

IMAGES OF YALLOURN - GRACE ROULSTON



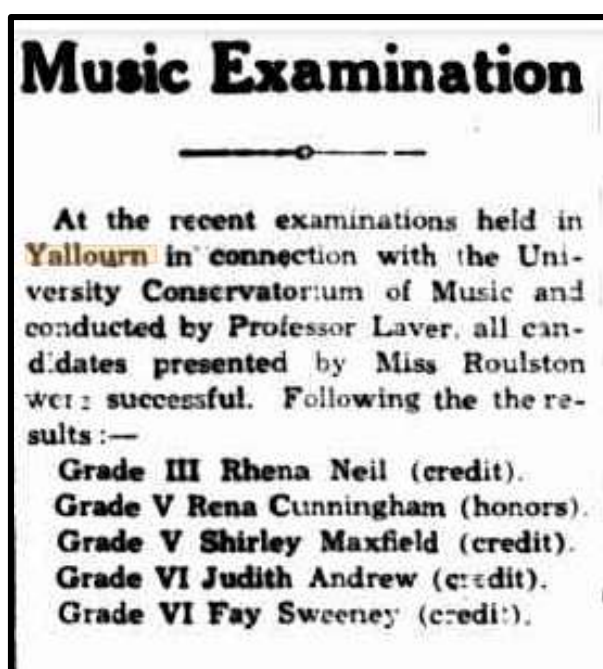
GRACE ROULSTON (SCOTT) A CARING AND HUMBLE ACHIEVER OF YALLOURN

INTRODUCTION

This article is to place on record Grace Roulston's positive influence on the lives of many children of Yallourn and the district; and to document her keen involvement in the local community.

As this website demonstrates, there are many heart-warming stories to be told about Yallourn. It was an industrial town that attracted widespread affirmative comment, intrigued visitors and engendered civic pride.

While the town's essence sprang from Ebenezer Howard's concept of an ideal 'Garden City', it was, nevertheless, the selfless endeavour of countless individuals who made Yallourn a unique and spirited community. Grace Roulston was one such person; and her contribution to the town should be recorded for posterity.



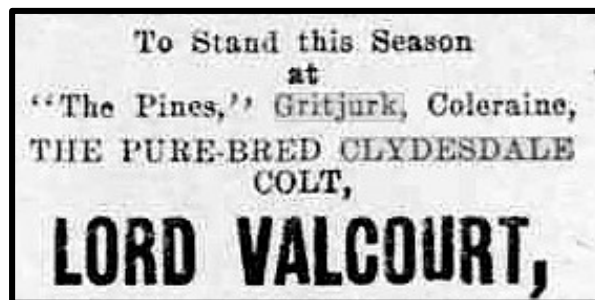
As the extract above shows, local girls Rhena Neil, Rena Cunningham, Shirley Maxfield, Judith Andrew and Fay Sweeney were successful in the University of Melbourne's Music Examinations which were held at Yallourn in 1932.

Such exams were rigorous and nerve-racking; and, in order to gain a mere pass, many hours of training/practise and study of theory were necessary; and that is where Grace Roulston played such a vital role in the context of her pupils' accomplishments....

"...Conservatorium of Music and conducted by Professor Laver, all candidates presented by Miss Roulston were successful..." Source: See above.

