

**RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD:  
LIVING IN YALLOURN 1943-1950's**



*Peter A. Roberts*



# FOREWORD

*My story is a 'feel good' story. There are no regrets or traumas associated with my childhood. I grew up in a pleasant environment, in a family surrounded by positive, loving parents and relatives. I had plenty of friends and a sense of belonging. I never experienced severe hardship and enjoyed good health and opportunities to make the most of my life. For me, Yallourn was a great place to grow up.*

*My family relationships survived and developed allowing my children the opportunity to enjoy the richness of life that comes with strong, enduring family networks.*

*Peter A Roberts*

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*Above L-R: Malcolm & Peter*

## CHAPTER 1: IN THE BEGINNING

For Evelyn (Eva) Frances Roberts, nee Scarlett, and Alvin Alfred Roberts of 12 Parkway, Yallourn, Gippsland, Victoria, Australia, Southern Hemisphere, The World, The Universe, Saturday, July 3, 1943 was an important day. Not only was the Second World War well under way and Alvin's one and only sister about to be married, but, of greater significance was the birth of their first child, Peter Alvin Roberts - ME!



Of course, I have no personal recollections of that day. However, I was told that mum and dad attended Auntie Florrie's wedding celebrations. Eva was her efficient self, enjoying the wedding breakfast and timing the labour pains. At the right time, she went home, washed her hair and dad drove her to hospital in a borrowed car. As the hospital was a mile away, walking was ruled out. I was born at 11.45 p.m. To Eva, I was the most beautiful baby in the world - 6lb something and worth the effort. To Alvin, I was small, red and shrivelled with a bald head and a distinct resemblance to Winston Churchill. Nevertheless, he loved me heaps.

*Below: Mum and me, 1943*

I spent my first week in the hospital nursery with a number of other babies. Wider family, friends and other visitors showed the appropriate interest in my arrival and peered at me through the nursery window as I lay in the arms of one of the starched white, nursing staff or tightly wrapped in my crib. On the Roberts side of the family, there were already a number of grandchildren and I was the fifth. On the Scarlett side, I was the first grandchild, the first child born to the oldest child. What status! After a period of hospitalization my parents took me home.



Our home was a rough-cast, cream coloured, six room, red tiled roof dwelling on the corner of Parkway and Park Crescent opposite the primary school and overlooking acres of park land. The parkland included the lake, which served as the swimming pool, the tennis courts, the croquet green, the bowling green and the soccer and football ovals. Our quarter acre block was surrounded by a high cypress hedge that added to its security. After a few years I learnt that this was a great environment to grow up in.

Not surprisingly, my birth had no impact on the daily routine of the Yallourn township, Victoria's energy centre. The open cut brown coal mine, briquette factory and power stations continued operating without disruption. July in Yallourn was often cold and wet with some frost. From time to time the winter sun would occupy the sky,



warming the damp atmosphere. 12 Parkway, Yallourn was a cold house in winter except for the kitchen which had a briquette stove fuelled by Yallourn briquettes and a small electric radiator. At the start of each day, before Alvin went to work he would make sure the stove was alight and the kitchen warm. I was wheeled from a cold bedroom in my cream, cane basinet to the kitchen where I spent much of my waking hours.

*Left: Dad and me, 1943*

Apparently, I experienced the normal developmental stages of early childhood without too much drama. I was pushed in a pram to the shops, to church, to the health centre and to visit family, friends and neighbours. As there was no family vehicle most of this time was spent in Yallourn. The family pet, a cocker spaniel dog called Scamp, took a mild interest in my intrusion into his territory and as I grew, we became firm friends.

Scamp took his guardianship of me seriously, in fact, too seriously on one occasion. Mum placed me on a rug on the grass while she hung up some washing. She turned around to find Scamp on top of me. I was very blue in the face and had almost suffocated; otherwise, our relationship was without trauma although I do not believe I was ever the leader of the pack. I was more a follower if mum's account is correct. She saw my little body scurrying on all fours through a dog worn path and tunnel under the huge cypress hedge that surrounded our yard. Just before I disappeared she managed to extricate me by the leg and from then on I was restricted to an exercise area that involved me being attached by a long lead tied to the clothesline. Nevertheless, I continued to share time and resources with Scamp including drinking from his bowl.

*Below: Scamp, Peter and mum, 1944*



So much was my affection for Scamp, that I wrongly assumed every dog had his temperament and affection for me. I proved, to my dismay, that this wasn't so. I had accompanied my mother to the Yallourn Post Office where I tried to convince a dog resting on the footpath that my affection was acceptable. Unfortunately the dog thought otherwise and bit me on the hand. With the help of the Post Master's wife my wound was disinfected and dressed and an important lesson was learnt. Nevertheless, the neighbourhood dogs, an old black labrador

and small, black kelpie named ‘Laddie’, maintained positive relationships with me and I received many bacterially charged, dog lickings from them, as well as from Scamp.

My brother, Malcolm, was born on August 10, 1945 when I was two years old. My only specific memory of that occasion was walking with my father from our home across the Yallourn ovals and along the pathway that ran beside the road to the hospital. It was a sunny day. World War 2 was ending. This was something I’d heard but didn’t understand. Dad walked beside the fence holding my hand. As we chatted away I remember the eucalyptus trees and grass on the other side of the fence. When we reached the hospital we saw mum and her baby, my brother, a mop of black hair in a basinet. Again, this was a very happy occasion drawing family and friends closer. When mother and son returned home, Nanna Scarlett came to assist with the management of the home for a few weeks.

Eventually, Malcolm and I shared the same bedroom. Malcolm was in a cot that had a fly wire lid which prevented any irritating insects access and as he grew, prevented him from escaping. In my case, I had a bed from which I was able to communicate with my one and only sibling. We shared that room for about fourteen years until the family moved to live in Morwell. My parents had decided that two children were enough, despite their own experience of large families. The family relationships were stable and we enjoyed each other's company.



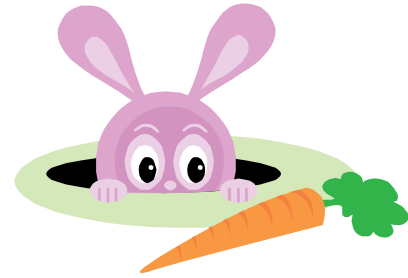
As I grew older the boundaries of my world extended from the backyard to the neighbourhood and from the nuclear family to the extended family. More people were involved in my life. New friends were made. New places visited and explored. New experiences featured. However, this was all under the watchful eyes of my parents.

The base of the dining room table was a ship. Behind the lounge sofa was a great place hide. The front entrance was behind a curtain at the end of a long passage. It was dark and scary and used very little. You could squeeze in to the bottom of the linen cupboard and shut the door. Mum and dad’s bedroom was a great place to go when you were sick or frightened at night or wanted some company on a Saturday morning.

Mum told me that as I grew up I was quite articulate. I spoke beautifully, she claimed. So much so that when a visitor sat to read a book to me and referred to a "choo choo" I quickly informed her that the picture she pointed to wasn’t a ‘choo choo’. It was a train. According to mum I lost my beautiful speech when I went to school and picked up some undesirable vocabulary. Tarnished by the masses, it appears, but not too severely.

## CHAPTER 2: SCHOOL DAYS

Yallourn Kindergarten was the place I spent a year of pre-school time. Mum walked me to kindergarten each morning and left me to play with other kids. From my perspective there was plenty to do, things to play with, structures to play on inside and outside of the building. I remember a high fence around the kindergarten and only a couple of gates to enter. Toilets and hand washing areas were kid-size and everyone had a peg on which to hang his or her coat, bag or apron which was worn to protect your clothes from paint and dirt. Each peg had a picture under it rather than a name. Mine was a carrot. A carrot! This was probably the start of the propaganda to get me to eat vegetables. Other kids had animals, houses, dolls, and plenty of objects more reasonable images than carrots. Maybe they forgot the rabbit. Or maybe, I've forgotten the rabbit!



I remember eating fruit at morning recess time. Small pieces were cut so everyone could share what they'd brought. I'm not sure who the kindergarten teacher was but she certainly didn't leave a bad impression. I recall on one occasion that Dr J. Moore Andrew, Yallourn's first General Practitioner visited kinder to give the kids a checkup for something or other and an injection on some other occasion. Mum said he was a nice man and there was nothing to be afraid of. I don't think that helped much because I seemed to have a lasting fear of people who poked, prodded and stuck needles into me. This concern was only matched by my fear of the dentist, however, more about that later.

I enjoyed kinder - its kids and activities and I must have benefited in some way because when I began school I moved from Grade Prep to Grade 1 on the first day!

My primary school days were spent at Yallourn Primary School, No 4085 from 1949-1954. To get to school I had to walk across the road and up an embankment. It was very close to home and this meant that I came home for lunch each day and got home quickly.

My primary education was very stable and most of the kids who started school continued to the end of Grade 6 before moving to the local high or technical school. As a result I made and kept many friends. The reason was that most of the kids lived in Yallourn and their fathers had secure permanent employment. Those that didn't live in Yallourn lived at Herne's Oak, a very small settlement, a couple of kilometres south on the Princes Highway.

Herne's Oak was actually in the Shire of Morwell, a fact which meant nothing to me until the Queen's visit to Victoria in 1954 when we all got flags to wave and certificates to commemorate the occasion of her visit to Yallourn. However, the kids in the Shire of Morwell received a medallion as well. Herne's Oak kids did, Yallourn kids





didn't and that stunk! Anyway, we all lined the road from the Yallourn railway station where the Royal Train pulled in and waved hands and flags cheering and yelling as the Royal Rolls Royce drove past. I'm not sure we saw too much of Her Majesty and Prince Charming but it was a historic moment I'll never forget. For Queen Elizabeth this was just another sea of bodies and faces.

