

YALLOURN YEAR BY YEAR 1933



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.

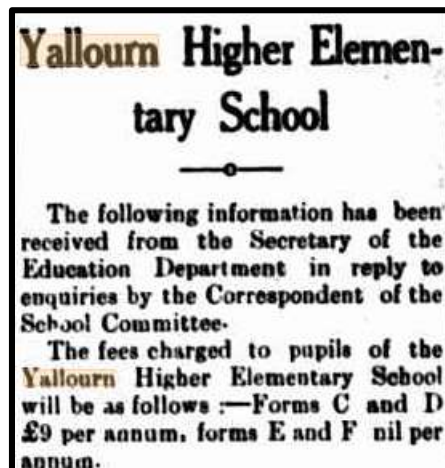
In this history series for the Virtual Yallourn website, various events in the life of the town and its industries have been chronicled. The monthly activities, shown in each year, are not necessarily the most momentous occasions but simply attempt to show the many varied and interesting happenings that 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 1933.



1933

JANUARY: The Victorian Education Department informed the Yallourn Elementary School Committee of the new fee structure for 1933. The extract (below) shows that certain pupils (Forms C and D) would be required to pay £9 (pounds) per year while other students' instruction would be free of charge. The article also outlined exceptions and variations of such charges according to the situation faced by local families. Note: According to the RBA inflation calculator, £9 in 1933 is equivalent to approx. \$960.00 in today's currency.



Source: 'Morwell Advertiser' January 19th 1933. Page: 10



This photograph, of students of the Yallourn Higher Elementary School, was taken in 1930. It is stated that the first secondary classes at Yallourn were held sometime in 1928. The initial enrolment was 61 pupils and the first headmaster was Mr Henry Bull. The school was listed as a 'higher elementary school' in 1929. Source: 'Weekly Times' April 19th 1930. Page: 38.

The annual meeting of the Yallourn Branch of the League of Nations Union was also held in January 1933. Mr R.D. Dixon was elected to the position of President while Dr H.V. Francis and Mr Morris were nominated Vice-presidents. Mr W. Jamieson was the Honourary Secretary.

The name Robert Derwent Dixon may not have great meaning to younger generations but, in the story of Yallourn, he was a tower of strength and a person of the highest ideals and selfless endeavour.



This rare photograph of Robert Derwent Dixon, Superintendent of the SEC at Yallourn, was discovered in a timeworn Monash University publication. Mr Dixon was a dynamo in the township and was active in a wide range of community organizations. R.D. Dixon served as a Captain in the 35th Battery during World war: 1 and was awarded the D.S.O. He arrived in Yallourn in 1927; and set his mind to make Yallourn a 'place of opportunity' for young and old. His belief in the importance of education for children was exemplified in the standard of town's school buildings and the opening of Yallourn Technical School in 1936. R.D. Dixon was a heroic figure in the story of Yallourn and was admired by all...

"...And while he gained everyone's respect and confidence by his dignity, justice and impartiality, he won the affection of all by tact, geniality and real kindness..."

Source: 'To Yallourn with Love.'

FEBRUARY: Mrs Jones was elected to the position of President of the Yallourn Branch of the Country Women's Association. Other known members of the Yallourn Branch in that era included: Mesdames Dixon (wife of R.D. Dixon-see above) Armstrong, Jamieson, Lucas, Porter, Parkinson, Wilson, Orr, Cox, Hoath, McMahon, Roulston and Harder.



The badge of the Victorian Branch of the CWA

MARCH: The Yallourn Orchestral Society's gave another memorable recital in March. The society was very busy throughout 1933; and had acquired a handsome reputation for the quality of its performances in and around Yallourn since its formation in 1931. Mr Cannon was the first conductor of the Orchestra and it is recorded that he was succeeded by Mr Connolly in 1933.

The Office Bearers of the Yallourn Orchestral Society in 1933 were: President: Dr. J. M. Andrew, Vice President: Mr R. A. Hunt, Secretary: Mr Steel and the Treasurer was Mr W. L. Kerston.



This is an image of the Yallourn Orchestral Society. The year in which this photograph was taken is unknown but is probably after 1933. Source: Item MM10230-‘Museum Victoria’ collection.

Also in March 1933, the Yallourn Cricket Club travelled to the city and took part in the Country Week Championships. The team performed exceptionally well and was ‘Runners-up’ to Ballarat in the ‘Group: A’ group competition.