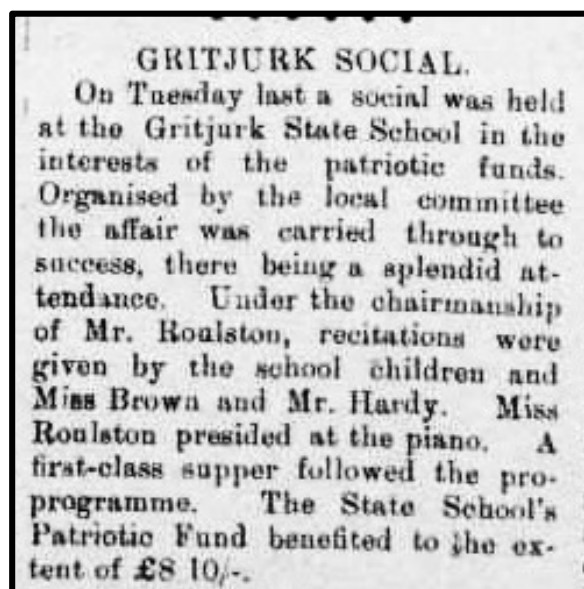
EARLY DAYS

Grace Marion Roulston was born at Henty in 1903. She was the daughter of Joseph and Emily Roulston. Joseph was a farmer and expert breeder of Clydesdales (a Scottish variety of draught horse and a powerful 'beast of burden) which were ideal for agricultural and haulage work in earlier times.



J.H. Roulston's advertisement as published in 'Coleraine & Western Advertiser' in December 1915. Grace's family had strong connections with the land and horses.

The Roulston farm, known as 'The Pines', was near the small settlement of Gritjurk (about 10km from Coleraine). When Grace was a young girl, the population of Gritjurk was 113 (1912 Commonwealth Census), so she led a quiet but active life helping with jobs around the farm.



Source: 'Coleraine Albion & Western Advertiser' July 24th 1916. Page: 2

It is thought that Grace learnt to play the piano at home. It was reported (see above) that in 1916, at the age of thirteen, Grace performed at the Gritjurk State School to assist in raising money to aid the war effort (i.e. the Patriotic Fund). It was quite a family affair as Joseph Roulston 'chaired' the evening's program of entertainment.

Later in the same year, J.H. Roulston was again mentioned in regard to offering prize money for the winner in the Draught Horse Class at Coleraine's Annual Pastoral and Agricultural Show. There is no doubt that Grace would have been heavily involved in helping Joseph that weekend because, once again, all profits from the show went to the Patriotic Fund.

Grace was one of five siblings (Alice, Herbert, Charles and Les); and possibly the most adventurous of all. It is stated that Grace was the only Roulston child to 'leave and live away' from the district. Her much-loved sister, Alice, who never married, stayed on at home and cared for her parents in their old age.

GRACE ROULSTON ARRIVES IN YALLOURN

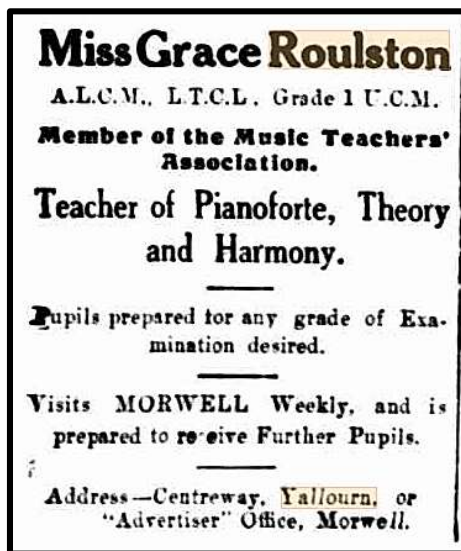


This photograph shows Grace Roulston leaving home in 1922.

Grace left Gritjurk at a young age and went to live in Tocumwal. It is unclear how many years she spent in Tocumwal but a 'certain Miss Roulston' was listed in a glowing report regarding the Albury District School Concert at the Mechanics Theatre in Albury in June 1918.

'Miss Roulston' is also mentioned as an artiste in support of the Prisoners' Aid Society concert in Albury in 1918. Although difficult to verify, it seems that Grace arrived in Yallourn sometime around 1930; and quickly gained a reputation as a fine pianist.

Grace had a deep love of classical music; and it was part of her generous nature to impart her knowledge to the youngsters of Yallourn. Teaching piano was her passion; and, in reading the newspaper articles of that era, she was an inspiring tutor and mentor.



Source: 'The Morwell Advertiser' April 22nd 1932. Page: 2

The advertisement (above) from 'The Morwell Advertiser' gives some idea of Grace's background and credentials. The article also highlights her willingness to travel to Morwell to instruct those interested in learning the piano.

