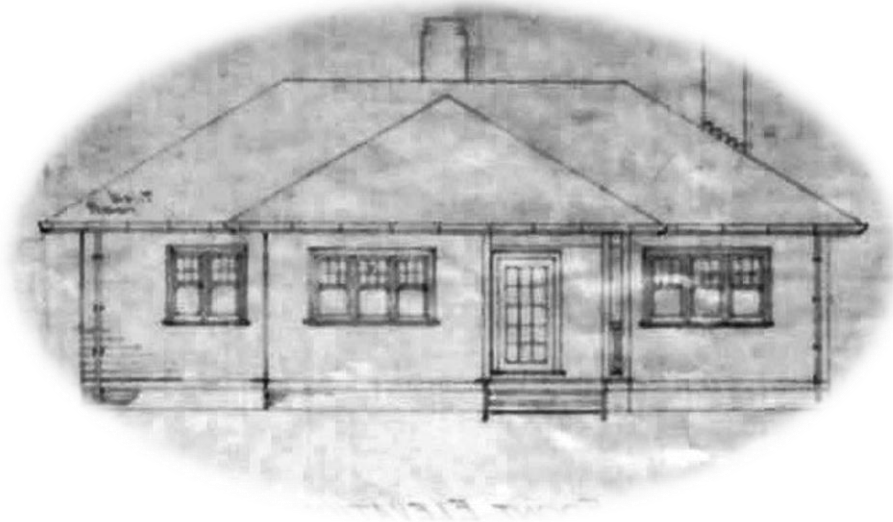


‘HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS’

THE HOMES OF YALLOURN



INTRODUCTION

The famous American author of ‘Little House on the Prairie’, Laura Ingalls Wilder, once said: ‘Home is the nicest word there is’; and, it appears from the plethora of photographs and comments posted on the Virtual Yallourn website, that there that is no place like home or to be more precise ‘there was no place like Yallourn.’

This article, for the Virtual Yallourn website, had its origins in the sale of a house at No: 7 Fairway Drive, Yallourn Heights. The house was the former residence of Mrs Susannah Lacey for more than 70 years; and it was sold in 2021 following the sad passing of Mrs Lacey on the 15th October 2019.



The Lacey Home - 7 Fairway Drive, Yallourn Heights



Susannah and Wal Lacey and family at home at Yallourn

The house, which was relocated from Boola Crescent in Yallourn to Yallourn Heights in 1979, has quite a background story which is best told by Susannah's daughter, Veronica and her husband, Rod Barfoot...

'THE LACEY FAMILY HOME AT 10 BOOLA CRESCENT YALLOURN &

7 FAIRWAY DRIVE YALLOURN HEIGHTS'

Written by: Veronica & Rod Barfoot. February 2021

***"10 Boola Crescent...** was a modest but practical and functional house with 3 bedrooms, generous lounge/dining area, kitchen, bathroom and laundry incorporating the toilet.*

There was no air conditioning with a wood heater and wood hot water service requiring regular family wood chopping excursions.

It was the standard weatherboard with tile roof design and the SEC regulation all white plaster walls and ceiling.

Over the years as regulations eased, with much excitement colours such as light mint green, pink, blue, and lemon were introduced to the interior.

The house was brand new when the family moved from 23 Narracan Avenue to 10 Boola Crescent during June 1946. It was a large undeveloped block apart from the house and the standard SEC provided garden shed.

Wally and Sue set about landscaping the property including the construction of a garage/workshed with vehicle access via a laneway off Driffield Road.

After much hard work, the garden would become a feature of the property including carefully manicured (by Wal) pencil pines bordering the two sets of front steps, rock terraced garden beds (made by Wal) with a large grassed play area for the kids together with a 20 yard concrete cricket pitch beneath the clothesline. A very large paddle pool was also constructed which was a popular attraction for the neighbouring kids; and this would later be converted to a fishpond.

There were many assorted fruit trees and a large vegie patch together with the chook house which provided both eggs and occasional meat.

Wal and Sue were both avid gardeners; and with an abundance of natives and bulbs, you were able to pick flowers year round.

The house was a true family home abuzz with children and friends, dogs (mainly fox terriers for rabbit hunting) cats, guinea pigs and assorted wildlife.

It was always a welcoming and open house with Sue able to whip up a meal or a batch of scones in no time for regular visiting family, friends or church acquaintances.

7 Fairway Drive Yallourn Heights... *The house was relocated from Boola Crescent to Yallourn Heights in 1979 and after undertaking minor renovations, the family moved in during March 1980.*

This was another large block and once again the family set about establishing another garden of flowers, fruit trees, vegie patch, fish pond, natives and pathways but this time the chooks missed out.

It was still the same loving and welcoming home with children and dogs always a feature and each shown equal affection.

By this time, grandchildren had arrived; and over the years, photos of family/extended family members and kids adorned every available space on shelves around the house.

The home continued to be the “hub” and gathering place for birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas gatherings and any other celebration that deemed recognition.

Sue passed away in October 2019 at the age of 98 and was still living in the same house by herself to the end. It is truly remarkable that she had occupied the same house for over 73 years. Another interesting statistic is that, due to the age spread of the children, there was at least one child 21 years or younger living at the home for over 40 years. An era closed when the house was eventually sold in January 2021.”