The Yallourn Cricket XI -Runners-up in A Group at the 1933 Victorian Country Week Championship. In the Grand Final, Yallourn was all out for 136; and Ballarat (4/141) ‘coasted home’ to a comfortable victory. The players who represented Yallourn at those championships included Messrs: Cummings, Michael, Claringbold, Turner, Evison, Hutchison, Le Franc, Gilbert, Collier, Dunn, and Cox.

APRIL: In an historic match, Yallourn opened its 'account' against Morwell in the 'newly' formed Central Gippsland Soccer Association. The Association's President was the dynamic local personality W.H. Brewer and the Secretary was Mr S. (probably Sid) Benson. On April 8th, the Yallourn team played against Morwell at the Yallourn pitch and Yallourn claimed victory (by three goals to one). Yallourn's best players were listed as Slade and Greer who were said to have shown some 'finer points of the game'. Yallourn's Mr T. Evans umpired the match.

Other players who represented the Yallourn soccer team in 1933 included: Messrs: Spence, Tremaine, Tate and Waring. It seems that in those early years, soccer was played at the oval adjacent to the briquette factory.

A comprehensive match report from the 1934 soccer season can also be found on this website.



Soccer was a most popular sport in Yallourn; and the YSC won quickly won recognition following its formation. This photograph of the Yallourn Blues Soccer team (junior team) was taken in 1938. Back Row: Bruce Spenser (reserve), Doug Wilson, Tom Melbourne, Ron Welfare. Middle Row: Bob Crookston, Roy Whelan, Ray Stanger, Ray Tate. Front Row: Tom Mills; --- Drane, Don McAllister, Syd Tate, Brian Downey. Coach: Tom Oddy. The youngster Syd Tate (front row) went on to become a star wingman for the Geelong Football Club (i.e. Australian Rules). Source: 'Virtual Yallourn' website.

MAY: The photograph below was published in the 'Weekly Times' on May 6th 1933; and shows the Yallourn Fire Brigade team which participated in the Leongatha Highland Sports Carnival.

Unfortunately, there were no names of members listed with the image. It is known that a volunteer brigade was formed at Yallourn in 1924; and by 1933, Yallourn had won the prestigious title of the State's Champion Brigade. The Captains of the Yallourn Brigade in those early days were: Mr C.S. Fenner, Ron Wiggins (1924), Harry Tait (1926), Tom White (1927) and Joe Smith became the Yallourn Brigade Captain in 1939.



JUNE: In June 1933, a group of 40 engineering apprentices travelled from Yallourn to Maffra to tour the Sugar Beet and Butter Factories. The students also visited a sugar beet farm at Bundalaguah to learn how the beet(s) were farmed, topped and loaded for processing at the local factory.

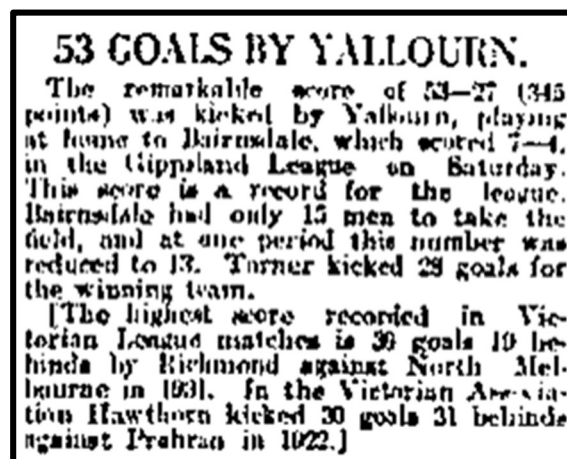
Following the guided inspections, the apprentices were provided with afternoon tea at the Maffra Presbyterian Church Hall. From reading the article, the excursion appeared to be a resounding success; and the Yallourn students were appreciative of the warm hospitality that they had received from the people of Maffra.





Quotation from Maffra.net.au website: *"The Maffra Sugar Beet Company was registered in 1896, with capital of £70,000. Building of the factory commenced in the following year and was completed in 1898. The Colony's first 500 tons of sugar was refined that year. Unfortunately, drought seriously affected production and the Company was unable to continue profitably, so the Victorian Government took over the factory in 1899. It was kept in 'mothballs' until 1910, when the industry was revived"*

JULY: In July 1933, Yallourn Football Club hit the news across Victoria when it kicked 53 goals in a match against Bairnsdale. The score of 53-27 (345) was a then-record in the Gippsland Football League. Yallourn's famous spearhead, Jack Turner, who had played with Essendon in 1930, booted 28 goals.



