

YALLOURN YEAR BY YEAR 1932



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 township of Yallourn 'took root, bloomed, withered and died'....

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

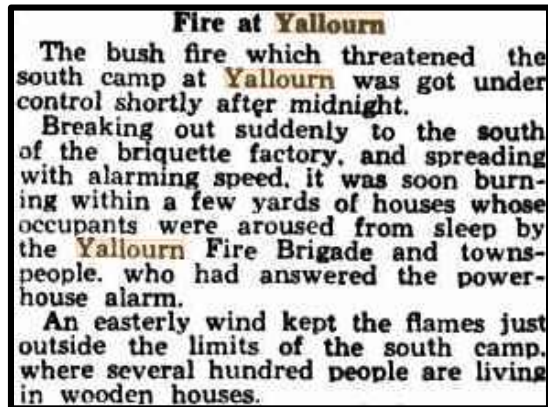
In this history series for the Virtual Yallourn website, various events in the life of the town and its industries have been chronicled. The monthly activities, shown in each year, are not necessarily the most momentous occasions but simply attempt to show the many varied and interesting happenings that made the local (and sometimes national) news in that era.

The walk down 'Memory Lane' (not to be confused with Meadow Lane which ran off Latrobe Avenue) begins in the year of 1925 when the plans for the Yallourn Project were well underway and the 'garden town' of Yallourn was creating interest far and wide. This article relates to 1932,



1932

JANUARY: A bushfire threatened the South Camp at Yallourn In January 1932. The fire started somewhere near the briquette factory and spread rapidly towards family dwellings. The Yallourn Fire Brigade and volunteers brought the fire under control. Thankfully, there were no lives lost or reported injuries.



Source: 'Weekly Times' January 9th 1932. Page: 5

FEBRUARY: The Yallourn Branch of the Australian Natives Association held its Annual Picnic at Walhalla. A special train carried a large group of adults and children to Walhalla for the festivities, which included a variety of games. Mr H. Tait and Mr J. Young received warm praise for their central role in organizing the 'fun-filled' outing.



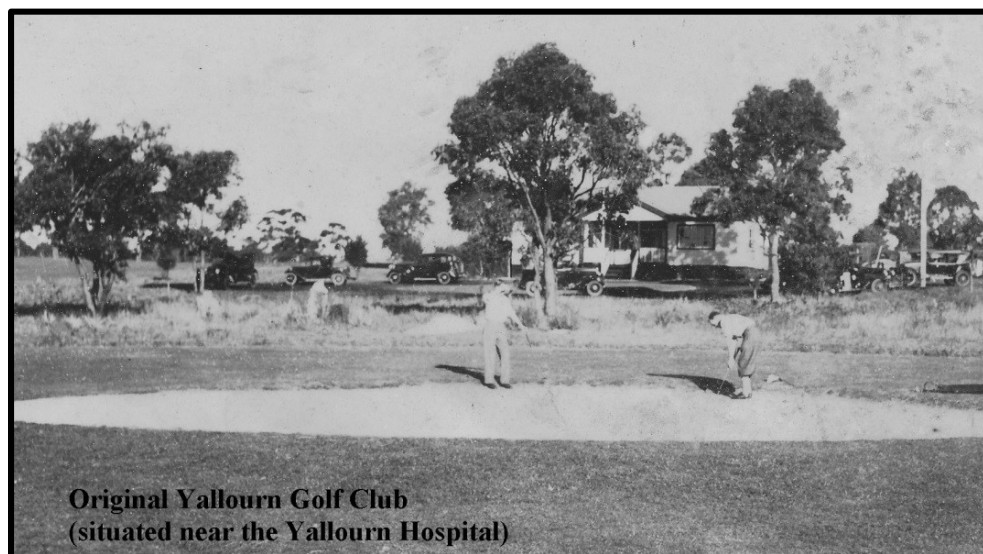
This is a photograph of the 'famous' railway bridge at Walhalla. It must have been a most memorable picnic for the families of the Yallourn ANA to have 'been aboard' the steam locomotive journey to the Walhalla Station. Note: Mr H. Tait, as mentioned in the above article, was probably Harry Tait (who was also President of the Yallourn Anglers' Club).