Some of my best friends at primary school were: **Apsy**, a tall thin lad whose passion was keeping racing pigeons. **Billy**, a town tough, with whom I was forbidden to mix after he was charged by the police for doing something he shouldn't have. **Kevin**, who was an only child and lived a few houses away. One day on the footpath outside of Kevin's place I used the 'bloody' word. Immediately, Malcolm decided it was a reportable offence and went straight home to tell dad who smacked my bottom. Mum was more distraught and quietly spoke to me about using swear words. There was **Trevor** the eldest in a family of six and **Fitzy** whose father was an engineer. Fitzy lived in the better houses on the top of the town. In Grade 2 Fitzy pushed a pencil rubber up his nose and couldn't get it out. He was taken to the doctor who managed to find it in his nasal cavity and drag it out. While he didn't have any real operation involving stitches and chloroform, we all learnt a lesson on that day and were told never to put anything up your nose that was smaller than your elbow. That made sense to me! I finished Year 12 with Fitzy who went to university to be an engineer like his father.

Then there was **Jimmy**, whose class poem about a cockatoo that had been taught to swear included the word 'bloody' and caught the teacher off guard. All the kids thought this was great but the teacher pretended not to smile. Jimmy was a real character. He lived in the married quarters with his parents near the power station on the outskirts of the town. Once he got the strap from Mr Evans, six of the best, which made me very angry with the teacher.



The school friends I've listed are the ones I remember best. At primary school I had little to do with girls and the only girls in my circle of friends were my cousins, especially the Hodgsons, but more about them later.

One person who I didn't like seeing at school was the dreaded 'dog man'. We called him the 'dog man' but he was actually the Ranger for the Yallourn SEC Works Area. I knew nothing about the rules and regulations of keeping pets, but did know that if your dog roamed and the 'dog man' was called, he may have it killed. The 'dog man' was a man of large stature, bigger than most normal people. In Grade 3 he seemed to be at least ten feet tall. He wore high leather boots, jodhpurs, a leather jacket and a peaked

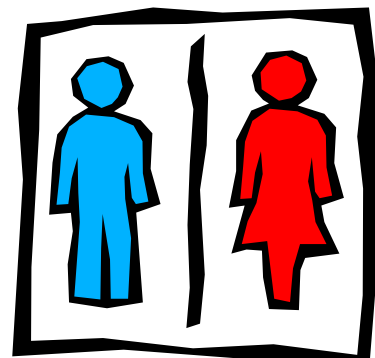
leather cap. He was a frightening figure made worse by the stock whip he carried in his hand. From time to time the 'dog man' would be called to school and when he walked past your room someone would cry, "The 'dog man's' here! All eyes would look towards the window to find him. Sometimes the crack of his whip would be heard and we all knew he was there.



Once my brother and I visited the town pound to see if there were any dog's in it. It was in the works area south of the briquette factory up a dirt track. The pound was about four metres square with a concrete wall around it that was about a metre high and had two metres of wire mesh on top. No dog could get out or in for that matter. At one end was a sheltered area for dogs staying overnight and adjoining that was a concrete box like structure with a door and a hole in the concrete at the rear. This was where unclaimed dogs were 'put down'. Dad said 'put down' but I didn't understand what it meant for a while. Later I learnt it meant killing the animals. It was humane in that the 'dog man' would back his utility vehicle near the wall and put a pipe from his exhaust into the hole. In a few minutes, whatever dog or dog's were inside would be dead. The day Malcolm and I visited the pound no dogs were present but we did notice the wire in the door had been cut. We decided that day that if any dogs were present we would have let them out. Further, if we came again we would do the same. We'd do anything to deprive the 'dog man' of his pleasure!

One day, our dog Spot, a black and white Heinz breed, was missing and I had to go to the Ranger's Office in the shopping centre to find out if Spot had been caught and taken to the pound. Unfortunately, he had been roaming and was picked up so that meant we had to pay money to have him released. Fortunately, I didn't have to face the 'dog man' and another person met us at the pound and released Spot. Spot had other companions that day but we had other things to do so we left them there.

Primary schools days were a time when lots of challenges were presented. These social, physical, and academic challenges came in many forms and varied according to one's age and stage of development. One of the challenges reserved for boys that is imprinted in my mind was that of peeing up the toilet wall. It probably sounds gross, but it was a challenge.



The toilets were stand alone red brick, fortress like facilities positioned at a reasonable distance from the main building. Why the walls were made so thick, is beyond me. Was an invasion expected? An earthquake? Was there something hidden we weren't told about? Out of school hours a locked, strong wire mesh gate closed off access to the toilets, a practice which often frustrated those playing in the school grounds after hours.

One entered, turned left to the urinal or right to the cubicles. The toilets were available to staff and students. I think one cubicle may have been reserved for staff but from time to time male staff used the urinal. Students tried hard not to look to see what an adult male looked like. I have no recollection of the floor plan of the girls' toilets which remained a mystery to me, out-of-bounds and not a place where 'nice' boys went. I do recall some not so 'nice' boys getting into trouble for being in the girls' toilet with some 'not-so-nice' girls. They were the same boys and girls whose parents were called when they were found together in the school wood shed.

The urinal was a vast concrete wall covered in black tar so the stains and smells of Yallourn's children did not remain forever. One stepped on to a concrete ledge, faced the wall, did the job then reached up for the chain which activated the water to flush the urine away. I observed from time to time that wet marks appeared above the urinal that was about a meter high. The objective was to pee as high as possible without getting yourself or others wet. Most boys tried to do this when no one else was looking. Others demonstrated determination and just did it or tried to do it. Others talked a lot about their achievements but had nothing to show for it. Others proclaimed the record breaking achievement of friends or people unknown. Yet others, like me, saw it as a challenge to be conquered.

First, one needed to have a full bladder, so drinking plenty of water beforehand was essential. Next, it was necessary to wait as long as possible to ensure a jet stream would eventuate. Last, it was a case of point and shoot. Aim high, don't wave it around and focus on the target you wanted. The challenge was more difficult than expected. While I marked the bricks above the urinal, at no time did I ever manage to go over the top of the wall. That was the ultimate achievement. Come to think about it, I'm not sure anyone did unless they were standing on someone else's shoulders. I certainly wouldn't want to be the person underneath. However, it seemed to be, that those who bragged the most, conquered.

Milk monitors were a chosen race. In the fifties students were provided with free milk delivered in crates. The milk monitors left class about ten minutes early to organize the crates in grade lots and place them at the front of the assembly area. Students would access their small one-third pint bottles before going off to play. Monitors had to separate any untouched bottles from the rest and stack the crates ready for the dairy to pick them up. Monitors always had more than one bottle of milk - fresh, cold milk with a layer of cream on top. I can still see the white residue on the top lips of my friends and feel the cold liquid as I swallowed. There was always a benefit in being a monitor.



My primary school teachers were a memorable bunch. **Mrs Catchpole** was my Grade 1 teacher. She was a nice, motherly lady who ensured we had plenty to work on. She was the mother of John Catchpole who was about my age. **Miss Kylie** was the

Infant Mistress. She had purple hair and wore clothes that matched. She was someone you didn't cross. She could be extremely unpleasant if you did. I had no trouble with her.

In Grade 3, I was in a composite class in the grounds of the Yallourn High School about a kilometre away. We had a number of short-term teachers, some good, some not so good. I remember finding an empty beer bottle in the bushes around the building we used. For some reason I imitated a drunk person. I have no idea where I got that role model. Anyway, from that day till the end of the year my nickname amongst some of the kids was 'Plonk'.



*Above: 1951 Grade 3 Peter is dead centre.*

**Mr Garlick** was my teacher in Grade 4. He was a balding, middle aged overweight man. We worked hard for Mr Garlick in our pre-fabricated classroom. He made our work interesting. The pre-fabricated huts had lots of nuts where the sections were joined and each nut had a nipple like plastic cover with a hole in the end to protect it. We soon found that you could pull off the plastic nipples and if you held one hard on the drinking taps you could send a fountain of water high up into the air. Gradually, all the plastic covers disappeared from the outside of the building.

**Mr Allen** taught Grade 5. He always wore a dark suit and a tie. He was an excellent teacher with an excellent reputation. Mind you, he could wield the strap if he had to. I worked hard for him and never got the strap at primary school. He was a teacher at Yallourn Primary School for many years. He would always acknowledge you when you saw him in the street.

**Mr Evans** was my Grade 6 teacher. He was an experienced teacher with a big moustache and a pipe. He often smelt of beer. This was a new smell to me because in my family nobody drank alcohol. My grandfather, Frank Roberts, used to drink and fight and catch mutton birds in Bass Strait. However, he stopped all this when he met my Grandmother. She straightened him out. In Grade 6 I sat near David Evans, his son, and had no trouble with the teacher.

**Mr Walton** was the Head Master of Yallourn Primary School, No. 4085. He was a short, severe looking man with nicotine stained fingers. We knew he liked beer because his car was often seen outside the Yallourn Hotel. Occasionally, he would stand in for a teacher and when he did there was never any trouble. In retrospect, Mr Walton had the appearance of Henry Bolte, one of Victoria's later Liberal Party Premiers..

Our family were active members of the Salvation Army that was our church. Mum and Dad's side of the family were Salvationists. As a consequence of her faith, she taught religious instruction at the primary school. She did this for a number of years and even before I went to school officially she took me to school with her when she had religious instruction. I just sat with the older girls and behaved.

A bit later I felt a little self-conscious about her being at school in her uniform. Nevertheless, she was never any trouble, never caused me any real embarrassment, always got on well with the kids and taught her lessons well. She used a flannel graph board to tell stories. This was a flat board which opened out into a larger board. It was covered with felt and she placed coloured pictures, which had a small square of sandpaper stuck to the back, on the felt. It was a great bit of technology for the time and kept children's attention. Mum had hundreds of stories she borrowed from Sunday school. They were in labeled brown paper bags. Her material covered all the stories in the bible. She also taught us songs and bible verses. By the time I got to secondary school she was working night shift at the local hospital and gave up teaching religious instruction. This saved me from the embarrassment that comes with adolescence.