Source: Veronica and Rod Barfoot. February 2021.

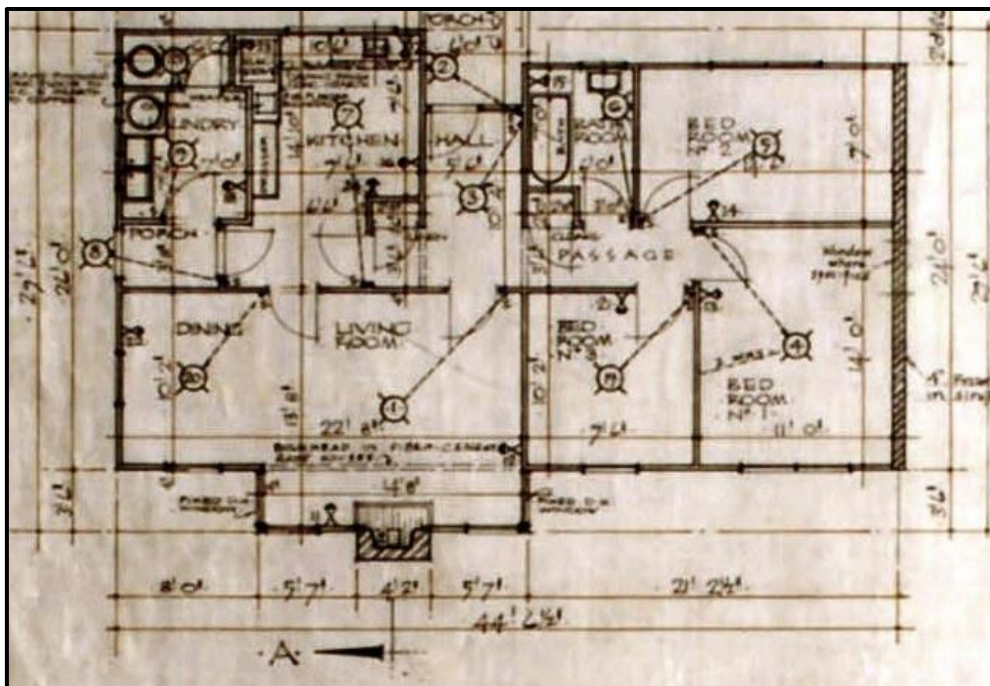
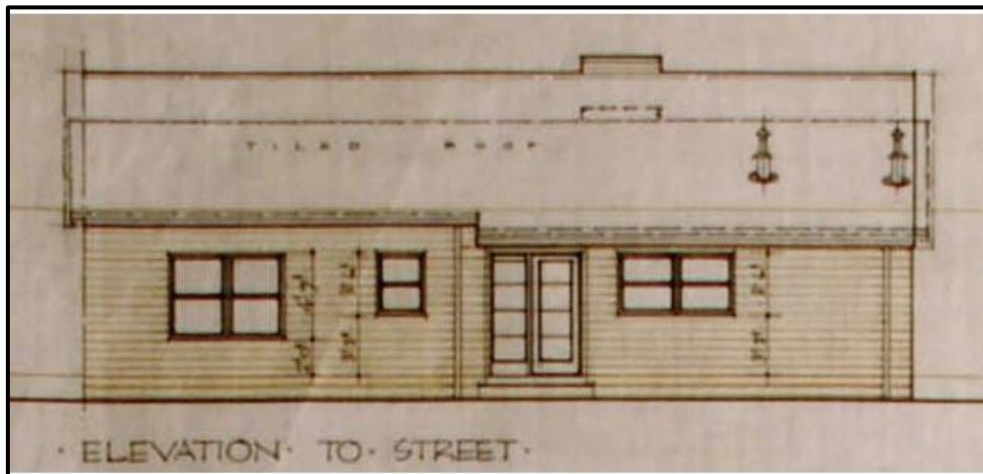


The arrival at Yallourn Heights – The relocation the house to Fairway Drive in 1979

PLANS AND FRONT ELEVATIONS OF YALLOURN HOUSES

The plan and front elevation of the house at 10 Boola Crescent is shown below. It is one of many such ‘blueprints’ (related to the houses that were built in Yallourn) which can be found on this website.

Plan number: 103
House Number: 10. Street Name: Boola Crescent.



NOTE: One of the most demanding, yet interesting, projects that Julie George has undertaken in her role as administrator of the Virtual Yallourn website, was the collection, ordering and posting of floor plans/front elevations of the houses constructed in Yallourn. It is doubtful if any other community website can offer such an insight to the homes of local residents.

There are 13 pages of plans and elevations on the Virtual Yallourn website; and each house has a designated ID number, relevant street name and number; and, in some cases, the function of the building (eg the Reservoir Cottage). Many entries also contain comments and/or photographs from the former occupants of that particular home.

