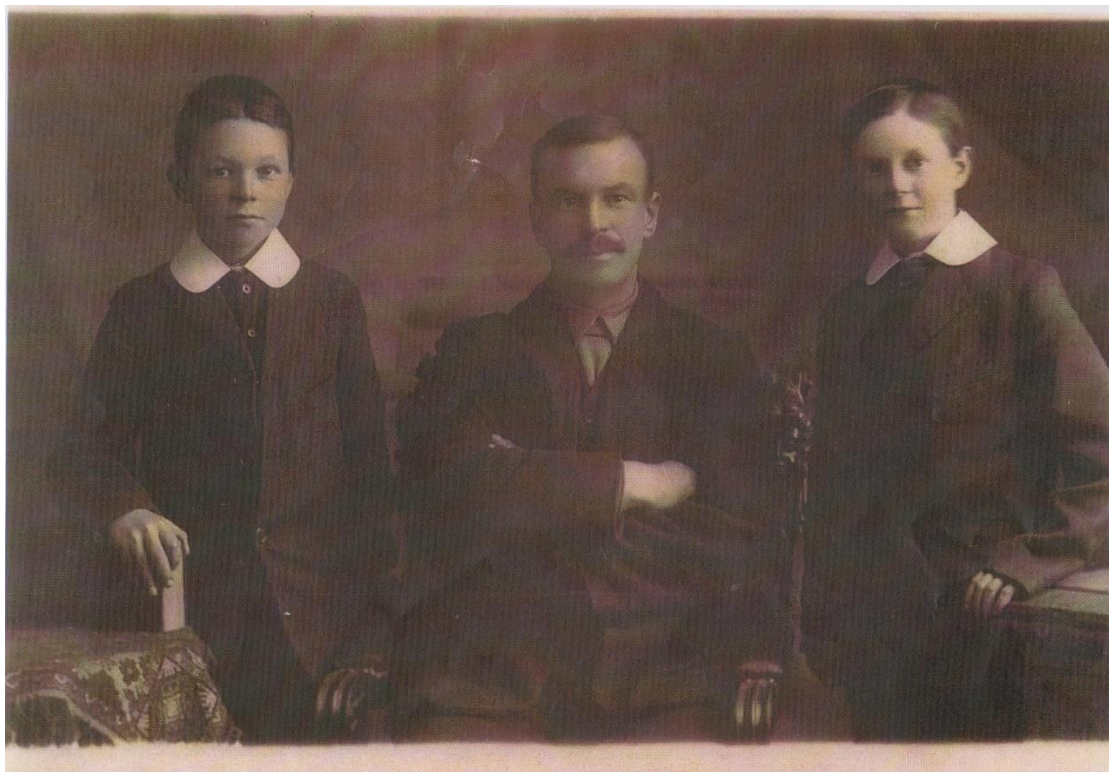


## WATT'S OF YALLOURN

This is the story of my grandfather, James Alexander (Jim) Watt, and his family who moved to Yallourn in the mid-1920's.

Jim was born January 1899 in Pennan, a small fishing village in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, to fisherman John and Barbara (nee Wiseman). He lived with his three younger brothers – Ben, George and Andy. Sadly, Barbara died during her fifth pregnancy in 1908.



Ben, John and Jim Watt around 1910 in Scotland.

After Barbara's death, John continued fishing then served with the Royal Navy (RN) during WW1. The children were cared for by relatives, friends and in a widowed seaman's boarding school in Aberdeen.

My grandfather Jim also joined the RN in 1917 after putting his age up one year to enlist. Both survived the war.

On return to Pennan, life was not the same. Brothers Jim, Ben and George left Scotland for a new life in Australia arriving in Melbourne in April 1922. They were followed by Andy and their father John soon after.

Initially they did odd jobs that included fruit picking in Shepparton. Soon after, all five men moved to Yallourn to construct the Yallourn SECV. They lived for over 5 years in site camps.

My grandfather Jim officially joined the SECV on 5 August 1924. In the 1920's, he worked as a builder's labourer, trades assistant, rigger and scaffolder.

Somehow Jim met a girl from Tasmania, Doris Hines, who at 21 years old was then living in Melbourne. On 1 February 1930 they were married at the Presbyterian Church in Malvern.

On 24 September, my father James Andrew (Jim 2<sup>nd</sup>) Watt was born, followed a year later by his sister Barbara. The family then lived at 10 Strzelecki Road, Yallourn.

About 1934, the family moved to Morwell Bridge. At this time, Jim worked as a power station lagger, trimmer and steam plant attendant. Working the fishing boats and RN steamship boilers made it easier to qualify for power station operations. By October 1945 he was employed as a Turbine Driver.