As an indication of her musical flair, it is known that Grace received a credit in Grade 4 Pianoforte in the University of Melbourne Music Board's examinations in 1933; and in 1934, gained credit for her Grade: 5 examination which consisted of playing three pieces of set music, scales and technical work, sight reading, aural tests and arpeggios (i.e. musical tones).

During her early years in Yallourn, Grace received numerous accolades for her stirring performances as a solo artiste, an accompanist for the CWA Choir and for the recitals of the Yallourn Orchestral Society (e.g. 'Merrie England' in 1937). Grace's meticulous attitude in preparing her students for the annual music examinations was second to none; and as the results above testify, credits and honours were common.

Perhaps one of Grace's most notable triumphs was when she organized a musical afternoon for the people of Yallourn...

"...MUSICAL AFTERNOON AT YALLOURN On Saturday last, 16th inst., a very pleasant time was spent by the pupils of Miss Roulston who gave a social afternoon in the Girl Guides Hall...Musical items, by the pupils were thoroughly enjoyed by all present, and afternoon tea brought an enjoyable' musical treat to a close" Source: 'The Morwell Advertiser' December 21st 1933. Page: 11.

CWA, RED CROSS AND GOLF

While Grace was busy with piano tuition and local musical productions, she also found time to be involved in community activities such as the Red Cross and the Yallourn Branch of the Country Women's Association.

It is known that Grace won at least one award for her fancy needlework; and as mentioned above, she and Mrs Beryl Kimberley were the pianists for the Yallourn CWA Choir in those early years. The CWA Choir was founded in 1931 and the members in that era included: Mesdames Linaker, Connolly, Wynd, Turner and Heskey. According to Prue McGoldrick's research, the Yallourn CWA Choir...

"...enjoyed considerable success in CWA district and State choral contests."
Source: 'Yallourn Was' Page: 147.

Golf was another of Grace's pastimes and she was an enthusiastic and adept player. In a mixed foursome event at Yallourn in August 1933, her partner was Edgar Scott, a well-known teacher (and later to become the Principal) at Yallourn Technical School. (Note: Edgar Latham Scott was born at Frankston in 1909). As the records show, Grace and Edgar were married at Hamilton in 1938...

"Utility Tea at Yallourn...Miss Grace Roulston, who is to be married shortly to Mr. E. Scott, formerly of the staff of Yallourn Technical School, was the guest of honour at a utility tea last night..." Source: 'The Age' November 11th 1938. Page: 5

THE SCOTT FAMILY AT YALLOURN

Grace and Edgar left Yallourn in 1939 to take up residence in Williamston as Edgar had been appointed to a teaching position at Footscray Technical School. Edgar worked at Footscray TS for twelve years.

Note: Readers may be interested to know that another well-known personality in the history of Yallourn, Mr C.H. Beanland, was appointed to the position of Principal of Footscray Technical School in September 1951.

In 1941, the Scott twins, Jenny and John, were born at the Epworth Hospital. The Scott family returned to Yallourn in 1952 when Edgar took up the challenging role of Principal of Yallourn Technical School following the departure of Mr W. Baker (1948-51).



The staff of the Yallourn Technical School in 1952. Edgar Scott, who was the Principal from 1952-1973, can be seen front and centre in the photograph. In all, Edgar was a member of staff at YTS for a total of 25 years. Source: 'Virtual Yallourn' website.

Note: In Edgar's report to the YTS Council in April 1953, he stated that 1076 students were enrolled at YTS. Those figures included: (i) Students undertaking Diploma Courses in Engineering and Applied Chemistry; and (ii) 560 apprentices involved across a wide range of trade training. It was well known that the job of Principal at YTS, in that era, was not for the faint-hearted.

The family's new home was at 26 Hillside which was not too far down the street from the High School where Jenny and John would ultimately matriculate in 1958...