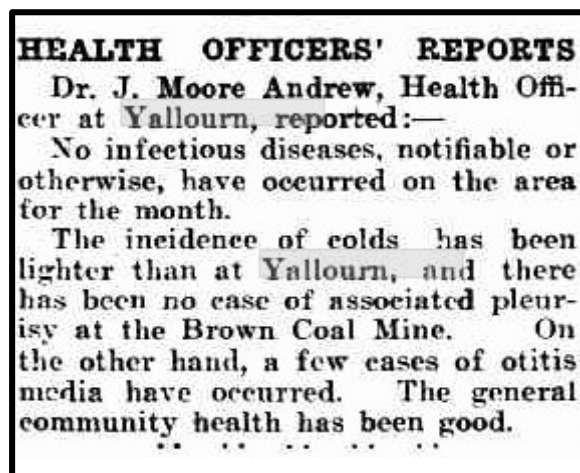
Source: 'The Australasian' July 22nd 1933. Page: 49

In 1933, Jack Turner kicked 28 goals against Bairnsdale. Yallourn was affiliated with the Gippsland Football League that season. The scores from the game were: Yallourn 53.27 (345) defeated Bairnsdale 6.7. (43). Yallourn's listed goal kickers that day were: Turner 28, Graham 6, Pratt 4, Crawford 4, Knight 2 and Franklin 2. Up until that point of the 1933 season (29th July), Jack had kicked 85 goals. At the GFL meeting at Sale (24th August), it was announced that Jack had won the goal kicking with 116 goals. Jack may be the only YFC player to have kicked 'a ton' in one season. Jack kicked two goals in the 1933 Grand Final; and Yallourn 13.14 (92) won the flag that day by defeating Maffra 13.9. (87).

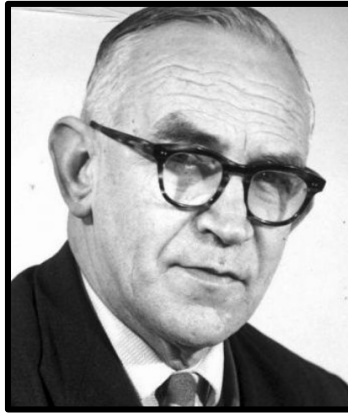


The Yallourn Football Club in 1933. Jack Turner can be seen third from the left in the back row. (Back Row, left to right): T. Knight. A. Hutton (Vice-Capt.) J. Turner B. Crawford. E. Franklin, T. McKay. James. E. Harry. (Centre Row) L. Kiernan V. Irwin P. O'Neill (Capt.) E. Williams J. Piggott C. White P. Palmer. (Front row) I. Williams R. Trevorah H. Graham. R. Smith (19th). Source: 'Weekly Times' September 9th 1933. Page: 35

AUGUST: In August, Dr Andrew, who was the Health Officer at Yallourn, reported a clean bill of health for the district. As Dr Andrew's report indicated, there were some cases of otitis media (better known as a middle ear infection) and the most heartening news was that there had been no cases of pleurisy at the Brown Coal Mine settlement.



Source: 'The Narracan Shire Advocate and Yallourn Brown Coal Mine, Walhalla and Thorpdale Lines Echo' August 25th 1933. Page: 3



Dr. James Moore Andrew 1899-1972

Dr. James Moore Andrew arrived in Yallourn in 1925. His time in Yallourn was marked by unstinting and dedicated service to the people of the district. Dr. Andrew was once described as... 'The doyen of the local medical fraternity...' There are endless stories about Dr Andrew's drive and his resolve to care for his patients. He gave his time and energy selflessly to make Yallourn an ideal place for workers and their families to live.

In 1972, Dr Andrew received an MBE for his services to the people of Yallourn. The maternity wing at the Latrobe Valley Community Hospital at Moe was named in his honour; and his portrait was hung at the LVCH as a constant reminder of the 'power of one' in serving a community.

SEPTEMBER: Fishing in the Latrobe River was keenly embraced by many local residents; and it is known that there was an Anglers Club in the Moe district in 1922. Brief references were also unearthed about similar clubs at Trafalgar and Morwell. The Yallourn Anglers Club was formed in or about October 1927; and the number of foundation members was thought to be 30.

Creek, grassed 21 fish up to 3lb.
Yallourn have formed a club and
joined the Morwell association, they
already have 30 members and ex-
pect more.