To study the list of homes posted on the website go to:

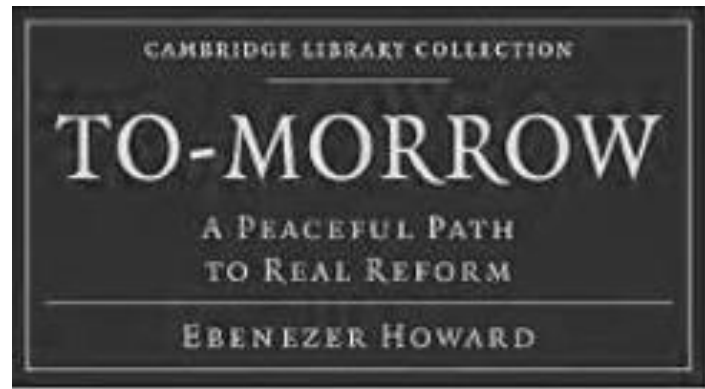
http://www.virtualyallourn.com/places/houses?field_streetname_value=All&page=0

A BRIEF HISTORY ABOUT THE HOMES OF YALLOURN

INTRODUCTION: THE GARDEN CITY MOVEMENT

The origins of planning of the township of Yallourn can be found in the philosophy of the Garden City Movement which was articulated by urban planner Ebenezer Howard, in England, during the 1890's.

Ebenezer published his sweeping ideas in his book entitled 'Tomorrow-A Peaceful Path to Real Reform.'

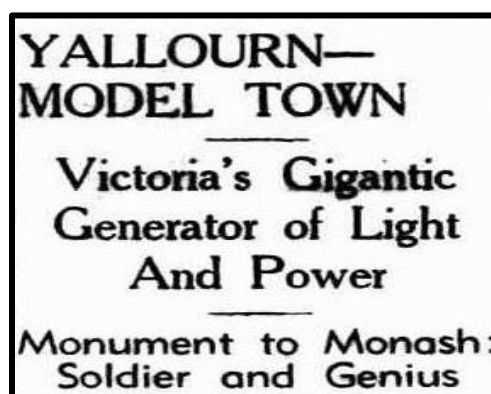


The objective of the Garden City scheme was to bring about new standards of town planning; and to build attractive and healthy communities for workers and their families.

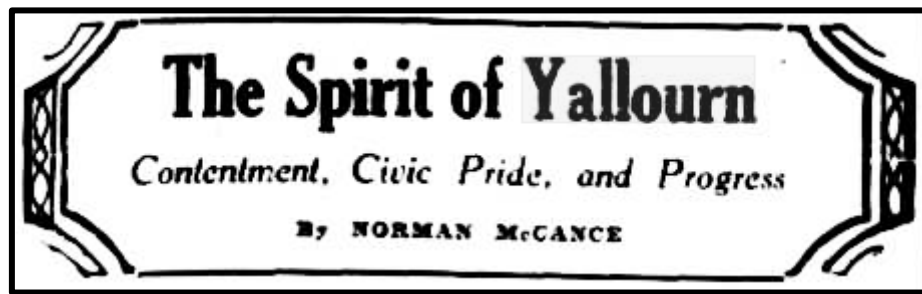
Compared with the living conditions, in the slums of English industrial centres, as described in the classics of Charles Dickens, the garden cities/ towns aimed to be safe, hygienic and ordered residential areas surrounded by green belts (parklands, farmland, thickets, open fields and well-maintained town gardens). It was the 'vision splendid'; and Ebenezer's ideas regarding town planning were dominant influences in the creation of English 'model' towns such as Letchworth, Welwyn, Bournville (ie of Cadbury chocolate fame) and Telford.

The Garden City Movement created attention and triggered action in Australia; and cities and towns such as Adelaide, Canberra, Haberfield (near Sydney), the Melbourne suburb of Sunshine and the town of Yallourn were influenced by the ideas of Ebenezer Howard.

It is known that John Monash, Alfred Romeo La Gerche (the SEC's Chief Architect) and William Gower (SEC Architect) played powerful roles in bringing the dreams of the advocates of model/ garden city communities to realisation at Yallourn.



Sir John Monash's role in establishing the town of Yallourn is well documented. Just as he had cared for his troops in the battles of the Great War, he exhibited a comparable deep concern for the health, welfare and housing of SECV workers and their families.

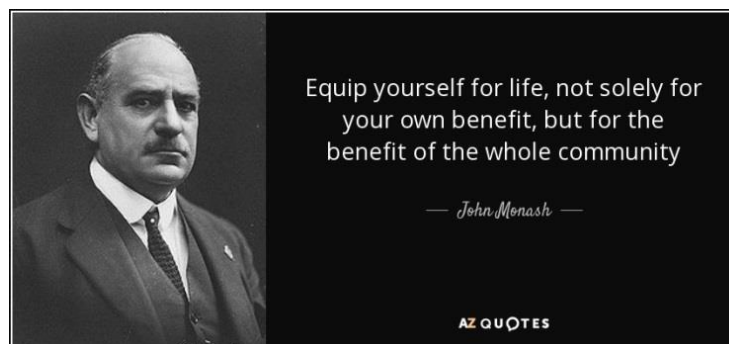


The Spirit of Yallourn: Contentment, Civic Pride and Progress.
The banner headline from - 'The Argus' March 8th, 1930 Page 3.