"...Dad enjoyed gardening and had a flourishing vegetable garden, as well as lawns and perennials. A very large shady fig tree grew just outside the back porch, and was a real nuisance in summer because the birds loved it. When we moved to Yallourn from Melbourne, John and I (twins) went into Year 6, and then had all our secondary schooling at the high school conveniently situated at the opposite end of Hillside from the Tech. We all came home for lunch each day..."
Written by Jenny Scott in 2011. Source: 'Virtual Yallourn' website.



This wonderful photograph of the Scott family was taken at Yallourn in about 1951

THE SCOTT TWINS

Many readers will remember the Scott twins; and Jenny and John never forgot their happy days at Yallourn High School. In her final year at YHS, Jenny was the Senior Prefect, and co-captain of Bass House (i.e. with John Lawton) and captain of the basketball and softball teams.

John, who was a cricketer of note, steered the Senior XI to a decisive victory, with a top score of 46 runs, in the 1958 'Test Match' against the Yallourn Technical School combine.

With the defeat of the YTS, Edgar would have had mixed feelings about John's fine innings that day. In his final year of studies at YHS, John gained three second class honours in his examinations.



Jenny became a school teacher; and, after completing his studies in Civil Engineering at Melbourne University, John worked for many years overseas. Jenny recalls that she and John graduated from Melbourne University on the same day in 1963....another happy quirk in life for the Scott twins!!

Since Jenny's retirement from teaching, she has followed in her mother's footsteps within the CWA; and like her Mother takes a keen interest in community affairs.

IN LATER YEARS



This photograph is of Edgar and Grace with Mr and Mrs Ellis. Many readers will remember George Ellis who was the Principal of Yallourn High School from 1953-1960.

In the late 1960's, Grace and Edgar purchased a house in Murray Avenue Newborough; and so the next chapter in Grace's life unfolded.

With the passing of years and the onset of arthritis, Grace found increasing difficulty in playing the piano but maintained her keen interest in community affairs and followed the fortunes of local children in their pursuit of music.



The Yallourn Branch of the CWA. This photograph was taken in the mid 1960's. Grace Scott is one of the many members shown above. Source: 'Virtual Yallourn' website



This photograph is of Edgar, Grace and Jenny's son, David. This was taken at Jenny's home in Armidale N.S.W.

It would be interesting to know how many students had prospered in life having been taught the piano by Grace; and as Frances Clark once wrote...

"There is music in every child; the job of the teacher is to find it and nurture it"

It is known that Grace's last pupils in piano were her twins Jenny and John; and it is a fitting juncture to say: *'here endeth the lesson.*

Grace passed away at Traralgon in October 1980; and Edgar died in 1983 at Newborough.

In conclusion, Grace Roulston was a quiet and humble achiever of Yallourn. She gave willingly of her time, talents and energy to lift the sights of youngsters and to further the community spirit of Yallourn.

Jenny and John Scott must feel very proud of what their parents contributed in making Yallourn an exceptional place for families to live and enjoy.

OTHER READING:

1. Edgar Scott wrote an engrossing account of the floods at Yallourn in December 1934. The article can be read by clicking on this link:
<https://www.virtualyallourn.com/node/4898>
2. In 2011, Jenny Scott wrote about her home at 26 Hillside...here is the link:
<https://www.virtualyallourn.com/places/26-hillside>
3. Other photographs of the Scott twins can be found on this website by typing in: 'High School' in the search field at the top right hand of this page and then press Enter.

THANK YOU

- ‘Thank you’ to Jenny Scott (Sholl) for her assistance in writing this article about Grace for the Virtual Yallourn website. Jenny’s own journey is quite remarkable; and is another story that again underlines the solid start in life that the town of Yallourn offered to so many children.
- ‘Thank you’ to Professor Jane Southcott of Monash University for her advice regarding history of Pianoforte Examinations in the 1930’s
- David Strover, Faculty of Fine Arts & Music Melbourne University.

This article was researched and written by Roger Spull and presented and posted on the Virtual Yallourn website by Julie George in February 2023.