

# **ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND**

**Opened at an Athletics meeting**

**Monday 27/12/1920**

## **A chronology of:**

- **early recreation in Ararat**
- **users**
- **development of facilities**

## **Acknowledgments:**

- special thanks to Danny and Judy Barry whose passion for the history of Ararat motivated this compilation of events

### **This chronology was compiled through the following sources:**

- Lorna Banfield collection at Ararat Library – a list of dates of events reported in the Ararat Advertiser
- Ararat Advertiser – archived issues of the Ararat Advertiser
- Ararat Municipal Library – archived issues of the Ararat Advertiser
- “From the Recreation Reserve to Kokoda Park, Ararat” by Danny and Judy Barry
- Ararat Advertiser articles related to Alexandra Sports Ground – compiled by Danny and Judy Barry
- Langi Morgala Museum – historical photos
- Trove – National Library of Australia, online digitised newspapers
- “Green Pastures and Gold: A history of Ararat” – by Lorna Banfield
- “Like the Ark: The history of Ararat” by Lorna Banfield
- Joy Gunstone – information and dates about the Ararat City Tennis Club
- Ararat Football Club – information from meeting minutes
- State Library of Victoria – archived material

## Early recreation spaces

Ararat has passed through quite a number of stages in connection with its open air recreation resort. Time was in the early gold field days when a huge population was centred about Commercial road, Commissioner's Hill and Pump Town, when people assembled for outdoor sport in large numbers at the Green Hills, and some very successful and enjoyable fairs were held, but as the place settled down a situation not so remote was sought, and the old cricket ground was utilised as a recreation reserve. It possessed, however, not one redeeming feature. A low lying salt flat, remote from the centre of the town, even the residents in the neighbourhood turned their backs upon it, and a desolate flat had a desolate foreground, with here and there a somewhat dissolute looking back fence and outhouses. The bar sinister to the shield was provided when one of the main open sewers of the town was taken through the pleasure ground of the people, and children were invited to enjoy an outing on its banks, and at the same time run a by no means remote risk of infection by typhoid and other zymotic disease. A determined, indeed, it might be said, an obstinate effort was made to continue an impossible state of things, and many hundreds of pounds were recklessly spent in improvements, and under the compelling hands of Mr HA Linaker, then the curator of the public gardens, the place for a brief space blossomed as a rose. The gilding of the pill was nor regarded by many as a satisfactory remedy of the evil, however, and the movement initiated for the concentration of the sports of the town at a convenient spot steadily grow. Backed by a splendid public spirit – a spirit which no opposition could effectually kill, Mr Linaker, like Phidias of old, removed the debris from the old Botanical Gardens and revealed the beauties that lay hidden there. It was found that there lay concealed verdant lawns spreading from the marge of an islet studded miniature lake – that there were sweeping terraces and unsurpassed parterres of brilliant blooms – that within the proverbial stone throw of the principal business and residential thoroughfares there was room for spacious bowling greens, and tennis courts and croquet lawns, and a playing ground fitted with swings: giant strides and other means of pleasure and exercise for children. But end was not yet. The untiring band of enthusiastic workers merely used the splendid achievements of yesterday as the lever of Archimedes to ensure the culmination of their well-maintained effort by adding to Alexandra Park a public sports ground worthy of the town and in keeping with the existing club conveniences. The praise worthy efforts of all associated with the movement have resulted in a wild furze covered waste. Which included several long since deserted miners' dams and the slum dam of an almost forgotten crushing plant, located below the gaol hill, into a spacious sports ground with an exceptionally fine arena, a wide trotting track of three laps to the mile, and all the conveniences necessary for the holding of sports meetings of a successful character. The new addition to the social side of the public life of the town was tried out on Boxing day, when a gathering of over 5000 people assembled, and all were loud in their praise of the convenience provided and charmed with the situation and the surroundings, declaring the place an ideal one. Compliments and congratulations were showered upon all concerned in the movement for the creation of the ground. The expectations of the committee were fully realised. Had the 5000 present been 25,000 there would have still been ample room for doubling the number, and every visitor would have enjoyed an uninterrupted view of the whole of the interests.

1857	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ararat Turf and Cricket clubs formed</li> <li>The cricket club have a chosen a beautiful site under the Green Hill for their cricket ground – it is their intention to apply to the Government for a grant of the same.</li> </ul>
1858	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application for a portion of land for Mount Ararat Cricket Club</li> </ul>
1860	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mount Ararat Cricket Club granted 10 acres to be surveyed in the neighbourhood of the Green Hills, they being at liberty to choose the exact spot.</li> </ul>
1861	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government gazetted five acres for the purposes of Public Recreation (Recreation Reserve &gt; Kokoda Park)</li> </ul>
1862	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ararat Cricket Club were granted 10 acres for a cricket ground near the Green Hills</li> <li>Name of trustees for grant to Ararat Cricket club</li> </ul>
1863	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government gazetted 3 acres for the site of the Ararat show yards (site where Prestige Mill currently sits)</li> </ul>
1864	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>700 person grandstand built for England v District cricket match on what became the Cricket Reserve/Showground – north of the hospital (later Prestige Mill)</li> </ul>
1864	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ararat Borough Council to be trustees of land reserved for Public Recreation in 1961 (Recreation Reserve)</li> </ul>
<b>Grounds that Ararat Football Club played on:</b>	
1871	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cricket Reserve (Show ground – site of currently disused Prestige Mill)</li> <li>Market Square – later to become Town Hall precinct</li> </ul>
1874	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cricket Reserve</li> <li>Ararat Racecourse</li> </ul>
1876	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFC's new ground, which is between the Cricket Reserve and the Asylum - (Recreation Reserve)</li> </ul>
1877	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ararat Racecourse</li> <li>Recreation Reserve</li> </ul>
1878	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation Reserve</li> </ul>
1879	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation Reserve</li> </ul>
1880	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation Reserve</li> </ul>

1882	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Asylum ground – oval on the site of the Aradale Golf Club</li></ul>
1886	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recreation Reserve</li></ul>
1887	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cricket Reserve</li><li>• Recreation Reserve</li></ul>
1891	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From 1891 to 1920 the Recreation Reserve was AFC's home ground.</li></ul>
1921	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From 1921 the new Ararat Sports Ground - Alexandra oval became AFC's home ground</li></ul>

## *Chronology of events*

1902 March	<b>TENDER RESPONSE FOR APPLICATIONS FOR NEW GRANDSTAND</b> 5 competitive designs were received by the Borough Council for the new grandstand at the Recreation Reserve.
1902 August	<b>GRANDSTAND TENDER ACCEPTED</b> The tender to build a new grandstand at the Recreation Reserve from Mr WF Allen, Horsham, of £488 12s and 6d was accepted
1902 December	<b>OPENING OF NEW GRANDSTAND AT RECREATION RESERVE</b> Mayor, Cr Wild, decided to invite the Ballarat City Council to the opening of the new grandstand at the Recreation Reserve.
1912 January	<b>PRETENTIOUS SCHEME FOR ARARAT – COMBINED OVAL FOR SPORTS – THE LARGEST IN THE STATE.</b> A deputation to the Borough Council, including representatives of the Agricultural Society, Gardens Improvement Committee, Traders’ Association, Ararat Athletic Club, Football Club and Cricket Club proposed to provide the largest oval in the state. The matter has been taken up with great spirit by practically the whole town.
1912 March	<b>GRANT TO ARARAT RECREATION RESERVE</b> The Government granted £10 for the improvement of the Ararat Recreation Reserve on condition that £5 be locally contributed.
1913 January	<b>CONSENT WITHDRAWN FOR NEW RECREATION GROUND</b> After previously approving the plan of the Athletic and Football Clubs, Agricultural Society and Gardens Improvement Committee for a recreation ground adjoining the park, the council withdrew consent after ratepayers expressed disapproval by a majority of one at a poll taken.
1914 January	<b>ARARAT RECREATION RESERVE</b> Ararat council discusses the cost of renovation of the Ararat Recreation Reserve.
1919	<b>DEMAND FOR A BETTER SPORTS OVAL</b> The return of the men from war in lead to a revival of outdoor sport demanding a bigger, better and more central oval than the Recreation Reserve
1919 April	<b>ARARAT NEW SPORTS GROUND - THE STATE PREMIER’S VISIT</b> The State Premier, the Hon. H S W Lawson, MLA. expressed a keen desire to assist the Borough Council in every way possible in carrying out the proposal for a new sports ground abutting Alexandra Park on the west side. The council had wisely decided to expend the £749 voted by the Commonwealth Government to provide work for the soldiers.
1919 April 7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>ARARAT’S NEW SPORTS GROUND – PUBLIC MEETING AT TOWN HALL</b> A public meeting was held at the Council Chambers, Town Hall to make arrangements for the carrying out of the scheme of making a new sports ground abutting the west end of Alexandra Park.
1920 September	<b>GRANDSTAND TO BE SHIFTED</b> The grandstand at the Recreation Reserve is to be shifted, in about 2 weeks time, to the new Sports Ground in readiness for the opening on Boxing Day.
1920 December 26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>ARARAT’S GALA DAY – OPENING ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND – ATHLETIC CLUB MEETING</b> Boxing Day was a red letter day in the history of Ararat, when the New Sports Ground at Alexandra Park, on which so much laudable public effort has been expended, was officially opened by the State Premier, the Hon HSW Lawson. Like the Alexandra Gardens development volunteer labour was outstanding. 70 working bees with 270 attending one of these. £1650 was contributed in voluntary labour, and donated materials, etc, out of a total of £4600.
1921 May	<b>SCOREBOARD</b> The Sports Ground committee rejected a price of £8/10/6 from McArthur and Son to erect a new scoreboard. It was decided to remove the scoreboard from the Recreation Reserve and put it into good order.  <b>GOAL POSTS</b> It was resolved to erect goalposts to take in the full ground – Oregon, £20
1921 October	<b>TURF WICKET</b> The Ararat Cricket Association made a report to lay a turf wicket.



1921 December 26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>NEW DRESSING ROOMS OPENED</b> Federal member Mr WG Gibson, MHR opened the dressing rooms at the Boxing Day Athletics carnival. The cost - £500, built by TA McArthur and Son. It is a large ornate structure. It is a handsome indispensable adjunct to the conveniences of the reserve.
1923 July	<b>CRICKET PITCH QUAGMIRE</b> The cricket pitch was a regular quagmire. It was too large and detrimental to football. There was room for 4 wickets.
1924 July	<b>CONCERN ABOUT MAINTENANCE EXPENDITURE ON THE OVAL.</b> Over the last 9 months expenditure was £391 (£50 loss). It was moved to call a public meeting. <b>IMPROVEMENTS CONTINUE</b> Good drainage work is a great improvement for ground
1924 May	<b>GROUND IMPROVEMENTS</b> Old publican's booth to be moved to grandstand enclosure and converted into bandstand.
1920s- 1930s	<b>COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE SPORTS GROUND</b> Various community groups held bazaars, community singing and dances to raise money to pay for further ground improvement and reduce ground debt.
1925 June	<b>ATTEMPT TO STOP THE SALE OF LIQUOR AT ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND</b> The Women's Christian Temperance Union is endeavouring to stop the holding of public booths at the Alexandra Oval Sports Ground. They recently out tendered the highest public booth offer to hold their own booth.
1926 May	<b>SPORTS GROUND IMPROVEMENTS</b> It was resolved to carry out extensive improvements on the terrace at the foot of the J-Ward hill for the purpose of providing more accommodation for motor cars. Ararat is the only provincial town to permit cars in the reserve.
1926 June	<b>SUBWAY TO OVAL</b> There is a preference to put in a subway under the railway, rather than a bridge, to lead to the oval.
1926 November	<b>CURATOR RESIGNS</b> Mr J Howie, curator since the starting of the fine grounds, has been appointed to Footscray parks and gardens. Mr J Fiscalini has been appointed curator to the Alexandra Sports Ground
1928 January	<b>ARARAT SPORTS GROUND LOAN FOR MORE IMPROVEMENTS</b> Increasing costs to improve oval.
1928 August	<b>INTENTION TO PLANT AN AVENUE OF PLANTS AND SHRUBS</b> The Alexandra Sports Ground committee decided to reclaim a portion of land abutting the reserve with a view to making the approaches more attractive. <b>ELECTRIC LIGHT FOR ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND</b>
1929 July	<b>REVENUE SHORTFALL</b> Owing to no senior football this year the Alexandra Sports Oval Committee will close £150 short this year. <i>(Ararat Football Club sat out of football as they were not accepted back into Wimmera football after leaving the Ballarat Football League – clubs were upset that Ararat had left the Wimmera competition in 1925)</i>
1931 January	<b>OVERDRAFT HAS TO BE REDUCED</b> At a public meeting it was said "without doubt the Sports Ground was in most serious straits, and this must be got over." The Borough Council had previously recognised the committee's claim and had move to pass them £100. Bankers had told the Sports Ground Committee that a reduction had to be made in the overdraft. Money was tight in the town – the hospital, the football club and now the Sports Ground Committee were each considering organising community singing as a revenue raiser. Revenue was down as wet weather had impacted on the fixtures of the Athletics Club and Trotting Club, revenue from Patriotic Pictures was now divided with the hospital, and there had been no senior football in 1929.
1932 December	<b>DEPUTATION ASKS COUNCIL TO TAKE OVER SPORTS GROUND.</b> A deputation of sporting bodies has asked the Borough Council to take over the sports ground. Around £12000 has been expended and the debt is between £500 to £600. The council is willing to do so after viewing a full list of liabilities.
1933 January	<b>COUNCIL TO TAKE OVER CONTROL OF SPORTS GROUND</b> At a special meeting of the Borough Council it was decided to take over control of the grounds, on which there is an overdraft of about £550. Expenditure by the Sports Ground Committee is to cease. The curator is to be given a week's notice.

1932 February	<b>CURATOR APPOINTED</b> Mr James Fiscalini was appointed curator of the Sports Ground by the Borough Council.
1933 June	<b>PRESS BOX TO BE BUILT AT ALEXANDRA OVAL</b> Wimmera scribes will hear the news with great pleasure, as the reporting of a match from the grandstand, with the shouting of juveniles in one's ears and the absence of even a desk to rest a book on makes the task a tedious one.
1947 September	<b>RECREATION RESERVE RE-NAMED</b> At a meeting of the Town Council the Recreation Reserve was re-named Kokoda Park on the suggestion of Cr Morris. Other suggestions were: Anzac Park, Alamein Park and Victory Park.
1956 August	<b>LAST MINUTE MOVE TO IMPROVE DRAINAGE BEFORE WFL SEMI-FINAL</b> Council attempted to improve drainage at the oval in the weeks before a WFL semi-final by installing new pipes the length of the ground. The works were halted after half the job was completed as they encountered sludgy conditions in the middle of the oval.
1956 August	<b>ALEXANDRA OVAL TO BE TOP-DRESSED WITH SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS SOIL</b> The Alexandra Oval will be top-dressed with sand and rot with soil from the sewage treatment works to try and improve drainage. "The topsoil will be a wonderful stimulant to the growth of grass."
1959 March	<b>TENDERS FOR NEW OVAL CLUB ROOMS CLOSE LATER IN MONTH</b> The City Council may guarantee to have the dressing rooms at Alexandra Oval removed and ready for an immediate start on the construction of modern club rooms for the Ararat Football Club. The Football Club was willing to accept inconvenience in order to have the new rooms erected as quickly as possible.
1959 April	<b>VARIATION OF £1900 IN CLUBROOM TENDERS</b> Four tenders, ranging in price from £6671 to £4738, have been received by the Ararat Football Club for a modern brick veneer club rooms at Alexandra Oval. Football Club secretary, Mr RJ Falla said "We have done the job the council requested us to do by having plans and specifications prepared and calling tenders".
1959 April	<b>MR JAMES FISCALINI RETIRES AS OVAL CURATOR</b> Mr James Fiscalini retired as Alexandra Oval curator after 33 years and helped change it from a bare oval into one of the most attractive sports grounds in Victoria.
1959 April	<b>CLUBROOMS GO TO CENTENARY PARK</b> Messrs E Nunn and Son who started moving Ararat Football Club's training rooms on Thursday morning and had the 60 by 30 front building on the move by Friday morning. The building is to be erected at Centenary Park.
1959 May	<b>BANK FINANCES OVAL PAVILLION</b> Mr HP Peters, manager of the Ararat branch of the State Savings Bank of Victoria, has announced that the bank had granted a loan of £2000 to the City of Ararat. The loan will be repayable over a period of ten years with interest at the rate of 5 and a half per cent per annum and will be used to finance the erection of a new brick dressing pavilion at the Alexandra Oval.
1959 December	<b>FISCALINI PAVILLION WILL BE THE BEST IN THE WIMMERA</b> Claims by the councillors and football officials that the James Fiscalini pavilion at Alexandra Oval is the best in the Wimmera are not without foundation. The spacious brick veneer building expected to be completed by early December, has every facility necessary, not only for football but for every sporting organisation using the oval. It is a fitting building to grace the fine setting of Alexandra Oval, and unlike other pavilions has an off season use. Built by SL Phillips and Sons for £4800, it stands as a monument to James Fiscalini whose work as a curator of the grounds was always readily extended in the interests of all who used them, and who still lives to proudly see the pavilion in use. Towards the cost the Football Club contributed £2000, of which over £400 was raised by special effort in conjunction with the Trotting Club, and by the sterling work of the ladies' committee. Now these bodies are working for further additions to add value to the pavilion. <b>The Building</b> Two double doors centre the front of the eastern side of the building, opening off a wide concrete verandah running the full length and set off with bricked-in flower box. The main hall, approximately 60 by 30 feet, will be divided by folding doors, providing for two dressing rooms. Provision is made for separate showers and conveniences at the western end and off the main room is a wide tiled bath capable of holding four persons.

	<p>Four large windows, two on the wall, give ample natural light and a stone faced fireplace is set in the eastern wall between the first window and double doors.</p> <p>A kitchen, administrative office and property office with ceiling to floor storage, are included in the building. The kitchen is fitted with ample cupboard space and hot and cold water, and the first aid room has a separate outside door for easy access to ambulance.</p> <p>Main hall and offices are lined with Masonite from the floor to four feet, then plaster to the ceiling. The whole structure is due to combined efforts of three clubs and the football ladies' committee and will stand to the credit of Ararat generally for years to come.</p>
<p>1960 January 29<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>A MONUMENT TO A LIFETIME OF WORK</b></p> <p>"I trust that those who use this building will regard it not so much as a dressing room but as a monument to a lifetime of work by a mighty man – James Fiscalini". That was said by the president of the Ararat Football Club, Mr Len Ford on Friday night before handing the keys of the James Fiscalini pavilion to the Mayor of Ararat, Cr RA Blachford.</p> <p>Both the Mayor and the club president expressed a sense of indebtedness to the ladies' committee of the Ararat Football Club, the Ararat-Stawell and Districts Trotting Club and Highland Society for contributions which helped to make the pavilion possible.</p> <p>He thanked the architects who designed the building, and the builders, Messrs SL Phillips and staff, who did an excellent job.</p> <p>"I have much pleasure in accepting the key from the president of the Ararat Football Club" Cr Blachford said.</p> <p>This represents a really good combined effort by sporting bodies, with the greatest credit to the Football Club ladies' committee whose efforts over the years raised a considerable sum of money, enabling the club to go ahead with the project.</p> <p>The Football Club knocked on the door of the Government and they spared a little finance, the City Council added something and the Trotting Club and Highland Society joined in.</p> <p>Cr Blachford</p> <p>He believed the building was equal to any sports pavilion of its size in Australia. It was in keeping with the sports ground, for which much credit goes to Mr Fiscalini.</p>
<p>1962 November</p>	<p><b>NEW GRANDSTAND SUGGESTED</b></p> <p>The City Council is to investigate a new Alexandra oval grandstand with totalisator, kitchen, dining room and offices. The grandstand is in a deplorable state and would need replacement before long and night trotting was a great attraction.</p>
<p>1969 October</p>	<p><b>SPEED IS NEEDED ON OVAL WORKS FOR BIG CRICKET</b></p> <p>The following was discussed at an Ararat City council meeting: - a visit by a touring New Zealand team prompted a high-speed design programme of improvements at Alexandra oval. A dollar for dollar grant up to \$10,000 would be available.</p> <p>A city council sub-committee was appointed to investigate work necessary to upgrade facilities at the oval up to the required standard. (Cr D Rosengreen, Cr R Blachford, Cr R Blizzard, Town Clerk Mr J Grenfell and City Engineer Mr N Baldy)</p> <p>The match will take place at Alexandra oval on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1970.</p> <p>The facilities needed were – a suitable dining room, the existing dining room under the grandstand was a "shambles". It is not reasonable to have the Fiscalini pavilion as a training quarters and use it as a dining room.</p> <p>There was a suggestion to design the dining room in a manner to allow the addition of a grandstand at a later date. It was proposed to start with the kitchen and work up to the grandstand.</p> <p>The structural elements of the grandstand were still alright – there was a lot of life in the main frames. Difficulties were met with the flooring and hand rails.</p>
<p>1969 November</p>	<p><b>SPECIAL GRANT WORKS AT OVAL APPROVED</b></p> <p>At a City Council meeting it was moved that a new kitchen and dining room facilities will be provided at Alexandra oval in time for the cricket match against the touring New Zealand team.</p> <p>A sketch plan was presented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- kitchen 30 feet x 20 feet</li> <li>- Dining room 40 feet x 20 feet, sit down accommodation for 100 people</li> <li>- Concrete floor, surrounding and dividing wall in brick</li> <li>- Kitchen fitting based on gas</li> </ul> <p>It will replace the existing skillion building at the rear of the grandstand.</p> <p>The new building is designed to allow progressive improvement of the grandstand.</p> <p>Cost about \$10,000 (half of grant plus council contribution)</p>