MARCH: A dirt-track motor cycle race was held at Yallourn and several well-known exhibition riders competed in the event. The races were part of a Yallourn Sports Day program which included the foot running, trotting and the very popular sport of wood chopping. Proceeds from the day went towards providing work for local unemployed men.



For younger readers who maybe unaware of how popular wood chopping events were in earlier days. This photograph, taken by the eminent J. P. Campbell, shows the huge crowd that gathered to watch the axe-men in action at the Yallourn Gymkhana in the 1920's. The competitors in the woodchop can be seen in the clearing in the middle of the photograph. Source: State Library of Victoria. Reference: 2010164.

APRIL: On April 30th 1932, the official opening of the Yallourn Golf Club links took place. The original golf course was situated near the Yallourn Hospital. The Secretary of YGC in 1932 was H.W. Lynch and the Club Captains in that era included:- M.C Cox, H.W. Lynch, G.D. Jones, W. Morrison, H.P. Wallman and R.K. Dixon.



An early photograph of the Yallourn Golf Club. Source: Virtual Yallourn

MAY: The final results of the 1932 State Election gave an indication of the population of Yallourn (including the number of men living in the camps) in that period of the town's history. In 1932, Yallourn was part of the electorate of Walhalla (i.e. Legislative Assembly).

At the 1932 election, it was a three-way contest for Walhalla. The sitting member was Mr Moncur (Country Party); and a resident of Yallourn, Mr H.E McGowan stood for the Labour Party. A well-known member of the Morwell Shire Council, Cr D. J. White, was an Independent candidate in that election. The overall voting figures at the booths in Yallourn/Brown Coal Mine were:

	McGowan Labour Party	Moncur Country Party	White Independent
Yallourn	729	498	229
Yallourn West	131	42	11
Brown Coal Mine	261	89	31



This photograph of Mr Moncur was published in 'The Countryman' in November 1929.

Despite the strong level of support for Mr McGowan in Yallourn, Mr Moncur won the election quite easily with 5389 votes. Mr McGowan polled 2614 votes and Cr. White gained 1056 votes. As previously mentioned on this website, Mr Moncur was the member for Walhalla from 1927-1945. The seat of Walhalla was abolished in 1945; and Yallourn became part of the electorate of Gippsland North. In 1955, the 'new' Morwell electorate (with some 20,000 registered voters) included the subdivisions of Morwell, Yallourn, Trafalgar and Neerim South.

JUNE: Yallourn was back in the news in a big way when the headlines read: '**A Strange Animal Seen Near Yallourn**' ...



Source: 'The Age' June 14th 1931 Page: 10

A large animal (which some said resembled a lion) was seen near Yallourn at the small mining settlement of Tanjil.

Mr Spencer, Mr Townsend and Rev. Fitzgerald corroborated the story; and a search party (with guns and dogs) was organized to 'run the strange beast to earth.'

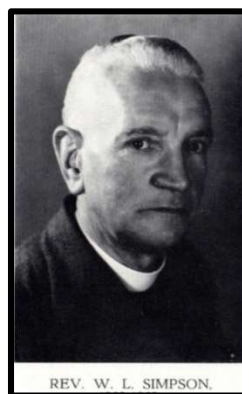
JULY: The Reverend W. Simpson departed Yallourn in July to take up pastoral duties at St Stephen's Church in Caulfield.

Reverend Simpson arrived in Yallourn in 1929; and he had proven to be a popular member of the township. He was said to be most diligent and dedicated in his work for all local families. As part of the King's Jubilee Commemoration Service at the Yallourn Presbyterian Church in May 1935, Rev. Simpson was invited to return to Yallourn and deliver an address to the congregation.