It is difficult to discover who or what actually influenced Sir John Monash but perhaps his background in civil engineering may explain his whole-hearted enthusiasm/acceptance for the concept of garden cities...

"By the age of 30, he had gained his Bachelor of Arts and a Masters in Science (Civil Engineering) and had qualified as a municipal surveyor, an engineer of water supply and a patent attorney.

He would go on to become a Doctor of Laws (Melbourne), Doctor of Engineering (Melbourne), Doctor of Civil Law (Oxford) and Doctor of Laws (Cambridge)" ...Source: Monash University website



Sir John Monash

In 2007, 'The Age' newspaper published a story about the future of the Latrobe Valley and referred to Sir John Monash's ideal vision of Yallourn...

"Monash died in 1931 and didn't see his creation in full flower. But for another 30 years, his vision bloomed into a grubby (ie coal dust) utopia for 'labourers of coal', where full employment, good wages and pre-fabricated commission houses made life easier than it had been for some survivors of depression and war." Source: 'The Age' September 23rd, 2007.

THE EARLY HOMES OF YALLOURN

In the earliest days of the Yallourn Project, the workers survived the rigours of Gippsland summers and winters in tents, makeshift huts and humpies. The living conditions, for everyone involved in the construction of the power station on the banks of the Latrobe River, were unforgiving.

The SEC report entitled 'The Establishment of Township at Yallourn (1921)' set the number of tenements/houses in the town at six hundred (600) and...

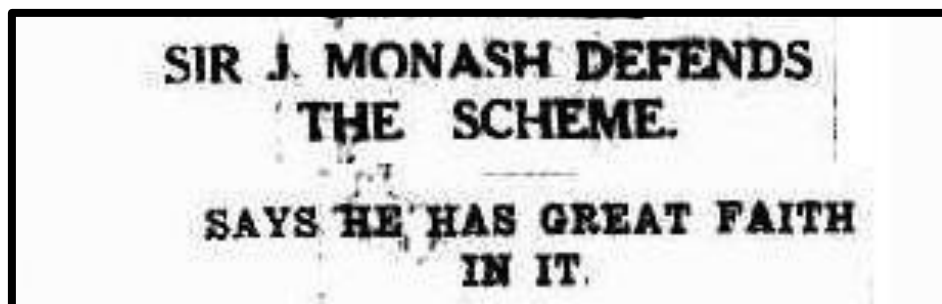
"Many residences were built of brick but economic conditions and the desirability of providing suitable dwellings at minimal rentals necessitated a larger proportion of wooden houses

Townspeople lived in four, five or six-roomed houses of brick or timber which stood on allotments, the minimum size of which was 60 by 120 feet.

Residents turned their houses in homes by surrounding them with gardens" Source: 'Yallourn Was' Pages 43 and 85.

As history shows, Yallourn gradually 'took shape' under the 'watchful eye' of Sir John Monash; and there may have been no better qualified and stout-hearted man in Australia to 'breathe life' in Alfred La Gerche's magnificent plan of the township.

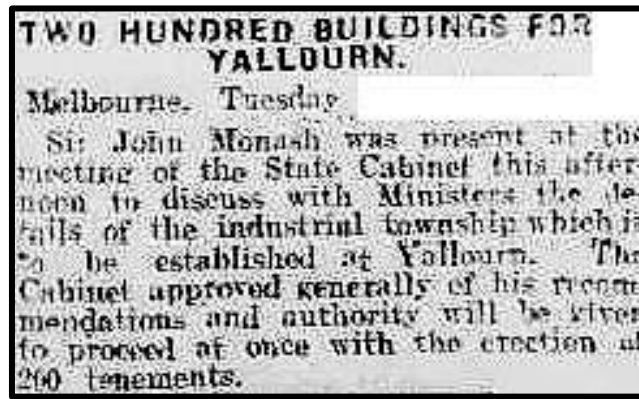
NOTE: It is known that Sir John often faced trenchant opposition of naysayers and 'prophets of doom' in his support of the Yallourn project. Sir John remained undeterred in his quest; and his decisive leadership 'under fire' again came to the fore.



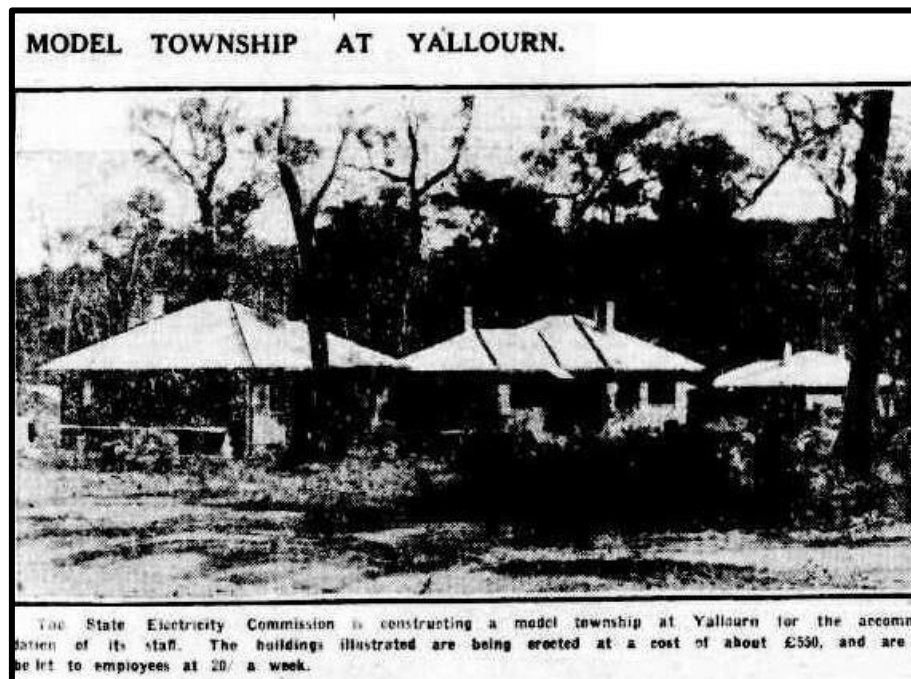
Source: 'The Age': December 23rd 1925 Page 10