1969 November	<b>MIRACLE IF OVAL FACILITIES ARE READY FOR NEW ZEALAND MATCH</b> At an Ararat City Council meeting the City Engineer, Mr N Baldy, said it would be a miracle if the kitchen and dining room improvements at the oval would be completed in time for the cricket match against New Zealand. The plans and specifications had been simultaneously submitted to the Premier's Department and Commission of Public Health. Cr G Moore said if the Premier was contacted these plans would get a kick along.	
1970 January	<b>NEW ZEALAND CRICKET GAME CANCELLED</b> Rain lead to the cancellation of the touring cricket match.	
1970 December	<b>TOILET BLOCK FOR ALEXANDRA OVAL</b> Construction of a toilet block could proceed next year if council receives a further \$2000 from the Municipal Assistance Fund – matched with \$1000 from council. Construction would proceed in May or June 1971	
1971 March	<b>OLD SHOW FACILITIES TO BE CLEARED</b> Dilapidated buildings and stalls, formerly used by the Agricultural Society, and noxious weeds will be removed from the area adjacent to J Ward.	
1971 April	<b>GRANDSTAND NEEDS REPAIRS</b> The grandstand is in a dilapidated, if not verging on dangerous, condition and flooring was in a deplorable state. One of the front posts has dropped several inches and the whole of the woodwork needs painting. A plan is needed to renovate the building, Cr EW James said, after commending the new work which had been carried out by a special grant. Reporting on special grant works City Engineer Mr NW Baldy said the construction of concrete plats in the open section of the grandstand was now about 20 feet short of completion and three short handrails would then be erected. The previous garden area in front of the grandstand will be gravelled and sealed. <i>(by the end of 1971 wooden slats on metal frames were erected on the concrete plats)</i>	
1971 July	<b>GRANT FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF GRANDSTAND</b> Ararat City Council has received a \$10,000 grant for the reconstruction of the grandstand and other facilities at Alexandra oval. Council had put the work in hand when the grant was promised by the government after the allocation of an international cricket match on the Ararat oval.	
1971 November	<b>TOILET BLOCK ON EASTERN SIDE OF OVAL</b> A photo in the Ararat Advertiser publicised the recent completion of the cream brick toilet block on the hill of the eastern side of the oval.	
1973 March	<b>EXTRA LIGHTING FOR OVAL</b> A second set of floodlights are erected on the eastern side of oval opposite an existing set of lights. It is a 60 foot pole with three 1500 watt quartz-iodine, the lights mounted at 50 feet. Cost \$500. The first set of lights was installed a few years ago.	
1976 September	<b>NEW TOILET BLOCK BEHIND GRANDSTAND</b> A brick toilet block, on the western side of the oval, is erected behind the grandstand replacing an older weather board block.	
1978 December	<b>ARARAT COUNCIL BUDGET FOR OVAL</b> At a council meeting \$7,000 was budgeted for Alexandra oval projects.	
1980 September	<b>NEW ENTRANCE FOR ALEXANDRA OVAL</b> Council improved the entrance to Alexandra oval by constructing a ticket box in the middle of a median strip separating in-coming and out-going traffic.	
1982 April	<b>GRANDSTAND NAMED</b> After a recommendation from the AFC the Alexandra oval grandstand has been named the Olver Stand after Ararat Football Club stalwarts Mr Bill 'Buff' Olver and Mrs June Olver.	
	<b>Bill 'Buff' Olver</b> AFC Life member 1962 AFC player 69 games, 1946-49, Players' Rep 1948 AFC Committee 1954 AFC Vice President 1955-62, '66 Trainer 1963 AFC President 1967-69 AFC Secretary 1972-77	<b>June Olver</b> Life member – Ladies' Committee 1963, AFC 1980 AFC Ladies' Committee 1947-59, 1961-63 Secretary 1960, 1973-82 Assistant secretary 1964-66 President 1967-71 Treasurer 1972
1982 June	<b>NEW ROOMS OKAYED BY COUNCIL</b> City Engineer, Mr Robert John, said after talks with the AFC executive it was proposed to build rooms adjacent to the southern end of the Fiscalini pavilion. It would be elevated and be 20 by 12 metres in area. Estimated cost \$66,000.	

1985 May	<b>NEW SCOREBOARD FOR OVAL</b> Council erected a new scoreboard to replace the decaying old one. <i>The old one was re-located to the Ararat Technical School oval.</i>
1992	<b>ST MARYS NEW HOME GROUND</b> St Marys Football Club made application to Council to share Alexandra Oval as a home ground with Ararat Football Club because of the poor facilities at Centenary Park. As the Wimmera FL and ADFA draws had already been completed St Marys weren't able to play all home games at Alexandra Oval. St Marys are to work around Ararat Football Club's pre-season, in-season training schedules and WFL draw.
1993 March	<b>RENOVATIONS TO FISCALINI PAVILION</b> The back portion of the Fiscalini Pavilion was demolished then new showers, toilets, gymnasium and football umpires' room were added. Jim Pearce, builder and President of Ararat Highland Sports Society supervised the Ararat City Council \$30,000 funded project. Completed in time for the Ararat Gift.
1993 May	<b>TOILET FOR THE DISABLED</b> A toilet for the disabled will be added to the existing western toilet block behind the Olver Stand. The cost of \$4800 will include a path from the carpark.
1994 June	<b>LIGHTING TO BE UPGRADED</b> Ararat Football Club received a \$2500 grant from Council to be matched by \$2000 from user groups to erect one new light pole. The current poor lighting meant clubs tended to train on one side of the oval which would lead to deterioration of the ground. The Ararat Football Club had investigated lighting (about \$40,000) good enough to play night football and benefit other major events.
1994 August	<b>CONTINUED LIGHTING UPGRADE</b> Council will meet with the AFC to further discuss options for further lighting improvements.
1995 November	<b>NEW KIOSK</b> A new kiosk attached to the grandstand is nearing completion. It will overcome the need to serve food from a caravan or rotunda. It has been erected with the help of New Work Opportunities scheme and user groups.
1995 July	<b>NEW LIGHTING</b> Three new light poles have been erected to carry the new lighting, adding to a pole set in place last year.
1996 October	<b>TREATED WATER USED FOR IRRIGATION</b> Grampians Water will open the Ararat Wastewater Treatment Plant to the public as part of National Water Week. Alexandra Oval is one of the recipients of treated waste water for irrigation purposes.
2005 late	<b>Alexandra Oval Reserve Committee of Management</b> The AORCM was established late 2005 as a section 86 Committee of the Ararat Rural City council. The inaugural members of the committee were made up of representatives of the main users of the Reserve at that time, plus 2 community representatives.

Alexandra oval Reserve Users Committee of Management: Main committee meeting attenders												
Chair	Deputy	Sec/Treas	Sec	Treas								
		Organisation rep	'06 /	'07 /10	'08 /9	'09 /11	'10 /7	'11 /6	'12 /9	'13 /10	'14 /8	
MASON	Toni	AEFNC		9	8	11	6	5	6	8	1	
McROBERTS	Nats	AEFNC		3	3		1	1	2	1	1	
O'CONNELL	Dan	AEFNC								1	5	
SLADDIN	Ash	AEFNC			3							
SMITH	Mark	AEFNC				9	1					
TARUA	Hemi	AEFNC		5								
JENSEN	Murray	AFNC		6	6	5	6	5	6	1		
SHEARER	Tim	AFNC										
SPALDING	Michael	AFNC > Community		10	6	10	6	6	8	8	6	
ALLGOOD	Gwenda	Councillor		9	6	3	2	5	6	6	4	
FRAMPTON	Nicole	Council		8	2	5			3			
PHILLIPS	Don	Council > AFNC		3						8	5	
PITCHES	David	Council		7	4	5	2	3				
ROWE	Rose	Council		2	6							
VINCENT	Barkley	Sport and Rec officer				8	4	6	7	6	6	
CRONIN	Tim	Community		9	8	11	5	3				
DADSWELL	Gayle	Community		7	7	8	6	6	9	10	8	
EASTICK	Andrew	Community		10	7	7	2					

<b>HOSKING</b>	David	GCA		8	6	6	4					
<b>MARTIN</b>	Anthony	GCA										4
<b>LIDLAW</b>	Tracie	Swimming club		5	4	9	3	4	5	5		4
<b>BRENNAN</b>	Peter	Tennis club		8	9	8	6	5	9	10		8
<b>DUNN</b>	Alan	Tennis club		6	6	7	3					
<b>REYNOLDS</b>	Tony	Umpires		8	5	9	2	6	6	8		7
<b>THOMPSON</b>	Colin	YMCA		6	5	2	3					
<b>BURKE</b>	Brian	Disability Sport		4	1	5	2	2	1			
<b>HODGETTS</b>	Mark	ACE			1	4	2					
<b>2011 November</b>	Change in composition of Committee of Management 1 x Ararat Rural City Councillor 1 x Ararat Rural City Municipal Rec Officer 1 x AFNC 1 x AEFNC 1 x Grampians Cricket Association 1 x Ararat Tennis Club 1 x Ararat Solar Olympic Pool Advisory Committee 1 x Ararat Football Umpires 2 x Community Representatives 1 x ACE / Disability Sport											
<b>2015</b>	Alexandra oval Committee of Management disbanded New committee formed to drive the construction of the new facility											

<b>2006 MONTH?</b>	<b>WORK BEGINS ON FOOTBALL AND CRICKET CLUBROOMS</b> Ararat Eagles Football Netball Club and the Grampians Cricket Association went in partnership to build shared clubrooms.
2007 January	<b>NEW SOCIAL ROOMS BURNT DOWN</b> The Ararat Eagles Football Club/Grampians Cricket Association Social clubrooms were suspiciously burnt down before they could be officially opened.
2010	<b>A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR OVAL</b> A state of the art lighting upgrade at Ararat's Alexandra Oval means that State, or even national level sporting events can now be held in the municipality. Last year Council installed four, 25 metre lighting towers with 24 2000 watt lamps, raising the facility's lighting to 100 lux, the Australian standard for club football. The new lighting was funded using \$100,000 of the State Government's \$300,000 Local Works Infrastructure Program funding for drought affected communities. Council is now in the process of delivering on stage two of the project, by installing two more lighting towers, at a cost of \$80,000. Council will split the cost with Ararat Community Enterprise, an independent organisation that has chosen the Alexandra Oval Master Plan as its major community project. Ararat Community Enterprise operates as a Telco retailer, pouring profits back into community projects.
2013 March	<b>ALL SYSTEMS GO FOR ALEXANDRA OVAL</b> Ararat's sporting community is celebrating following yesterday's announcement of a \$1.15 million funding boost to develop the new multi-purpose pavilion at the Alexandra Oval Community and Recreation Centre. In Ararat yesterday, Minister for Sport and Recreation Hugh Delahunty said the funding was part of a Victorian Coalition Government facility funding package for the popular sporting precinct. Mr Delahunty said the project would replace the existing outdated change-rooms with bigger and better change-room facilities catering for football, cricket, netball, umpires and match-day requirements. "It will also involve construction of a multi-purpose community space, meeting room, function space, commercial kitchen, canteen, first aid room and public amenities," Mr Delahunty said. "I congratulate the Ararat Rural City Council for developing the project and their investment of \$2 million, as well as the Ararat Community Enterprise for their contribution of \$100,000 and the Alexandra Oval Reserve Committee of Management for their contribution of \$70,000.
2014	<b>INTERIM CHANGEROOMS</b> After being renovated the western toilet block behind the Olver Stand was used as change rooms for visiting football teams.

<p>2014 November</p>	<p><b>COMMUNITY AND RECREATION CENTRE AT ALEXANDRA OVAL HAILED 'ONE OF THE BEST OF ITS KIND' AT GRAND OPENING</b></p> <p>ARARAT and the surrounding districts are set to benefit for decades to come following the official opening of the new \$3.8 million Community and Recreation Centre at Alexandra Oval.</p> <p>Minister for Sport and Recreation Damian Drum has declared the state of the art facility to be one of the best sporting facilities of its kind in regional Victoria and said the redevelopment will have a profoundly positive impact on Ararat including attracting big events to the region.</p> <p>"It has been built to a standard higher than just a community facility, so we will have the opportunity to host AFL practice matches and the like, this will be a regional centre for all sports.</p> <p>Minister Drum was joined by Victorian Deputy Premier Peter Ryan and Senator for Victoria and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Scott Ryan, along with more than 100 members of the Ararat community at the grand opening on Thursday.</p> <p>Ararat Football Club stalwart Harold Bright, 96, had the special honour of unveiling the commemorative plaque to mark the official opening of the multi-use facility.</p> <p>Construction of the Alexandra Oval Community and Recreation Centre was made possible with funding from the Australian Government (\$500,000 from the Regional Development Australia Fund), two grants from the Victorian Government (\$650,000 from the Community Facility Funding Program and \$500,000 from the Putting Locals First Fund), Ararat Community Enterprise (\$100,000) and Ararat Rural City Council (\$2 million, including the Alexandra Oval Reserve Committee of Management's \$70,000).</p>
<p>2017 August</p>	<p><b>CLUBROOMS REMOVED</b></p> <p>The Ararat Eagles Football Club/Grampians Cricket Association clubrooms were deemed surplus to the reserve requirements and were shifted to the Ararat Hospital as a classroom for students.</p>
<p>2018 March</p>	<p><b>GRANDSTAND RENOVATIONS</b></p> <p>Local contractor, Andrew Eastick, was employed to do repair work on the Olver Stand.</p> <p>Both ends of the stand had dropped requiring new foundation work, steel girder and timber framework, and replacement of timber seat cladding above new works. Work completed in June.</p>
<p>2019 February</p>	<p><b>PREPARATIONS FOR NEW INFRA-STRUCTURE</b></p> <p>The dilapidated scoreboard at the south end of Alexandra oval was removed by council in preparation for the new electronic scoreboard.</p> <p>The steel frame was designed, manufactured and donated by AF Gason.</p> <p>Installation by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KHS contactors</li> <li>• West Cranes and Access Hire</li> <li>• Matt Peel Electrical, L &amp; H Electrical suppliers</li> <li>• Tom &amp; Logan North from Tom's Mowing and Slashing dug the power cable trench.</li> </ul> <p>The new scoreboard was \$19,600 funded from Ararat Rural City Council's Community Grants Program</p> <p>The old scoreboard was replaced by a WiFi controlled electronic scoreboard in a similar position.</p> <p><b>The Ararat Football Netball Club and Ararat Eagles will supply work "in kind".</b></p> <p>Old interchange boxes removed from in front of the social rooms. Fencing was removed and cement slabs were poured in preparation for new interchange boxes much further apart than the previous boxes.</p> <p>New interchange boxes erected towards either end 50m line.</p> <p>The interchange benches were funded with \$9000 from the federal government's Stronger Communities Fund.</p>
<p>2019 April</p>	<p><b>SCOREBOARD</b></p> <p>Electronic scoreboard trialled for the first time for Ararat Football Club intra-club practice match.</p>
<p>2019 October</p>	<p><b>GRANDSTAND REMODELLING</b></p> <p>Minister for Regional Development, Jaala Pulford announced a \$500,000 grant (from the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure fund) towards the Ararat on the move – Event and Visitor Space Project. The funding along with \$377,000 from the Ararat Rural City Council will see new terraced seating, level grassed and compacted gravel areas for marquees and pop up activities, a formalised car parking area</p> <p>Local contractors, Andrew Eastick was employed for the remodelling of the grandstand and SHS Civil were employed for the landscaping in front of the grandstand.</p> <p>As part of an "active corridor" project works included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• removing the concrete plats and red plastic seating at the front of the stand.</li> <li>• reinstating the stairs at the front of the stand (similar to original design).</li> <li>• removing the canteen on the northern end of the stand and replacing it with a stand-alone kiosk nearby.</li> </ul>

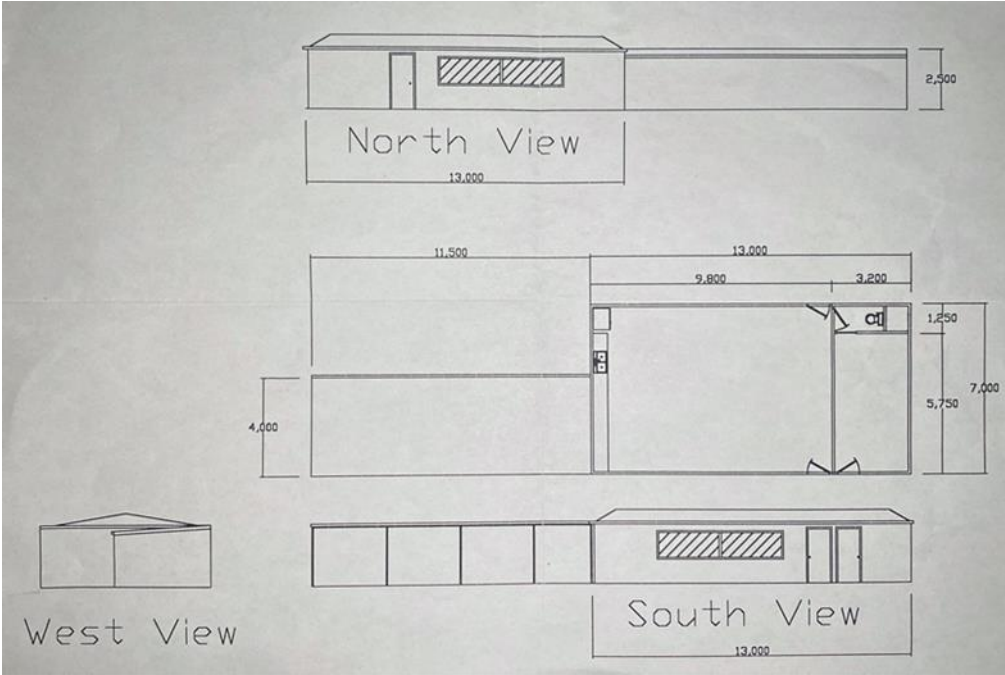
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>removing the toilets on the northern end of the stand and replacing them with unisex toilets at the back of the stand.</li> <li>creating a family room, storerooms and other spaces under the stand.</li> <li>drainage works and landscaping (including seating) between the grandstand and fence.</li> </ul>
2020 March	<p><b>NEW GOAL POSTS FOR OVAL</b></p> <p>New football goal/post posts (12m/8m) were erected replacing the much smaller set.  Cost of purchase and erection was \$24,000 of which Ararat Football Club contributed \$12,000  Erected by local contractors SHS Civil</p>
2020 March	<p><b>RE-DEVELOPMENT OF OLVER STAND BEGINS</b></p> <p>Council removed the red plastic seating and metal supports from the front of the grandstand.  The Ararat Football Club cleans out various parts of the Olver Stand in preparation for local contractor, Andrew Eastick, to commence work on renovating the stand.  Demolishing works include the north end kiosk, toilets, south end office and kitchen wall.  Work continued despite the impact of the Corona virus because of the grant deadlines.</p>





