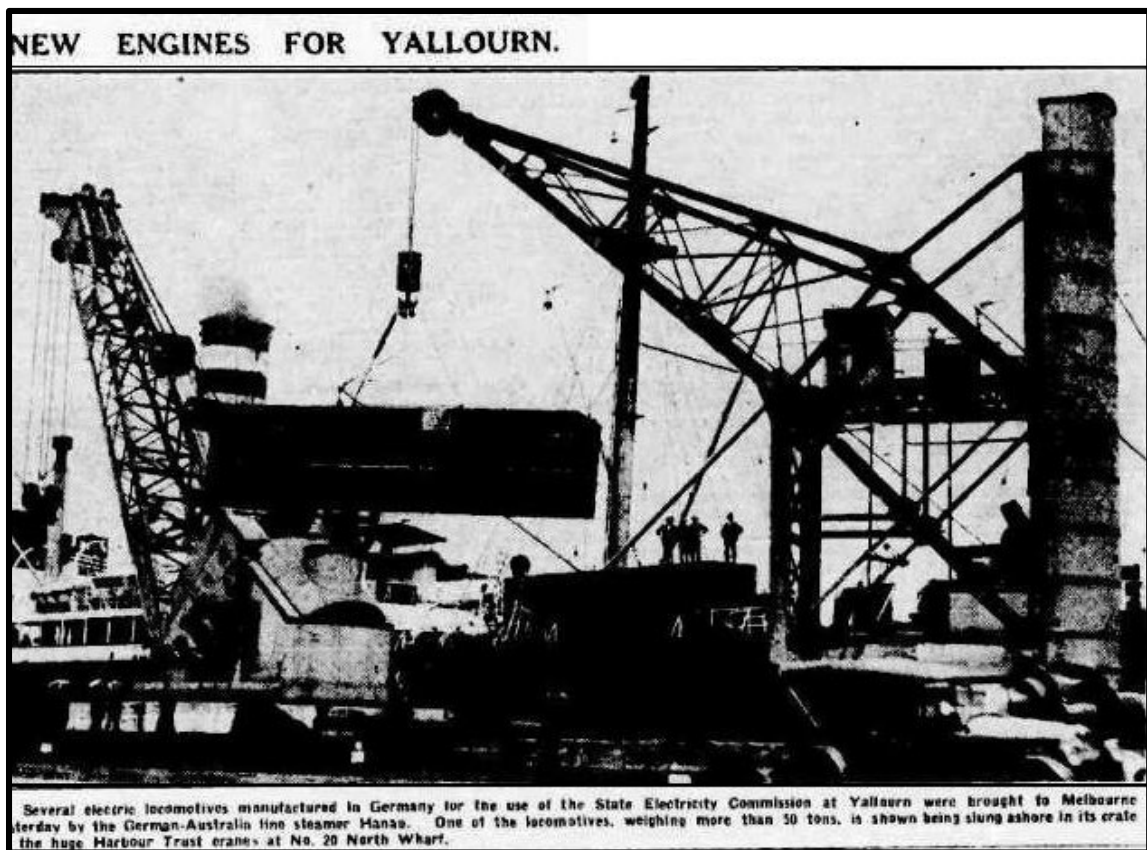
In January 1929, the photograph below was published in 'The Herald' and illustrates the ferocity of a fire which had broken out at the 'old open cut.' The caption referred to the situation at the Yallourn as 'like a scene from Dante's Inferno.'



Caption text : LIKE A SCENE FROM DANTE'S INFERNO: Fire fighters pouring water from the top of the old open cut at Yallourn into the flames which are raging below in the brown coal. Miles of hosing is being used to carry the water from the Latrobe River.

Source: 'The Herald' January 19th. 1929 Page 32

FEBRUARY: Four electric locomotives, that were to be used at the Yallourn mine, arrived in February 1929. The locomotives were manufactured in Germany; and arrived at the North Wharf in Melbourne aboard the Steamship 'Hanau.'



