

# Memories Of Yesteryear

## LATROBE VALLEY THEATERS PART 3

# YALLOURN

GIPPSLANDS PREMIER THEATRE



# THEATRE

AIR CONDITIONED THROUGHOUT

The perfect theatre is at your service, bringing you the warmth of your own fireside in an air conditioned theatre, combined with sound and projection that is equal to any city theatre. Yallourn Theatre has been acclaimed the best of the recently erected theatres throughout Australia. See the screen's greatest productions at the perfect theatre ---- The Yallourn Theatre.

With a seating capacity of 663, Yallourn Picture Theatre was opened in May 1939. Situated in the Town Square, the theatre contained a lower area (stalls) with a curved floor, and an upper area (dress Circle) with a stepped floor, as well as the usual front of house facilities, etc. foyers, toilets, kiosk and office's. Ahead of its time in design, the cinema featured a crying room which seated around 12 people in.

It was quite large with big glass windows and you could take your pram in. The Theatre also had foot-warmers in front of each seat which relied on briquettes heating water, which then travelled through pipes to the warmers. The stage area provided for an orchestral pit, a 42ft. wide stage and upper and lower dressing rooms. A later addition was the installation of modern wide



screen projection equipment. Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights were always a full-house at the Theatre. Weekdays saw mostly the theatre's downstairs section used.

There's no doubt "the pictures" were the centre of all social activity as tickets had to be booked and there was a collection point in the foyer. In the early days the cinema also showed two main features, including an older film first, divided by an interval and preceded by Movie tone, 15 minutes of world news which cinema-goers always came early to catch. Movies also took longer to make so there were fewer new releases. And then the arrival of TV meant the earliest feature was dropped since people

didn't attend, having probably already seen it on television, and the world news was no longer an attraction.



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FOR COMFORT & PLEASURE

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## NELSON SMITH THE THEATRES LAST PROJECTIONIST

**YALLOURN THEATRE**  
AIR-CONDITIONED  
RESERVATIONS  
PHONE 622250  
Booking Office Open  
between 2&5 Daily

**NOW SHOWING**  
FOR AN EXTENDED SEASON NIGHTLY AT 7.40  
(NOT OPEN SUNDAY)

A long time ago  
in a galaxy far far away...

**STAR WARS**  
NRC

TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX Presents A LUCASFILM LTD PRODUCTION  
STAR WARS  
Starring MARK HAMILL HARRISON FORD CARRIE FISHER  
PETER CUSHING  
and ALEC GUINNESS

Gone with the Wind, The Sound of Music, Jaws, Grease..... They have all been seen at the Yallourn Theatre over the years. And right up until its closure on December 6th the theatre was one of the major entertainment centres in the Latrobe Valley. One of the people associated with the success of the theatre was Nelson Smith, Nelson has been screening films at the theatre for the past 23 years. Born and educated in Yallourn, he began as a trainee projectionist in 1955 at about the same time he started an electrical mechanic apprenticeship with the Commission. He gained his unrestricted projection licence in 1960. Nelson has seen many changes in the cinema world in those years. He was involved in the switch to projectors equipped for both 35mm and 70mm film and the introduction of a stereophonic sound track system in 1967. In addition to his role as projectionist, Nelson has controlled the lighting for many plays, concerts and other special

functions held at the theatre. He says he has many fond memories of the Yallourn Theatre, as well as few he'd rather forget like the odd time a reel of film was used out of sequence. Nelson is sorry to see the theatre closed but will not be lost to the Latrobe Valley cinema scene, as he will be involved with the new twin-cinema complex soon to be open in Morwell.

(Taken from Latrobe Valley Express 1979)

Yallourn Theatre lasted for nearly 40 years closing in 1979 with the last film being Gone With The Wind the theatre was demolished in the early 1980's.

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AIR-CONDITIONED  
RESERVATIONS  
PHONE 622250

**NOW SHOWING 2<sup>nd</sup> WEEK**  
NIGHTLY AT 7.40

You won't  
feel  
ashamed  
to cry

Marilyn Hassett  
&  
Beau Bridges

"A WINDOW TO THE SKY"  
sung by  
OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN  
Lyrics by NORMAN GIMBEL  
Music by CHARLES FOX

**A WINDOW  
TO THE SKY**  
NRC

PLUS *Love means  
never having to say  
you're sorry -*  
Ali MacGraw  
Ryan O'Neal

**LOVE  
STORY**  
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