Text: "The Rev. W. Simpson, of Yallourn, is being called to St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Caulfield, in succession to the Rev. H. M. Burns." **Source:** 'The Argus' July 20th.

It is known that Reverend Simpson returned to Yallourn in May 1952 to officiate at the wedding of Fae Lawson (the daughter of well-known local identity Jock Lawson) and Keith Horman.



Reverend W. Simpson

AUGUST: The Annual Meeting of the Yallourn and District Vocational Guidance Council was held at Yallourn in August. Delegates from Moe, Morwell Bridge, Brown Coal Mine and Yallourn attended; and the office bearers of the YDVG in 1932 were: Mr G. Pearce (President), Mr W. Abrahams (Vice President) and Mr B. Drummond was the Secretary. Mr Abrahams was school principal at Yallourn from 1932 until 1935.

SEPTEMBER: Yallourn Football Club created history when it won the Gippsland Football League Premiership in 1932. The Grand Final was played at Sale; and a record crowd paid £150 to witness Yallourn overcome a strong Maffra combination. The final scores were: Yallourn 9.17 (71) defeated Maffra 6.7 (43). Other major local football news in 1932 was that Stan Comber, a stalwart of YFC, decided to 'hang up his boots' after his sterling career in country football.



Text: "Yallourn Veteran Retires STAN COMBER, the popular playing secretary of the Yallourn club, has decided after 17 years of active participation in the game that the time has come to permit a younger man to take his place on the field, and that he can still serve the game and his club in an executive capacity.

He leaves the playing field with an unblemished record. Ever known as a hard, vigorous player, he has occupied practically every position in the field, but never has it been said of him that he has done any unfair action. Long may he continue to serve the game in an executive capacity." Source: 'The Weekly Times' August 20th 1932. Page: 65.

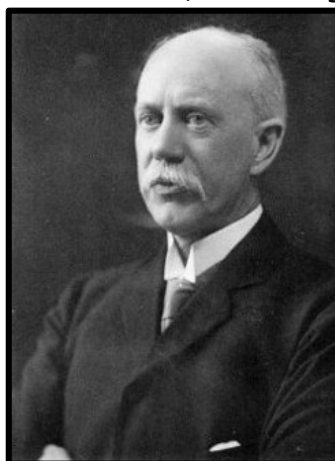
OCTOBER: A young cyclist from Morwell Bridge, A. Grist, won the Yallourn - Morwell Road Race. The return distance (which included the town of Traralgon) was given as some 36 miles (58 kilometres) and the winner's time was 1 hour 42½ minutes.

Other riders to impress in the event were M. Cotton and R. Barton. In later years, a racetrack for cycle racing was constructed around the No: 2 Oval and cycling race meetings at Yallourn became very popular.



An item of vital interest to the people of Yallourn in October 1932 was an announcement that the SEC intended to outlay £5000 (pounds) to combat the high levels of coal dust which were contaminating the Latrobe River...

"Several months ago, a deputation told the Minister for Water Supply (Mr Goudie) that cows would no longer drink the water and that land subject to flood was spoilt for grazing by the black silt from Yallourn. By the new scheme, the sludge will be drawn through a cloth filter by an electric vacuum process, and the water drained off will be used for spraying. Neither the water nor the sludge will find its way to the river. The dust arrested will be used as fuel. Source: 'Morwell Advertiser' October 29th, 1932. Page: 5