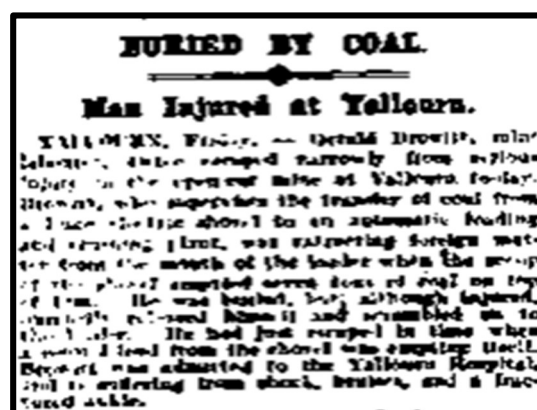
Source: 'The Argus' 14th February 1929. Page: 5.

MARCH: The Yallourn Fire Brigade competed in the country brigade carnival at Warrnambool in March 1929. The original brigade hall at Yallourn is shown by the red circle in the picture below.



The original Fire Brigade Hall can be seen in the bottom right hand corner of this greeting card. The card was produced by Yallourn's renowned photographer James Pinkerton Campbell. JP Campbell was a highly acclaimed photographer; and a story about his years in Yallourn can be found on this website.

APRIL: Gerald Browitt, a labourer at the Yallourn Open Cut, escaped serious injury (perhaps death) when he was buried by seven tons of coal in a freakish accident involving the giant-sized scoop (part of a loading and crushing machine). Thankfully, Gerald survived the frightening ordeal and was taken to the Yallourn Hospital, for emergency treatment.



Source: The Argus April 27th 1929. Page: 23

MAY: Members of the Morwell Golf Club were invited to play at the Yallourn links. The secretary of the Yallourn Golf Club in 1929 was Mr. N. Westmore; and he appears to have been a steadfast member during those early years of establishing the club. The vital role played by Mr Jones, in planning that first golf course, was widely recognised; and the Yallourn Golf Club was fortunate to be able to call upon his formal qualifications in surveying...

"A meeting to establish the Yallourn Golf Club was held at the Yallourn Tennis Pavilion on the 1st of May, 1926. Subsequently, the State Electricity Commission (SEC) advised that they would grant the Club 85 acres of land suitable for a golf course, at a site about half a mile from the Yallourn Township. Plans were prepared for the first 9 holes by Mr. G.D. Jones, an enthusiastic golfer who was also the SEC's Head Surveyor. Work began almost immediately on the site, which was located across the road from the Yallourn Hospital. During construction, the newly formed Club conducted its competitions at the Morwell Golf Club on the 9th of June 1928, the Course was officially opened by the inaugural President of the Club, Mr. C.H. Kernot, who drove the first ball in the 9-hole stroke competition which he subsequently won." Source: Yallourn Golf Club website.



Source: Virtual Yallourn files.

JUNE: In an historic occasion in local (perhaps national) sport, a group of women from Yallourn travelled to the city to compete in a special sporting carnival centred about two sports - hockey and basketball. Teams that participated in the 'Country Weekend' included: Yallourn, Warrnambool, Echuca, Ballarat, Wangaratta, Traralgon, Rutherglen, Colac, Albury and Benalla (and others).



MELBOURNE, Today... Playing against Yallourn in the country' women's basketball competition today on the University ground, Echuca scored 99 goals to their opponents' three goals." Source: 'Mail' (Adelaide) 1 June 1929, Page 5.

While the details were sketchy, it is known that the Yallourn team fared badly against the Echuca combination. Yallourn lost the game by 96 goals as shown above. Despite that severe drubbing, the team from Yallourn was an early pioneer of women's basketball; and such games were the first steps in a long journey for the game (i.e. women's basketball) to win acceptance across Australia.

Note: One of the earliest references of girls playing basketball can be traced back to 1898 but it took until the mid-1950's for women's basketball to be organized on a 'serious basis' in Australia. Yallourn was quite a centre for women's sports; and a list of sporting teams can be found on this website (click on the 'Groups' tab above this page).

JULY: The Yallourn Briquette Factory was operating at 'peak load' in attempting to meet the heavy demand for winter domestic fuel. Other photographs and the history of the factory can be found on this website.