<b>FOOTBALL at Alexandra oval</b>	
1871	<p><b>Ararat Football Club formed</b></p> <p>1871-1901 – Occasionally AFC didn't form as football was establishing itself as the preferred recreation activity. Club officials would contact other district clubs to play friendly matches and sometimes matches for trophies.</p> <p>From 1902 AFC participated in various versions of Wimmera competition, often involving Horsham and Stawell with other clubs opting in.</p> <p>1924-1928 – AFC joined the Ballarat League for improved competition.</p> <p>1929 – AFC tried to get back to Wimmera competition but were blocked by some Wimmera clubs who were unhappy AFC left to go to Ballarat – AFC didn't play football that year.</p> <p>1930-33 AFC re-joined Wimmera competition</p> <p>1934-36 Ballarat joined with the Wimmera to improve their standard of football.</p> <p>1937 – first year of Wimmera Football League</p>
1921 June 4 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>FIRST GAME OF FOOTBALL ON ALEXANDRA OVAL.</b></p> <p>Ararat Football Club 9.7.61 defeated Mount Gambier Rovers 5.13.43</p>
1921 June 15 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>AFC'S FIRST COMPETITION GAME ON ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND</b></p> <p>AFC 14.13.97 defeated Rupanyup 1.3.9 in its first home game for the Wimmera District Premiership.</p>
1929	<p><b>LOSS OF REVENUE FOR ALEXANDRA OVAL COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>In 1924 AFC moved to the Ballarat Football League for better competition. In 1929 AFC tried to re-enter the Wimmera competition but were not accepted by clubs who were unhappy that AFC had left in the first place. This meant a loss of revenue for the Alexandra oval committee.</p>
1958 November	<p><b>CITY COUNCIL TO HELP PROVIDE NEW DRESSING ROOMS AT OVAL</b></p> <p>The City Council will ask the Football Club and Trotting Club to prepare plans and specifications and call tenders for construction of new dressing rooms at Alexandra Oval.</p> <p>Rough plans had been proposed by a builder whose firm estimate was £4500.</p>
1960 January	<p><b>AFC CANNOT CHARGE AT PAVILLION OPENING</b></p> <p>Permission has been granted the Football Club to officially open the "James Fiscalini" pavilion in Alexandra Sports Ground on Friday, January 29, but no admission charges can be made until the building is registered with the Health Department.</p> <p>The club planned an official opening ceremony on the terrace fronting the pavilion, followed by a social and dance for which an admission charge was to be made.</p> <p>Money received was to be put towards the cost of furnishings for the room.</p>
1960 December	<p><b>NO PAVILLION KEY FOR ARARAT FOOTBALL CLUB</b></p> <p>At its meeting on Monday night, Ararat City Council refused a request of the Ararat Football Club to have a key for the James Fiscalini pavilion issued to a responsible person.</p> <p>Making the request, the club gave as its reasons that (a) as football club activities continue throughout the summer, regular committee meetings are necessary; (b) on many occasions and most weekends, old players and supporters returning to Ararat are eager to see the pavilion and photos and pennants are kept therein, and (c) it is felt, having contributed liberally to the cost of erecting the pavilion, the request was reasonable.</p> <p>Cr de Clerq – "The Ararat Football Club does use the building a good deal and it may be difficult at times to get a key, but on the other hand there are other bodies that use it. If we do it for one, we must do it for all."</p>
1962 November	<p><b>FOOTBALL COULD BE DENIED USE OF CLUBROOMS FOR MEETINGS</b></p> <p>Ararat Football Club could possibly be denied the use of its own club rooms for committee meetings, the James Fiscalini pavilion, towards the construction of which it contributed £2000.</p> <p>A letter from Town Clerk, Mr Grenfell, said future applications for use of the pavilion must be forwarded in time to be presented at council meetings, otherwise your request will be refused.</p> <p>Bob Falla jumped to his feet and declared "we are being treated like a lot of – I don't like to use the adjective – school children. We have a £2000 equity in that building and we should endeavour to get the building as and when we like. I am fed up to the neck about the whole matter.</p>
1962 December	<p><b>PAVILLION ACCESS GRANTED BUT NO KEY ISSUED TO FOOTBALL CLUB</b></p> <p>Pavilion access has been granted by the council at times when there are no other bookings, but not granted a key to use the building at will.</p>
1971 February	<p><b>AFC LADIES' COMMITTEE REQUEST REFUSED</b></p> <p>Ararat Council refused an application from the AFC Ladies' Committee to use the Fiscalini pavilion, kitchen and dining room facilities for catering purposes.</p>
1971 April	<p><b>AFC MAY SOON HAVE FOOTBALL HOUSE</b></p> <p>AFC committee man, Bill Studd, said at the moment the club relies on council owned facilities. It was vital for the club to gain its own clubrooms on its own land. It could be used as a gymnasium or catering for the ladies' committee and other purposes. In time the club may get a liquor licence to produce extra finance.</p>

1973 December	<p><b>AFC GIVEN LAND ON CONDITION</b></p> <p>Ararat Council approved the application by the AFC for an area of land to the north of Alexandra Oval provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plans approved by the council to be submitted within 6 months</li> <li>- Proof of financial capacity to satisfactorily carry out the proposal within 3 years.</li> </ul>
1974 February	<p><b>CLUBROOM PLANS TO BE DISCUSSED</b></p> <p>Special meeting of the AFC to discuss development plans for proposed social clubrooms – advice to be sought from VFL clubs.</p>
1974 December	<p><b>\$50,000 SOCIAL CLUBHOUSE FOR FOOTBALL CLUB</b></p> <p>At the annual meeting AFC gives go ahead for planned social clubrooms at Alexandra Oval.</p>
1975 August	<p><b>APPEAL FOR CLUBHOUSE</b></p> <p>AFC opened an appeal to raise \$60,000 for a social clubhouse.</p>
1977	<p><b>AFC PURCHASES LAND</b></p> <p>AFC paid \$2,000 for land adjoining Alexandra oval and the Tennis club with a view to building social clubrooms.</p>
1982 March	<p><b>APPLICATION TO NAME GRANDSTAND</b></p> <p>At an AFC committee meeting it was moved that a recommendation be made to council that the grandstand be named the “Olver Stand”.</p>
1983 March	<p><b>ROOMS FOR CLUB</b></p> <p>The City Council made the decision to give control of the Olver Stand to the Ararat Football Club. The club proposes to move the kitchen to one end of the area and put in arch ways so that the area will be large enough to accommodate the club’s social functions. Stairs are to be constructed up to the Olver Stand for watching football matches (<i>this was not constructed</i>). It had been in the club’s plans since the mid-1950s for its own clubrooms.</p> <p><b>OLVER STAND COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>An Olver Stand committee is to be formed (from the AFC) with the function to construct and finance football clubrooms and to administer and provide financial reports to the AFC and Ararat City Council.</p>
1983 May	<p><b>AFC SELLS HOUSE</b></p> <p>AFC sold the house they owned in Clarke St for \$19,000</p>
1983 August	<p><b>AFC TO MEET WITH COUNCIL ABOUT FACILITIES</b></p> <p>The AFC will meet with the City Council to discuss netball viewing facilities, toilets under the Olver Stand and a new scoreboard. It will also ask the council to raise a loan of \$30,000 on behalf of the club.</p>
1984 December	<p><b>AFC ACCEPTS COUNCIL’S OFFER OF ASSISTANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The AFC accepted the following offer from the City Council:</li> <li>• Provide \$10,000 for construction of a new scoreboard and gatekeeper’s station.</li> <li>• Keep advertising signs up all year</li> <li>• Provide an interest free loan of \$9000 until 30<sup>th</sup> September 1985</li> <li>• Transfer ownership of land owned near tennis courts for gratis</li> </ul>
1985 March	<p><b>AFC LAND TRANSFERRED TO COUNCIL</b></p> <p>AFC transferred the land it owned to the City of Ararat for \$1.</p> <p><b>OLVER STAND TOILETS TO BE COMPLETED</b></p> <p>New toilets are to be added on to the north end of the Olver Stand. Quotes were accepted from R &amp; L Loeliger - \$19,700 and Cane Plumbing - \$3,851 for a total of \$23,551. They are to be finished in 8 weeks.</p>
1986 September	<p><b>SHOWERS NEED UPGRADE</b></p> <p>AFC to contact Ararat City Council to seek extension and upgrading of Fiscalini pavilion showers.</p>
1986 November	<p><b>REQUEST REFUSED</b></p> <p>Ararat City Council refused AFC’s request to upgrade showers.</p>
1989 July	<p><b>BAR TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN OLVER STAND</b></p> <p>A sub-committee of the AFC was formed to construct bar facilities in the Olver Stand – behind the wall under the seating. Richard Harricks, Trevor McKinnis, Phillip Lugg and Greg Dadswell.</p>
1993 May	<p><b>RATS TAKE CHARGE OF FISCALINI PAVILLION</b></p> <p>On the recommendation of Henry Gunstone, Ararat Recreation Officer, the Ararat Football Club was made the committee of management for the Fiscalini Pavillion. The club is a major user of the facility.</p>

2018 August	<b>GRANDSTAND STOREROOM IMPROVEMENTS</b> Ararat Football Club organised for the concreting of the storeroom floor under the north end of the grandstand, adjacent to the kiosk. Contractors – Andrew Eastick and Paul Ganley.
2020 March	<b>NEW GOAL POSTS</b> The Ararat Football Club contributed \$12,000 to the \$24,000 cost of the newly erected goal posts

<b>NETBALL at Alexandra Oval</b>	
1972	<p><b>ARARAT FC NETBALL CLUB FORMED</b> Netball played on court on the south west corner of the hospital grounds (car park/ambulance station). Each week the netballers had to scratch netball lines onto the court surface.</p>
1972 July	<p><b>PROPOSAL FOR NETBALL COURT</b> Council moved construction of a netball court at Alexandra Oval subject to a reasonable contribution from the AFC Netball Club.</p>
1973 October	<p><b>PROBLEMS WITH NEWLY LAID COURT</b> Wet weather and speed of construction (to try and complete an asphalt court) lead to problems in the surface which needed patching.</p>
1985 April	<p><b>NETBALL COURT MAINTENANCE</b> After a request from the AFC the Ararat Council re-sealed the netball court at Alexandra oval.</p>
1991 Before season	<p><b>NETBALL SHOWERS CREATED</b> With materials supplied from the Ararat City Council and volunteer work from members of the AFC two showers were constructed in the female change-rooms of the western toilet block behind the Olver Stand.</p>
2001 December	<p><b>NETBALL COURT RELOCATED</b> After the AFC Netball Club had requested the re-surfacing of the netball court at Alexandra Oval, they were told funding would only be granted if they shifted to a safer location (short and sloping run-offs). Council Recreation Officer – Henry Gunstone was successful in gaining a \$38,000 grant to green flexi pave over two existing black hot mix tennis courts and \$8,000 grant to install lighting. The eastern court doesn't have enough run-off for Wimmera Netball to be played on. <i>(Over the following years there were concerns about the disconnect between netball and football facilities and young children having to walk through car traffic to get to and from the canteen)</i></p>
2002 October	<p><b>APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY ORGANISATION GRANT</b> AFC Netball club put in for a grant on behalf of stakeholders for a changeroom/viewing shelter: Ararat Tennis club Ararat Football Netball Club Ararat Eagles Football Netball Club Ararat Rural City</p> 
2003 February	<p><b>GRANT DECLINED</b> From AFC Netball club committee minutes:  “We put in for a large grant at the end of last year with a view to having a shelter built. We were one out of 6 applications that were rejected – reason – council is currently looking at a ‘grand plan’ for Alexandra oval and don’t want anything to happen just yet.”  “We have put in another application for a smaller grant (\$5000) to at least get some temporary shelter.”</p>

2003 July	<b>GRANT FOR SHELTER</b> AFC Netball Club received a grant of \$2300 to erect a viewing shelter at the new netball courts. Works have to be completed within 12 months.
2003 September	<b>GRANT</b> \$3000. Works have to be completed by 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2004 Quote from Totalspan - \$4100
2004	<b>NETBALL SHELTER ERECTED</b> Ararat FC Netball Club financed a spectator shelter which comprised of lockable storeroom and 2 open bays adjacent to the netball court. A section of fence had to be removed. The floor was not concreted. Built by Mark Lewis Cost: ? 
2007 June	<b>NETBALL DISCUSSIONS</b> AFNC and AEFNC netballers met to discuss sharing AFNC's netball storage.
2007 August	<b>NETBALL SHELTER EXTENSION DISCUSSIONS</b> The 2 netball clubs met to discuss extending the netball shelter.
2008 June	<b>ARARAT FC and EAGLES FC NETBALLERS RAISE MONEY</b> The 2 netball clubs held a quiz night which raised \$2000 towards the cost of extending the netball shelter for spectators.
2008 November	<b>FLOOR CONCRETED IN NETBALL SHELTER</b> Concrete supplied by Darren Hamilton and finishing completed by Nats McRoberts.
2009 March	<b>NETBALL SHELTER EXTENDED</b> Toni Mason (AEFNC) and Andrew Eastick organised and erected the extension to the existing netball shelter which added 3 open bays and floor concreted. Application was made for a government grant. Project cost \$6000 
2012 October	<b>SPECTATOR CHAIRS FOR NETBALL</b> Peter Gibson, V/Line, donated surplus-for-requirements seating for the use of netball.
2017	<b>CONCERNS ABOUT SAFETY OF NETBALL COURTS</b> Netball goal circle surfaces became too slippery in the wet – in an effort to improve the problem incorrect paint made the problem worse – eventually corrected.
2018 March	<b>NETBALL COURTS RESURFACED</b> Ararat Council budgeted \$9000 to resurface the 2 existing netball courts to improve the grip.
2019 October	<b>NEW NETBALL COURTS</b> Minister for Sport, John Eren, announced funding for construction of 2 new netball courts - \$500,000 from the State Government Grant from the Female Friendly Facilities Fund and \$470,000 from the Ararat Rural City Council. Work began on 2 new netball courts in the north-west corner of the Alexandra oval precinct behind the social rooms. Other works include female friendly clubrooms and a female recreation hub. Local contractors SHS Civil Managers – Jacob Hamilton and Lachie Hamilton are in charge of the project.

<b>TENNIS at Alexandra oval</b>	
1878 December	<b>TENNIS FIRST PLAYED IN ARARAT</b> First court in corner of Recreation Reserve.
1886 January	<b>NEW TENNIS COURT</b> Permission to asphalt and control courts in the Garden Reserve – ground between Bowling Club and Croquet Club in High St.
1909 January	<b>MAYOR OPENS NEW TENNIS COURT</b> Mayor, Cr G Burn, opened the new and most up-to-date tennis court of the Ararat Tennis Club.
1912 November	<b>MAYOR OPENS NEW TENNIS COURT</b> Mayor, Cr G Burn, opened the new and most up-to-date tennis court of the Ararat Tennis Club.
1914 May	<b>OPEN NEW COURTS</b> The old court was taken up from the foundations and entirely remade after the latest design. Messrs McLeod and Co of Geelong were the contractors.
1923 January	<b>GRAMPIANS TENNIS TOURNAMENT</b> The Grampians Tennis Tournament is held on Alexandra Oval over Friday, Saturday and Monday. Ten courts were marked out on the oval. "The turf is in excellent condition reflecting the greatest credit on the curator, Mr Jim Fiscalini."
1928 February	<b>MORE COURTS TO BE PROVIDED</b> It was decided at a meeting of the Ararat Tennis Club that more courts and a more commodious and up-to-date clubrooms were necessary in view of the progress being made by the town.
1929 October 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>CLUBROOMS OPENED</b> Tennis club President, Mr HE Webb, opened the new clubrooms. The new pavilion (a residence moved from Dobie) was converted at a cost of about £400. Members and visitors admired its comfortable spaciousness and simple but up-to-date appointments. The pavilion was erected mainly due to the efforts of the ladies.
1931 October	<b>LAND SALE TO TENNIS CLUB</b> The Alexandra Sports Ground Committee sold about an acre and a half (£200) to the Ararat Tennis Club to lay down a set of grass courts.
1932 November 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>NEW TENNIS COURTS OPENED BY MAYOR CR WL BREWSTER and MAYORESS</b> The whole scheme had been designed by Mr Robert Speed – who unfortunately died before being able to see the full accomplishment. Winter and summer tennis can now be played under excellent conditions. Tribute was paid to Mr J Fiscalini, curator of the Alexandra Sports Ground, for the excellent state in which the lawns were in. Exhibition matches were played by four of the State's leading players – Holloway, Fleming, Teague and Ryan.
1933 February	<b>NEW LAND PURCHASED FOR CLUBHOUSE</b> Ararat Council agrees to sell about half an acre of land adjoining the grass and asphalt tennis courts on which to erect a clubhouse. £13, £2 to be paid down and the balance in five years with interest.
1933	<b>TENNIS COURT CLUBROOMS</b> The Ararat Tennis clubrooms from the old asphalt courts on High Street were removed to the new lawn courts.
1933 August	<b>OLD TENNIS COURTS TAKEN OVER</b> The Ararat Croquet Club has taken over the old courts of the Ararat Tennis Club and intends to lay down extra lawns.
1934 January	<b>STALWART REMEMBERED</b> A memorial sundial was erected to recognise the work of Mr Robert D Speed who was secretary for many years.
1935 September	<b>SEASON OPENING</b> 2 new hard courts were put down in the winter and were now ready for play. Under the excellent care of James Fiscalini the lawn courts had recovered from the grasshopper plague.
1937 December	<b>MORE LAND PURCHASED</b> The Ararat Council agreed to allow the Tennis Club to purchase an "eyesore" piece of land between the Tennis Club and the Sports Ground for improvement.
1959 June	<b>FOOTBALLERS USE TENNIS CLUBROOMS AS CHANGEROOMS</b> Due to the removal of old football change rooms and construction of the Fiscalini pavilion footballers changed in the Tennis club clubrooms.

1965 June	<b>CLUB IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY</b> Ararat Tennis club in financial difficulty as rates and water charges have doubled.
1966 July	<b>SOLUTION OFFERED</b> Minister rules Tennis Club ground as recreational City Council asks the Lawn Tennis Club for their land title - this would save \$190 in yearly rates and offered a sliding scale for water – this is rejected. Tennis Club is using 1 million gallons of water yearly.
1967 November	<b>HOPEFUL WATERING SOLUTION</b> Tennis club bores for water to maintain their courts.
1967 December	<b>WATER ROSTER</b> A roster of members was drawn up to water the courts to ensure the grass survived the drought.
1970	<b>NEW TRUSTEES APPOINTED</b> Mr Grant, Mr Lardner and Mr Richardson
1979 January	<b>ALEXANDRA OVAL USED FOR TENNIS COURTS</b> Due to the large number of entries at the ANA annual tournament extra courts were set out on Alexandra oval.
1982 September	<b>CITY COUNCIL TAKES OWNERSHIP</b> Following negotiations, the tennis courts now belong to the city of Ararat.
1982 December	<b>NEW COURTS OPENED</b> The tennis club constructed 4 new grass synthetic courts and lights. \$20,000 to come from the Department of Youth Sport and Recreation, \$20,000 from the city of Ararat and \$15,000 from the tennis club. (350 junior members at this time)
1983 January	<b>BORE WATER NOT THE SOLUTION</b> Bore water, which is not suitable for the tennis courts is being used to keep the surrounds in good condition.
1983 May	<b>TENNIS COURTS TO BE LEASED</b> The City Council to give a 21 year lease of the courts to the Tennis Club.
1983 Month???	<b>NEW TENNIS COURTS</b> Four new artificial grass courts with lights were established on the western side of the original clubhouse
1989 November 19th	<b>NEW CLUB HOUSE OFFICALLY OPENED</b> A brick clubhouse was constructed to replace the old weather board clubhouse.
1996 December	\$28,000 for new tennis courts – details ??
2006-2007	Grass courts at the front were also reworked and surfaced with artificial turf. Other surfaces were replaced in 2010 (western side) and (southern) in 2015.

<b>TROTTING CLUB at Alexandra Oval</b>	
1920 April	<b>ARARAT TROTTING CLUB WAS FORMED</b>
1921 June	<b>FIRST TROTTING MEETING AT ALEXANDRA OVAL</b> A Programme of 6 events. £100 prize money.
1935 August	<b>PROPOSAL TO CHANGE SHAPE OF TROTTING TRACK</b> It has been proposed to do away with the oval shaped trotting track
1947 April	<b>TROTTING CLUB RE-ORGANISED AFTER LAPSE OF 9 YEARS</b>
1949 August	<b>PROPOSAL TO LIGHT UP ALEXANDRA OVAL TROTTING TRACK</b> The Ararat Trotting club has decided to light Alexandra Oval. At present Ararat is only allocated 2 meetings a season. The club is hopeful the government will grant more country dates.
1950 January	<b>NEW TROTTING CLUB FORMED</b> The enthusiasm for night trotting resulted in the formation of Ararat and Stawell and Districts Trotting Club. The cost of lighting at Alexandra Oval will be about £3000
1950 March	<b>FIRST NIGHT TROTTING MEET AT ARARAT</b> Second club outside Melbourne after Mildura to hold a night trotting meeting. Ararat's venture is on a more elaborate scale and facilities, generally, are better. The fast and safe track is ideally suited for racing under lights, it is just under 3 furlongs, enabling a close up of the runners.
1952 December	<b>TRACK ALTERATION</b> The trotting club submits plans to reconstruct the Alexandra Oval trotting track.
1953 February	<b>COUNCIL REJECT PLANS</b> Council refuses plans to reconstruct the track as it reduces the width of the arena and takes in the entrance to the grounds.
1953 May	<b>PROPOSAL TO RECONSTRUCT TROTTING TRACK</b> 2 straights of 140 yards, minimum radius of 174 feet Shift the curator's residence, take a portion of the hill, take in the camping ground, take a strip of the oval in front of the grandstand
1953 July	<b>ANOTHER PROPOSAL</b> 8 yards shorter than present track, 93 yard straight (grandstand side) 111 yard back straight, take 10-12 feet of oval grandstand side, swing onto camping ground, take in camp kitchen, remove a number of mature trees, right up to hedge at curator's residence, cut off the driveway to parking area near tennis courts.
1953 August	<b>TROTTING CLUB MEETING WITH COUNCIL</b> At a meeting the Trotting Club seemed dissatisfied with the Council Engineer's trotting track plan. The club proposed to move the curator's residence and discuss everything but the track. Cr Murphy felt they did not want a new track this year, but were prepared to wait three years for a better track. The next move was up to the Trotting Club.
1955 November	<b>COUNCIL TO CHARGE CAR ADMISSION TO ALEXANDRA OVAL</b> The Ararat-Stawell and Districts Trotting Club disagree with the Council proposal to charge admission for cars entering Alexandra Oval. The trotting club suggested to the council it wants 20 acres to develop its own track. A split in the club lead to the eventual development of a Stawell track.
1955 December	<b>ARARAT STAWELL AND DISTRICTS TROTTING CLUB TO HOLD TROTTING MEETINGS AT STAWELL</b> Decision made on the grounds that the club could never own council controlled Alexandra Oval.
1956 May	<b>ARARAT COUNCIL OFFERS TO BORROW £3000 TO IMPROVE THE ARARAT TRACK</b> Claims the Stawell track would be laid at no cost and a drive-in would be privately built to help finance the scheme. Ararat Council offered to improve the track.
1956 July	<b>COUNCIL MEETS WITH TROTTING CONTROL BOARD</b> The TCB refuses the Ararat Council's request to guarantee that trotting will be held at Alexandra Oval over a number of years. The TCB also refuses to grant the council the right to hold meetings on the Alexandra Oval track. The bad state of the track was a concern to the TCB. It was appropriate to hold discussions with the Ararat-Stawell and Districts Trotting Club over the state of the track.
1965 April	<b>PHOTO EQUIPMENT FIRST USED AT ALEXANDRA OVAL</b> At the Easter Monday meeting of the Ararat-Stawell and Districts Trotting Club photo equipment was used for the first time. It worked perfectly and proved a great assistance to judges on a number of occasions to verify winners or place-getters. Photos were in the judges hand less than 2 minutes after the horses passed the post.