THE THREE PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSES AT YALLOURN

The actual building of the houses in Yallourn commenced in 1921; and, in that year, 30 houses were built. In 1923, 90 homes were completed; and in 1924 the number of houses constructed was 124. The photographs, which are included in this article, show some of the first houses of the township in the Maiden Street and Maryvale Road.

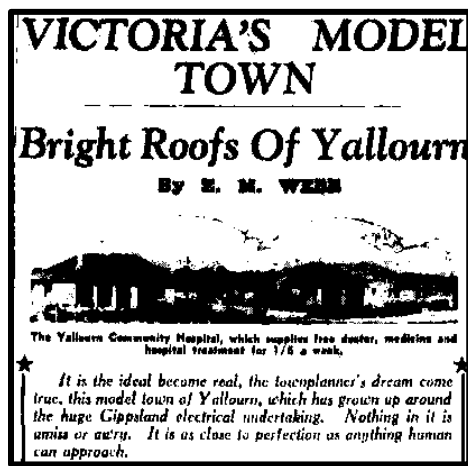


Source: 'The Ballarat Star' February 15th 1922 Page: 2



Caption text: MODEL TOWNSHIP AT YALLOURN. The State Electricity Commission is constructing a model township at Yallourn for the accommodation of its 'staff'. The buildings illustrated are being erected at a cost of about £550, and are to be let to employees at 20/ a week. Source: 'The Argus' 25th October 1922 Page: 17

The construction of homes exceeded 500 in the first decade (1920-30). However, the Great Depression brought home building in Yallourn to a virtual standstill; and in 1931-32, only one new house was built, and none were completed during the following year.



Caption text: VICTORIA'S MODEL TOWN Bright Roofs Of Yallourn. By G. M. WEBB... It is the ideal become real, the town planner's dream come true, this model town of Yallourn, which has grown up around the huge Gippsland electrical undertaking. Nothing in it is amiss or awry. It is as close to perfection as anything human can approach. Source: 'The Herald' May 31st 1939 Page: 12

By 1944, there were 863 residences in the town and despite the war-time restrictions, 33 new homes were constructed in 1944.

According to the 1968 report of the SEC, the number of houses built in Yallourn in the first three decades of settlement of Yallourn were:-

- In the period 1920-1930: 535 houses
- In the period 1931-1940: 227 houses
- In the period 1941-1951: 286 houses

As can be seen from the Australian Bureau of Census figures below, the population of Yallourn peaked in the mid 1950's...

CENSUS DATE	POPULATION
1921	138
1933	2520
1947	4119
1954	5580
1961	5010

By 1976, the population of the town had decreased to less than 2000 residents; and it is believed that in 1984, the last remaining resident moved to Yallourn Heights. You could say with that departure, the lights of Yallourn 'went out', and the town, which had meant 'the world' to so many people, was quickly 'swallowed up' and vanished into the abyss (of the coal mine).

In her edifying book 'Digging People Up for Coal', Meredith Fletcher wrote about the systematic destruction and demolition of Yallourn ...

“Forty years after the scrub had been cleared to build the first houses, and Yallourn had matured into the beautiful leafy town its founders had envisaged, the SEC told residents their town would be demolished to mine the brown coal that lay underneath. In another twenty years, Yallourn had disappeared into the open cut.”

Yallourn was a unique, harmonious and spirited community; and it is fair to say that we shall never see the like of such again. Furthermore, the dismantling of one of the finest Australian garden towns was a sign of things to come in the Latrobe Valley as the theories of economic rationalists won acceptance and echoed through the corridors of power.

TEN COMMENTS ABOUT THE HOUSES OF YALLOURN

These pointers are for mainly younger readers who may be unaware of certain aspects of the Yallourn's short but rich history.