*Below: Yallourn Primary School c.1947*



## CHAPTER 3: LIVING IN YALLOURN

Yallourn was a great place to live. There was plenty of space with wide streets, sports grounds, a number of parks and plenty of natural bush on the perimeter. The kids in the neighbourhood were very friendly and there was always plenty to do, places to see and friends to do it with.

*Right: Overview of Yallourn*



Because I lived adjacent to the sports grounds, football, cricket, soccer, tennis, croquet, bowls and swimming were played nearby. Yallourn Football Club was a popular place on Saturdays and we always managed to see the football match without paying. George Bates was the full forward, top goal kicker and idol of the day. Sometimes we managed to get into the club rooms to soak up the atmosphere and smell the lineament. Outside, we'd be looking for bottles to cash in. From time to time a footy brawl would take place amongst the players and occasionally the spectators which would liven up the day.



At the back of the ovals was an open drain which carried the overflow at the back of the lake which served as a swimming pool. The drain was a natural barrier to people wanting to get into the sports grounds without paying. However, there were plenty of ways across the drain. The various piles of clay that resulted from the construction of the drain were used as a cycling track. Plenty of challenging hills, holes and obstacles made this very popular. Sometimes groups of kids would have races along the clay or dig traps so the unsuspecting would fall from their bikes.

On one occasion when I was playing along this drain I found a length of timber in place as a bridge. Unfortunately, as I crossed I slipped and caught my knee on a bolt that was sticking out. It was a great corner tear through my trousers and into my knee. Mum took me to the Health Centre where the wound was cleaned up, antibiotic powder was dusted on it and three sutures were inserted to hold the wound together. It took ages to heal. There was plenty of weeping puss and it has left me with a large scar to this day. Guess what? I never cried once!

On the other perimeter of the Yallourn ovals and sports facilities was a deep concrete drain that carried any overflow from the opposite end of the lake. It was mostly a trickle of water with a green slimy base. Sometimes we used to ride our bikes along the drain. Now and then we'd fall but mostly we kept upright. There were a couple of

pedestrian bridges and one larger vehicular bridge along the way to add to the interest. From time to time the lake would be drained and the drain became very dangerous.

*Below: Yallourn swimming pool c.1940's*



The Yallourn swimming pool was part of the lake. There were two jetties, a high diving tower and a fenced off area for kids to swim in. The water was brown and opposite the concrete embankment was swampland. When Malcolm was a toddler he tried to swim in the kids' area before he could barely walk. Fortunately, Dad rescued him and saved him from drowning. We spent hours and hours in summer swimming in the pool, as we called it. We always waited after meals before we went

swimming. My parents said two hours wait was appropriate so our food could digest, whereas every other kid in town only had to wait one hour or even half an hour, I could never understand why, except that my mum was a nurse and she probably knew better. As we got older we spent more time in the deep part of the pool where you could only touch the muddy bottom if you made a conscious effort to dive to it. Kids came from everywhere to swim in the lake.

There was a very active swimming club and a kiosk adjacent to the pool. I learnt to swim at the pool and was awarded the Herald Sun Certificate for swimming 25 yards. That's as far as my formal swimming qualifications went. I enjoyed the water but any thought of competition turned me off. I never mastered even simple diving from above the water, no matter who tried to teach me and I can't dive to this day. If I was in a swimming race I'd enter the water with a very obvious belly whacker and get left behind.

Sometimes I'd spend time at the swampy end of the pool. You could catch minnows on a bent pin baited with bread. It was great fun, but definitely no help if you were starving. Sometimes we'd wade into the swamp and see swamp hens. On one occasion I jumped from the bank on to what seemed to be a little island. Unfortunately, it was floating weed and I ended up neck deep in muddy, smelly water. I was much more careful after that.

Every few years, the State Electricity Commission who owned the lake would drain it. To this day I have no idea why, but it was a great idea and provided a different dimension to the leisure opportunities in the town. When it drained you could explore the bottom of the lake. Mind you, you had to pick your path carefully because it was very muddy in most places. Also, people found things. That was the legend, because

the only things I saw were huge, black eels some of which were over a metre long. The enthusiasts caught and ate them.

Mr and Mrs Melbourne managed the kiosk near the pool. They were a middle-aged couple with a son who was in his twenties. The Melbournes lived behind the kiosk which opened every day. This was the place to buy broken biscuits, fizzy drinks, ice creams, lollies, chocolate bars and to deposit the Palex soft drink bottles for which you received sixpence each. A special treat for our family occurred on Saturday nights when dad would send Malcolm and I to the kiosk to buy a bar of chocolate for us to share or to spend our pocket money on some lollies or a Choo Choo Bar. Sometimes we'd go in our pyjamas and then curl up on the lounge room floor in front of the open wood fire and listen to the radio.



We spent a lot of time in the playground and trees behind the buildings at the swimming pool. Old fashioned galvanised see-saws, slides, swings and a roundabout provided plenty of fun and sometimes the odd fall. Every now and then kids would get cuts and bruises and need medical attention. Most of the time I preferred climbing in the nearby cypress trees where you could act like a monkey and swing from branch to branch. This was a great place to grow up.

Behind the lake was a group of air raid shelters left over from the second world. These were concrete bunkers that were great places to explore. We called them shelters, but they were really the place where anti-aircraft guns were installed to help protect Yallourn, Victoria's power source from any possible Japanese invasion. I believe there were a number of anti-aircraft gun sites around the town. Dad told me that one Sunday night during the Salvation Army church service, the quietness of the prayer time was destroyed by unexpected anti-aircraft fire. Apparently, an Australian plane from Sale strayed over the works area and thinking it was the enemy, the vigilant gunners shot at it. Fortunately, they missed.

If you followed the track from the pool further still, you ended up at the stables. The stables were owned by the State Electricity Commission and were home to a number of horses used to pull drays and jinkers around the town and the works area. In my time the use of horses had declined from the earlier days when their use was extensive particularly in the open cut. Each morning, we would see about half a dozen horses with carts on their way to work about 7.30 am. The largest dray was pulled by a team of horses named Blossom, Paddy and Blinker. Malcolm and I became friends with the driver, Mick, who stopped and let us climb aboard. We had plenty of rides during school holidays from our corner to the works area gate where we would get off and enjoy a very long walk home. We learnt a lot about horses and even got a chance to hold the reins. Three pairs of reins were quite a handful and it was a special thrill to be able to take charge. These were big draught horses and the experience has remained in my mind.





The modes of transport that influenced my life in my pre-adolescent years were various. The pram, the pusher, the tricycle, the scooter and bicycle were my personal transport systems. There was little choice about the first two. These were my parents preferred means of moving my brother and I about. When I was about fifteen months old dad made a removable seat which he fitted across the pram near the handles so mum could take us both out. Malcolm, being younger, was wrapped up in the pram while I sat on the seat and held the handles. Eventually I was too big for the seat and I walked beside mum while she pushed the pram. At different times both of us rode in the pusher but mum never managed to push the pram and pusher simultaneously.

In my pre-school year I received a tricycle for my birthday. I learnt how to ride it on the paths around the backyard. Most paths were angled downhill so one had to be very careful not to fall from the tricycle. I'm sure I fell sometimes but none of these accidents was significant.



When I was about six years old I learnt to ride a two wheeler bicycle. The bike was a Christmas present and it was a real achievement. My first attempts were very wobbly and I frequently fell off, usually on the grass around the house. However, I learnt quickly and mastered the skill. There were plenty of places nearby to ride bikes - in the school ground, in the park, near the swimming pool, around the sport's ovals and along the clay track near the drain mentioned earlier.

As I got older and Malcolm was equally skilled we used to ride our bicycles everywhere. One year for Christmas we both received new bicycles. They were Malvern Star 27 inch bikes with 4 speed gears. By now we could ride out of town. Once we rode from Yallourn to the Morwell rubbish tip and back. The tip was situated in Latrobe Road about 10 km from home. That day we went with another cousin, Colin, who lived on top of the hill in Yallourn. We had a good search but the only person who found anything worthwhile was Colin. He found an alarm clock in working order. Another day we rode with Ron Guy, another friend, through Morwell to his uncle's farm in Hazelwood North. This was a very long trip of about 15 kms. We left home early one Saturday morning with food and water and arrived sometime about lunchtime. Fortunately, we were driven home later in the afternoon.

The very best cycling I can remember was the Christmas we received the new bikes. We spent the day riding around behind the shops in the Yallourn Shopping Centre. It was early in the morning and the wire gates, which usually prevented access to the rear of the shops, were open. We went round and round wherever we could just enjoying the new freedom of the bikes. Like all cyclists, we had flat tyres and other

mechanical problems from time to time, but with dad's help and the help of Arthur Oliver who owned the bike shop we managed to deal with them.

Our family didn't have a motor car till about 1953. Dad always talked about the new car he'd bought before he was married. It was a straight six Willy's Overland with a bull nose, a soft hood and a 'dickie' seat. That was a seat fitted into the lid of the boot. He raved about this car and how good it was and how fast you could drive it. He sold it because marriage costs money and mum must have convinced him that a car could come later.

The first family car was a limousine, a shiny black limousine, which dad bought from his brother Frank. It was a Humber Super Snipe that had previously been one of the vehicles in Governor of Victoria's fleet. It had full leather upholstery and plenty of room. On the bonnet near the windscreen was a very royal silver lion. At the front of the bonnet near the radiator was a sleek, silver bird with a black rubber beak. This car was most impressive. I enjoyed telling my friends of its royal connections. Unfortunately the



car had a down side. It was extremely expensive to run. It used lots of petrol, about 10 miles to the gallon and when the engine broke down dad found out how expensive it was to repair so he sold it. It was while the car was in pieces in the garage at home that a neighbour's son, Noel, who was helping dad, taught me a ditty. A bird had flown into the garage and dropped little white deposits on the bonnet of the car. So we sang,

*Don't do a dooty on the carburettor,  
The carburettor, the carburettor,  
Don't do a dooty on the carburettor  
You naughty little bird.*

In 1954 my parents purchased a cream coloured Vauxhall Velox. This smaller compact English car served our little family for about five years and on one occasion was used as the bridal car for a family friend's marriage. Fitting dad's Bb bass in was always a problem. It was too big for the boot and had to stand up between the back seat and the front seat which meant that we all couldn't fit in. However, we managed to work around that problem.