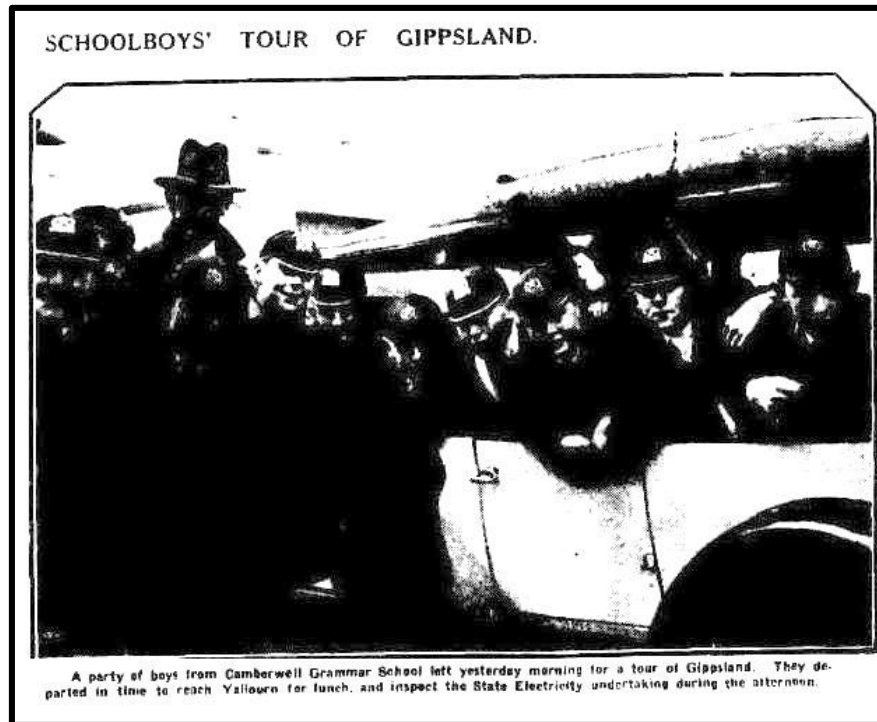
Source: State Library of Victoria - The JP Campbell collection.

AUGUST: As outlined by Prue McGoldrick in her book 'Yallourn Was', music played a significant part in the lives of many local families; and Mr I. G. Martin (probably Irving Martin) of 12 Strzelecki Road, was conducting lessons in Piano Theory and Harmony in 1929. In his advertisements, 'Mr Martin A.L.C.M-L.L.C.M Gold Medallist' indicated that he used 'up to date methods' in teaching music; and that he could prepare pupils for 'all examinations.'



Source 'The Morwell Advertiser' August 9th 1929. Page; 1

In August 1929 a group of students from Camberwell Grammar School visited Yallourn as part of an organized tour of the Gippsland region...



Caption text: SCHOOLBOYS' TOUR OF GIPPSLAND. A party of boys, from Camberwell Grammar School, left yesterday morning for a tour of Gippsland. They departed in time to reach Yallourn for lunch and inspect the State Electricity undertaking during the afternoon.
Source: 'The Argus' Saturday August 31st 1929. Page: 17.

SEPTEMBER: Mr. P. C. Brown was appointed to the position of Senior Assistant at Yallourn Technical School. Mr Brown was the former demonstrator in the Electrical Engineering Laboratory at Melbourne University.



An early photograph of the Yallourn Technical School.

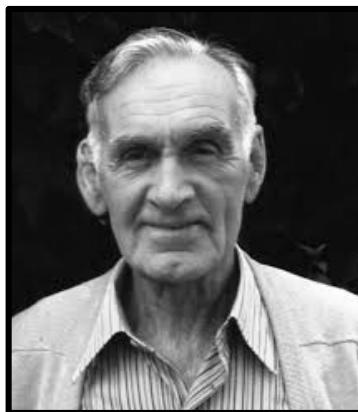
OCTOBER: A group of lawn bowlers from the Carlton Bowling club visited Yallourn. The Yallourn Bowling Club was a shining example of community involvement; and, from its beginnings in 1927, the Yallourn Bowling Club became a facility which engendered great pride throughout the town.