1. The first homes were built in Maiden Street in 1921.
2. In addition to the residential homes in Yallourn, there were also camps for single men. The North Camp was originally established at the Brown Coal Mine in 1887. Workers' camps at Yallourn followed: East Camp (1920), West Camp (1921), South Camp (1921). In later years, there was a settlement at Married Quarters (near the Latrobe River), migrant hostels and a burgeoning community at Hernes Oak. Newborough (originally known as Moe East) was established after World War II; and in 1947, it is recorded that 206 people lived at Newborough .
3. The rental fees of the houses in the township varied; and it is recorded that in 1952, the cost of rental for a five room home at Yallourn was £1. 5 shillings (equivalent to approx. \$47.00 per week in 2020)
4. Coal dust was a problem for the residents of Yallourn and the fear of house fires was ever-present. Because of the build-up of coal dust in the roof cavities of homes, a program of cyclic 'vacuum cleaning' was introduced after the war...

“...After the war, the SEC's regular maintenance included vacuuming the roof space of houses, in an effort to get rid of the coal dust that stored in the ceilings.” Source: Australian Heritage Commission. 2001 (Source: Research of Meredith Fletcher)

Coal Dust Fire Menace: Yallourn Protests

YALLOURN Wednesday Five women are going to see the Premier (Mr. Hollway) and talk to him about the dangers of buquette dust.

5. Due to the fact that Yallourn was deemed a possible target for air attack during World War: II, many homes in the town installed air raid shelters *"...each household was given enough timber to construct a five feet by seven feet underground air-raid shelter."* Source: 'Yallourn Was' Page: 122.

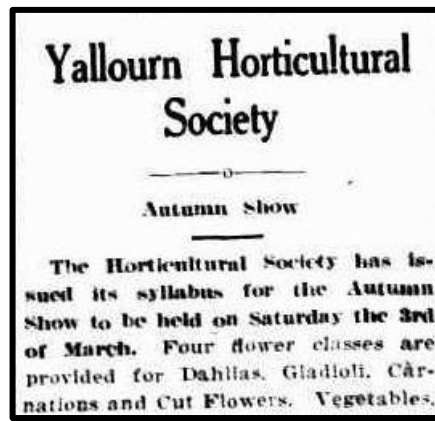


Wartime 1942 - Welfare volunteers Mses O'Kane, McKay and Hoath at the Warden Post Sector B Shelter Source" Yallourn Was' Page: 177

6. In keeping with the city/town garden philosophy, garden competitions, flower shows and awards were common and very popular activities in the town. The home gardens of Yallourn were often spoken about by visitors to the town in the most glowing terms...

"Sir John Monash was unequivocal about the importance of well-maintained home gardens in Yallourn. In July 1926, Sir John wrote a letter to every resident of Yallourn, which included the following..."...and a point of duty for every occupier to see that his home and garden are not allowed to be or become an eye sore or an offence to his neighbours but should, as soon as possible, be beautified by being kept scrupulously tidy and by the planting of trees, shrubs, flowers and climbing plants..."

Town and home gardens were a significant part of Sir John's vision for Yallourn and in the SEC's report related to the establishment of township at Yallourn, it states that ..."the gardens which residents will be encouraged to make and keep in order.... Yallourn boasted some of the most beautiful home gardens in Australia; and bearing in mind that the homes in the township were rented from the SECV, their upkeep was exceptional"Source: 'Virtual Yallourn'



7. Many of Yallourn's street names reflected the ideas of the garden city/town attitude to community life... eg Fairfield Avenue is an instance of a street with some connection to the garden city concept of greenbelt towns...

"English: habitational name from any of various places, for example Fairfield in Derbyshire or Kent, both named from Old English as fæger 'beautiful' + feld 'open country', or Fairfield in Worcestershire, which is named with Old English for 'hog' + feld. Source: 'Ancestry. Com.au'

MEADOW LANE

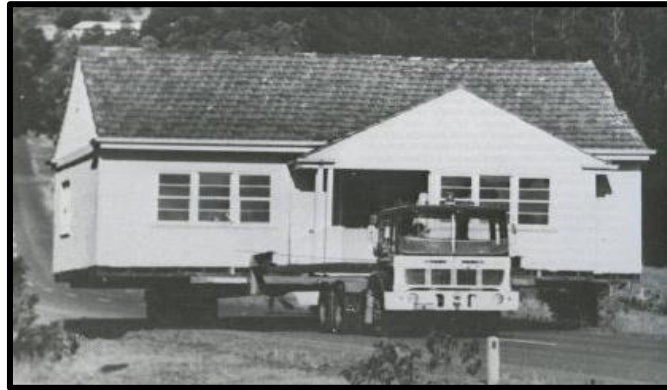
Other names of the streets of Yallourn included: Meadow Lane, Fernhill, Heather Grove, Parkside, Garden Street, Banksia Street, Hillside, Lake Avenue, Valley Road, Hazelwood Crescent, Ovals Drive, Wattle Road (in the Married Quarters), Parkway and Banksia Crescent.

8. Home maintenance and repairs were carried out by a sizeable team of qualified SEC tradesmen (and apprentices); and, of course, the trees that lined the streets (nature strips), parks and town gardens were the responsibility of the town's own nursery specialists led by Jock Lawson.



The beautiful tree-lined streetscapes of Yallourn – Latrobe Avenue.

9. In the latter years of the town, houses were purchased, hoisted onto trucks/ prime movers and re-sited and re-stumped/re-blocked in other townships. As can be seen from the photographs below, transporting the houses was a 'balancing act' which would have done justice to the legendary Charles Blondin.