Before we had a family car we relied on the buses if we wanted to travel to Morwell to go shopping or the train if we wanted to go to Melbourne. When we were toddlers mum took us with her when she went to Morwell about once a week to go shopping. She'd have a cup of tea and a sandwich in a cafe in Commercial Rd before returning home. Occasionally we went to Melbourne and this meant catching the train at Moe because the passenger service by-passed Yallourn station which was reserved briquette trains.

I used to be fearful for Malcolm at the Moe station because he would go to the edge of the platform as the train steamed in to the station. Mum always had to grab him

by the hand. He seemed to enjoy the rush of air, steam and smoke in his face. We always travelled second class because it was cheaper. Each carriage had a corridor down one side and a number of compartments that seated about eight people. There were large framed black and white photographs of scenes around Victoria to look at. When we travelled we wanted a drink of water from the drink dispenser and always



needed to go to the toilet. It was fascinating to hear the swish of the train and the sounds of the wheels as you peed. I wondered where the waste products went but the sign above the toilet said it all: *'Do not use this toilet when the train is at a station.'*

*Left: K153 steam train*

In 1948 we travelled to Adelaide for a holiday on the Overland Express from Spencer Street Station in Melbourne. This was very exciting. Unfortunately, the sleeper compartment which dad thought he had booked was double booked and mum and dad spent the night sitting up with Malcolm and me on their knees. This took the edge off the trip. Nevertheless, we had a pleasant time in Adelaide, visiting Victor Harbour and other places of interest including the beach at Semaphore where I fell over and gashed my eyebrow on the sharp blade of my small sand spade. I think I embarrassed Dad because I made such a fuss when he was looking for a doctor's surgery to get me sutured up. Things were better when the clinics were closed and a first aid station on the beach was able to patch it up without sutures. I have that scar and an unpleasant memory to this day.

On the whole, I grew up without serious health issues. However, I had need of medical and dental attention from time to time. As a toddler I remember going with mum to the Yallourn Health Centre when she took Malcolm for a checkup and an injection. Lots of other children were there too and there was much wailing.

As a child I suffered from tonsillitis each year. Coughs, colds, and running noses were common ailments but the sore throat from tonsillitis was worse. I heard of others having to have an operation and I feared that prospect. Not even the thought of having to eat ice cream and jelly convinced me otherwise. When I visited the doctor he would place something cold and flat on the back of my tongue and ask me to say, "Aargh". I'm not sure what medicine I was asked to take but somehow I managed to avoid getting my tonsils out at a time when tonsillectomies were common place.

Not long after I started school I became seriously ill. I don't remember anything about it except that I was put into the Yallourn Hospital for a few days. It appears I had some fits and there was concern about me having epilepsy. However, this was a once-off illness and after due treatment and observation it never recurred. While I was in hospital it was necessary for me to have some injections and like most children this wasn't pleasant. One clever nurse convinced me that the injections wouldn't hurt if I let

her give them to me in the holes made by the previous ones. I thought that made sense and agreed. After that there were no more tears. I just had to remind the nurses to place them in the holes made previously. It was years before I realized what I'd agreed to.

When I was eight years old I visited Dr J. Moore Andrew, GP in Yallourn. Dr Andrew was Yallourn's first doctor. He had arrived in 1926 and stayed in the town till he died in 1972. Mum had a lot of respect for Dr Andrew. He was her doctor and had brought me into the world. As she felt confident, so did I. This visit was to do with my weight. At eight years of age I weighed 8 stone or 112 pounds. As a result of the consultation I went on a diet. I don't remember much about the initial visit except that when he asked me to jump off the scales I did so with an enormous thud on the floor. The doctor was quite surprised. I wasn't. He said, "Jump" so I jumped.



School doctors were another source of concern. At some point in my primary school days, Grade 4, I think, the Health Department sent in their team. I knew it was a check up and wasn't too concerned until the rumours went around the boys. Yes, this too was torture. On good information the boys would be grabbed by the testicles and asked to cough hard. This wasn't a pleasant prospect at all. Added to that there were stories of boys being hit on the penis with a dessert spoon. No explanation was given, this was just passed as a fact. As it happened, the coughing part wasn't as bad as I'd imagined and the dessert spoon didn't exist.

Since mum had been a nursing sister, we were cared for quite well at home. Minor ailments like cuts, grazes, bruises, burns, coughs and colds were managed at home. We had a good supply of band-aids, bandages, Dettol, ointment and Aspros. Mum knew what to do and I felt confident that I was in good hands. From time to time the doctor's advice and assistance was sought. One such time was when I was on my way to cash in an empty lemonade bottle and fell on to it near the front gate. It broke on the concrete and gashed my wrist. Sutures were necessary and I was taken to the Yallourn Health Centre.



The Rawleigh's man who would visit homes in Yallourn each month. He drove a van that was full of various medical preparations. Mum would always make sure we had a good supply of first aid items, especially a blue tin of linament ointment to rub on to one's chest when one had a cough or cold. There was also an orange tin of ointment for cuts and other wounds. Rawleigh's cough mixture was another favourite, but the one we liked least because of its smell was the fish smelling cream for burns. The Rawleigh's man was very common in Gippsland and each visit was like meeting an old friend again.

From time to time I stayed home from school because of illness. Those times weren't too frequent but when it was necessary, the rule was that I stayed in bed till after lunch when I could get up if I was feeling a little better. I was always feeling a little better by then and I was able to sit around in my pyjamas for the rest of the day. On those days it was always necessary to go to bed early to be bright and strong for school the next day. Once I heard that if you wanted to stay home and you weren't really sick you could fool the thermometer and your mother by putting a dollop of Rawleigh's lineament in the side of your mouth so when the thermometer was put in it would give a high reading. I thought about trying this but didn't want to overdo the illness in case the doctor was called and my cover blown.

Doctors were one thing, but dentists were another. There were two dentists in Yallourn when I had to visit the dentist. Mr A.M.Thiessen who had a private practice and Mr J.C.Rosenbrock who was the resident dentist at the Yallourn Health Centre. Visiting the dentist was one experience I never sought. However, a visit was needed because I had a couple of bad teeth. I was terrified at the thought. Mum made the appointment and we went to visit Mr Rosenbrock who decided I needed to be put to sleep. This terrified me more because this involved placing a mask on my face as I lay in the chair and dropping chloroform on to it. Since nothing had been explained to me I struggled and kicked and made plenty of noise. In response Mr Rosenbrock grabbed my hair and pulled me down. With my position fixed the chloroform was duly dripped on to the mask and I went to sleep. I remember seeing the design that appeared on children's jumpers at the time - boats and planes. My teeth were pulled and in due course I woke up feeling quite sick and sore. I vowed that I would never go to a dentist again.



A few years later, I needed more teeth pulled. Mum, dad and I talked about this visit and decided I should visit Mr Thiessen, who was a nice man, instead of Mr Rosenbrock. Apparently, mum didn't like the way he treated children either. I co-operated with mum and we walked to the surgery in North Way. All went well and we registered at the front desk. I sat in the waiting room while mum went into another room to speak to the dentist. That was my opportunity. While the coast was clear I took off and ran as fast as I could up the road towards the shopping centre and away from the dentist's. I was convinced that all dentists were the same and didn't want to repeat the experience. Just as I thought I was safe mum grabbed me by the shoulder and walked me back again. More wailing and gnashing of teeth! By now I knew that escape was hopeless and given the bribe of a toy if I was a good boy, I co-operated again. Well, Mr Thiessen was gentle. He didn't yell at me and he didn't pull my hair. The procedure went according to his plan and the bad teeth were pulled. Mum was true to her word and as we walked home we called into the Yallourn General Store and a small toy car was purchased.

Dentists were never my favourite people and for years as I walked past the Yallourn Health Centre I would look up at the window where Mr Rosenbrock's surgery was located and the bad memories would flood back.

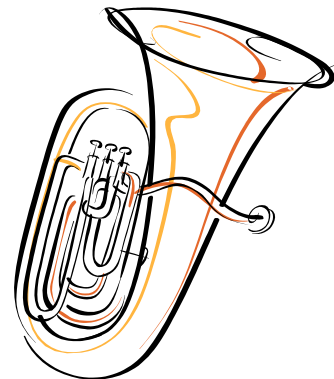


*Left: Yallourn Town Square from the theatre.*

## CHAPTER 4: MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC

Music in some form or another was a constant element in my life. We had a radio, radiogram and a piano. Our small collection of 78 rpm records were brass band records and from time to time we sit and listen to them. The first record I bought was Winifred Atwell playing the '*Black and White Rag*' on the piano. Mum played the piano and dad played a Bb bass in the Yallourn Salvation Army Band. They both sang in the Yallourn Salvation Army songster brigade and from time to time sang duets in church services and concerts. Dad was a tenor and mum was an alto. Neither of them was a graduate of a music school, but both of them were keen. Mum had piano lessons when she was a girl but did not persist. She played by ear and read music. I think mum wanted me to be the pianist she hoped to be but wasn't or at least she wanted to give me an opportunity to succeed. On the other hand, dad had no formal lessons and learnt a brass instrument as a matter of trial and error from the time he was married. Mum had a big effect on dad's life because she told him if he wanted to marry her he'd have to wear a Salvation Army uniform and be positive about his faith. It worked. He contributed to the music in the church and became a reasonable bass player over time.