The Yallourn Bowling Club. Source: Virtual Yallourn files.

A story about the contribution of Yallourn's Head Gardener and President of the Yallourn Bowling Club, Mr Jock Lawson, to the township can be found on this website. "...

"...Jock Lawson was somewhat of a visionary as he understood the way in which gardens could bring harmony, pride and tranquillity to working communities. It seems that he fully appreciated the essence of the 'garden town' philosophy as advocated by Ebenezer Howard and other luminaries." Source: Virtual Yallourn



Jock Lawson - An unforgettable character in the story of Yallourn. Jock was a dedicated and fervent visionary in his work for the town of Yallourn. Source: Yallourn Association file.

In October 1929, the Victorian Tourist Bureau organized a group of students, from eight city girls' secondary schools, to visit and tour Yallourn. It was a major excursion which involved thorough planning as shown in the extract...

Girls to Visit Yallourn.
 Arrangements have been made by the Tourist Bureau for a party of pupils from girls' secondary schools to visit the Electricity Commission's undertaking at Yallourn on Saturday. The visit has been arranged by Mrs. L. Drexler, reception officer of the bureau, and the girls, who will represent eight schools, will be accompanied by the manager of the bureau, Mr. W. McConnell, and by mistresses from each school.

Source: 'The Age' October 30th 1929. Page: 15

Yallourn Technical School

At a meeting of the School Council, held on 9th inst., the question of extending the scope of the present classes was discussed.

At the beginning, the work was necessarily of a preparatory nature, but a stage has now been reached, where the progress made by students renders imperative the introduction of classes in higher technology.

Source: 'Morwell Advertiser' October 18th 1929. Page: 3

Caption: "Yallourn Technical School: At a meeting of the School Council, held on 9th inst., the question: of extending the scope of the present classes was discussed. At the beginning, the work was necessarily of a preparatory nature, but a stage has now been reached, where the progress made by students renders imperative the introduction of classes in higher technology. It was suggested that classes be introduced in the following subjects, Heat Engines, Advanced Electric Technology, Mixed Mathematics including the design of Machines and Structures."

NOVEMBER: Dorothy Payne, of the Yallourn Higher Elementary School, was in the spotlight when she was awarded a Meritorious Scholarship to the Methodist Ladies' College in Melbourne.

METHODIST LADIES' COLLEGE.

The following scholarships at the Methodist Ladies' College have been awarded as a result of the recent competitive examination:—

Full Entrance Scholarships.—Gweneth Fraser (Gardiner C.S.), Lois King (Melbourne Girls' H.S.), Joan Yeaman (Spring road C.S.).

Half-entrance Scholarships.—Irene Sheldon (Coburg C.S.), Joan Cornish (Mont Albert C.S.), Ivy Young (Glenferrie H.S.), Janet Bryant (Coburg C.S.), Margaret Graham (Swan Hill High School), Maisie McDermid (Gardiner C.S.), Hilja Hobbie (Rainbow Higher Elem.).

Meritorious Scholarships.—Gladys Joyce (Auburn C.S.), Irene Nicholls (Boulton S.S.), Dorothy Payne (Yallourn Higher Elem.), Betty Weatherall (Coburg C.S.), Betty Warren (Mont Albert C.S.),

Source: 'The Argus' November 16th, 1929. Page: 23

DECEMBER: The Yallourn Band's burgeoning reputation was further enhanced when it won the 'Quickstep Section' at the Echuca Carnival and Band Contest.



The Yallourn Band in 1929. Source: The Virtual Yallourn files.

CAN YOU ADD TO THE HISTORY OF YALLOURN?

The above item was prepared for the Virtual Yallourn website by Roger Spaul and Julie George in the hope of fostering further interest in the history of Yallourn.

Please contact Julie if you have memorabilia or photographs related to any of the above events in 1929. Thank you for your help in building the history files of Virtual Yallourn.