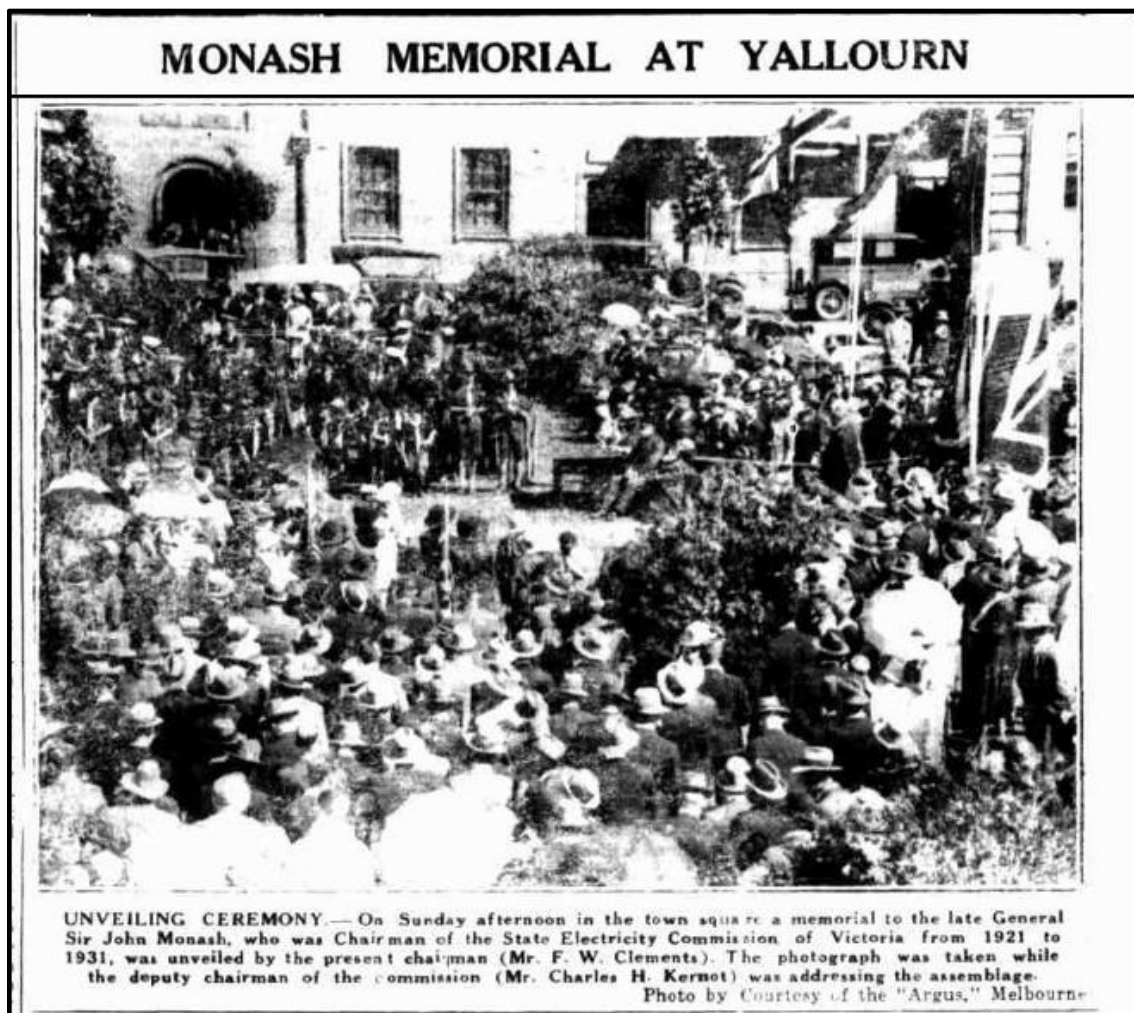
The Minister for Water Supply in 1932-Sir George Goudie.

An article regarding Sir George Goudie and the problems of pollution of the Latrobe River in those years at Yallourn can be found on this website at:

<http://www.virtualyallourn.com/media-archive/document/newspapers-1932-problems-pollution-yallourn>

NOVEMBER: More than 4000 people gathered at the Yallourn gardens for the unveiling of the memorial to Sir John Monash. People travelled from far and wide to Yallourn on that historic day. The following extract was published in 'The Herald' on November 22nd