1966 March	<b>TROTTING CLUB MAKES A REQUEST TO THE ARARAT COUNCIL TO WIDEN AND EXTEND THE TRACK</b> The request was for a 50 feet wide track 3 and a half to four furlongs long.
1966 April	<b>COUNCIL REFUSES REQUEST TO ALTER THE TRACK</b> The track could not be laid without purchasing private land, heavy earthworks and slicing off 15 feet of the western side of the oval.
1966 June	<b>THE TCB GIVES 12 MONTHS TO GET TRACK SAFE</b> Until the track is brought up to standard Ararat meetings are only allowed 10 horse events at 5 abreast.
1966 July	<b>\$120,000 NEEDED TO CREATE A 4 FURLONG TRACK AT THE ARARAT RACECOURSE.</b> The Chairman of Stewards said the Alexandra Oval track was unsafe for improved class fields and higher standard trotting. Developing a trotting track at the Ararat Racecourse was a good option.
1966 August	<b>TCB SETS A NEW STANDARD LENGTH FOR TROTTING TRACKS</b> The Trotting Control Board says the new minimum standard trotting track is 3 and half furlongs for a night track and 4 furlongs for a day track.
1966 September	<b>TCB, ARARAT COUNCIL AND ARARAT-STAWELL AND DISTRICTS TROTting CLUB AGREE ON NEW SITE</b> The 3 organisations agreed that land at the North East Common off Campbell St was to be the site for the new Ararat Trotting track.
1967 May 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>FAREWELL TROTS MEETING</b> “The oval track which served the Ararat-Stawell and Districts Trotting club for 17 years had been the venue of an authorised meeting for the last time. Labelled anachronistic by the Trotting Control Board Alexandra Oval will be replaced by the modern Russell T White Raceway.”

<b>ATHLETICS at Alexandra Oval</b>	
1874 December	<b>FIRST BOXING DAY SPORTS IN ARARAT</b>
1920 December	<b>BOXING DAY SPORTS AT THE OPENING OF ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND</b> After the Premier opened the Sports Ground the Athletic Club held their athletics meeting.
1926 August	<b>ATHLETIC CLUB TO LIGHT UP ALEXANDRA OVAL</b> Council agrees with the Athletic Club intention to light up Alexandra Sports Ground by electricity. This would allow them to run their Boxing Day program into the evening. The club did not want Council money but the assistance of officials to help in erection work. They would like the Council Engineer to purchase 30 poles for them.
1933	<b>FORMATION OF HIGHLAND SPORT SOCIETY</b> The Ararat Highland Sports Society was formed by a meeting convened by Mr J Robertson. Mr Alex McDonald was elected Chief.

<b>ARARAT AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY at Alexandra Oval</b>	
1863 March 12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>INAUGURAL SHOW AT MARKET SHEDS</b> In 1860 attempts to make Ararat a market town were initiated when more than fifty drays were bringing in farm produce each week. The Municipal Council built market sheds on the reserve gazetted for the purpose. The building was the venue for the Agricultural Society's inaugural show.
1864 January	<b>GRANDSTAND</b> In preparation for the All-England Cricket match a 700 person grandstand was built at the showgrounds
1937 April	<b>SHOW GROUND SALE</b> The Agricultural Society ask permission to sell their show grounds before moving to the Ararat Sports Ground.
1938 June	<b>NEW HOME FOR AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY</b> The Ararat Agricultural Society shifted their buildings, for a cost of £900, from the old show yards (site of the former Prestige Mill) to the site between the Ararat Sports Ground and J-Ward.
1938 November 11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>FIRST SHOW AT THE NEW SHOW GROUNDS.</b> Mr H Pye, MLC, assistant Minister for Agriculture officially opened the new show grounds, above the Sports Ground adjacent to J Ward, in the presence of a large gathering.
1959 May	<b>DISCUSSION TO MOVE TO A NEW SITE</b> The Ararat Agricultural Society is going to investigate the possibility of moving their buildings to another site which will give more scope for their activities so that at some future date the show may be enlarged.
1968 June	<b>RECOMMENDATION TO MOVE TO RUSSELL T WHITE RACEWAY</b> At a meeting of the Ararat Agricultural Society it was recommended that the Russell T White Raceway would make an ideal site for their activities if permission could be obtained from the Ararat Council and Trotting Club.



**Ararat Showgrounds** - on the later site of the Prestige Mill

Grandstand constructed in 1864 in preparation for a cricket match featuring the All-England cricketers.

The Agriculture Society shifted to Alexandra Sports Ground in 1938



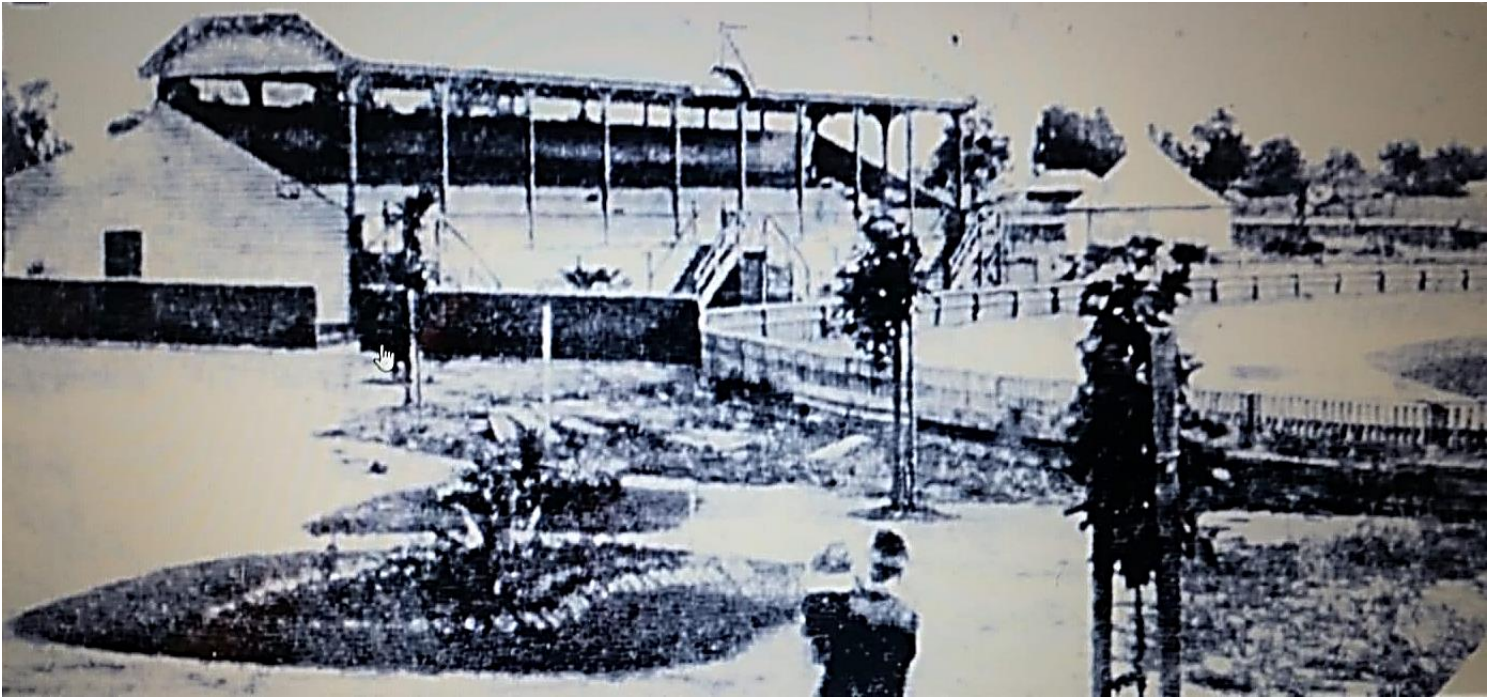


Photo from Weekly Times 1903  
Grandstand constructed in 1902  
Recreation Reserve (named Kokoda Park in 1947)



Recreation Reserve (Kokoda Park)



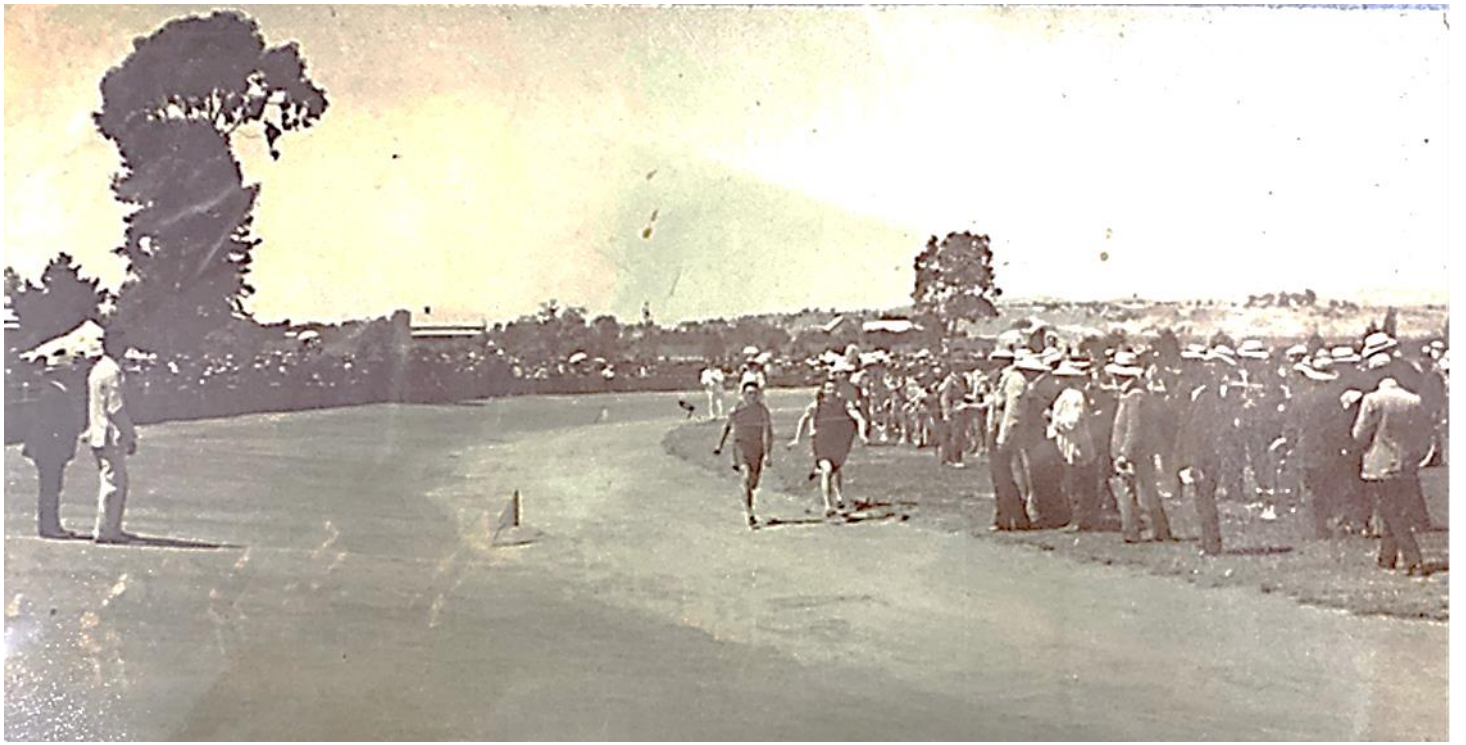


Recreation Reserve in 1906



Recreation Reserve (Kokoda Park)





Athletics meeting at Recreation Reserve (Kokoda Park)

## DEVELOPING THE SITE FOR ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND

The site intended for the sports ground was an area of waste land, covered with gorse and mining sludge.



New Sports ground site before work started





Surveying the site for the new sports ground



Volunteer labour was a feature of the construction of the new Sports Ground













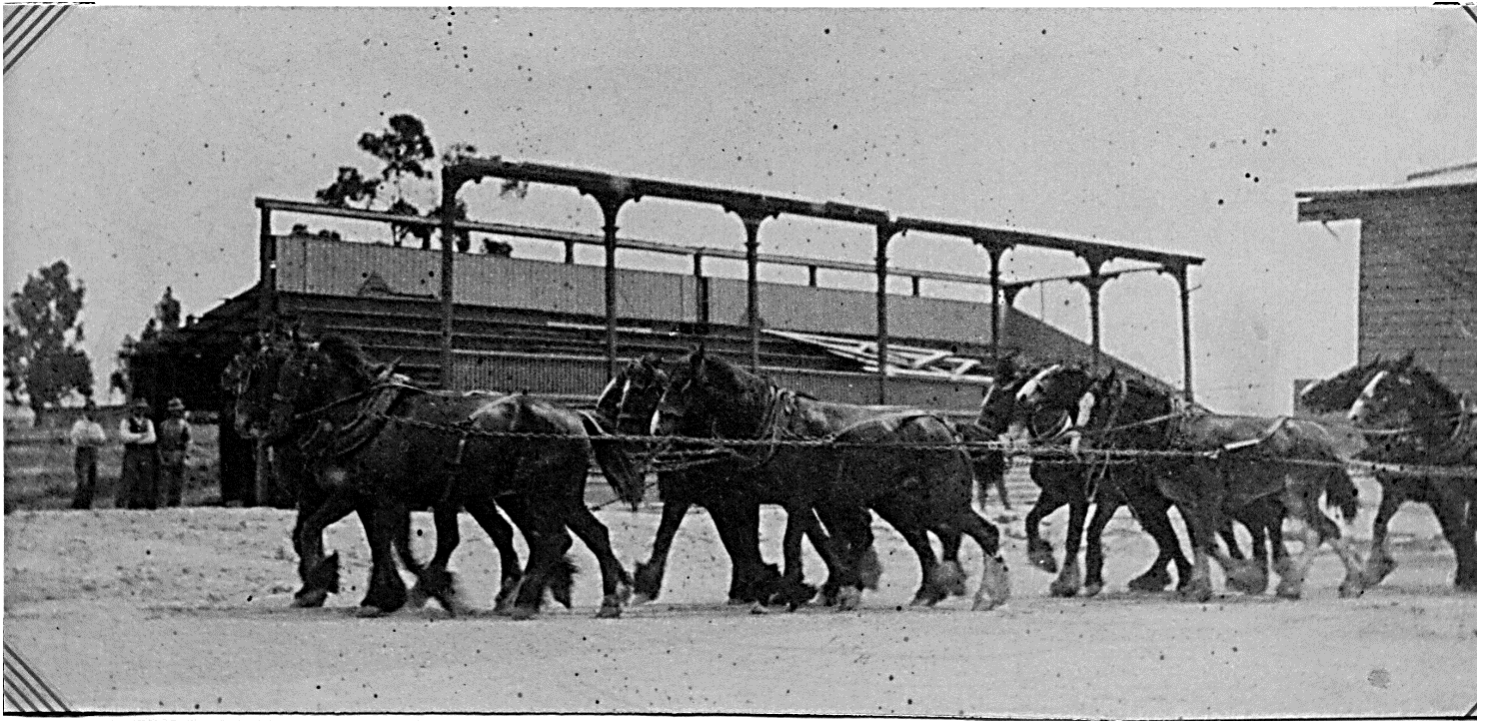






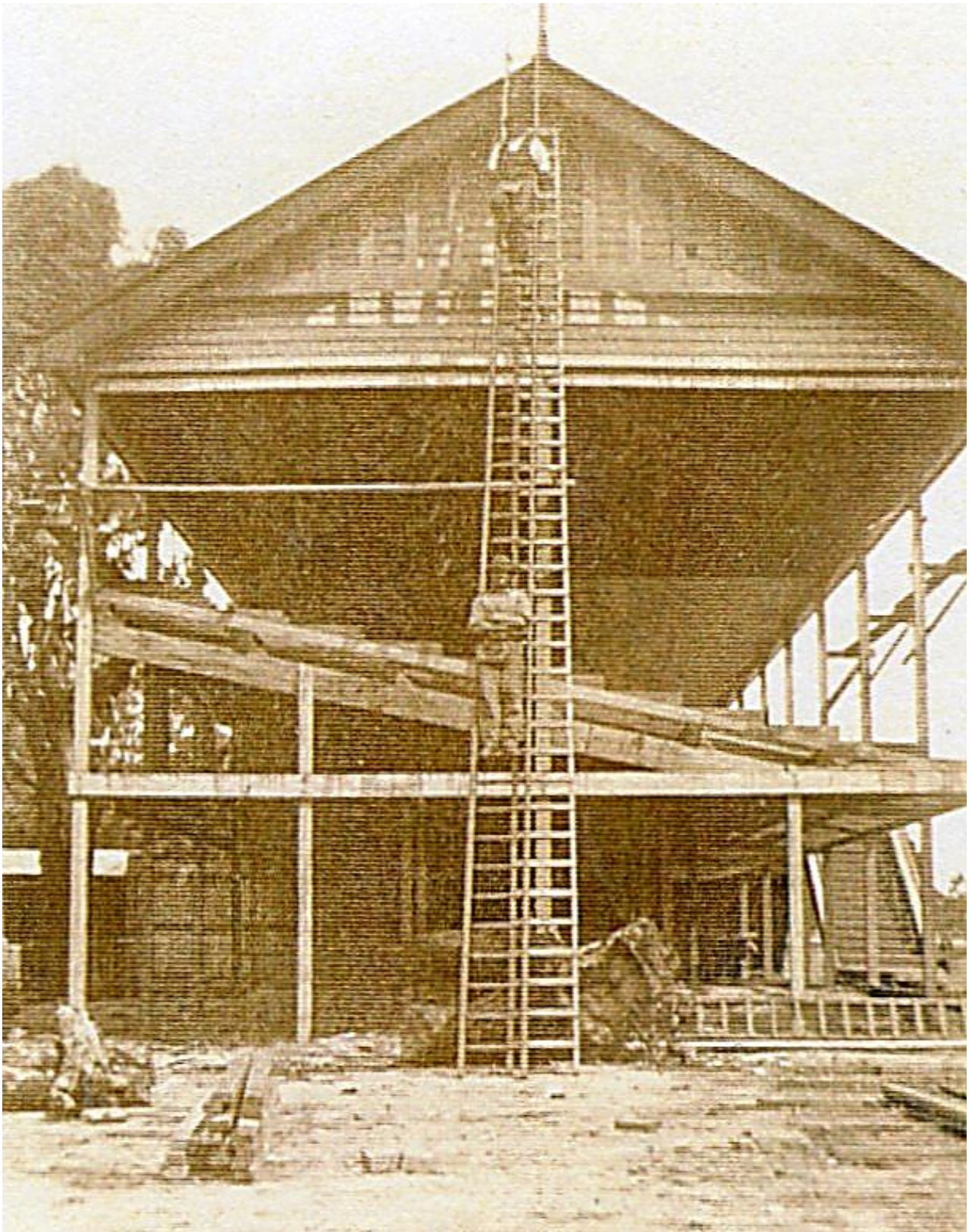


Driver: Muriel Waugh, Ann McDonald, Eileen Dodd, Tot McDonald, Barbara McDonald



Relocating the grandstand from the Recreation Reserve  
to the new Alexandra Sports Ground in 1920





Reconstructing the Recreation Reserve grandstand  
at the  
Alexandra Sports Ground in 1920





Reconstructing the Recreation Reserve grandstand  
at the  
Alexandra Sports Ground in 1920





Athletics meeting at the Boxing Day opening of the new Sports Ground





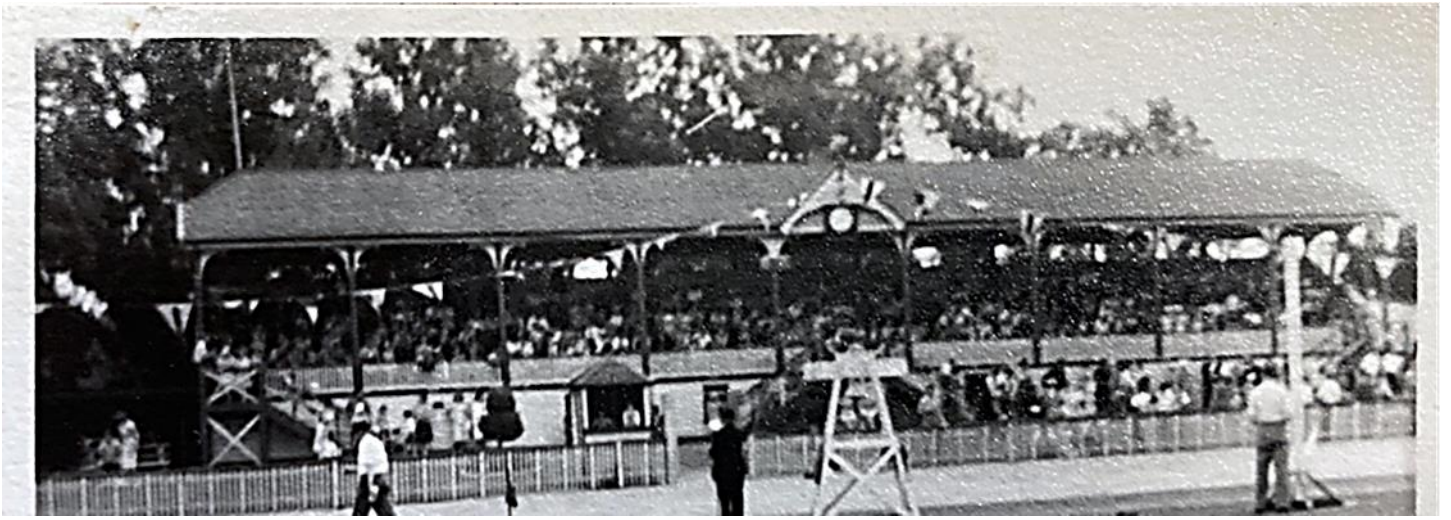


**Ararat v Maryborough on Alexandra Oval in 1921**

(The first game of football played on Alexandra Oval – Ararat defeated Mount Gambier Rovers 7/6/1921)







FROM AN OLD SWAMP AND WASTE LANDS THEY MADE THIS PERFECT SPORTS GROUND. GEO. GOSSIP WITH HIS A.P.S.. YOUTHS OF BOTH SEXES WORKED HARD AND ENJOYED IT.