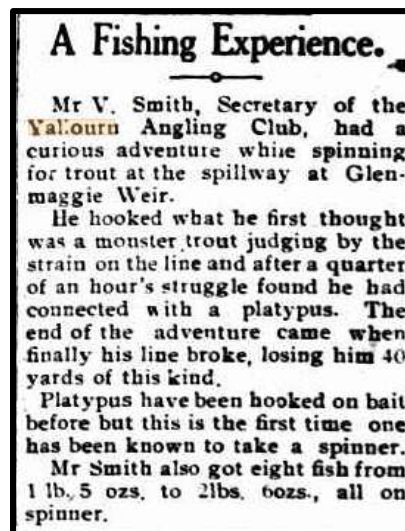


This scenic view of the Latrobe River was taken in the period 1920-30; and is one of a series on file at the State Library of Victoria (Reference: 2037193)

By 1931 the club was known at the Yallourn and Brown Coal Mine Angling Club; and the active members included H.(probably Harry) Tait, E. Blanche, Anderson, F. Cain, F. Hassett, R. Dixon, H. Johnston, M. Hogan, L. McCrory, J. Gardiner (Yallourn Butchery) J. Whitaker, Smith, T. Mills (West Camp store) and Mr. Williams (General Store).

As a measure of how the club had seized the imagination of the fishermen of Yallourn, it is recorded that a 'fishing picnic' on Boxing Day in 1933 (organized by Harry Tait) had attracted 150 adults and 60 youngsters to attend.

However, the biggest fishing story of 1933 was when the Yallourn Angling Club's Secretary, Mr Smith hooked a platypus while fishing on the spillway at the Glenmaggie Weir. Thankfully the platypus broke the line and 'got away'...



Source: 'Morwell Advertiser' September 28th 1933. Page: 9

Also in September 1933, Yallourn featured on the metropolitan radio station 3LO. The broadcast would not only have promoted the extensive SEC projects at Yallourn but would have engendered pride of the local residents in their town and its facilities.



'Radio rules the waves' – an advertisement for a wireless set in 1933.

By 1932, there were more than 50 radio stations in Australia (12 ABC stations and 43 commercial stations including local station 3TR, originally situated at Trafalgar). While the population of Yallourn was approximately 3,500 in 1933, there were only 260 wireless sets in Yallourn; and it would be interesting to know how many local listeners had actually tuned in to hear the 3LO broadcast which featured aspects of work at the Power Station, Open Cut and the Briquette Factory.

A broadcast of the works through
3LO was carried out on Tuesday.
The activities of the Open Cut,
Power Station, and Briquetting with
appropriate descriptions of the work
being carried out was given at
intervals during the day.

Source: 'Morwell Advertiser' September 7th 1933. Page: 12

OCTOBER: The Yallourn Junior Gymnastic Club gave an exhibition in October. According to Prue McGoldrick's research, there was an organization within the town known as the Yallourn Girls' Physical Culture and Gymnasium Club.

The Yallourn Junior Gymnastic
Club will give a Grand Display in
the Presbyterian Church Hall on
Tuesday, 24th October, 1933 at 8
p.m. A charge of 1/- will be made
for admission. Children ad.

Source: 'Morwell Advertiser' October 19th 1933. Page 9

NOVEMBER: The history of Yallourn is dotted with the visitations of eminent men and women; and one of the highlights in November 1933 was the visit of Dr Frank Mauldon to the town. Having served on the Western Front in World War: 1, Dr Mauldon's life story makes interesting reading...

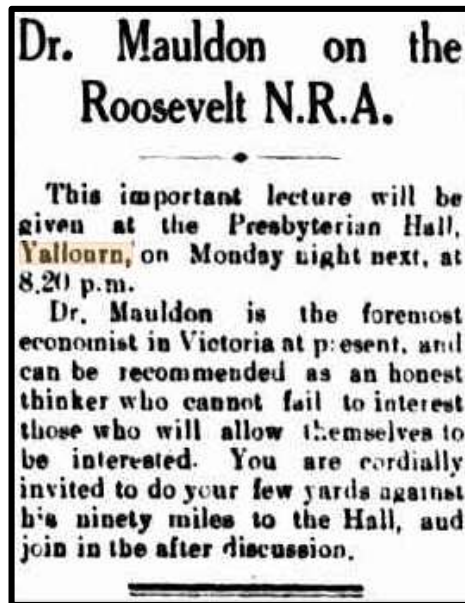
"Frank Mauldon was appointed senior lecturer in economics in the new faculty of commerce at the University of Melbourne. For 'The Economics of Australian Coal' (Melbourne, 1929), Mauldon received the university's Harbison-Higinbotham research scholarship (1928)...