Photos of Jim, Doris, Barbara and young Jim circa 1940

My father Jim 2<sup>nd</sup> vividly remembered the horrific '1939 Black Friday' bush fires, and during WW2 plans were made to billet out the children to live on farms as far away as Drouin should the SECV Yallourn come under threat.

After WW2 the Watt family moved back into Yallourn at 10 Moondarra Place.



Photo circa 1946 of 10 Moondarra Place, Yallourn.

In 1947 my father Jim was employed by the SECV as a personnel clerk and soon after his sister Barbara trained and worked as a nurse.

Life in Yallourn from the 1950's was great. Shift work suited Jim 1<sup>st</sup> and in April 1961 he took a 4-month long service leave holiday back to Scotland with his brother Andy. On return, he said it was "*bloody cold*" over there.

Doris managed the home, was involved in the Presbyterian Church, CWA and Red Cross. She even met the Queen at Government House in recognition of her community role.

Barbara moved during the mid-1950's to outback Queensland near Winton where she married sheep grazier Reg Kavanagh. They had four children – John, Rosalind, Victoria and Anne.

My father Jim played sport – soccer, cricket, tennis, football and badminton. He loved fishing and going bush. As a volunteer with the Fire Brigade he attended fires, competed in ladder and reel events, and was duty officer at the picture theatre. Here as an usherette, and at the SECV where she was a typist stenographer, dad met my mother, Diana Marshall, who was five years his junior.

My parents married on a hot 31 January 1959 at the St. John Church of England.



Wedding Photo of Jim and Diana 31 January 1959

Grandparents Jim and Doris built a house in Boolarra Avenue Newborough and moved in 1962. In 1964, Jim compulsory retired from the SECV after working 39 years. He died in June 1966.

I was born in February 1960. We lived at 11 Valley Road and as an only child attended Yallourn Primary School until the end Grade 3.

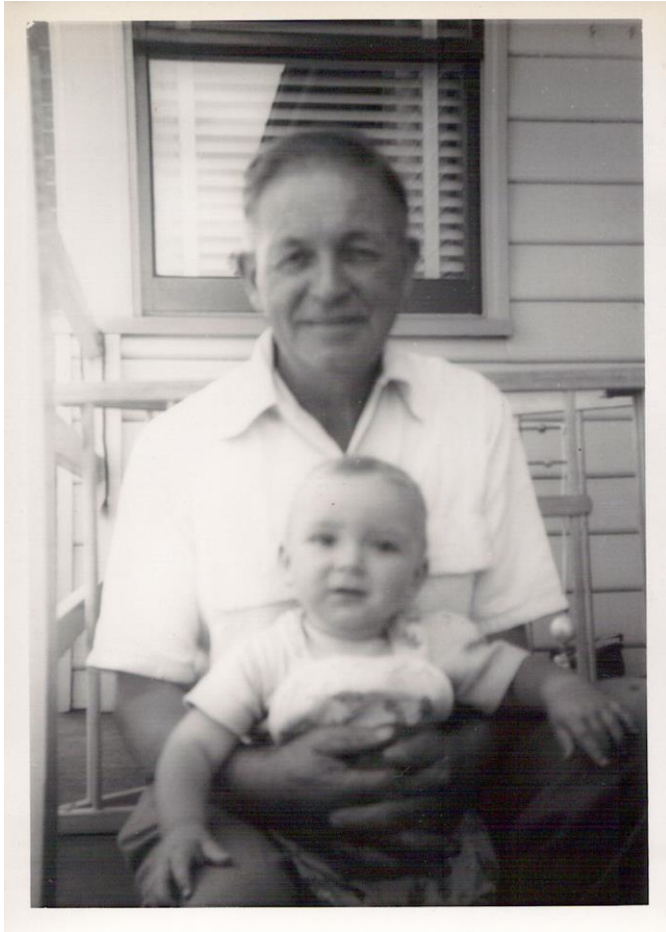


Photo of grandfather Jim and me in Yallourn 1960

We moved into my grandparents Newborough house in 1968. Grandmother Doris moved to Moe. My mother Diana died in 1978 and Doris in 1980. Dad Jim (2<sup>nd</sup>) died in December 2018 aged 88.

Yallourn as a town to live and work had wonderful memories for the Watt family.

Written by James (Jim) M. Watt 3<sup>rd</sup>. April 2020.



Photo taken in 2014 of four generations of James Watt – James T 5<sup>th</sup> (2013-), James S 4<sup>th</sup> (1987-), James A 2<sup>nd</sup> (1930-2018) and me James M 3<sup>rd</sup> (1960-)