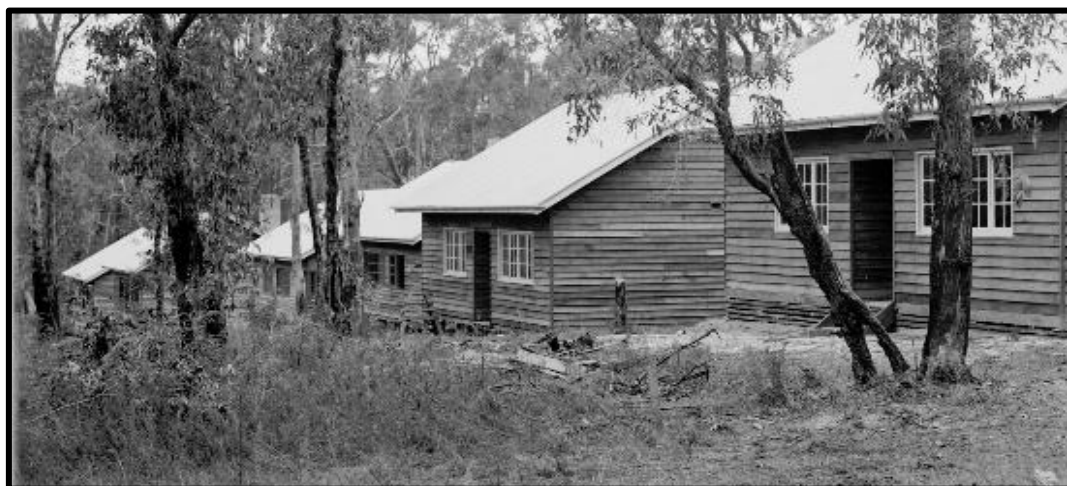


10. For many residents, leaving Yallourn was both a physical struggle and an emotional wrench; and some residents, who had lived in the town for lengthy periods, were understandably distraught. It is impossible to lose something in your life that you loved without grieving....

"When we reached the top of Reservoir Road where our house had stood with its back to bushland, I was shocked to find the trees gone and the ground levelled. Because it was some distance from the developing big hole (ie the open cut) I assumed it would be spared such treatment. It was unbearably sad and I cried. I could not look again at such devastation, even if it were possible."
Page: 194 'Digging People up for Coal.'

THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF YALLOURN HOMES

The following photographs endeavour to provide a cross section of the style of houses that were built in Yallourn. It is hoped that readers will recognise the houses and maybe able to add comments and opinions.



1921- The first houses in Maiden Street



Maiden Street in 1922



Early homes in Maryvale Road



Early brick home 1923



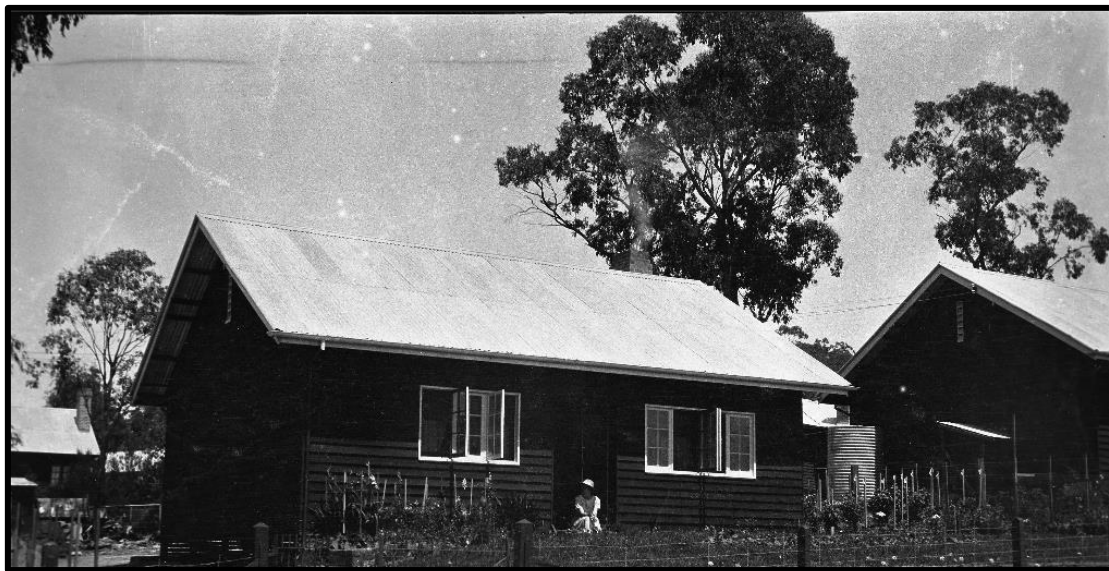
East Cross 1925



There is no address given for this photograph but it maybe Maiden Street



Corner of Garden Street and Railway Avenue in 1925



1925- This was the home of the Lynch family at 12 Maiden Street



Corner of Southway and The Angles 1925



This home was possibly in Railway Avenue; and perhaps one of our readers can help identify or confirm its exact location.