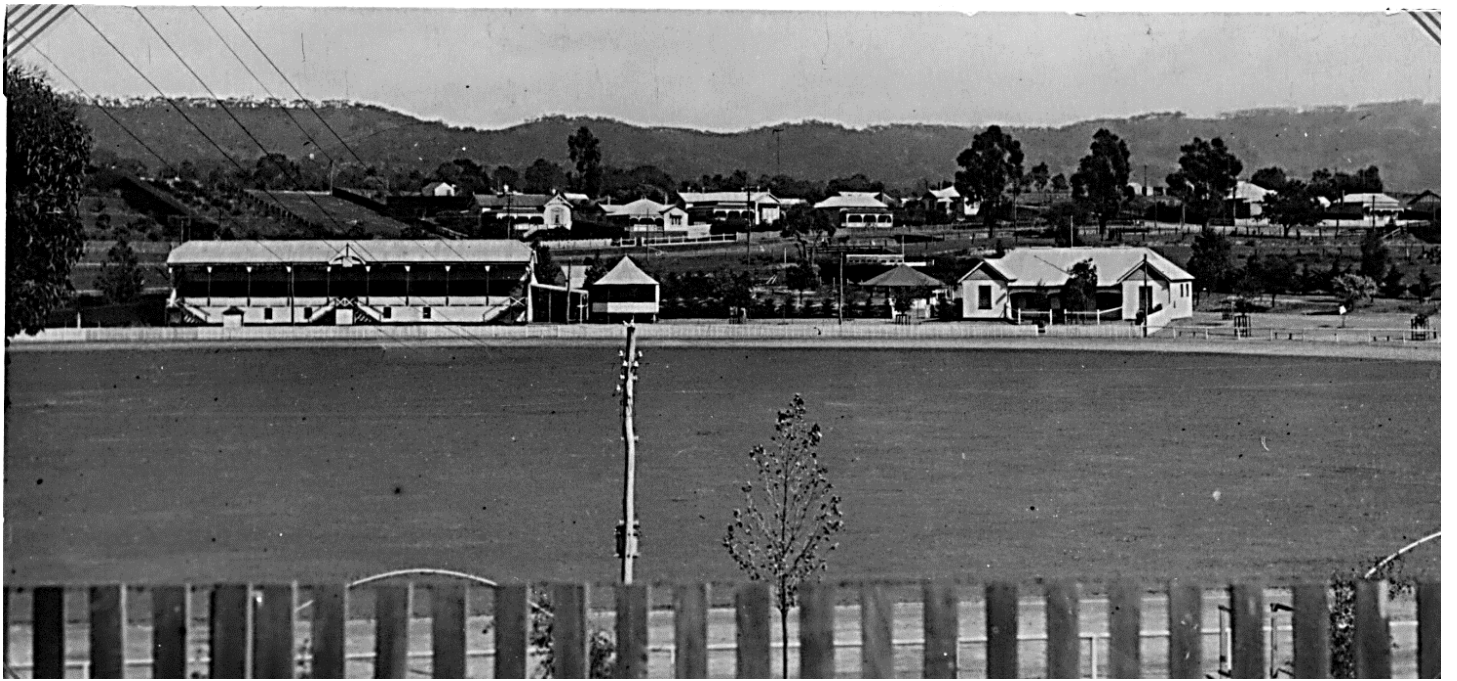


GRASS COURTS. PART of the NEW SPORTS GROUND









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THE RECREATION RESERVE, ARARAT, VIC.









THE ROSE SERIES P.2490  
COPYRIGHT

ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND, ARARAT, VIC.



Go-karting on the Trotting track





Aerial view of Alexandra oval about 2014





# Ararat Advertiser articles related to the construction of Alexandra oval

Thursday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 3.8

## Editorial:

Some little time ago, in order to relieve the more pressing needs of the returned soldiers, the Commonwealth Government set aside the sum of £500,000 to be spent in useful public works by the municipalities of the various States. Victoria's share of this grant is £142,276, and the amount allocated to each municipality is £749. Certain conditions are necessarily attached to the grant, these being briefly that the money spent solely in the employment of returned soldiers not in employment; that the work commenced and finished within six months from the 31<sup>st</sup> March (this condition being dependent on soldier labor being available); and that the works be necessary, but not in the category of normal undertakings by public bodies, and the money must not be spent in substitution or ordinary local works. The provisions are wise, for without these safeguards a municipal body might just pass the money to its general account, merely substituting soldier labor for the men now employed, and thus transferring the evils of unemployment from the shoulders of one man to another. Though the expenditure of the amount granted has not yet been considered by the Ararat Borough Council, the matter is being made the subject of some discussion in the town, and the pros and cons of various schemes have been reviewed. Amongst those it has been suggested that a memorial building should be erected in Alexandra Park, in an elevated position, but as it has been resolved to provide a substantial memorial in the town the proposal does not find general favor. One suggestion made, however, commends itself to careful consideration. A few years ago an effort was made to complete Alexandra Park by clearing up the reserved land at the west end as far as the railway line and converting it into a sports ground, but a most fractious opposition was raised to the scheme, and a work which would have been of great value to the town, and which would have been completed without any substantial call upon the municipal funds of the town, was prematurely strangled, and a most commendable spirit scotched. The improvement of this eyesore at the Park has now again attracted attention, and the question is asked why should not a start be made to lay the foundations of a fine sports field in this forsaken wilderness. There is a good area of ground available, it is situated in the centre of the town, in touch with the Bowling Green, Tennis Court, Croquet Lawns, the Children's Playground, and attractive Alexandra Park, and it would unquestionably become a popular recreation ground. The conversion of the ground to a useful purpose would be an extra-municipal work which would serve a double purpose. It would provide work for the returned men and recreation for all manner of people. We feel sure that were this work adopted it would meet with the practical sympathy and support of the burgesses generally, and that many would cheerfully assist in any scheme for the improvement of the place. It would, too, heal a sore which has irritated and is still irritating the body politic. Moreover, we are assured public entertainments would be arranged and further funds made available for the employment of the men for a more or less lengthened period. A convenient sports ground in keeping with the needs of the burgesses has been for a lengthy period a pressing need. It's want has had a restricting effect upon such fine pastimes as cricket, and with as little delay as possible the want should be supplied. We may express the hope that the suggestion made will at least receive consideration when the Borough Council is determining a course of action.

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Saturday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 8

## CORRESPONDENCE.

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[To the Editor.]

### EXTENSION OF ALEXANDRA PARK.

Sir,— The article published in your last issue, recommending that the money to be voted by the Federal Government to the Borough Council, £700 odd, in order to provide employment for returned soldiers, should be expended on enlarging Alexandra Park by way of adding a sports arena to it, is such a good one that it should commend itself to the council and the public generally. For many years now we have had to put up with that miserable Recreation Reserve for the holding of all kinds of sports, and to speak the most in its favor, it can truly be said that the place is in no way suitable or fit for such gatherings. One has only to look at the Stawell ground when he at once becomes ashamed of the Ararat "pleasure" resort. By the creation of a sports ground on the waste lands adjoining Alexandra Park a long-felt want would be met, and probably were that proposal carried out it would be the means of resuscitating the old Gardens Improvement Committee — a body that years ago performed a tremendous amount of work at the park. If the proposal you so ably suggest be agreed to, application could be made to the authorities for permission to sell the present Recreation Reserve site for residential quarters, the money derived therefrom to be used also in furthering the proposed new grounds. Trusting that your article will bear fruit. —

Yours, etc.,

**OLD BRIGADE.**

Ararat, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1919.

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Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

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**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT  
REPATRIATION GRANT.**

**PUBLIC MEETING OF CITIZENS.**

**CREATION OF NEW SPORTS GROUND.**

It having been learned that the Ararat Borough Council had convened a special meeting to consider on what work the grant of £749, made by the Federal Government Repatriation Department to the council should be expended, a quickly arranged public meeting was convened for Saturday evening last at the Mechanics' Institute, after the closing of the shops. There were forty persons present, and on the motion of Messrs T. O'Keefe and Beynon, Mr T. G. Grano was voted to the chair. Amongst those in attendance were the Mayor (Cr T. J. Gossip), and Crs Mackay, M'Gibbony, M'Cure, Tibbles and Timmins. The Mayor made a brief statement, but beyond that councillors did not take part in the discussion.

Mr Grano said that as the convenor of the meeting it was perhaps fitting that he should take the chair. He had, previous to the meeting, spoken to the Mayor, and he also thought the same. Mr Grano said, that as they observed, he, with the co-operation of Mr Leopold, had issued a small circular convening the meeting and was gratified that so many had attended at such short notice. They were aware that the Federal Government had decided to grant the sum of £749 to each of the municipalities in Victoria in order to provide work for the returned soldiers, and he, along with others, thought that, so far as Ararat was concerned the money could not be spent to better advantage than in making a sports ground annexed to Alexandra Park, to the west of the present park. The conditions in connection with the grant were that the money should be expended on manual labor, and that the works should not include any contemplated by the council, such as road works, channelling, etc. They would remember the old Gardens Improvement Committee had set out to do the same work, but on a more elaborate scale, because at that time it was intended to include the show grounds in the scheme, but since then the Agricultural Society had improved their grounds, so that provision need not be made for a show ground in their scheme, which would lessen the cost. He considered that with the spending of the £749 they could go a long way in providing a sports ground fit for football, cricket, sports of all kinds, with a good arena and tracks around it. Were that scheme decided upon he was sure that people would come to the fore, as they did previously in connection with other schemes, and complete the work. Then they could also remove the grandstand from the present Recreation Reserve to the new site, and convert the present Recreation Reserve into municipal corporation yards. He had spoken to Cr Irwin about the matter, and had asked him to attend the meeting, but that gentleman informed him he could not be present. Cr Irwin did not approve of the scheme they had met that night to consider; he favored improving the triangular reserve (Cavell reserve) at the top of Barkly street, and attention being paid to roads, but the money could not be spent on works like the latter.

Mr Leopold said that he was a member of the old Gardens Improvement Committee when a much larger scheme was proposed, but the present scheme would not cost more than half of the amount then estimated. With the expenditure of the grant and all additional £200 or £300 of free labor, they could get the ground pretty far advanced. He was sure that another body would rise to the occasion and see the scheme through. They would only have to secure one block of land, and he was sure all past differences would be set aside and a fresh start made in carrying out the scheme.

Mr T. Parsons said that as Vice-president of the old Gardens Improvement Committee, it would be the crowning point of his life to see the proposal scheme carried through. They should all bury the hatchet regarding the trouble in the past, and enter heartily into the carrying out of the scheme.

Mr Jno. Start (President of Ararat branch of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers' League), said they had not as yet had a meeting to consider the matter, but he could assure them that the boys heartily approved of the proposal.

Mr Oke remarked that when he first saw Alexandra Park he realised the people of Ararat did not know what an asset their town had in it. He was pleased that there was a chance for the development of the scheme. If they one got a start he thought the scheme would go. Their boys had showed up well on the other side, and he was sure they would assist this scheme. Fifty per cent., of their lads had been turned down on going up to enlist (and he was unfortunately one of them) on account of not having become physically developed, and with the providing of a new sports ground that defect would be remedied. He always took visitors to Alexandra Park, but he took jolly fine care that they did not take them to the Recreation Reserve.

Mr R. Harricks said that it was only throwing money away to spend it on the Recreation Reserve. He approved of the scheme.

Mr T. Parsons said the old scheme was estimated to cost £3000.

Messrs T. L. Grano, F. P. Thomson, D. A. Taylor, and quite a number of others spoke in favor of the scheme.

The Mayor stated that he felt at that stage he should say a word or two. If they did anything, they should submit a definite and concrete proposal to the council. He could inform them that a sub-committee of the council had already gone

into the matter of spending the grant, and there was a recommendation that Cavell Square (the triangular block) should be beautified and also that work in Alexandra Avenue should be carried out, but the council as a body was bound to that work.

It was eventually decided unanimously on the motion of Messrs John Start and R. Harricks — “That this meeting of citizens strongly recommend the Borough Council to expend the £749 in the extension of Alexandra Park to provide a sports ground in accordance with the plans submitted when the larger scheme was proposed.”

Mr Beynon proposed — “That a petition be prepared for presentation to the special meeting of the council.”  
Seconded by Mr D. A. Taylor and carried.

It was then decided that a deputation comprising of Messrs T. Parsons, H. Oke, W. H. Grano, and T. L. Grano, wait upon the council and present the resolutions carried, also the petition.

#### SPECIAL MEETING OF BOROUGH COUNCIL.

A special meeting of the Ararat Borough Council (sitting as a committee with power to act) was held last night at the Council Chambers, Town Hall, to consider how the £749 granted should be expended. The Mayor (Cr T. J. Gossip) presided, and there were also present:— Crs J. Moore, E. C. M’Gibbony, A. M’Cure, T. Impey, W. H. Mackay, W. Timmins, and W. Tibbles.

The Mayor said the meeting had been convened to consider the question of the grant of £749 for works which had been made by the Federal Government. A committee of the council had gone into the matter, but since then the public had met and had taken certain action.

Cr Timmins.— Would it not be better to receive the deputation first ?

The Mayor.— Probably it would.

Cr Impey.— You appointed a committee to go into the matter, and out of courtesy to that committee their report should be received before the deputation was heard.

It was decided to hear the deputation first, and the members of it — Messrs H. J. Oke, T. L. Grano and T. Parsons — were introduced to the meeting by Cr Timmins.

Mr T. L. Grano said the burgesses at the public meeting on Saturday evening were unanimous that the money should be utilised in the making of a sports ground on the west side of Alexandra Park. The Athletic Club had decided to make the aquatic carnival an annual affair, and there would be a good revenue from it. Alexandra Park was a popular place, becoming more so every day, consequently the revenue therefrom would increase.

Mr T. Parsons said it was satisfactory to know that the deputation had the Returned Soldiers’ Association with them. Ararat had a beautiful park, but not a good Recreation Reserve. He then handed to the Mayor a petition, signed by 122 ratepayers, approving of the money being expended in making a sports ground.

Mr Oke said the council should endeavor to develop the principle of true sport, and that could not be better done than by providing a good sports ground. It was impossible to exaggerate the value of their park as an asset, but as regards the Recreation Reserve it would not be wise to spend any more money there.

The Town Clerk then read the resolutions carried at the meeting of burgesses on Saturday night and also a letter from the executive of the Returned Soldiers Association, supporting the proposal to form a sports ground adjoining Alexandra Park.

An unsigned letter, which came through the post, and signed “Horsham,” was read by the Mayor. It did not approve of the scheme, an [on] account of the cost of the work.

Cr J. Irwin, who could not attend the meeting owing to being away in Melbourne, sent a letter to the Town Clerk, in which he stated:— “Let me say first that I am in accord with the wishes of the deputation to have an approved sports ground where stated, adjoining the park, but I am not in favor of spending the whole of £749 on it. My idea is that Cavell Reserve and Alexandra Avenue should receive first consideration. Cavell Reserve is at the intersection of Barkly, View Point, and Taylor streets. It is a most important, yet wholly neglected entrance to the town, which has no less than four streets either opening on to, or impinging on it, and it due to the west end burgesses that they should at least receive some consideration. On this reserve there is a great depth of road gravel, which could be used in forming the west end of Barkly street adjoining the reserve. This portion of the road is the worst in the borough, and requires immediate attention before the winter sets in, so that if we can, while beautifying Cavell Reserve, do another very necessary work at the same time, and practically without any additional expense, as it will be as cheap to put the gravel on the road as in a heap anywhere else, it is for the council and the burgesses to give it their most serious consideration. The soil for filling can be obtained

handy to the reserve. The materials for the fencing and gates could be purchased out of borough reserve, also a man to spread the road gravel, paid out of revenue, while all else would come under the heading of labor, and be paid for out of the Government allowance. Regarding Alexandra Avenue, for which plans were prepared by Mr Linaker, this so-called avenue is an eyesore and a menace to health right in front of the main entrance to the park, and if there is anything to be done with the money in connection with the park, to my mind this avenue should be included. I have gone carefully into the cost of these two works, and consider that both could be done for £250. I would, therefore, suggest that this amount of the allotment be set aside for doing these works, and the balance, about £500, be spent as a nucleus on the proposed new sports ground. As a councillor I am prepared to give my support to guaranteeing from £100 to £150 per year from council revenue for the next five years towards the same object if a committee of burgesses is formed to interest itself in further financing and helping on such work. This statement is made, believing that this sum can be spared annually in the future, as our roads from now on will be in a fair order owing to the loan money the council is now spending on them.”

The plan of Mr W. H. Grano, for a sports ground, which was prepared some years ago, was then scrutinised.

Cr Moore said that to see that plan before them again was like ancient history. He was pleased to see that the matter had cropped up again through the Government grant. The idea to him was a good one. Cr Irwin’s idea was also a good one, but he did not approve of it. It provided for the money to be spent on three works, and in addition the council had previously decided to carry those works out of revenue. It would not be wise to spend any more money on the Recreation Reserve, for they could never make a sports ground out of it. He thoroughly agreed with the desires of the deputation. The time the plan was knocked out he considered it was the most disastrous blot that that had been placed upon the map of Ararat. It was far better to spend that money at one spot than to divide it up.

The Town Clerk said the committee of the council had decided to recommend the carrying out of works at Alexandra Avenue, Cavell Park, and repairs to footpaths.

Cr Timmins said he was a member of the council committee. He now found out that some of the work they recommended could not be carried out under the conditions of the Government proposal, and that being so he did not think they could do better than adopt the proposal of the deputation and spend the money in the one place.

The Mayor said it was open to the meeting to definitely decide the matter.

Cr Tibbles moved — “That it be a recommendation that the money be spent on the west end of Alexandra Park, by forming a sports ground.”

Cr M’Cure said they had not been informed yet what would be the cost of converting that barren country into a sports ground.

Cr Tibbles — “I rise to a point of order. There has been no seconder to the motion.

Cr Timmins — Well, I will second the motion.

Cr M’Cure said that the £749 would only keep 20 men going for 12 weeks. The council should not act hastily without knowing the cost. First of all a public meeting should be convened and if that meeting decided in favor of the proposal, he would be heartily with it. No doubt Ararat wanted a good recreation ground. The upkeep would not be so great.

Cr Mackay said he felt something like Cr M’Cure did. He had no objection to the money being spent at the west end of the park. What he would like would be for the meeting to adjourn, and that plans be prepared, and the committee meet on the spot and come to some arrangement as to what was required. The idea of improving the west end of the park was a good one. When he (Cr Mackay) came to Ararat the Recreation Reserve was a good place, and it was not to the credit of the council to have allowed it to get into such a bad state. He moved, as an amendment — “That the meeting be adjourned, that a public meeting be convened, and that the councillors and representatives from the public meeting visit the place, decide what is wanted, and that application be made for the money.”

Cr M’Gibbony held that they should decide that night. A decision was expected that night, and on that being forthcoming, the people who attended Saturday’s night meeting would get going this week. He strongly supported the request of the deputation.

Cr Mackay said he favored the proposal of the deputation, but desired more information. They were only a committee. They could not act, but only recommend.

The Mayor — No; they as a committee were given power to act.

Cr Mackay — Well, I am agreeable. There is no reason to hurry the thing on. A delay of a week or two would not matter.

Cr M'Cure seconded the amendment.

Cr Impey said he was more in accord with the amendment than the motion, not that he was against the proposal. The meeting on Saturday night was only attended by 40 people, and there were only 120 odd names on the petition — which was a very small proportion of the ratepayers. He thought the money could be spent on any new works — such as making of a new road, a new footpath, etc. If they decided to accept the voice of less than 200 who were present at Saturday night's meeting or who signed the petition, then they should take the voice of the whole of the ratepayers. It would cost a vast amount of money to transform the wilderness named into a sports ground. The council should be cautious.

Cr Moore had no doubt that the additional money required to carry out the work would be raised without assistance from the council.

Cr Timmins said that so far as providing the remainder of the money, there need be no doubt. The old Gardens Improvement Committee raised £900 for the fernery, and a committee of ten arranged and had the new gates at the park erected, and so far as he knew the council had never thanked them for it.

The Mayor said they had to take a broad and comprehensive view of the matter. The £749 was a free gift to the council, and it was a great opportunity to the council to complete a work which should be undertaken. The meeting should decide to let the public know that it was intended to make application for the money to make a sports ground. The whole work would cost more than £749, but they had to remember that they would get a good body of men behind then to work. He heartily favored the proposal of the deputation. The work should not be held up one minute longer.