One of my earliest recollections is our family walking to church on a Sunday morning with Dad carrying the large Bb bass strapped over his shoulder. This was a heavy instrument to carry around. In those days there were no cases so they had to be carried. The instrument was kept in the spare room and as children Malcolm and I would often try to blow it, lift it and push the keys up and down with little success. However, it was great fun.



From time to time Dad would lay his bass in the bath in warm water to clean it inside and outside before polishing it. The cleaning agent was Silvo. You poured some liquid Silvo on a clean, damp rag, wiped it on the instrument, a small area at a time, then polished it with a dry rag when it was dry and powdery. We favoured old singlets because these seemed to polish the best. This made the instrument look like new. It absolutely shone.

In between major maintenance, the valves were dismantled and spat upon to lubricate them or water was poured through the instrument to achieve the same effect. Spitting was not recommended because it was possible to make the valves sluggish if you had eaten sugary foods or drinks. At the time there were no suitable light oils available as there are today so these practices continued. The smaller slide tubes were dismantled, by holding the three valves down and slowly pulling the slides out. Vaseline ensured that they remained well lubricated. The aim in all this effort was to keep the instrument in such a condition that all the bits and pieces worked properly and could be undone or pulled out without effort. Dad's practical engineering background contributed to the bass being well maintained.

When dad arrived home from work he would have a daily debriefing session with mum, a cup of tea, a bath and a period of home practice on the bass. The practice session took place in the bathroom with dad sitting on a wooden chair with the nobby end of the bass resting in the chair between his legs. Everyone shared the practice, even the neighbours. He would start by blowing air into the mouthpiece to warm up the instrument then he'd blow up and down the scales. After this he would play his part in the music the band was currently rehearsing. If this was before a special event he'd play longer and make sure his instrument, music bag, uniform and shoes were all spic and span.



There was no doubt that I was going to learn music. This wasn't possible at school so mum found me a teacher. The same teacher another cousin went to. She was a recognized pianist, her husband played cornet in the Yallourn Town Band and her two children played the piano. So once a week after school I would walk to Mrs Ross's house where I would play the pieces she set for me the previous lesson and complete the theory. I had to be able to balance a penny on the back of each hand as I played. Mrs Ross would write notes for me in an exercise book so my parents were aware of what I had to practice during the week.

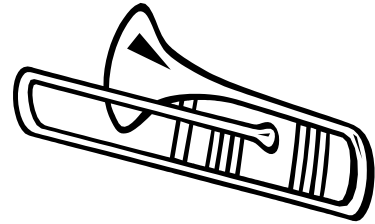
From my perspective Mrs Ross, a talented, friendly lady, was quite multi-skilled. While she cooked tea in the kitchen she could teach one student at the bedroom piano, one sitting in the hallway completing the theory lesson and teach me playing the piano in the lounge room. At the time I thought this must be a very good way to make money. I'd start with the new scale for the week, revise old scales, play the new piece and revise a couple of old pieces. Home practice was a bit of an issue but I managed to get through without too much drama. Sometimes I did it without a fuss, sometimes I had to be threatened, however most times mum and dad were kept very busy encouraging me. On one occasion I recall breaking the corners from a number of keys because I was so frustrated by having to play at all.

I learnt for five years from age 8 to age 13. However, I had no inclination to sit exams like most of the other students at the time. I thought I played well for my age and had some favourite pieces like Schubert's, '*Marche Militaire*', '*The Blue Danube Waltz*', '*The Indian Dance*' and many others. I still have a copy of the '*Coronation Piano Folio*', a collection of classics I had to learn. This experience didn't result in me being a competent pianist but it did provide a sound musical basis for my second instrument, the trombone. Ironically, I started to learn brass at the Salvation Army about the same time I started piano. This was my negotiating point when I turned 13. I convinced mum my effort would be better spent on one instrument rather than two and that was the trombone.



My brass teacher and mentor was my uncle, Norm Hodgson. Norm was married to mum's youngest sister Nell. He had been a member of the prestigious Melbourne Staff Band, the Salvation Army's premier band. In that band he played Bb bass and tenor trombone. He was an excellent musician and a naturally skilled teacher. I joined a learner's class at Yallourn Salvation Army when I was about eight years old. For my lips, the trombone was the right instrument. I played a silver plated Boosey and Hawkes, tenor trombone.

My piano experience had helped me read music so it was more a technique issue for me to learn to play this instrument. My arms were long enough to reach all the shifts. There are seven shifts on a trombone from the 1st, when the slide is not extended at all to the 7th when it is fully extended. Fortunately, I rarely had to use 7th shift. However, most of the rest were fairly common especially the 6th shift which was D under the staff. With a trombone you have to move from shift to shift in the same time as a person pushes down the valves on a valve instrument. You can't be slow or you'll get left behind. Also, the slide is quite fragile. If you put a dent into it, it is harder to play. So, you have to be very careful not to leave the instrument laying around or letting other people play it. I became very protective and wouldn't let anyone play it. It was returned to its case as soon as I had finished playing it which was a smart move in the long run.



Regular maintenance was essential so warm baths were in order to wash the instrument inside and out. I had a piece of string with a small rag tied to the end to pull through the inner slide when it was being washed. Again, I pulled the tuning slide out and applied Vaseline and on the inner slides I smeared a small amount of Ponds Face Cream. Silvo kept the exterior shining. Once I mistook Ponds Cleansing cream for the face cream. The outcome was immediate. The slide became extremely sluggish and had to be cleaned off. I tried to maintain a regular practice routine and met on Friday nights to be taught a bit more. Uncle Norm focused on the importance of having a pleasant and confident sound on any brass instrument..

I was always excited by the brassy sound of the trombone and took a special interest in the trombonists in the Salvo band and any others. At one time the Yallourn Salvation Army Band had three trombones, two tenors and a G bass trombone. The bass trombone was a bigger instrument with a handle to allow the player to reach the 6th and 7th shifts. Its deep brassy sound was something extra special. The quality and technology of trombones improved with time, as did my playing, but this was the beginning.

## CHAPTER 5: ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

I was born into a Christian family. My parents and grandparents were active Salvationists. This meant they had made a public, personal commitment to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. In addition, they signed the Articles of War in order to become soldiers of the Salvation Army. They were active members of the church not just pretenders, attenders or supporters.

Mum was born in Buckhaven, Fifeshire, Scotland on January 29, 1913 and migrated with her family, the Scarletts, from Durham, Yorkshire, England in 1927. Joseph and Rose Scarlett and their seven children were sponsored by the Salvation Army and initially settled at Victor Harbour, South Australia before moving to Melbourne, Victoria in January 1938, first to Gardiner, then Tooronga and later to Box Hill in about 1960. By then the family had well and truly grown up and dispersed. In January 1933, Eva, the oldest child, entered the Salvation Army Training College in Melbourne and was commissioned as a Salvation Army Officer on January 8, 1934. She was appointed to Bethesda Hospital, Richmond where she commenced her nursing training and remained there till her marriage in 1941.

Dad was born in Waratah, Tasmania on July 7, 1916 and moved to Yallourn, Victoria with his family in 1926. Frank and Jane Roberts and their five children *were* the Salvation Army at Yallourn in its early years. Dad grew up in Yallourn, the developing open cut brown coal mining and electricity producing centre of Victoria. He completed his schooling in Yallourn and was employed by the State Electricity Commission as an apprentice fitter and turner. He worked in the boiler house and turbine room at Yallourn Power Station before transferring to Morwell in the late fifties.



Mum and dad met as a result of their friendship with the Salvation Army officers (ministers) of the day, Lieutenants Frank and Isobel Kowalick. Isobel had been a nurse at Bethesda Hospital and trained as an officer with mum. Mum had come to Yallourn for a short holiday with the Kowalicks when she met dad. Mum was a very 'proper' young lady whose manner and speech were impeccable. Dad had a few rough edges and some members on his side of the family thought mum was a snob. Dad felt otherwise. He was quite keen on mum, and visited her in Melbourne on a number of occasions.

Once the relationship seemed likely to proceed mum made it quite clear to dad that he would have to be a uniformed, committed Salvation Army soldier before she would marry him. At the time he was neither committed nor uniformed and he had been attending the Methodist Church as the result of a girl friend he had. Well, dad was

obviously smitten by mum because he got the message and they were married in Salvation Army uniform on November 29, 1941.

Together they were both involved in a range of church activities - the songsters (choir), the band, the home league, the Sunday school, worship services and open air meetings. Further, they were positive Christian role models to others, encouraging similar involvement and commitment.

This is the loving environment I grew up in. Having a baby in a pram was no reason for mum or dad not to attend Salvation Army activities. An evangelical Christian culture was predominant in my home where prayer and the bible were part of everyday life. I grew up in the church, attended Sunday school, church services, and corps programs and took part in visits to other Salvation Army centres. I enjoyed Sunday school picnics and learnt a to play a brass instrument.

Gradually, I learned basic Christian precepts and theology. Without major issue or concern, I accepted the Christian faith as expressed in the culture of the Salvation Army. At an early age I understood that I needed to make my own personal commitment. This was done on number of occasions but the first was at a Sunday school anniversary at the age of eight when I responded to a call from the leader of the service, Major Carr, to come to the front of the hall, to kneel and pray. On that occasion I was given a small bible as a reminder of this commitment.

The local Salvation Army corps was a close community of people motivated by similar beliefs. In some cases these people were family members, extended family members and friends. We enjoyed our style of worship and grew up together. Sunday was always busy, as the seventh day of the week it was our day of worship.

For me the day started at 10.00 am with the Primary Meeting for kids under eight years old. For a time mum was the Primary Leader assisted by a couple of ladies. Mum liked to make things interesting for the kids who sat in a circle on small, wooden folding chairs. We would sing choruses with actions, hear stories, take up the collection and say prayers. An activity to make a model, draw something, colour in a drawing or watch a flannel graph presentation was common.

