

VALE
ALAN RIPPER (1939-2020)
A FINE INNINGS



Readers of this website and former residents of Yallourn will be saddened to hear of the recent passing of well-known Yallourn and Morwell identity Alan Ripper.

Alan passed away at his home at Lake Cathie (near Port Macquarie) on Wednesday, 14th October. He was 81 years of age.

Alan, the only child of Vernon and Alma Ripper, was born in Melbourne in 1939. In his early years, he lived in Lygon Street, Carlton, just a 'drop kick' from Princes Park Oval; and hence his life-long support of the Carlton Football Club.

Vern's experiences in the RAN during the World War: II make for absorbing reading; and, on his return home from active duty in 1946, he accepted a position as the Boiler House Engineer at the Yallourn Power Station. Consequently, the Ripper family moved to Yallourn...

"We stayed in Mr and Mrs Wal Lacey's house initially until a house was made available to us at 13 The Angles...I started school in Year 3 with Miss Williams as my teacher. The Year 4 classes, the following year, were held in the Guide Hut down near the swimming pool. Our teacher was Ms Kiely ...Years 5 and 6 were back at the main school (4085)..."

Like so many children of the Yallourn township, Alan had a happy and fun-filled life which included spirited adventures with his friends, bike riding and picnics along the Narracan River.

In 1951, Alan commenced his Secondary Education at Yallourn High School; and it was at that juncture that he met a well-known local cricketer, Dudley Sharpe. Dudley fostered Alan's interest in cricket and encouraged him to play lower grade cricket with Yallourn CC.

Dudley was not only one of the finest batsmen in the post-war era at the Yallourn Cricket Club but he had the ability to impart the finer points of the game to youngsters. Alan profited from Dudley's tuition and he took to the game of cricket with unbridled enthusiasm.

In 1955, the family departed Yallourn for Geelong and Alan attended Geelong High School. However, within a 'short space of time' Alan was on the move again when he enrolled at Swinburne Technical College (at Hawthorn) to commence studies in Mechanical Engineering. It was during those two years that he joined Richmond Cricket Club and gained invaluable experience playing on turf pitches.

In 1958, the family returned to Latrobe Valley and Vern, Alma and Alan took up residence in June Street, Morwell.

Alan completed his engineering Diploma at the Yallourn Technical School in 1960; and, following his graduation from YTC, he worked as a cadet engineer with the SECV. It was a golden opportunity for Alan; and that training was to prove the start of a substantial engineering career which took him 'further afield' (e.g. to the Electricity Commission of NSW in 1970).

His time at Yallourn Technical School were important years as he not only achieved academic success but also gained a handsome reputation, in the Central Gippsland Cricket Association, as a formidable and fiery opening bowler.

As the CGCA archives show, Alan developed into a star with Morwell Cricket Club. Even today, Alan's ability to tear the top order, of the very best opposition batting line-ups, to shreds is still spoken about. Alan hit the news across Gippsland in 1967-68 when he captured 9/28 against Yallourn.

In his 92 games with Morwell Cricket Club (in all grades of CGCA cricket), Alan took 258 wickets at an impressive average of 11. 48; and, as a middle order batsman, made 1487 runs. He was once described as...

"Alan Ripper was a nippy, right arm quick bowler, who was able to gain pace off the wicket.. Alan too was a handy middle order batsman who valued his wicket. When he left Morwell he played Sub-District cricket for Malvern." Source: Morwell Cricket Club Files.

In 1961-62, Alan was selected to represent the CGCA at the Victorian Country Week Championships. He later captained Morwell Cricket Club to a premiership in 1962-63; and, in that Grand Final, his fighting innings of 83 and fine bowling (3/53) steered MCC to a definitive victory over Moe.

Arguably, the highlight of Alan's notable cricket career was when he and his former friends and teammates, Alan Mathieson and Robin Auchterlonie, were selected in the Morwell Cricket Club All Star Team.

While cricket was his first sporting love he was also an enthusiastic player with Morwell Football Club

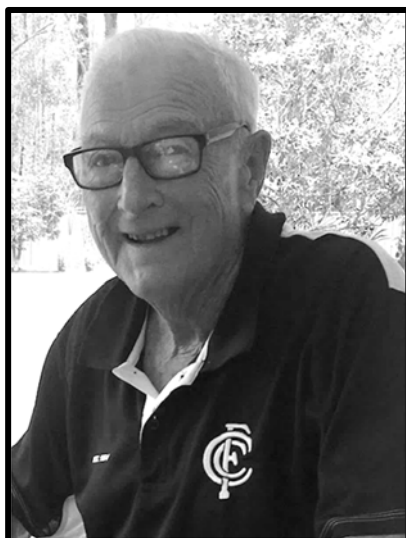
In May 2019, Alan made contact with Julie George at Virtual Yallourn; and forwarded his recollections and several photographs of his days at Yallourn Technical School.

One photograph (posted below), which he sent to Julie, shows the students of the 4th Year Engineering Diploma Course(s) at Yallourn Technical School in 1960.



Alan Ripper was a gregarious and generous person who enjoyed life to the full. He will always be remembered for his friendly demeanour and his fine spirit of sportsmanship 'on and off the field.'

The readers and friends of Virtual Yallourn express their sympathies to Rosemary, Susan, Alan (Junior), Julie and the Ripper family at this time of deep sorrow.



Alan Ripper 1939-2020
R.I.P

'Thank you' to Rosemary, Susan and Jim Watt (Jnr) for their assistance in preparing this article for the website.

Alan Ripper is also mentioned in John White's book entitled: 'Coaldust & Cricket' which was published in 2012. John is a former resident of Yallourn; and an article about John, who played cricket with Alan, can be found on this website at : <http://www.virtualyallourn.com/stories/yallourn-cricket-club-ycc-john-jumbo-james-john-white>

This article was written and presented for the Virtual Yallourn website by Roger Spaul and Julie George in October 2020.