The Town Clerk — An application has already been made for the money.

On a vote, the amendment was lost, Crs Mackay, M'Cure and Impey voting for it.

Cr Impey moved a further amendment — “That the Mayor convene a public meeting for next Friday evening to take the matter into consideration.” That would relieve the council of any responsibility.

Cr Mackay seconded the further amendment to give it a go.

On a vote being taken this amendment was also lost with the same voting.

The original motion moved by Cr Tibbles was then put and carried, only Cr Impey holding up his hand against it.

Cr Tibbles then moved — “That a committee, consisting of the Mayor, Cr Irwin, the present Gardens Committee, the curator, the foreman and Mr W. H. Grano, submit a plan of the proposed undertaking to the Public Works Department, in order to claim the grant of £749.

Cr Moore seconded the motion.

Cr Impey — Then does the whole thing pass out of the hands of the council.

The Mayor — No; it will be under the control of the council.

The motion was carried, Cr Impey alone holding up his hand against it.

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Thursday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 8.6

### **PROPOSED NEW SPORTS GROUND.**

#### **ADVANCING THE SCHEME.**

In a recent issue we published a report of a meeting of the Ararat Borough Council (sitting as a committee with power to act) in reference to the spending of a special gift of £749. The money, it will be remembered, is to provide work for returned soldiers, and was granted by the Commonwealth Government. That meeting decided that the money should go towards the making of an up-to-date sports ground adjoining Alexandra Park, on the west side. Since that time Mr Smith (council's engineer), Mr W. H. Grano (surveyor), who prepared extensive plans some years ago for a like purpose, Mr Baker (foreman), and Mr Lloyd (curator), have been hard at work in inspecting the place, and preparing an amended plan, and it is expected that this will be sent to the department concerned in a few days, when the money will be available.

Last night, at the meeting of the Borough Council, the following report was read from a committee (consisting of the Mayor, and Crs Mackay, Irwin, Timmins, Mr Smith, Mr Grano, the curator and the foreman), who had met the previous evening:— “We have gone into the plan etc., of the proposed new sports ground, to claim the grant of £749 for works for returned soldiers. Mr Smith will prepare the necessary specifications, and as soon as this is done the grant will at once be claimed. It will be necessary to purchase four allotments of land to complete the scheme. Arrangements can be made with the owner for the purchase of three allotments, and the Mayor and Town Clerk were instructed to see the owner of the other allotment to ascertain the rate of purchase money.”

The report of what was done at the meeting of the council (sitting as a committee), previously published, was adopted on the motion of Crs Tibbles and M’Gibbony.

Cr Irwin said he supported the motion, but at the same time stated that he took exception to certain remarks made by a councillor at the committee meeting of the council, that the people who erected the gates had not been thanked. Ex-Cr Northey (when Mayor) publicly thanked them at a gathering at the park.

The report of the committee meeting, published above, was adopted.

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Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 3 Column 2.4

### **ARARAT NEW SPORTS GROUND.**

#### **THE STATE PREMIER’S VISIT.**

The State Premier, the Hon. H. S. W. Lawson, M. L. A., who was received at the Town Hall on Wednesday evening last by the Mayor (Cr T. J. Gossip), when on his way to the Hamilton district, expressed a keen desire to assist the Borough Council in every way possible in carrying out the proposal for a new sports ground abutting Alexandra Park on the west side. When the matter was mentioned, the Premier expressed a wish to see the plans of the scheme. These were produced by Mr B. A. Smith, the engineer, and closely scanned by the Premier and the Hon. W. S. Manifold, M. L. C. The Mayor stated that Ararat possessed one of the best gardens in the State, when the Premier interjected, “Yes; I have heard of your gardens.” The Mayor, continuing, remarked that if they could get a sports ground in keeping with the park, then Ararat would play second part of no other town. The council had wisely decided to expend the £740 voted by the Commonwealth Government to provide work for the soldiers in this direction, and he could say that the townspeople as a whole were prepared to supplement the amount by another £1000. There was a little difficulty in the way of the successful carrying out of the scheme. There ran through the area required a road which was practically not used by anybody, and were they able to take that in a big trouble would be out of the way. When Mr Watt was Premier, he promised to bring in an Amending Bill to meet the purpose, but that had not been done. The Premier replied that he thought there would be no difficulty in bringing in such a bill, and looking to Mr Manifold, said, “You would see that it was piloted through the Legislative Council.” Mr Manifold stated that there would be no difficulty in the way. Later on the Premier expressed the opinion that he did not think a bill was necessary. The Mayor stated that there would be no objection to closing the street on the part of the people, for they were heartily with the scheme, and another thing it would inconvenience nobody. The Premier then asked the council’s engineer to mark out on the parish plan in red the unused street that they desired to be closed, and he would attend to it without delay. He thought the people of Ararat were to be congratulated on their fine public spirit.

It is announced by advertisement in this issue that a public meeting of citizens desirous of assisting in the scheme, will be held at the Council Chambers, Town Hall, on Monday evening next, at eight o’clock. It is imperative that there should be a large attendance, so that arrangements may be made to push on the scheme at once.

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Page 3 Column 8.5

### **MEMORIAL SPORTS GROUND.**

A PUBLIC MEETING in connection with the above object will be held at the Town Hall on MONDAY, 7<sup>th</sup> instant, at 8 p.m. A large attendance is requested. A report will be made of the initial proceedings, and suggestions of ways and means for completing the project received and discussed.

**THEO. G. GRANO. Convenor.**

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Tuesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 7

### **ARARAT’S NEW SPORTS GROUND.**

#### **PUBLIC MEETING AT TOWN HALL.**

A public meeting, convened by Mr T. G. Grano, was held at the Council Chambers, Town Hall, last night. The business for which the meeting was called was to make arrangements for the carrying out of the scheme of making a new sports ground abutting the west end of Alexandra Park. There was a large attendance of citizens, and the Mayor (Cr. T. J. Gossip) was voted to the chair on the motion of Messrs T. G. Grano and W. A. Claringbold.



The Mayor said that a committee of the council had gone into the matter. The council had adopted the recommendation of the committee, and Mr W. H. Grano had been requested to prepare a plan setting forth the requirements for a sports ground. Mr B. A. Smith, the council's engineer, had also lent valuable assistance in the way of preparing plans, which would be laid on the table for inspection. The Premier (Mr Lawson) had visited Ararat the previous week, and he (the Mayor) took the opportunity of placing the matter before him, and he (the Premier) thought the scheme was worthy of his best consideration.

Mr W. H. Grano said that he understood Mr Smith was taking out the earthworks in connection with the oval. He understood that there was a grant of £749. They had to consider that there would be a good deal of drainage work to carry out, and in addition there were four properties which they would have to buy out. He enumerated a number of works that would be necessary. Mr Leopold owned three of the properties there, and he was prepared to sell them at the same price as he paid for them, and was further agreeable to wait for five or six years for payment. There was another block, owned by Mrs Bloy, but he did not know what she wanted for it. There would also be the removal of the grandstand from the Recreation Reserve.

Mr T. G. Grano said they could say, roughly speaking, that the cost of the project would be £2000. They were certain to get the £749 from the Commonwealth Government, therefore the first thing they should affirm was the desirability of getting the sports ground. He moved — "That this meeting assembled endorses the scheme, and pledges itself to carry out at all costs the work of securing a sports ground as an annex to Alexandra Park."

Mr Thurgood asked whether they had taken into consideration the cost of the up-keep of the ground. He considered that it would take £5 a week for that purpose.

The Mayor said that the proposed ground, to a great extent, would be self supporting. There was no doubt but that they wanted a new sports ground. The Premier when on a visit to Ararat recently said that he had heard of Alexandra Park, and no doubt the men who had assisted to bring about that beautiful spot would lend assistance again.

Mr Claringbold. — You won't get free labor again.

Mr T. G. Grano. — You are a wet blanket.

Mr Claringbold resented the remark. He was there to express his opinion whether they liked it or not. Look at what the council wanted at their last meeting, the Returned Soldiers' Football Club to pay £1/5 a day for matches on the reserve.

Cr Mackay. — That was a section of the council. There was an amendment moved to that, but the papers did not report it.

Mr Oke said he thought there would have been a rush to second Mr Grano's motion. However, he would second the motion.

Mr J. Irwin thought they should have a written statement regarding what the owners required for the land. The meeting was going on with the scheme without knowing what the cost of the land would be.

The Mayor stated that Mr W. H. Grano had submitted a verbal report which showed that the land would cost about £180.

Mr Leopold stated that he was agreeable to let the land go at the price stated and there were enough present to hear him say that.

Cr Irwin said that nobody doubted Mr Leopold's statement. What they wanted to know was what Mrs Bloy required for her land.

Mr G. Gossip asked if the meeting endorsed the idea of going on with the proposal. It appeared to him that all sorts of side issue were being brought in to upset the thing, and for the purpose of electioneering business.

Mr P. Boyet said they did not want the part to be called a soldiers' memorial.

The Mayor stated that that would be an after consideration.

Mr Boyet said that the soldiers were making an appeal during certain months of this year, and it would be better to allow this to stand over for a while, when the soldiers would come in and help them to a larger extent than they thought. He noticed that the council was going to charge the soldiers 25/- a day for football matches, which he thought was an insult to the soldiers.

Cr Irwin said it was a public meeting. Although he was in favor of the scheme, he thought that any person present should be allowed, if he thought it necessary, to ask questions.

The Mayor said if anybody had been stopped it was unintentional on his part.

The Mayor then put the resolution moved by Mr T. G. Grano, which he declared to have been carried practically unanimously.

The Mayor said that the next thing they should do would be to appoint officers to carry the scheme through.

Mr T. G. Grano said that so far as funds were concerned, he thought it would be a good thing for the Shire Council to pool the £749 it would receive from the Commonwealth Government with the borough money, and the result would go a long way in completing the scheme. For the Shire to spend its £749 cut up into three ridings would be only frittering the money away, and another thing, he did not think they would be allowed to spend the money on road works. That suggestion was not one of his own. It was a suggestion of a member of the Ararat Shire Council, who said that he did not expect to get any support from his colleagues. But that councillor said his idea was that the money should be added to the borough money and go towards the proposed new grounds.

Mr Oke thought a good way to raise money would be to issue debentures. Then they could hold aquatic and other carnivals to assist them in meeting those debentures.

Cr M'Gibbony stated that the Fire Brigade would assist in the way of labor.

Mr Boyet at this stage thought there was a want of enthusiasm in the meeting. He could assure them that the soldiers were with them. There were only two or three who were enthusiastic.

Mr T. G. Grano said he thought the same as Mr Boyet. In fact he was about to take up his hat and walk out of the room. If there was anybody against the scheme, they would [should] get up and say so.

Cr Irwin thought that they had a good meeting and should be thankful.

Mr T. L. Grano said he entirely disagreed with Mr Boyet and his brother. The fact of there being such a large attendance showed that they were favorable to the scheme.

Mr W. H. Grano moved — "That the grounds be called Alexandra Sports Ground." This was seconded by Mr Rogers.

Mr Thurgood moved an amendment — "That it be called the Ararat Sports Ground." There was no seconder to the amendment and the motion was carried.

The Mayor stated that they would have to appoint a secretary. They would have to understand that there would be a lot of work to do. He was sure that the burgesses of Ararat were with the proposal.

Mr Holmes stated that where public moneys were raised they should issue a balance sheet. He moved — "That any money raised by the public, apart from the council money, for the carrying out of the sports ground, be published as an audited statement annually, and that all free labor be computed."

Mr J. Williams. — What is the motive behind your proposal?

Mr Holmes. — I take that as a direct insult.

Mr Williams. — No so.

Mr Holmes. — What I mean is that the public should see how the money is raised.

Cr Timmins. — I see the motive of it and will second it. There was a lot of money that had been expended by the old Gardens Improvement Committee that the public know nothing about.

Mr G. Gossip. — That is not so.

Cr Timmins. — I do not wish to be misunderstood. I have nothing to say against the old Gardens Improvement Committee.

Mr G. Gossip. — No body carried on their work better than the Gardens Improvement Committee. Every penny was accounted for by reputable men, and even when they were short on/in their money at the ticket boxes, I made them

make it up themselves. He remembered the time when Cr Timmins was not with the Gardens Improvement Committee. Mr Holmes is a new comer to town, and somebody must have put this into his mind, for Mr Holmes was too much of a gentleman to say such a thing.

Mr Holmes said that he was referring to the old Gardens Improvement Committee. Looking at the park they must know that a good deal of voluntary labor had been put into the gardens which had not been accounted for.

Mr O'Keefe moved — "That Mr H. J. Oke be appointed as secretary." Mr John Start seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

It was resolved, on the motion of Messrs W. H. Grano and O'Keefe — "That the Mayor for the time being be the chairman of the committee."

As regards the appointment of the committee, Mr G. Gossip suggested that a committee be formed on the lines of the old Gardens Improvement Committee. They wanted a live general committee, with sub-committees to take up different branches of the work. He moved — "That all present with power to add, for a general committee," which was seconded by Mr John Start and carried.

Messrs T. Parsons, W. H. Grano and P. Boyet were appointed Vice-presidents.

Mr W. H. Grano moved — "That money raised be paid through the council." Seconded by Mr Holmes and carried.

Mr Parsons proposed — "That the Town Clerk act as treasurer." Seconded by Mr Tonkin and carried.

It was decided that the next meeting be held that night three weeks and then alternate Mondays.

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Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 7.1

Ararat Borough Council.

[...]

Correspondence.

[...]

From the Public Works Department, stating that the specifications in connection with the new sports ground were considered satisfactory. A second letter was read from the department in reference to the gift of £749 for the employment of returned soldiers. The department and the Repatriation Department had agreed to the work constructing a new recreation ground adjoining Alexandra Park being made a charge against the gift, and the approval of the gift payment thereof was subject to council acquiring the land from the Crown. The secretary to the Premier wrote:— "I am directed by the Premier to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7<sup>th</sup> inst., relative to the question of closing certain streets in connection with the construction of a sports oval. In accordance with the promise which he made at Ararat, Mr Lawson has submitted this matter to the Lands Department for investigation. Certain reports are now being obtained. As soon as they are received the matter will be fully considered and the department will communicate with the council." Received.

[...]

The curator reported that a good deal of damage had been done through children running about the fernery and he suggested that notices be posted there, "Citizens, protect your own property." The report was adopted.

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Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 8

### **ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND.**

A meeting of those interested in the Alexandra Sports Ground was held last night at the Town Hall. The Mayor (Cr T. J. Gossip), who is the President of the movement, occupied the chair, and there was a good attendance.

Mrs Bloy wrote, stating that she was agreeable to sell a piece of land for the sum of £90, provided that the offer was accepted within a month. Should the land not be acquired in the time mentioned, she would revert back to the old price, £100.

Mr Bloy said that Mr Lloyd had a preference to purchase the whole of the paddock. Mr Lloyd had the first preference.

Cr M'Gibbony said it should be pointed out that Mr Lloyd was not the Borough curator, but Mr J. Lloyd, late of Maroona.

Cr Timmins did not think they could do much in the matter till Mrs Bloy had completed matters with Mr Lloyd.

Mr Bonner asked if the ground was not big enough without Mr Bloy's. The two blocks of land were offered him at £25 a piece by Mr Bloy's late father. He though £90 was a ridiculous price.



Mr Bloy thought Mr Bonner should know that more land was offered now than was offered to Mr Bonner.

Mr Lloyd (curator) said they would require some of Mrs Bloy's land.

In reply to Mr T. L. Grano, Mr Bloy said the land offered by Mrs Bloy was three roods twenty-five perches.

The Mayor said the meeting should express an opinion as to whether the land should be purchased or not. It was a question whether the land was worth £90 or not. Without the that land the plan would have to be curtailed, which would to his mind spoil the scheme.

Mr T. Parsons moved — "That the question of the purchase of the land in question stand in abeyance for the present."

The resolution was seconded by Mr Thurgood and carried.

Mr T. G. Grano asked if they had any idea when they could start work. He wanted to know so that a register could be opened for returned soldiers, so that they could stop sustenance as soon as possible. There were a number of young men waiting employment.

The Mayor stated they were practically ready for a start. If they could settle the question of the land they could go straight ahead.

Mr Oke said that there was plenty of voluntary labor offering.

The Mayor said that Messrs Thomson, Byron and Macnamara had each promised to send along teams.

The curator thought it would be best to have a voluntary working bee first to clear the furze, and then they could get the soldiers to work.

Cr Timmins moved — "That a working bee be arranged for next Wednesday." The resolution was seconded by Mr H. Dodd and carried.

Mr Oke moved — "That a committee consisting of the Mayor, Cr Timmins, Cr M'Gibbony and Messrs Deans, T. G. Grano, Dodd, Rogers and John Start be appointed to visit the grounds at half past ten o'clock this morning and arrange for a start being made." The resolution was seconded by Mr H. Dodd and carried.

Mr Deans having been informed that it would cost £2/10 a day for a team, he said he would pay for a team for two days. Messrs Dodd and Heilbronn also promised to supply drays and horses.

Mr Smith moved — "That the soldiers' rate of pay be not less than 9/6 a day." Seconded by Mr Mackay and carried.

Mr Oke said that they would want a large sum of money independent of the Government money to carry out the scheme, and the issuing of debentures would probably be a good way of raising it.

Mr W. Deans supported the proposal of debentures, as also did Mr G. Gossip.

Mr T. G. Grano thought that the Shire Council might see its way to contribute some of its grant money towards the scheme. He thought Mr J. Williams was wise in mentioning the matter. He suggested a deputation might wait on the Shire.

Mr Oke moved — "That the money be raised by £1 debentures, with 5 per cent., interest." Seconded by Mr Deans and carried.

Mr T. G. Grano moved — "That a deputation, consisting of the Mayor and Messrs T. G. Grano, W. H. Grano, H. Dodd and the curator, wait upon the Shire Council at its next meeting and ask for assistance from the Shire's Government grant." Seconded by Mr Williams and carried.

On the motion of Messrs A. S. Miller and F. Murphy, it was decided that a meeting of ladies be convened with the view of holding a bazaar at show time and something on New Year's Day.

Cr Timmins moved — "That a committee be appointed to interview Mr Lloyd, with full power to make any necessary arrangements, to purchase the land." Seconded by Mr G. Gossip and carried.

The committee appointed was as follows:— Messrs Dodd, Deans, Miller, T. G. Grano and the Mayor, and they were given power to act.

It was decided to issue 1000 debentures of £1 each, redeemable in 5 years, at 5 per cent., interest, and a committee was appointed to draft a circular in connection with same.

Promised were given taking up over 100 debentures in the room.

Mr A. S. Miller moved — “That the sports ground and park be secured for Boxing Day and New Year’s Day, and the Town Hall for show week.” Seconded by Cr M’Gibbony and carried.

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Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 5.1

**"Local & General News"**

A preliminary start has been made in connection with the formation of the Alexandra sports ground, to the west of Alexandra Park. On Tuesday afternoon last four returned soldiers were put on to fire the dense growth of furze which abounds over the area. The fire burn fairly well, and demolished a good deal of the dry material, but the green furze did not submit to the fiery elements too well. However, good work was accomplished. Yesterday afternoon the first working bee took place. There was only a small army of workers present, including Crs Timmins and M’Cure. The men worked with a will, and although the task of grubbing out the furze is a very hard one, at the close of the afternoon good results had been accomplished. As stated above there is a good furze area to be attended to, and it will require a lot of voluntary to complete the task. It is expected that at an early date ploughs will be introduced, when the place should be quickly cleared to allow of the formation work to proceed.

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Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1919.

Page 3 Column 1.7

**CORRESPONDENCE.**

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**[To the Editor.]**

**NEW SPORTS GROUND.**

Sir,— May I use your columns for amplifying the advertisement appearing to-day for workers for the new sports ground. Last Wednesday afternoon’s work showed that if every true sport rolls up and does his bit for a week or two, the whole of the preliminary clearing will be completed. The soldiers can then go full steam ahead. Much of the work is very light in character, and workers can, of course, mark their own tickets as regards rate of toil. Those who did go along, I am sure, have not regretted Wednesday’s good fellowship. The work was pleasantly interlaced with much good humor. The open air seemed to give piquancy even to old chestnuts, while at least one joke new to science was incubated. I have been asked to state that any ladies or gentlemen appearing with refreshments will not be warned off the course. — Yours, etc.,

HERBERT OKE, Hon. Sec.

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Page 3 Column 4.9

**WORKERS WANTED.**

EVERY Wednesday, Saturday, till further notice (except Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> May, Avenue Day.) VOLUNTARY LABOR will be put to good use at the NEW SPORTS GROUND.

Cash value of labor will be registered to the credit of each worker. Roll up and make a start this afternoon.

HERBERT OKE, Hon. Sec.

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Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 3.6

**"Local & General News"**

The sub-committee which was appointed to deal with Mrs Bloy and Mr J. Lloyd regarding the purchase of a block of land owned by the former, and over which Mr Lloyd had first preference of purchase, completed their business on Saturday evening last. It will be remembered that the lad in included in the area marked out for the new sports ground. The result of the interview was that the committee effected the purchase of the land in question, the price being £90. Now that that land question has been settled, it is hoped that no time will be lost in pushing forward with the scheme.

[...]

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Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 5.3

**ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND.**

The ordinary meeting of the Alexandra Sports Ground Committee was held last night at the Council Chambers, Town Hall. Mr T. Parsons (Vice-president) occupied the chair, ad there was a large attendance.