One day the story was about Goliath and how he was slain by David. A giant, ten feet tall, covered in armour and carrying a huge spear was dropped to the ground by a small boy. We often sang this song:

*Only a boy named David,  
Only a little sling,  
Only a boy named David  
And he could play and sing,  
Only a boy named David,  
Only a babbling brook,  
Only a boy named David*

*And one little stone he took.  
And one little stone went in the sling  
And the sling went round and round,  
And one little stone went in the sling  
And the sling went round and round,  
And round and round and round  
and round and round and round and round,  
And one little stone went through the air  
And hit the giant fair and square  
And the giant fell down dead.*

All the children would stand up to sing this song and as they went round and round they became very giddy and fell down. It was great fun and we all liked singing and acting it out. However, on the day I'm relating mum decided to do something a little different and instead of everyone singing the song she showed us a small sling she had made using string and a little square of material. As she told the story, she put the stone in the sling as David did and started to spin the sling round and round and round. Then to everyone's horror she lost her grip and the stone went flying through the air missing my head by an inch or two. That brought the story to a fairly dramatic and unexpected close as she had to make sure her darling was all right. Fortunately, mum was a poor shot and the stone clunked harmlessly into the wall behind me.

The older kids missed out on this fun and were stuck with Directory. This was like Sunday school except we learnt about the doctrines of the Salvation Army. It was fairly heavy stuff. For the adults, an open air street meeting was held somewhere in the town at the same time. The Yallourn Band would sometimes march to and from the open air meeting. We would listen as the band marched back towards the Salvation Army hall and made sure we went outside to watch when they were close.



This was followed at 11.00 am by the morning worship, the Holiness Meeting that lasted about an hour and a half. This service was a time of family worship and involved singing hymns and choruses, bible reading, praying, an offering, a contribution from the band and songsters (choir), announcements for the week to come and the bible address or sermon. It was hard to last through this without becoming restless and as a toddler I had to be taken outside a few times for being noisy. To be truthful, I wasn't just taken outside for the fun of it, I was taken outside to be smacked on the bottom. This was one way to get me understand that I couldn't be disruptive in the meeting.

Malcolm and I sat with mum because dad sat with the band. Occasionally, we were allowed to go and sit with dad. When we did we snuggled up close and played with his uniform badges, his rough hands with the left pointer that had the top cut off in an

industrial accident and tried to read his music books. I remember during prayer times that I often put my head forward with my mouth on the wooden back rail of the seat in front. For no particular reason I'd scrape my top teeth into the paint and as a result I left a permanent impression.

At the end of each meeting the officer leading the worship would invite anyone who felt led to come and kneel at the holiness table or the mercy seat at the front of the hall. The people who knelt at the holiness table with its red tablecloth were already Christians making a re-commitment of their faith. Those who knelt at the penitent form or mercy seat did so to receive salvation. I never saw any one receive anything tangible but understood that God had saved them from their sins. Sometimes they would cry and wipe their eyes as they walked back to their seat. When someone came to the



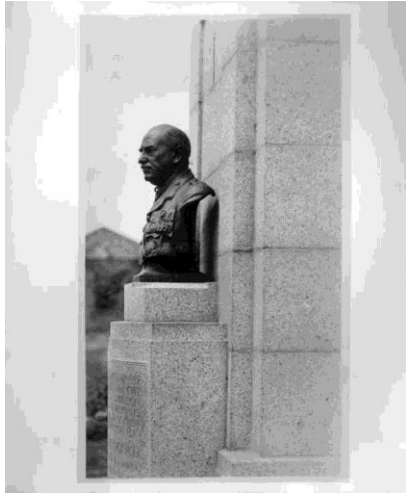
front we always peaked to see who came and often wondered what bad things they had done to get saved from. Also, when someone came forward the meeting was always extended and if a few people came, well, lunch was late. I hoped for someone to come up with a practice where God could do his work and save sinners without everyone else having to be penalized by more singing and prayer as well as a late lunch. If a number of people came forward I'd feel restless and mutter to myself that I wished the leader would stop and let us all leave. I guess I wasn't sensitive to the Spirit's leading at the time. You could be sure that if there was a visiting officer, a special occasion or a visiting group, like the Melbourne Staff Band, the meeting would be extended.

Sunday afternoon at 3.00 pm was the Young People's Meeting or Sunday school. There was time for singing and prayer before we moved into small groups with our Company Guard or Sunday school teacher. The good teachers always prepared the lesson for the day that was outlined in a small red book. The teacher would prepare an activity that involved a bible reading, a discussion and a puzzle, drawing or something to involve us. The poor teachers would fail to prepare and we'd have to listen to too much talk as they tried to keep our attention. They were often boring as they tried reading their teacher's book to us. After about an hour of Sunday school we'd walk home for tea.

At 6.00 pm another open air meeting was held. The band and a few others, including mum, Malcolm and I would walk to various street corners in the town to hold a half hour service. For a number of years the location was adjacent to the shopping centre in the town square in front of the monument to Sir John Monash and engineer and founder of Yallourn. The service would include some songs, a prayer, a testimony, a bible reading, a short message and an invitation to those in the vicinity to follow the band back to the Salvation Army hall for the night meeting at 7.00 pm. I don't remember seeing anyone follow the band back but mum said that before television and radio this often happened.

In the darker days of winter a couple of people carried kerosene fuelled Tilley pressure lamps on long poles so the bandsmen could see their music. Everyone rugged up in coats and hats to keep warm and dry. I sometimes wondered whether marching on the roads in the dark was a smart thing to do. There was very little traffic in those days and what traffic there was pretty slow. Dad told me that on one occasion there was a bit of confusion about who was giving the band its marching orders and one person called out to turn right as another called to turn left. The result was that the flag bearer and the few people in front of the band went right while the band turned left on slightly shorter route back to the hall. After a little bit of confusion and a scurry the right turn group reassembled in front of the band and continued on.

*Below: Sir John Monash's bust*



Mum said that in the early days of the Salvation Army some people would throw rotten tomatoes at the band. The worst I saw were people opening their windows and turning up their radios to try and drown out the band. Sometimes a person who was 'under the weather', as dad put it, would be abusive. On one occasion someone threw an apple when the band was marching but fortunately it missed its moving target. On another occasion a person rode a bike through the band. On that day they were marching in straight lines so there was no accident as there may have been on most occasion. Dad told me that one meeting was disrupted when a very drunk man in the vicinity decided to punch up Sir John Monash's bronze bust on the monument behind the band. Sir John never budged an inch, while his aggressor needed medical attention to deal with his wounded hands.

At 7.00 pm the Salvation Meeting would begin. Usually fewer people attended the evening service but form of worship was similar. After about an hour and a half I was pretty tired and ready for bed. When I was about eight or nine I tried to negotiate not having to go out on Sunday nights on the grounds that my cousin Douglas Roberts was allowed to stay home. My parents were not receptive. They told me that what applied to Douglas did not apply to me. Or put another way, "*If Douglas was to jump into the creek would you?*" Well, of course my answer to that question was 'no'. No further debate discussion took place.

The Salvation Army had week day activities for its congregation including a bible study, Home League (a mid-week women's meeting) and practices for band and songsters. These didn't affect me as a young child but mum and dad were involved. Other special events included an annual Sunday school picnic, special Sunday themes and concerts. Each year we would have a Young People's Anniversary. The anniversary celebrated the involvement of the younger children in the Primary and the older ones in the Sunday School. Each year there would a concert and all the kids would be involved in some way or another. I made my first and last public singing debut when

I was about eight at a Sunday School anniversary. It was so good the leader asked me to sing the song again. I got lots of applause from the audience. Here are the words:

*There was a man named Michael Finnegan,  
He grew whiskers on his chin-e-gan  
The wind came up and blew them inn-e-gan,  
Poor old Michael Finnegan.*

In my younger days we would travel together by bus to different places, particularly Gippsland towns and to the Sunday school picnics. Yallourn Salvation Army put on harvest thanksgiving concerts at Bairnsdale, Sale, Warragul, Wonthaggi and Korumburra. These were inclusive affairs involving the band, songsters, male voice party, timbrels as well as individual items. Our family would always be involved and sometimes mum and dad would sing a duet. The Salvation Army hall would be decorated with hay, fruit and vegetables to represent the fruits of the harvest and there was always a stall or auction with food for sale. All the visitors received a tasty supper. On the way home in the bus there was a lot of singing and one song that was popular was:



*We're on the homeward trail,  
We're on the homeward trail,  
Singing as we go,  
Going home.  
We're on the homeward trail,  
We're on the homeward trail,  
Singing, singing, singing, singing,  
Going home.*

I didn't understand until I was older that this was a song about going to heaven. Anyway the bus experience always made me feel safe and secure and I looked forward to the next trip.

A popular place for Sunday school picnics was the Narracan Falls. These were a beautiful natural formation on Narracan Creek, south of Moe and east of Thorpdale. Narracan Falls was a great place to swim and there was plenty of space for fun events like races and team games. We always looked forward to a lovely sunny day for our picnics and the clean smell of the fresh air as we travelled through farmland, bush and hills to the falls.

One year all these conditions were present as I sat about two thirds of the way down the bus on the driver's side with the window open and the rush of air on my face. As I day dreamed enjoying the experience I felt something wet on my face and hair. I moved my head away from the window as a hand behind me pulled the window shut. Then I could smell it. About four seats forward I saw an older boy leaning out the window vomiting. He had travel sickness. Mum found something to wipe my face and I was a lot more cautious for the rest of the trip. It mustn't have been my day because

during the day I fell in the creek and wet my clothes. While this didn't bother me so much, mum wanted the clothes to be dried so until that was done I had to wear an older girl's pair of bathers. I was so embarrassed that I spent the rest of the afternoon sitting in the back of the bus. Under no circumstances was I going to go public in that outfit.



The Salvation Army provided a strong network of Christian friends, worthwhile social involvements and a firm foundation for my Christian beliefs. As I grew up I became more aware and more involved.