MONASH MEMORIAL Special Train to Yallourn. *The State Electricity Commission has chartered a special train to Yallourn on Sunday, November 27, for the official unveiling of the memorial to Sir John Monash which will be held, at 3p.m. The special train will leave Flinders Street at 9.30a.m., stopping at Richmond, South Yarra, Caulfield, Oakleigh, Dandenong, Berwick and Warragul and will leave Yallourn on the return journey at 4.50p.m., reaching Flinders Street at 8.40 p.m. Visitors will have an opportunity of inspecting the works, as the train will arrive at the open cut at 1.30p.m. The unveiling will be performed by David Monash Bennett, a grandson of the late Sir John. The chairman of the Commission (Mr Clements) will deliver an address.*



Caption Text: MONASH MEMORIAL AT YALLOURN UNVEILING CEREMONY - On Sunday afternoon in the town square a memorial to the late General Sir John Monash, who was Chairman of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria from 1921 to 1931, was unveiled by the present chairman (Mr. F. W. Clements). The photograph was taken while the deputy chairman of the commission (Mr. Charles H. Kernot) was addressing the assemblage. Photo by Courtesy of the 'Argus,' Melbourne. Source: 'Advertiser' (Hurstbridge) December 2nd 1932.



This website has many stories and photographs devoted to the life and achievements of Sir John Monash. Click on the link below:

<http://www.virtualyallourn.com/search/node?keys=Sir+John+Monash+>

Also in November, the district's newspaper announced that Mr G.L Petersen (shown below), the advanced manager for Wirth's Circus, had arrived in Yallourn to publicize the anticipated performance of the famous 'big top' show on December 2nd.

WIRTH'S CIRCUS

Coming To Yallourn.

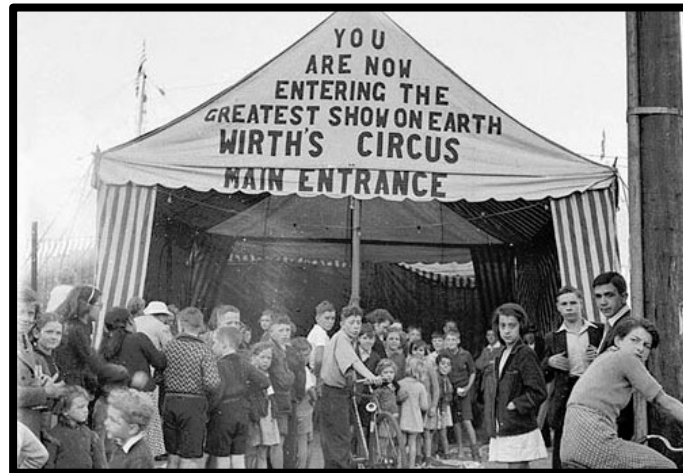
G. L. Petersen, advance manager for Wirth Bros. Ltd. has arrived to make arrangements to bring their enormous combined shows to Yallourn, on Friday, December 2, for one night only.

This year the principal attractions, which were specially engaged by Phillip Wirth on his Continental tour, are:—The great Aloys Peters, the sensation of the world in his

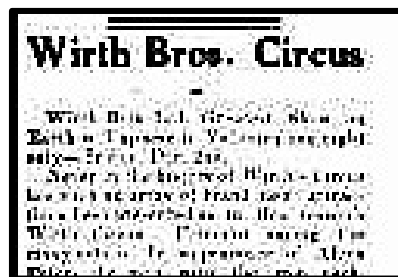


Source: 'The Narracan Shire Advocate and Yallourn Brown Coal Mine, Walhalla and Thorpdale Lines Echo' 25th November 1932. Page: 2

Some of the circus attractions included: the travelling zoo of 14 cages of wild animals (including elephants and a hippopotamus named Lizzie the Second), performing bears, aerial acrobats, trained horse and ponies, Russian Cossack riders and a death-defying high dive act by the 'world famous' Aloys Peters.