In 1930, as a Rockefeller Foundation fellow, he chose to study 'structural changes in industrial organisation and public administration' in the United States of America and Canada...."

In one of his lectures, Dr. Mauldon described 1932 as the *"darkest year in the annals of our employment..."* That year national joblessness had reached approximately 30%; and for many Australians life was despairing as poverty, caused by unemployment, brought families 'to their knees.'

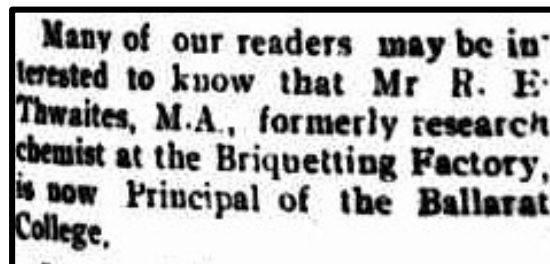
Younger readers may not be aware the Great Depression impacted upon Yallourn; and it is known that some local families were forced to leave the township because the cost of home rental was simply 'beyond their means.'

Dr Mauldon's lecture, at the Yallourn's Presbyterian Hall, centred upon President's Franklin Roosevelt's attempt to coordinate and strengthen the various sectors of American industry (via the agency of the N.R.A i.e. the National Recovery Administration-see below).

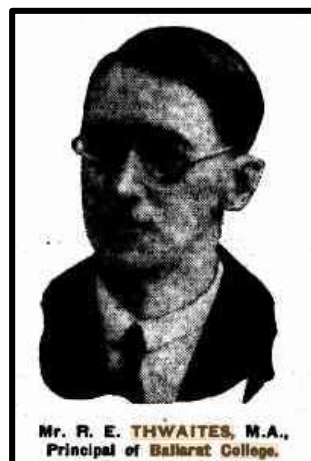


Sources: The photograph of Dr Mauldon is from 'Hobart Mercury'; and the notice of his visit to Yallourn was found in the 'Morwell Advertiser' (November 16th, 1933).

DECEMBER: A small item in the 'Morwell Advertiser' on December 21st reported that Robert Ernest Thwaites, formerly of Yallourn, had been appointed to the position of Principal of Ballarat College.



Sadly, the story of Thwaites' family of Yallourn has become lost in the 'fog of time' but it is a most absorbing chapter in the town's history. Robert Ernest Thwaites (shown below), a former Oxford scholar, had immigrated to Australia in 1911. His wife (Jessie Elizabeth) was the daughter of Sir Hugh Nelson (the former Premier of Queensland from 1893 until 1898).



R.E. Thwaites (1879-1946) formerly of Yallourn
Source: 'The Age' December 18th 1933 Page: 7

Robert Thwaites had graduated with honours in the Final Natural Science School (Chemistry), at Oxford University; and was a noted authority on matters related to shale oil, coal liquefaction and alternate uses for coal.

Robert was the author of a sixty-page book entitled: 'The Production of Liquid Fuels from Oil Shale and Coal in Australia.' The book was published in 1923. The contents of that publication may have been of interest to Sir John Monash and the SECV Commissioners in their future hopes and plans for the coal mine at Yallourn.

Robert and his family arrived in Yallourn in the mid 1920's. He worked as a chemist at the Yallourn Briquette Factory until he became seriously ill and ceased work with the SEC. It is hard to determine exactly when Robert and his family left Yallourn but perhaps it was in or about 1927.

Note: Robert's first-born son Michael attended Yallourn State School and was a brilliant student; and in 1936, he was awarded a Rhodes Scholarship and travelled to England to study at the Oxford University. Michael Thwaites was the first Yallourn student to study at Oxford; and he later won fame as a poet, author and intelligence officer. He was awarded the Order of Australia in 2002.

Robert Ernest Thwaites died in Ballarat on 17th February 1946.

A comprehensive article regarding the truly remarkable Thwaites family of Yallourn can be found at:

<https://www.virtualyallourn.com/stories/newspapers-1947-michael-thwaites-rhodes-scholar-who-attended-yallourn-state-school-4085>

CAN YOU ADD TO THE HISTORY OF YALLOURN?

The above item was researched and written by Roger Spaul and presented and posted by Julie George, for the Virtual Yallourn website, in November 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.