## CHAPTER 6: NEIGHBOURS, RELATIONS AND OTHERS

Our family lived in the one location in Yallourn from 1941 till we moved to Morwell in 1959. 12 Parkway, Yallourn was only a short walk from the shopping centre, opposite the Yallourn Primary School and opposite the parkland that provided most of Yallourn's leisure activity. On the corner of Parkway, Park Crescent, Parkside and Lake Avenue, 12 Parkway was very accessible, spacious and had a great outlook.

We had friendly neighbours on the north and the west sides of the block. The Brennans lived on the north and the Maddens on the west. Both families were large and Catholic. As a child I noticed that many Catholic families were large. The Lafferty's who lived further along Parkway, at the next corner, seemed to exude children. Often I never knew older people's real names and always called them Mr and Mrs. Mum and dad said children should always do this and regarded young people who called older people by their Christian names as 'very rude'. Mr and Mrs Madden had four children, Des, Max, Jeff and Elaine, their only daughter. I could look into their yard along the fence line and often chatted to anyone in the garden. None of the Maddens were my age, they were all much older. They weren't playmates, just neighbours.

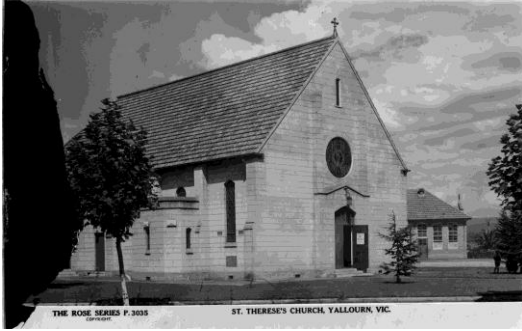


Mr and Mrs Brennan had Brian, John, Kevin, Noel, Robert and Pat. Mr Brennan, like dad, rode a bicycle to work each day. He worked at the Yallourn briquette factory. Robert was slightly older than me and Pat was Malcolm's age. We had a lot more to do with them. We played and visited each other often. The Brennans were the first family I knew to get a new car - a two tone blue and white 1956 Holden Special. It impressed me no end. They proudly showed their new car to anyone who was interested. They were also the first neighbours to get television, albeit black and white. It certainly beat standing outside Shine's furniture store every Friday night to watch The Lone Ranger and Tonto, his Indian friend.

I can't remember visiting the Maddens, but I often visited the Brennans. Sometimes it would be to play, sometimes to watch television, sometimes it was to go with Robert to the soccer oval and watch him play and other times it was to borrow a cup of sugar or flour. The Brennans had a sleep out where three of the boys slept. I don't know why they called it a sleep out because it was just a large room attached to the house. It was always untidy with dirty clothes and unmade beds. The Brennans seemed to be a pleasant, happy family. They were well behaved and never had trouble with the police. They got on well with each other, had jobs to do around the house and always went to church on Sunday.

Their church, St Therese's Catholic Church, was a large, striking light coloured brick building on the edge of the shopping centre adjacent to the Catholic primary school

and convent. The church was always busy on Sunday mornings and sometimes Saturday nights. Catholics went to mass, we went to a meeting.



Father Walsh was the priest. Occasionally, we'd pop into the Catholic church and marvel at the stained glass windows, the statues and interesting interior. I was amazed, that Catholics could go to church once a week and do whatever they liked after that. Seemed like a good religion to me. We had more church activities and had to behave during the week.

Above: *St Therese's Church, Yallourn*

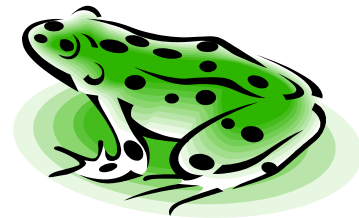
Every year the Catholic school held a bazaar. I went along with Malcolm and Robert and was amazed at the fact that they had spinning wheels, lucky dips and raffles. Boy, you never had them at the Salvation Army! That was gambling! Special guests for the bazaar was always the St Vincent de Paul's Boys Band. They had royal blue uniforms with a light blue band on the hat and a gold harp badge. The boys came by bus from Melbourne and were billeted with Yallourn families, including the Brennans. I met a few boys and enjoyed listening to their band.

From time to time a *'Holy War'* would break out in my neighbourhood. It was usually over some petty matter like a discussion that got out of hand, or which school you went to. Like all wars both sides would assemble their armoury and go for it. Rarely, we had physical contact or threw stones. Our conflict was verbal. On my side of the fence, Malcolm and I would chant:

*"Catholic dogs, sitting on logs,  
eating maggots out of frogs!"*

Then the younger Brennans would retort:

*"State dogs, sitting on logs,  
eating maggots out of frogs!"*



However, when they really wanted to rub salt into the wound they would say:

*"Salvation Army, free from sin,  
Went to heaven in a kerosene tin,  
One had a bugle,  
One had a drum  
And one went to heaven sitting on his bum!"*

Mum didn't like this when we told her because she said the 'bum' word was a swear word. However, we found the verse objectionable because the Salvation Army never had bugles in their bands. It was factually incorrect! We accepted the acknowledgement that we had been saved from sin but not knowing the difference between a cornet and a bugle was too much! Anyway, by the next morning the war was over and we were all friends again.

We accepted each other's differences; different faiths, different religious practices, different beliefs and ways of worship. I thought it odd that the priest could drink beer and bet on the races and still be a priest. Mum and Mrs Brennan were very close friends and met every day for a cup of tea and a good chat either at our place or theirs. Anyway, the Brennans were still our best neighbours despite the fact that they were Catholics.

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During my early primary school years my only accessible relatives were the Roberts's. Uncle Frank and Auntie Thelma lived in Banksia St about a kilometre away. Malcolm and I would sometimes go and play with Douglas who was a few weeks older than me. However, his parents became Salvation Army officers and the family moved away and we had little contact after that. Auntie Florrie had already left Yallourn and married Uncle Don Clarke. They were officers too and we had little contact with their two children, Robert and Gwen. Uncle Jack and Auntie Ellie lived near the kindergarten and we saw them each Sunday. We didn't spend time with their children, Mavis and Heather because they were girls and their son Leslie was much younger than we were. Uncle Bill and Auntie Jean lived on the hill near the Yallourn Reservoir. We got on well with cousin Colin who was a few years older than me, but had little contact with his older sister Beverley and Marilyn, who was about Malcolm's age. From time to time we would visit Colin. Walk in the bush, have lunch and ride our bikes around. He was good fun to be with.

The most significant thing that happened to us as a family was when the Hodgsons moved from Bentleigh to live in Morwell in the early 1950's. We knew about the Hodgsons because Auntie Nell was Mum's younger sister and we visited them once in Melbourne. Our family and the Hodgsons got on very well together. When I was a baby mum and dad took Kaye and I out together. Kaye was about six weeks younger than me but many people thought we were twins. Malcolm and I played with our new cousins Kaye, Rosiland, Anne and baby Sue. We spent a lot of time together at the Salvation Army and at weekends and holidays. It seemed that blood was not only thicker than water, but also, thicker than other blood. The Hodgsons spent the day with us on Sundays and we all went to the various Army activities together. This was the start of a close family relationship that has continued. The arrival of the Hodgsons meant girls. We had spent most of our time socializing with boys. Girls were different we found out. Nevertheless we had plenty of good times with them.

Uncle Norm and Auntie Nell were a great influence on us. They were good fun, liked kids, and talked to us. They were involved in the Salvation Army in various ways. Uncle Norm became the bandmaster. He used to be a member of the Melbourne Staff Band and could play any brass instrument. That was impressive. Auntie Nell was a poet. Not only could she recite poems, but she could also write her own poetry. Auntie Nell could also tell stories. She was very imaginative and could convince you that you were in some exotic place when you were really sitting on the lawn under the stars in your own back yard.

Uncle Norm was an accountant and became the paymaster for State Electricity Commission at Morwell. He had spent some time in the air force during the war and we saw plenty of photos of him in his uniform and in a dance band playing trombone. Aunty Nell, like mum, had trained as a nurse at Bethesda Hospital in Richmond.

The Hodgsons initially lived at 60 Vincent Rd, Morwell until they moved into their own house in Charles Court. Uncle Norm and Auntie Nell became my favourite Uncle and Auntie and the Hodgson girls my favourite cousins. Our families related well to each other and enjoyed sharing time with each other. This relationship reached a new dimension in 1955 when both families went camping at Newhaven, Phillip Island. This was the start a family tradition that lasted decades and brought new dimensions to each of us.

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There are a number of individuals who are worthy of mention because they were unique in their own way and made an impression on a growing child.

The first was **'Uncle' Dick Collett** who lived at our home for a number of months in the early 1950's. He was about Dad's age and was a specialist welder who had been hired to weld new equipment at the Australian Paper Manufacturers (A.P.M.), Maryvale plant. 'Uncle' Dick and his family lived in Melbourne at Preston. He had two boys about our ages but we didn't have contact with them until we were much older. 'Uncle' Dick was also a Salvationist and that's how he came to stay with us. He rode a motor bike in leather riding apparel and would travel to Melbourne and back at weekends.



The major single identifying factor about 'Uncle' Dick was his smell. It was unbearable! You could smell him when he was a hundred metres away. In fact, he smelt so bad you could tell by his smell that he'd arrived home before you heard or saw him. There was no way he could hide, his smell gave him away! No! 'Uncle' Dick didn't have bad hygiene or bad habits, his problem was that he worked at the A.P.M. Everyone who worked at the A.P.M. acquired this smell in those days. In fact, when the wind was right you could smell the A.P.M. from our backyard and we were 12 kms away. The smell like rotten cabbages permeated the Latrobe Valley for years and years. It was the result of the paper making process when chips of wood were cooked under pressure with chemicals. If you wanted paper, you had to tolerate the smell.

Each day after work 'Uncle' Dicks clothes were gradually removed to enable him to get to the bathroom for a bath without taking his smelly garments with him. He smelt normal after a bath and while he was bathing, mum would wash his clothes in the laundry to ensure the smell didn't linger in the house. I had a lot of time for 'Uncle' Dick. He was

friendly, told funny stories and played a cornet. Malcolm and I were sad when his contract finished and he returned to Melbourne.