Mr T. G. Grano stated that a deputation had waited upon the Shire Council regarding assistance with the scheme, but they were entirely unsuccessful. They were told that they were too late. They were well received and that was the end of it. He thought the Shire was experiencing trouble in getting men, and probably the committee would be successful yet.

In reply to Mr G. Gossip, Mr Rogers (secretary of the Soldiers club), said that he had not as yet met a single soldier who would go into the country to make roads.

Mr G. Gossip remarked that there was a good deal in what Mr Rogers said. He did not think it was right that soldiers, after being at the war, should be asked to live in tents in the country in winter weather.

Mr Rogers said the soldiers (town and district) were holding a meeting next Thursday, when the matter would be brought up.

Mr G. Gossip moved — “That the same deputation that waited upon the Shire take the matter in hand and not allow it to drop.”

Mr R. Harricks seconded the motion. He strongly supported pushing the matter forward.

Cr M’Gibbony stated that the sub-committee had purchased Mrs Bloy’s land for £90, and their action was endorsed.

The Mayor then took the chair.

The curator reported that the work of clearing the gorse was proceeding very well. In addition, other work had been performed, and on the whole the men had done well. He would have ten men at work on the following day, and Mr Macnamara was sending along teams and men to work as a donation.

The question of debentures was then introduced, and Messrs Deans and Miller were added to the Debenture sub-committee.

Mr S. Miller thought the £1000 could be quickly raised by debentures. At the present time he thought it would be a good thing for him to show what the Ararat Athletic Club had done for the old Recreation Reserve, and when they had figures enumerated he thought the going in for debentures at the present time was a good one. In the year 1902 the Athletic Club paid the council £13/9, and in 1903 the club got the council to borrow £1000 on the understanding that the club guaranteed four per cent., interest. That year the club paid the council £48/6. The following were the payments made by the club on other years:—1904, £49/11; 1905, £38/11; 1906, £38/17; 1907, £28/3; 1908, £34/6/6; 1909, £34/2/6; 1910, £39/3/9; 1911, £35/12; 1912, 28/16/3. That averaged £37/4 per year. Adding what the club had paid the council for the next five years gave an average of £31/3/8 the club had paid the council for fifteen years, or a total of £473. In addition, the club had donated £70 to the Ararat Hospital and £20 to the Red Cross.

Mr G. Gossip proposed — “That the curator be invested in the sole power of carrying out the whole work.” Seconded by Mr Wallis and carried.

Another £41 of debentures was taken up in the room.

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Thursday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 4.4

### "Local & General News"

At the meeting of the Ararat Borough Council last night, the curator reported that the soldiers have been engaged in clearing work at the new sports ground and the work is progressing satisfactorily. The whole of the arena has been pegged, surveyed and levels taken. This work has been carried out by Mr Tobin, assisted by Mr W. H. Grano’s assistant. He asked permission to transfer H. Hudson on to the sports ground work Hudson was a returned soldier and was agreeable to that course being taken, and then he could be foreman on the work. House could then take Hudson’s place. That arrangement could continue until the sports ground work was well advanced. He suggested that Hudson receive 1/- extra per day for being transferred. Cr M’Gibbony moved — “That the suggestion of the curator be carried out,” which was seconded by Cr Moore and carried.

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Ararat Borough Council.

[...]

Page 2 Column 8.8

Cr Tibbles said he had been requested to ask if the Recreation Reserve had already been booked for Boxing Day. He understood that the Miners’ Association had decided to hold their annual sports on that day, and they desired to know if the reserve had been booked.



The Mayor said that Boxing Day and New Year's Day had been booked so far as the reserve and park were concerned for the new committee that had taken up the new sports ground. The Commonwealth Government had granted £749 for work for the soldiers at the new sports ground, and as the scheme would cost a good deal of money apart from that, they had to look around and make arrangements for raising the money.

Cr Tibbles did not know what the Miners' Association could do as regards holding the meeting.

The Mayor said that probably some arrangement could be arrived at whereby they could work together.

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Saturday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 4.9

**"Local & General News"**

Members of the Alexandra Sports Ground Committee are reminded by advertisement elsewhere of a very important meeting to be held in the Council Chambers on Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> inst. The debenture sub-committee consisting of the Mayor (Cr Gossip), Messrs H. Dodd, W. Deans, T. G. Grano, T. L. Grano, A. Miller, C. A. Chamberlain, H. J. Oke, met recently and went very exhaustively into the financial aspect of the movement. They will submit the result of their deliberations and probably propose for discussion a proposition likely to secure an excellent security for the issue of debentures. Some further donations of value have been received and the curator will submit a new and very economical scheme for draining the oval. As the work is now far enough forward to give full employment to a large body of workers, arrangement will be made for a working bee on the following Wednesday afternoon. New members of the general committee are cordially invited to join up on Monday night.

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Tuesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 7

**ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND  
COMMITTEE.**

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**GENERAL MEETING.**

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A meeting of the committee working in the interests of the Alexandra Sports Ground was held last night at the Council Chambers, when there was a very large attendance.

The Mayor, (Cr T. J. Gossip) occupied the chair.

Mr T. G. Grano said that he attended the Debenture sub-committee meeting, and they had decided to recommend to that meeting that the rate of interest on the debentures be raised from five to six per cent. They came to the conclusion that five per cent., was not enough to offer the public, but if they decided on six per cent., there would be a greater chance of getting the debentures off. It was suggested that the interest start from the 1<sup>st</sup> July, and be payable annually, the first payment to be made on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1920. He thought the committee should have the whole say of letting the new grounds until such time as they had raised sufficient money to pay off the debenture holders.

Mr G. Gossip moved — "That the Debenture Committee's report be adopted, and that the debenture as framed be approved of." Seconded by Mr T. Parsons and carried.

Mr Lloyd (curator) said they had had Mr Tobin (surveyor) at the ground for several days in furthering the scheme. Mr Tobin had done a good deal of work, for which he deserved their best thanks. Mr W. H. Grano was to have carried out that work, but owing to illness he could not attend, but he had sent along his man. The work at the grounds was being pushed on well, but they had had a bit of a set back on account of shortage of horses and drays, and Mr Tardrew promised to assist them in that direction. They were preparing for the draining of the ground. The council had offered them a large quantity of lime at cost price, and it would be as well to get on with the drainage scheme as speedily as possible.

In reply to Mr T. G. Grano, Mr Lloyd said he had ten men at work at the present time. There would be no more room for men for a few days.

Mr E. C. M'Gibbony moved — "That a hearty vote of thanks be tendered to Mr Tobin and Mr Hamilton for the assistance they had rendered." Seconded by Mr Heilbronn and carried.

Mr T. G. Grano said that in respect to the purchase of Mrs Bloy's land they had come to satisfactory arrangements regarding the payment. By the 1<sup>st</sup> June £20 was required in connection with the payment.

Mr G. Gossip remarked that they noticed a number of municipalities had not taken up the Government grant. He thought they might get the Repatriation Department to give them a further grant on the £1 for £1 principle. By that means they might get another £500 granted.

The Mayor said that that might come later one.

Mr T. G. Grano said he had communicated with the Repatriation Department regarding the same matter. Ararat was the first municipality to take up the offer, and he had notified the department that Ararat people were also providing money which would give employment to soldiers long after the £749 was expended.

Mr Oke thought Mr G. Gossip's proposal a wise one.

The Mayor and Mr T. G. Grano held they should stay their hand in that respect for the present, the latter remarking that they did not know what would happen regarding the Shire grant.

It was decided to have a working bee committee, and Cr Timmins, C. M'Gibbony, and Messrs A. Davey, Bonner, Wallis, Heilbronn, and Baker were appointed members of it.

A working bee will be held at the Alexandra new sports ground tomorrow afternoon.

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Thursday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 5.3

**"Local & General News"**

A splendid response was given to the call for a "working bee" at the site of the new recreation ground yesterday afternoon. The weather was bright and brisk and a great impression was made by the crowd of stalwart workers who assembled. The furze which for so long encumbered the area had been cleared off, levelling commenced, and a start was made to sweep away an old landmark in the shape of the embankment of the dam of Troy Knight's tunnel. Forty men worked with lusty vigor at the job, and kept the drays provided by Messrs A. J. and H. E. Bryant, Tardrew, Sloper, Seater and Dodd fully employed; whilst Mr Tardrew's team of three fine horses and a plough and scoop aided in moving a lot of earth. Mr Wallis had a company of fifteen men engaged on the water scheme under his care. They very generously agreed to give their half day holiday to the job, doing the borough work on Saturday, and working under the direction of Messrs Lloyd and Dovaston, a good impression was made. Already the oval is beginning to assume shape and form and a few more bees such as that yesterday would see the rough work connected with levelling the space for football, cricket, pedestrian, and trotting races, etc., an accomplished fact. Refreshments were provided for the workers and even though the work was vigorous it was pleasantly tempered with a merry goodwill which demonstrated how cordially the work was undertaken and how popular the scheme is with all. We understand that quite a number of ladies are desirous of taking an active part in the movement, and they look for a sufficient notice being given of the next bee in order that they may put their will to assist into an active form by providing refreshments.

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Saturday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 3.8

**"Local & General News"**

Following the good work which was done by the working bee at Alexandra sports ground last Wednesday afternoon, it has been decided to hold another similar gathering next Wednesday afternoon. On this occasion the day men engaged on the High street works have decided to give the afternoon to the cause, consequently there will be available about fifteen horses and drays. To keep these going constantly a large army of volunteer workers will be required, therefore it is hoped that workers will attend in large numbers. Afternoon tea will be provided.

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Thursday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 6.7

Ararat Borough Council.

[...]

From Works Committee.—

1. Re drain in west side of new sports ground. — We have inspected the drain on the west side of the new sports ground, and find same in a very bad state. To get over the difficulty of this drain running house refuse through the new sports ground into the lake it will be necessary to construct a channel running east parallel with the railway line to the council's drain behind the Drill Hall either by taking it through railway land or first taking it over one allotment and then through Crown lands to the junction into the council's present drain. The estimated cost of the drain is £75.

2. Drainage on Ballarat road. — We recommend that no action be taken at present.

Cr Timmins moved — "That the report be adopted." Seconded by Cr Tibbles and carried.

[...]

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Page 2 Column 8

**ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND.**

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**A RECORD BEE.**

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Wednesday of last week the water forces were engaged in a big action at the new sports ground at Alexandra Park. Mr Wallis, the borough turncock, and his men employed on the borough water works, marched to the reserve with their

horses and drays, ploughs and scoops, and did a splendid day's work. Yesterday the land forces took the field, the borough men mustering 18 with 12 horses and drays, under Mr T. Baker, the borough foreman, very generously giving up their half holiday on Saturday to put their best endeavors into the work of levelling the new ground. They were supplemented by nine other drays with plough and scoop, and there was a great response from the town, and all told sixty-four men and ten boys gave their willing voluntary aid to the popular movement. The workers included grave and reverend councillors, with the Mayor and rotund professional men, who for the nonce laid down their customary cares and learned of the joys (and pains) which attach to honest toil. The drays were filled with great rapidity, and it was at first thought that the pace could not be maintained, but after an interval during which a dainty afternoon tea was served with graceful hospitality by the ladies' committee associated with the movement, the work was resumed with renewed spirit, and it was not until the shades of night were falling that work ceased without a single individual crying, "hold, enough." The ladies providing the refreshments were materially aided by the generosity of the Returned Soldiers Institute, who forwarded a large hamper from the surplus of the ball supper the previous evening. Mr Lloyd, the borough curator, generally directed the capably organised effort, and he was well aided by Mr T. Baker, the borough foreman, and Mr H. Hudson, of the borough gardens, and how vigorously all worked is shown in the fact that over 400 loads of earth were shifted, besides the great quantity removed by Mr R. Tardrew and his team by plough and scoop. The following had horses and drays at work:— Messrs J. MacNamara, 3; Alf. Drever, 3; George Heilbronn, 3; Alf. Pyke, 3; H. O. Wilson, W. Flavell, Jack Traynor, Joe Hastings, W. Batty, P. Laby, H. Dodd, and R. Tardrew. The popularity of the movement goes without saying in the face of the fine assemblage in which all good humoredly worked in friendly rivalry. Already the running track level has been reached and the trotting track started upon, and from a wild wilderness of gorse and mullock and tailing dumps, and long since forgotten miners' dams, is evolving rapidly a sports ground which will provide for pleasant outdoor amusements for the town and district, and be a lasting monument of the enterprise and public spirit of the citizens.

The question now arises who will try and organise a group of workers to challenge the record of the borough band and water forces. The field is open for invasion, and we are sure the volunteers are not all exhausted. Can the cricketers (we know that many have worked already) the Firemen (who are to the fore in a good cause), the footballers, the Cadets, or any other organisation challenge the honors of the borough. Perhaps a lady's nomination afternoon would bring out a lot of champions. No one would decline to take a shovel from the hands of a fair nominator who looked to him to do her credit.

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Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 4.9

**"Local & General News"**

A meeting of the Alexandra Sports Ground Committee is advertised to be held at the Town Hall on Monday next. As a good deal of important business has to be transacted, a large attendance is desired.

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Tuesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 5.3

**"Local & General News"**

Last night at the meeting of the Alexandra Sports Ground Committee, Mr G. Gossip said he understood that the soldiers who were employed on the works were receiving 9/6 per day. He understood that the Borough Council had decided at its last meeting to pay all casual employees 10/- a day, and as the soldiers would have a good deal of loss of time through wet weather, he thought that they should also raise them to 10/- per day. Mr T. G. Grano said he expected to have seen an application to that effect in from the soldiers at that meeting. Mr T. Parsons said it was only a notice of motion lodged that the council pay 10/- all round to casual laborers. Mr T. G. Grano thought it would be better to wait and see how the matter was settled by the council before they took action as a committee, but Mr G. Gossip was of the opinion that it would come with better grace if they granted the extra wage without waiting to receive a request from the soldiers. In reply to a request, the Town Clerk said that up to last pay £105/17 had been paid away out of the Government grant to soldiers, and as nearly a week had elapsed since that payment, the total to that night reached about £126. The matter was allowed to drop without action being taken.

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Page 2 Column 8

**ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND.**

**MEETING OF COMMITTEE.**

A meeting of the committee in connection with the Alexandra Sports Ground was held last night at the Town Hall. Cr. T. J. Gossip (Mayor) occupied the chair, and there was a large attendance.

On the motion of Cr M'Gibbony and Mr R. Harricks, it was decided that a letter of condolence be sent to Mr W. Wallis, in connection with the death of his mother.

The secretary stated that since last meeting Messrs A. Gamson and E. J. Beynon had donated £1 each to the fund.

Mr Leopold also stated that Cr J. Irwin had promised to donate £5 to the fund.



The Mayor said that it was very gratifying to receive such donations, and a vote of thanks was passed to the gentlemen concerned.

Mr T. G. Grano reported that Mrs Bloy had been paid the first instalment of £20 for land required.

Several small accounts were passed for payment.

Mr T. G. Grano stated that the Debentures Committee had held a meeting that evening. They had before them a proof of the debenture, and it was expected that they would be ready shortly. It was intended to canvas Barkly street and see how many debentures could be placed.

Mr Lloyd (curator) reported on the progress which had been made in connection with the working bees, and said great praise was due to the ladies for providing afternoon tea. Apart from what the soldier employment had done, 750 loads of material had been moved since their last meeting.

Mr T. G. Grano asked Mr Lloyd if he was putting a monetary value on the voluntary work.

The curator replied that he was keeping an account.

Mr T. Parsons said that Mr Stubbings was taking photographs of the voluntary workers. Theses were produced on the screen at the Friday night pictures and had a good effect.

Mr G. Gossip said that the Federal Football Club was holding a working bee on Wednesday next.

Mr T. G. Grano referred to the success of the working bees, and hoped that other organisations would follow in the way of holding bees.

Mr Leopold stated that Mr C. Moorfoot, of Langi Ghiran, had promised to send in a team.

Votes of thanks were passed to the Borough staffs for their assistance.

A report was read from the Works Committee, included in which was a recommendation that another team with scoops be put on to push on with the work.

Mr Oke moved — “That the recommendation be adopted.”

Mr T. G. Grano seconded the motion. He said that there would be plenty of work to do by the soldiers to swallow up the £749 voted by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr A. S. Miller said the scheme was set out to cost £2000 and they could accomplish it.

The Mayor supported the motion, which was carried.

A vote of thanks was passed to Mr Heilbronn for offering to cart gravel free of cost for drain work.

Cr M’Gibbony said he would endeavor to get as many members of the Fire Brigade as possible to attend Wednesday’s working bee.

Mr Oke stated that the ladies had decided to hold a bazaar in aid of the movement for three nights during show week.

The Mayor remarked that Mesdames Matthews and Bonnin had decided to provide the refreshments for the working bee on Wednesday week. Regarding the Town Hall for show week they knew that the Agricultural Society had the hall for show night, but he thought some arrangement could be arrived at between the two bodies. He thought they should instruct their secretary to write to the Agricultural Society regarding the matter.

Mr Leopold concurred with the Mayor.

Mr G. Gossip also thought the show committee should be consulted.

Mr A. S. Miller moved — “That a sub-committee consisting of Messrs T. G. Grano, G. Gossip and himself wait on the Agricultural Society in reference to the matter.” Seconded by Mr T. Parsons and carried.

Mr Oke said that the ladies who were getting up the bazaar would be able to do a good deal of good if they were voted a few pounds to work upon. He thought it would be possible to have another muggs’ concert to raise funds.

Mr G. Gossip moved — “That an entertainment committee be appointed consisting of Messrs T. Parsons, D. B. Morris, P. Grano, J. Dunn and R. Harricks, for the purpose of assisting the ladies who are running the bazaar.” Seconded by Mr Miller and carried.

Thursday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 1.4

### ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND.

#### ANOTHER BUSY BEE.

There was again a splendid afternoon's work done at the new sports ground at Alexandra Park yesterday, there being a large muster of men, horses and drays, etc. Following the land and water forces of the Borough Council, the Firemen took the field, together with the Federal Football Club, a sprinkling of bowlers, several councillors, professional men, and a few fine active youngsters, who were exhibiting a commendable civic spirit which bids well for the future of the place. About sixty workers did yeoman's service loading fully three hundred dray loads of soil which was removed to other portions of the reserve to build up the arena and its encompassing pedestrian and pony tracks. Mr Heilbronn and Mr Tardrew had again their teams with ploughs and scoops, besides three drays each, and Mr Dodd and the Borough Council one, whilst Mr P. Laby for the second time sent in a horse and dray all the way from his farm over the hills. Distance necessarily restricts landowners in the country in joining in a work in which they have a general interest, but Mr Laby's example, if followed, would be of tangible value. The returned soldiers who are employed on the work very generously gave their half holiday to the movement and did fine service. Afternoon tea was hospitably served by the ladies who are identified with the movement.

Several photographs were taken during the afternoon by Mr Stubbings, showing groups hard at work, the soldiers in action, and the needed rest for a grateful cup of tea.

In connection with the improvement of the reserve, it may be stated that Brigadier-General Brand paid a visit to the place on Tuesday. After passing through the park, he expressed great admiration, not only of the gardens, but of the splendid public spirit which they represented, and he hoped some day to visit Ararat and see the people of the town and district assembled on the sports ground on which they were lavishing such splendid efforts, enjoying wholesome amusement under pleasing conditions. Their efforts would, he was sure, result in an enduring source of pleasure. The Brigadier-General had a word to say to the soldiers, and enquired how they liked the job they were on, and expressed the hope that the ground would be finished in time for the military camp in February next, whilst the Diggers, on their part, assured him of a good welcome if he came to Ararat then.

Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1919.

Page 2 Column 4.4

#### "Local & General News"

As the works committee in connection with Alexandra sports ground is desirous of getting on with the drainage part of the scheme as speedily as possible, Mr Oke, the honorary secretary, informs us that a kind of working bee is to be held this afternoon for the supplying of gravel. Drays have been promised, and all that is now wanted is a band of men to assemble, armed with shovels, to fill the drays with gravel. In the past the response to appeals has been most generous, and there is every reason to believe that citizens will be to the fore on this occasion.