Although this photograph was taken somewhere in NSW well after 1932, it serves to show younger readers of the keen interest taken by children in the travelling Wirth's Circus in earlier times. In 1932, the circus at Yallourn was front page news with the 'Morwell Advertiser' calling it the 'Greatest Show on Earth' Source: State Library of NSW.

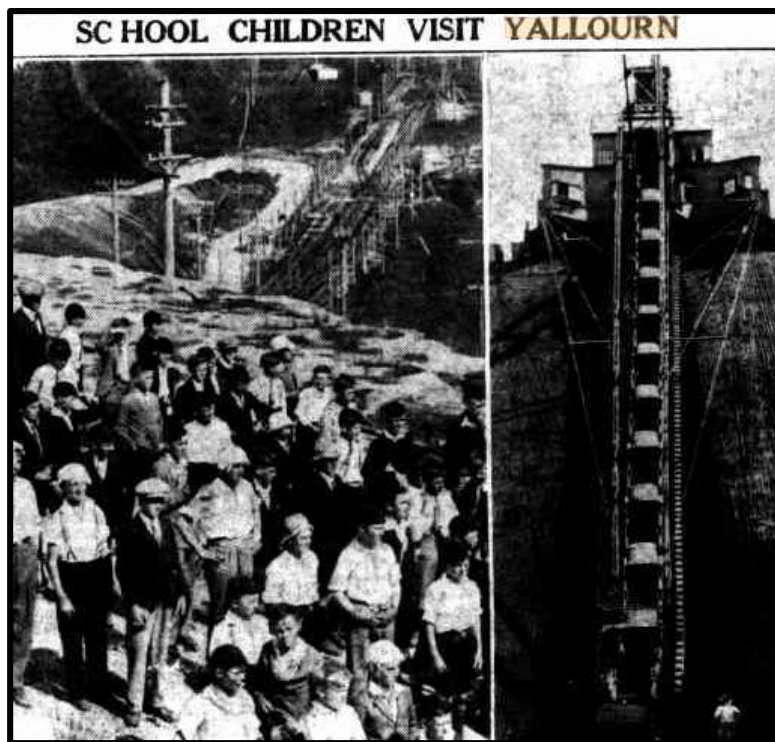


DECEMBER: The Yallourn Swimming Club hosted a major state-wide swimming carnival at the Yallourn Pool which, in those days, was situated on the banks of the Latrobe River. The carnival was widely advertised and 'cheap' motor transport from the city was made available as well as the opportunity for visitors to tour the SEC works.



This photograph of an idyllic scene at Yallourn, on the Latrobe River, in the 1930's was taken by one of Australia's most eminent photographers James Pinkerton Campbell (1865-1935). Other photographs and stories about the history of the Yallourn Swimming Club and its long list of remarkable personalities can be found on this website.

Also in December, some seven hundred school children from the metropolitan area visited Yallourn and toured the Open Cut Mine. Tours to Yallourn (and the on-going works at the coal mine) were a popular activity in that era.



Caption text: SCHOOL CHILDREN VISIT YALLOURN: Seven hundred school children from the Northcote district were shown over the brown coal mine workings at Yallourn on Monday. The photograph shows some of the children, and the huge dredge, which, operating in the open cut lifts 10 tons of coal a minute. Source: 'Advertiser' (Hurstbridge) December 16th 1932. Page: 1.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The photograph of Reverend Simpson was unearthed and forwarded to Virtual Yallourn by Barbara Hoad, President of the Glen Eira Historical Society. Virtual Yallourn is most grateful to Barbara for her kind assistance as it is possibly the only photograph, of Reverend Simpson, on the Virtual Yallourn website.

CAN YOU ADD TO THE HISTORY OF YALLOURN?

The above article was researched and written by Roger Spaul and presented and posted by Julie George, for the Virtual Yallourn website, in August 2022. It is hoped that readers may be able to add additional information regarding an event or a person mentioned in the above items. Please contact Julie if you have memorabilia or photographs related to the history of Yallourn. Thank you for your help in building the history files of Virtual Yallourn.