The second was '**Uncle**' **Matt Ten Veen** who migrated from the Netherlands about 1952. He was a single person who was sponsored by the Salvation Army. He played a trumpet and joined the Yallourn Salvation Army band. One of thousands of European migrants who moved to the Yallourn area, 'Uncle' Matt was a carpenter by trade and was employed by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (S.E.C.V.) He was the first Dutch person I had ever seen close up. He looked the rest of us, with short curly hair, but his thick accent betrayed his identity. Malcolm and I loved to hear him talk and great fun with him. Sometimes he would sing songs to us in Dutch.

While he was with us, 'Uncle' Matt had two major building triumphs. First, he made a large breadbox for our bread delivery each day. This wooden construction had a door and a metal roof just like a house. More important, if you put your fingers inside above the door frame, you could feel a secret ledge. I used this ledge to hide things I didn't want others to find. Our bread box was so well built it lasted till we left Yallourn in 1959.



The second building triumph was a letterbox that was fixed to the gatepost opposite the breadbox. Again, it was a solid structure. It had a large slot in the front facing the footpath so the letters could be slipped inside and a hinged lid for large items of mail to be inserted. Every day the postman would blow his whistle and when he did we knew there was mail for someone.

Unfortunately, 'Uncle' Matt's letterbox didn't last as long as the breadbox. One Guy Fawkes night I decided to blow it up. I didn't mean to demolish it completely, just a bit. I lit a couple of powerful sixpenny bangers - later banned- dropped them in the letterbox and closed the lid. As I hurried to step back there was a deafening explosion and the lid and four side flew into the air then to the ground. Only the base that was nailed to the post was left intact. I had no choice but to own up and neither mum nor dad was impressed. Sixpenny bangers were banned in our Guy Fawkes celebrations after that. 'Uncle' Matt had moved on so Dad reassembled the letterbox but it was never the same.

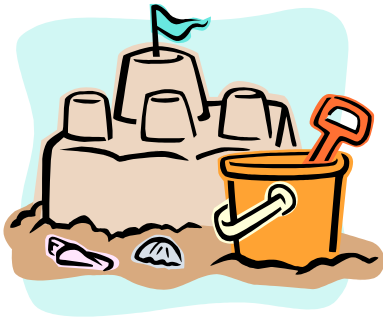
The third person was **Miss Murdoch**, a middle aged lady I knew very little about. She was the unmarried daughter of a very important, wealthy Melbourne family. She had been quite ill and needed somewhere quiet in the country to recuperate. Miss Murdoch was with us for a few weeks and stayed in the spare room at the rear of the house. Once I went in there with mum and saw her from the foot of the bed. She had greyish hair, pale skin and was propped up on pillows. I never heard her speak, although mum talked to her and I never saw her in any other room . Miss Murdoch was a mystery guest.

The fourth person, was the '**dunny**' man. He visited every house in the town regularly to remove the 'dunny' can full of human excrement and replace it with an empty one. He drove a truck which carried layers of cans and with his helpers would lift the empty cans onto the pad on their shoulders and take them to each outhouse toilet. There the full can would be lifted out and replaced with an empty one. A metal lid was fitted so the contents wouldn't splash as it was taken back to the 'dunny' truck. This was very heavy work and not without its hazards.

We often watched curiously from a distance when the 'dunny' man called at our house. He parked in the street and had to walk across the lawn to the outside toilet in the backyard. Mum told us that one day when he was returning to the truck with a full can, its bottom gave way and the contents went all over him. Now, I saw the shoulder pad he wore and thought of the terrible mess that must have gone done his back and front. However, mum said that day he was carrying the can on his head. Can you imagine that? The corroded bottom of the can gave way and guess where his head went? That's right! He was a real mess and quite embarrassed. Mum took pity and invited him into our laundry to clean up. It never happened again at our place, so I guess after that he decided that carrying the can on the shoulder was probably much safer or the cans were stronger.

The final two people worthy of mention were actually relatives, mum's sister, Aunty May and Uncle Don Scarlett.

**Aunty May** was unique because she was so small. Every child liked her because they could be as tall as she was in much less time than other adults. Mum said she was a normal child until she was about twelve years old when she became very sick. After that she ceased growing and stayed that size from then on. Aunty May lived with Nanna and Grandpa Scarlett and visited us from time to time with them. She always remembered birthdays and Christmas presents and that made her special too. For a number of years we received a bucket and spade or a handkerchief for Christmas. While we were able to use the present we hoped that the next Christmas would be different. Eventually it was.



Aunty May had her own room in Nanna's house and when no-one was around, I liked to look through the doorway and marvel at the tidy room with its dressing table with small bottles of perfume and her well made bed.

You'd think Aunty May would have been a little eater, however, she was a surprise as she could eat as much as Grandpa Scarlett. She always left her plate without a speck of food on it. It took ages for her to reach this state but she did it by systematically scraping her knife to gather each drop of gravy or last food residue.

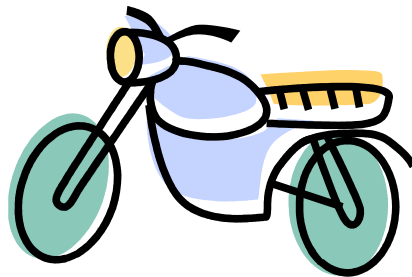
For a while, Aunty May worked as a domestic maid in Toorak. When we visited Nanna we would see her scurrying off to catch the tram, train or bus so she wouldn't be late. Later she worked with Nanna in the laundry at the Box Hill Boys' Home.

Although she was different, we loved her very much and always gave her a welcome or parting kiss, even though she seemed not to want it and consistently ducked her head leaving you with a mouthful of hair.

**Uncle Donald** was mum's youngest brother. He was the tail ender in the Scarlett family and the only child born in Australia, the rest came to Australia from England in 1927. According to dad, Donald was a spoilt brat. Mum didn't like the word 'brat' so she said he was just a naughty, little boy. Dad said Don was obnoxious and on one occasion, before they married, when he visited mum Don turned the garden hose on him and he was drench with water. When mum complained to Nanna Scarlett about Don's misbehaviour she was reminded that Nanna had brought up mum but every member of the family was having a hand in bringing up Donald.

Don was about ten years older than I was and I had very little to do with him for many years. However, I remember visiting Nanna's place during school holidays when I was in primary school. He always greeted us by asking what we were doing there and telling mum to take us back to the bush. At first I was a bit afraid of his manner but got used to it. Besides, as we got older he was always going out on his motor bike so he didn't bother us much.

Don liked riding motor bikes and riding them fast. He had a number of different models but the ones i remember were the CZ and Triumph. From time to time he got into trouble for his riding habits and on one occasion was stopped by the police for riding too fast. When Don saw the new police bike he asked the policeman how fast his bike would go, When the policeman replied, Don said, *"Well, if I knew that before, I wouldn't have stopped for you!"*



Donald had a small Clark Gable moustache, dressed well and wanted to impress others, especially girls, I was told. It wasn't until I was in secondary school that our relationship developed as we got to know him better. He became a favourite uncle.

# POSTSCRIPT

*This is really not all there is about life in Yallourn and certainly not the whole story of Peter Roberts. I knew little of the history of Yallourn and its importance as a major energy centre in Victoria in the period from my birth to the end of my primary school experience in the mid-fifties. The politics and pollution of mining brown coal were not part of daily life. Others have more aptly recorded that and the history of Yallourn as a major industrial centre.*

*Life is about change, refocusing and moving on. Growing up in Yallourn in a caring family environment was significant to my development as a person. It was both enjoyable and unforgettable.*

*The Roberts family relocated to Morwell in 1959 when my father moved to work at Morwell Power Station. As a consequence, a new chapter of my story commenced.*

*Peter Roberts*

*31/3/14*



## APPENDIX: YALLOURN TOWNSHIP

**Yallourn** , Victoria, Australia, 130km east of Melbourne, was a company town in built between the 1920s and 1950s to house employees of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (S.E.C.V.), who operated the nearby Yallourn Power Station and Briquette Factory complexes.

The town, planned by A.R. La Gerche, the SECV's Architect, was similar to early UK garden cities. The design featured a central square adjacent to the shopping area and a formal "Broadway" bounded by parks between the shopping area and railway station. The whole town area was surrounded by a green belt varying between native vegetation, open parkland and sporting and recreational complexes.

The majority of the land and buildings, with the exception of the churches and several minor properties, were owned by the S.E.C.V who adopted the role of landlord in addition to its role as employer to the majority of the town's income earners. For the majority of the town's life, citizen involvement was limited, residents being represented in their dealings with the S.E.C.V. by a Town Advisory Council that was established in 1947.

Houses within the town were constructed to a limited number of designs with differing external detailing and surface finishes. A brick and tile manufacturing plant was built near the town and produced a characteristic terracotta roofing tile which was used to clad most homes. The homes were placed on large plots, typically of 1000 m<sup>2</sup> and the design brief from General Sir John Monash, the initial S.E.C.V. chairman, required that each plot should have sufficient land to permit the tenant to keep a horse and a garden.



The town boasted outstanding public facilities many years in advance of similar rural or suburban communities of similar size, the majority funded by the S.E.C.V. A close community spirit developed within the town, in part through enthusiastic usage of the excellent facilities.

At its peak the town's population reached 5000. However in 1968 the S.E.C.V. decided to demolish the town to make way for further mining and by 1983 demolition was complete, the underlying brown coal reserves being used to feed the Yallourn W Power Station. Many of the people who were relocated from Yallourn built homes in surrounding towns in the Latrobe Valley. The majority of the houses from the town were removed, either to these nearby towns, or further afield. These relocated Yallourn homes remain popular with former Yallourn residents.

*Source: Extracts from 'Wikipedia' - [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/yallourn](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/yallourn)*



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