58 Narracan Avenue



23 Church Street



30 Railway Avenue



41 Banksia Street



70 Railway Avenue



19 Southway



An example of a tiled weatherboard residence.

Are there any readers who can identify the address of this home? Judging by the TV antennae, attached to the chimney of the house next-door, this photograph was taken in or after 1956.



53 Fairfield Avenue



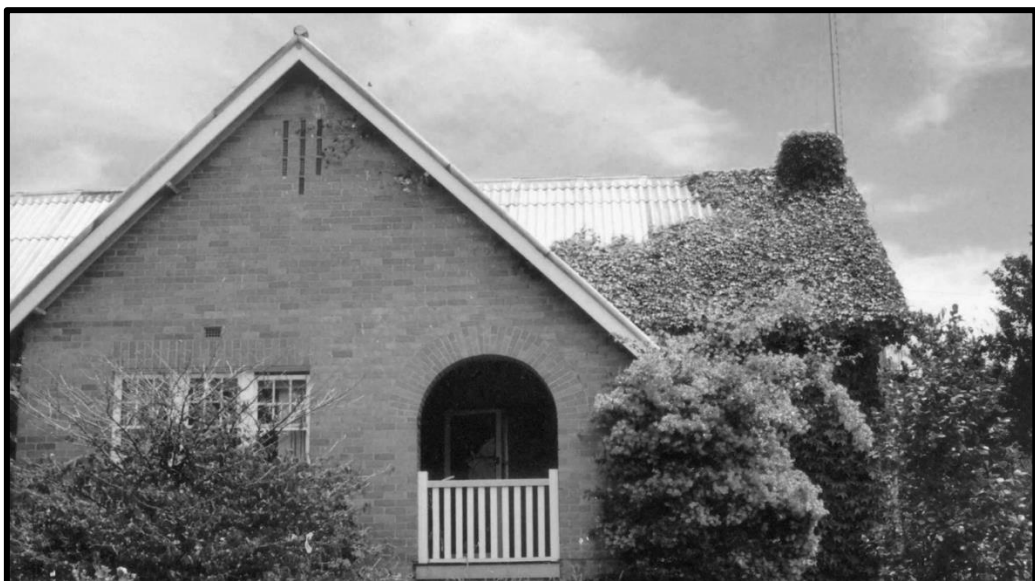
2 Broadway West which later became the Red Cross Centre



3 Outlook Road



Can any reader confirm that this home was sited at 30 Hillside?



18 Hillside



Can readers help? Is the above photograph of Latrobe Avenue?



‘The vision splendid’ - Yallourn in 1948



“There’s no place like home” ... Dorothy in the film ‘The Wizard of Oz’ (1939)

CAN YOU HELP ?

While this website contains many comments and photographs of the houses of Yallourn, Julie would welcome further information and comments related to the theme of 'Homes of Yallourn.' You may like to write about your residence, garden, street, friends and neighbours in your area and, of course, what your home in Yallourn meant to you.

Photographs of your home in Yallourn are always most welcome and Julie will be able to post such photos on the website under the details of your former residence in Yallourn. Every contribution assists in completing the full picture of a unique and beautiful town. Thank you.

FURTHER READING ABOUT THE HISTORY OF YALLOURN

For those readers who would like more information about aspects of the above article, the following links may assist...

The Lacey Family of Yallourn

<http://www.virtualyallourn.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/THE%20BARBER%20OF%20YALLOURN%20-%20MR%20WALTER%20%28WALLY%29%20LACEY.pdf>

The Garden City Movement

<https://planningtank.com/planning-theory/garden-city-movement>

Ebenezer Howard

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ebenezer-Howard>

Alfred Romeo La Gerche

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/233344895?keyword=A.%20R.%20La%20Gerche>

William Gower

https://www.builtheritage.com.au/dua_gower.html

An article about the camps at Yallourn

<http://www.virtualyallourn.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/IMAGES%20OF%20YALLOURN%20-%20The%20Yallourn%20Migrant%20Hostel.pdf>

An article about Jock Lawson and the gardens of Yallourn

<https://www.virtualyallourn.com/stories/newspapers-1936-jock-lawson-and-yallourn-bowling-club>

Sir John Monash

A book entitled: 'John Monash by Cecil Edwards -published by the SEC in 1970.

FILMS and VIDEOS ABOUT YALLOURN

Those readers who have only recently discovered this website may like to 'travel back in time' and enjoy watching a collection of films/videos about Yallourn by following this link:

<http://www.virtualyallourn.com/media-archive/videos>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS and REFERENCES

- Veronica and Rod Barfoot-Sincere thanks again to Veronica for her contribution to the Virtual Yallourn website; and her deep interest and continued assistance in compiling the history of Yallourn.
- Meredith Fletcher-'Digging People Up For Coal '- MUP 2002.
- Prue McGoldrick -'Yallourn Was'- Gippsland Printers 1984.
- Various newspapers of the era including: 'The Argus', 'The Herald', 'The Age', 'The Morwell Advertiser' and 'The Ballarat Star.'
- Articles, photographs and data from the Virtual Yallourn website.
- The archives of the State Library of Victoria.

This article was researched and written by Roger Spaul and presented and posted by Julie George for the Virtual Yallourn website in April 2021.