*Ararat Advertiser Saturday December 30 1920*

## ARARAT'S GALA DAY OPENING ALEXANDRA SPORTS GROUND ATHLETIC CLUB MEETING

Boxing Day was a red letter day in the history of Ararat, when the New Sports Ground at Alexandra Park, on which so much laudable public effort has been expended, was officially opened by the State Premier, the Hon HSW Lawson, and dedicated to the use of the citizens. Indeed, the festive season was taken advantage of to the full, and a gala week was arranged which will live in the memory of residents as pleasingly celebrating the achievement of an undertaking of which the whole town may well be proud. Ararat has passed through quite a number of stages in connection with its open air recreation resort. Time was in the early gold field days when a huge population was centred about Commercial road, Commissioner's Hill and Pump Town, when people assembled for outdoor sport in large numbers at the Green Hills, and some very successful and enjoyable fairs were held, but as the place settled down a situation not so remote was sought, and the old cricket ground was utilised as a recreation reserve. It possessed, however, not one redeeming feature. A low lying salt flat, remote from the centre of the town, even the residents in the neighbourhood turned their backs upon it, and a desolate flat had a desolate foreground, with here and there a somewhat dissolute looking back fence and

outhouses. The bar sinister to the shield was provided when one of the main open sewers of the town was taken through the pleasure ground of the people, and children were invited to enjoy an outing on its banks, and at the same time run a by no means remote risk of infection by typhoid and other zymotic disease. A determined, indeed, it might be said, an obstinate effort was made to continue an impossible state of things, and many hundreds of pounds were recklessly spent in improvements, and under the compelling hands of Mr HA Linaker, then the curator of the public gardens, the place for a brief space blossomed as a rose. The gilding of the pill was nor regarded by many as a satisfactory remedy of the evil, however, and the movement initiated for the concentration of the sports of the town at a convenient spot steadily grow. Backed by a splendid public spirit – a spirit which no opposition could effectually kill, Mr Linaker, like Phidias of old, removed the debris from the old Botanical Gardens and revealed the beauties that lay hidden there. It was found that there lay concealed verdant lawns spreading from the marge of an islet studded miniature lake – that there were sweeping terraces and unsurpassed parterres of brilliant blooms – that within the proverbial stone throw of the principal business and residential thoroughfares there was room for spacious bowling greens, and tennis courts and croquet lawns, and a playing ground fitted with swings: giant strides and other means of pleasure and exercise for children. But end was not yet. The untiring band of enthusiastic workers merely used the splendid achievements of yesterday as the lever of Archimedes to ensure the culmination of their well-maintained effort by adding to Alexandra Park a public sports ground worthy of the town and in keeping with the existing club conveniences. The praise worthy efforts of all associated with the movement have resulted in a wild furze covered waste. Which included several long since deserted miners' dams and the slum dam of an almost forgotten crushing plant, located below the gaol hill, into a spacious sports ground with an exceptionally fine arena, a wide trotting track of three laps to the mile, and all the conveniences necessary for the holding of sports meetings of a successful character. The new addition to the social side of the public life of the town was tried out on Boxing day, when a gathering of over 5000 people assembled, and all were loud in their praise of the convenience provided and charmed with the situation and the surroundings, declaring the place an ideal one. Compliments and congratulations were showered upon all concerned in the movement for the creation of the ground. The expectations of the committee were fully realised. Had the 5000 present been 25,000 there would have still been ample room for doubling the number, and every visitor would have enjoyed an uninterrupted view of the whole of the interests.

### **The Official Reception**

The Premier, the Hon HSW Lawson, who had accepted the committee's invitation to visit Ararat and officially open the new sports ground, arrived shortly after noon from Castlemaine, and was accorded a hearty welcome by the Mayor at the Town Hall, and the Parliamentary party included the State and Federal representatives of the district, Messrs RF Toutcher, MLA, the Hon. Drysdale Brown, MLC, and MR WG Gibson, MHR. The toast of the King having been loyally acknowledged, the Mayor (Cr EC McGibbony), in proposing the toast of Parliament and the Premier, expressed appreciation of the Premier's action in coming to Ararat at, he was aware, considerable inconvenience. He extended to him the season's greetings, and hoped that the visitors would spend a pleasant time in Ararat, on what was locally an auspicious occasion.

Dr Matthews, as President of the Athletic Club, joined the Mayor in welcoming the Premier. The club was exceedingly grateful that the Premier had consented to officially open their new grounds. He congratulated the Lawson Administration on having secured the reins of Government for another three years.

The Premier – Can you guarantee that? (laughter)

Dr Matthews – It was his hope, and on behalf of the club he wished the Premier a bright and prosperous new year, both in his official and private capacity. He desired to inform the Premier that the local public organisations had undertaken distinctive work at the grounds, wholly or in part as follows: - Borough employees – earthwork, Miners' Association – eastern terraces, Mental Hospital Staff – gravelling of promenade and approaches, Fire Brigade – planting of shade trees and cypress ring fence, Footballers – arena fence, Trotting Club – trotting track, Athletic Club - running tracks, Cricketers – turf wicket for next season, Railway Union – asphaltting of grandstand, approaches, dining room, etc. ANA – planting of ring of flowering gums around the arena. J Ward authorities – shrubbery on eastern hill and planting of Virginia creeper to cover J Ward wall. Langi Logan quarrymen – screenings for asphaltting. Road concreters of both Borough and Shire of Ararat – earthworks, The Citizens Band was the first organisation to take debentures. The bandsmen have organised working bees and massed workers in the town and led them to the grounds. Working bees have been arranged by the Bankers, the Bowling Club, the High School Council, the Primary and Secondary teachers, the Mayor and Councillors. The sources of revenue were – Grant by Federal Government £750, debenture issue £1250, donations in cash and revenue from entertainments £950, voluntary labor and donated material £1650; total £4600.

As analysis of voluntary labor and donated material showed the following: earthwork £700, surveyors' fees £200, cartage £200, gravelling £150, asphaltting and screenings £80, painting £80, carpentering £80, loam £120, plumbing £20, blacksmithing £20, total £1650. There have been 70 working bees and the ladies have provided refreshments for the workers on these occasions. At one working bee there were 270 workers present. The ladies have also raised the most of the money derived from entertainments, one bazaar returned £352 net, while an afternoon fete brought in £162 net. There have been several smaller efforts made by the ladies of Ararat. The curator of the borough, Mr Lloyd, has given an immense amount of his own time in over-seeing the work. He was very proud to be the President of the club, with which he had been connected for some years, in the year which saw the opening of the new ground, and the Premier would find it one of the finest in Victoria – not regarding the appointments, which could not compare with the cities, but for its

situation, possible landscape effects, arena, gardens and other details. There had been a fine committee of men at the head of the movement, who for years had given voluntary effort, and up to the present time about £4600 (though not in actual cash) had been expended in voluntary labor, materials, etc. There were 70 working bees and at one 270 were present and worked with a will. When all did so, he did not like to single out anyone, but Mr Lloyd stood out prominently. He resuscitated the movement from the setback which followed the expenditure of the money granted by the Government in connection with the employment of returned soldiers, and had raised a large sum. The ladies, too, should be mentioned, for they had provided refreshments at all the working bees.

An answer to Mr Toutcher, Dr Matthews said that about £4000 had also been spent in voluntary effort in making Alexandra Park.

Mr TG Grano briefly supported Dr Matthews and Mr Oke, the secretary of the movement, was called upon, and gave some interesting details of the work done. It was a wonderful manifestation of the public spirit of Ararat. It was to him quite an inspiration, and socially, industrially and politically the world would be better were this spirit to obtain a wider expression. As one interested in secondary education, he hoped Ararat would now be the centre for the champion school contests of the Grampians and Northern Association.

The Premier, who was cordially received, thanked the Mayor and councillors and members of the Sports Ground Committee for their kindly welcome. They seemed to think that he had come to Ararat at some inconvenience, but he might say that so far as the severance of home life at this season of the year, he had brought some of his kids with him in the car; but he was the Parliamentary representative of Castlemaine, and he could not bring with him to Ararat a function he had to attend there that afternoon. He had to regard the interests of his constituency, and return there for the function. He had with pleasure accepted the invitation of Mr Toutcher to be present. He had been politically associated with their member for 21 years, and they had been personal friends, and he was pleased to accept the invitation and pleased to be present in Ararat on such an occasion. Indeed, he was delighted to be associated with such a movement. He asked them to accept his presence as the representative of the Government as an assurance of their deep interest in the inland countries, and he realised that the movement culminating that day was a practical agency for decentralisation. Every agency they employed for enriching the life in the country had their fullest appreciation, because it was the means of grappling with an evil of huge proportion in Victoria – the concentration of so disproportionate a number of the people of the State in the one city. What was wanted was the encouragement of healthy, wholesome recreation of honest, manly sport. It was necessary by physical training to add to the physique of the people and to find an outlet for our energy, and the development of a sound mentality. To do this, certain things were necessary. The necessity of higher education was realised by all, and the Government was doing its best by the establishment of secondary schools, but they must have Mechanics' Institutes, Debating and Literary societies, etc., so as to get a richer life in the country. What drags any parents of children to Melbourne in the knowledge that there they can readily secure facilities in this direction, but what the Government aimed it is to get a richer and better life in the country by affording all possible opportunities to residents to service the development of the mental, artistic and literary talents of their children. It was also essential that life should be made cheerful, and recreation must be provided for with healthy athletic exercise. By this means the race educated in those social, economic and industrial problems which had to be faced. No-one could doubt the advantages of higher training. They had only to think of the abiding pleasures of literature to realise this. He had always been fighting for increased educational opportunities, and he knew the advantages of physical training. He was pleased to have been furnished with so much information of what had been done by the public spirited people of Ararat, and he hoped the earnest and enthusiastic citizens would thrive and prosper (applause)

Mr WG Gibson, MHR, in acknowledging the toast, congratulated the people of Ararat on the fine healthy spirit of citizenship displayed by the expenditure of £9000 in making public gardens and recreation reserves. They had done a work which could not be too highly recommended.

The Hon. Drysdale Brown and Mr Toutcher also spoke in similar terms, the latter stating that when asking the Premier to be present he said that he felt proud that Ararat had shown such a splendid civic spirit. It was an example to the whole state.

Mr Toutcher proposed the health of the Mayor, which he briefly replied to and the gathering adjourned to the sports ground.

*Ararat Advertiser Thursday November 20 1958*

#### **CITY COUNCIL TO HELP PROVIDE NEW DRESSING ROOMS AT OVAL**

The City Council will ask the Football Club and Trotting Club to prepare plans and specifications and call tenders for construction of new dressing rooms at Alexandra Oval.

The action was taken by councillors on Monday night in preference to raising a loan of £2000.

A deputation comprising the president, Mr Len Ford, and secretary of the football club, Mr RJ Falla, and Mr K Clover, a member of the Trotting Club committee, waited on the council.

Spokesman for the group, Mr Falla, the proposal to build new clubrooms at the oval had been shelved in the past because of lack of money. An amount of £2000 was now available and there seemed no reason why work should be delayed any longer.



The Football and Trotting clubs were the main users of the ground and it was unlikely that any objections to the project would be raised by other sporting bodies.

#### **Council Help**

Rough plans had been proposed by a builder whose firm estimate was £4500.

The council had indicated to a previous deputation that it was possible to obtain a Government grant of £800, Mr Falla said. When the club's contribution of £2000 was added it left only about £1700 to complete the building.

The new building would enhance the oval and the old building, which was in a good state of repair, could be removed and re-erected at Centenary Park where facilities were urgently required by district sportsmen.

The Football Club would like the new rooms to be ready for the 1959 football season, he added.

#### **Concrete Price**

The proposition was a worth-while one from a council point of view, Cr Marx said, when he moved, seconded by Cr James, that council raise a loan of £2000 to meet the cost of the new building and removal and re-erection of the old dressing rooms.

The council should assist the clubs as much as possible, Cr de Crespigny said. However, no concrete price had been submitted, only a rough estimate.

"Before we make arrangements for a loan we should know exactly what we are up for."

He moved an amendment seconded by Cr Murphy that the council do all it could to assist the Football club in providing new dressing rooms but before any further move the club first obtain plans and specifications and tenders for the job. The amendment was carried.

*Ararat Advertiser Thursday March 12 1959*

#### **TENDERS FOR NEW OVAL CLUB ROOMS CLOSE LATER IN MONTH**

The City Council may guarantee to have the dressing rooms at Alexandra Oval removed and ready for an immediate start on the construction of modern club rooms for the Ararat Football Club.

Tenders are now called, is to be completed with 4 and a half months of work starting, and the club asked that old buildings be removed.

Previously it had been taken for granted that the old rooms would be removed to Centenary Park, the acting engineer, Mr J Carter said.

The council had obtained a Government grant for erection of sheds at the park.

#### **Inconvenience**

The Football Club was willing to accept inconvenience in order to have the new rooms erected as quickly as possible, Cr Blachford said.

"If the construction was deferred until after the playing season the removal of the rooms would interfere with the trotting and cricket events", he said.

He moved, seconded by Cr Murphy, that information on the removal of the old dressing rooms be provided by the engineer for the next meeting on March 23, three days before tenders close on March 26.

The council would be in a position to advise the club of the position before tenders were considered Cr Blachford added. Plans and specifications for the building would be presented to the council for final approval after tenders closed, Mr Carter said.

*Ararat Advertiser – Saturday April 4 1959*

#### **VARIATION OF £1900 IN CLUBROOM TENDERS.**

Four tenders, ranging in price from £6671 to £44738, have been received by the Ararat Football Club for a modern brick veneer club rooms at Alexandra Oval.

The tenders which were opened at a special meeting of the club on Wednesday night, will be forwarded to the City Council in time for Monday night's council meeting.

A number of club officials will, it is believed, sit in the gallery to hear council debate on new rooms and the report of the city engineer on cost of removing existing dressing rooms to Centenary Park.

Club secretary, Mr RJ Falla said yesterday that no recommendation would be made as to which tender the club thought should be accepted. That was a council matter.

"We have done the job the council requested us to do by having plans and specifications prepared and calling tenders" he said.

The football club, with assistance from Ararat, Stawell and District Trotting Club, would have £2000 to put toward the project, Mr Falla said. The club would meet cost of plans and calling tenders.

#### **Low Estimate**

Details of tenders were – Mr DL Coxall, of Bunningyong, £6671: Mr RJ Stewart of Ararat £5399/16: Mr JJ Blackie of Ararat £5435, and Mr SL Phillips of Ararat £4738/2/6.

Preliminary estimates for building set the price at about 4500 pounds, Mr Falla said. The lowest tender price was 238 pounds to excess of this.

Last year the club approached council to see if it would help in erection of building, he said.

A Government grant of £800 would increase money available for the job to £3800.

On these figures the sum of 1598 pounds had still to be raised and it was hoped that the council would raise a loan to allow work on the clubrooms to proceed immediately.

### **Divided Room**

The clubroom is planned with one 60 feet by 30 feet room fitted with a folding dividing wall to make two dressing rooms. Coffee, first aid and property rooms and a kitchenette are also included.

A few alterations are necessary to toilet block of existing building to suit new clubroom.

Building line of new rooms would come to edge of verandah of present dressing rooms. This would allow much more space in dressing rooms which during the football season were always overcrowded.

The club intended that all money raised in future should be devoted to improving interior of new building and providing furnishings, Mr Falla said.

A wooden floor was to be erected over the concrete slab floor of existing rooms. To protect the surface, it was possible that the club would use heavy coir matting in football season to prevent damage by stops.

*Ararat Advertiser Saturday April 4 1959*

### **CLUBROOMS GO TO THEIR NEW HOME.**

Ararat Football Club's training rooms on the move Thursday. The building is to be erected at Centenary Park where it is expected to be a big asset to teams competing in the Ararat Association. The job was carried out by Messrs E Nunn and Son, who started the job on Thursday morning and had the 60 by 30 front building on the move by Friday morning. A great deal of trouble was experienced in manoeuvring the room across the trotting track and up the "J" Ward hill to Girdlestone street. Amazingly little damage was done to the ground surrounds during the big operation.



*Ararat Advertiser May 9 1959*

### **BANK FINANCES OVAL PAVILLION**

Mr HP Peters, manager of the Ararat branch of the State Savings Bank of Victoria, has announced that the bank had granted a loan of £2000 to the City of Ararat.

The loan will be repayable over a period of ten years with interest at the rate of 5 and a half per cent per annum and will be used to finance the erection of a new brick dressing pavilion at the Alexandra Oval.

Mr Peters went on to say that the new loan would be additional to those of £2350 and £2500 which were granted in November and December of last year respectively. These loans were associated with council projects relating to internal administration and electricity extensions.

*Ararat Advertiser Tuesday December 1 1959*

### **FISCALINI PAVILLION WILL BE THE BEST IN THE WIMMERA - COMPLETION**

Claims by the councillors and football officials that the James Fiscalini pavilion at Alexandra Oval is the best in the Wimmera are not without foundation.

The spacious brick veneer building expected to be completed by early December, has every facility necessary, not only for football but for every sporting organisation using the oval.

It is a fitting building to grace the fine setting of Alexandra Oval, and unlike other pavilions has an off season use.

Built by SL Phillips and Sons for £4800, it stands as a monument to James Fiscalini whose work as a curator of the grounds was always readily extended in the interests of all who used them, and who still lives to proudly see the pavilion in use.

Towards the cost the Football Club contributed £2000, of which over £400 was raised by special effort in conjunction with the Trotting Club, and by the sterling work of the ladies' committee.

Now these bodies are working for further additions to add value to the pavilion.

The Football Club is to provide covering for the main room, to preserve the floor at a cost of approximately 150 pounds, the Trotting Club will construct a set of wide concrete steps across the front of the pavilion, and the Highland Sports Society will provide rails and pegs around the rooms, a tender for which has been accepted for £31.

### **The Building**

Two double doors centre the front of the eastern side of the building, opening off a wide concrete verandah running the full length and set off with bricked-in flower box.

The main hall, approximately 60 by 30 feet, will be divided by folding doors, providing for two dressing rooms.

Provision is made for separate showers and conveniences at the western end and off the main room is a wide tiled bath capable of holding four persons.

Four large windows, two on the wall, give ample natural light and a stone faced fireplace is set in the eastern wall between the first window and double doors.

A kitchen, administrative office and property office with ceiling to floor storage, are included in the building. The kitchen is fitted with ample cupboard space and hot and cold water, and the first aid room has a separate outside door for easy access to ambulance.

Main hall and offices are lined with Masonite from the floor to four feet, then plaster to the ceiling.

Eventually the pavilion will be set off by the planting of native shrubs and trees.

The whole structure is due to combined efforts of three clubs and the football ladies' committee and will stand to the credit of Ararat generally for years to come.

*Ararat Advertiser Thursday January 14 1960*

#### **AFC CANNOT CHARGE AT PAVILLION OPENING**

Permission has been granted the Football Club to officially open the "James Fiscalini" pavilion in Alexandra Sports Ground on Friday, January 29, but no admission charges can be made until the building is registered with the Health Department. The club planned an official opening ceremony on the terrace fronting the pavilion, followed by a social and dance for which an admission charge was to be made.

Money received was to be put towards the cost of furnishings for the room.

After Crs Ford and Johnstone had moved, at Monday's meeting of the City Council, that the application be granted, Cr James asked whether the building was suitable as a place of entertainment.

Health inspector, Mr US O'Toole, explained that registration must be obtained if it was to be used for public entertainment. Upon receipt of application for registration it would be inspected by an officer of the department. Cr Ford then incorporated his motion "that permission granted provided no charge be made".

#### **To Remove Tree**

The football club also suggested the removal of the gum tree in front of the pavilion and replacing it with a planned display of shrubs.

Cr Murphy moved that the tree be removed and permission given to plant shrubs under the advice and supervision of the curator. This was seconded by Cr Ford and carried.

*Ararat Advertiser Tuesday February 2 1960*

#### **A MONUMENT TO A LIFETIME OF WORK**

"I trust that those who use this building will regard it not so much as a dressing room but as a monument to a lifetime of work by a mighty man – James Fiscalini.

That was said by the president of the Ararat Football Club, Mr Len Ford on Friday night before handing the keys of the James Fiscalini pavilion to the Mayor of Ararat, Cr RA Blachford.

Both the Mayor and the club president expressed a sense of indebtedness to the ladies' committee of the Ararat Football Club, the Ararat-Stawell and Districts Trotting Club and Highland Society for contributions which helped to make the pavilion possible.

Mr Ford said if sporting clubs pulled together like this more often better results all round would be achieved.

He thanked the architects who designed the building, and the builders, Messrs SL Phillips and staff, who did an excellent job.

"I have much pleasure in accepting the key from the president of the Ararat Football Club" Cr Blachford said.

This represents a really good combined effort by sporting bodies, with the greatest credit to the Football Club ladies' committee whose efforts over the years raised a considerable sum of money, enabling the club to go ahead with the project.

The Football Club knocked on the door of the Government and they spared a little finance, the City Council added something and the Trotting Club and Highland Society joined in.

This great effort, said the Mayor, resulted in a fine building which was "a monument erected to a great man, an untiring and unselfish man".

#### **Best in Australia**

Cr Blachford referred to three letters he had received from various parts of the State with congratulations on the wonderful building which had been made available for athletes at the Boxing Day sports meeting.

He believed the building was equal to any sports pavilion of its size in Australia. It was in keeping with the sports ground, for which much credit goes to Mr Fiscalini.

"There is not a better sports ground in Australia than what we have here in Ararat" said Cr Blachford.

"Guard this pavilion, look after it with the same care that Jim Fiscalini did the sports ground and gardens – with fatherly care." the Mayor added.

"Each of you is a custodian, so let nothing be done to destroy or damage it in any way," he advised.

The ceremony was conducted on the front steps of the pavilion, and at its conclusion the Mayor handed the key to Miss L Bonner, president of the ladies' committee, who opened the doors of the pavilion.

Present at the ceremony were the Mayoress (Mrs Blachford), the Town Clerk (Mr JI Grenfell), city engineer (Mr NW Baldy), Crs O Marx, L Ford and R de Clerq, officials of the Football Club and ladies' committee, Trotting Club and Highland Sports Society, representatives and players and supporters of the Football Club, who later enjoyed a social and dance inside the spacious building.

*Ararat Advertiser December 1 1960*

#### **NO PAVILLION KEY FOR ARARAT FOOTBALL CLUB**

At its meeting on Monday night, Ararat City Council refused a request of the Ararat Football Club to have a key of James Fiscalini issued to a responsible person.

Making the request, the club gave as its reasons that (a) as football club activities continue throughout the summer, regular committee meetings are necessary; (b) on many occasions and most weekends, old players and supporters returning to Ararat are eager to see the pavilion and photos and pennants are kept therein, and (c) it is felt, having contributed liberally to the cost of erecting the pavilion, the request was reasonable.

Moving that the application be granted, Cr TL Ford said it was very frustrating to have to get the key every time the club officials wished to use the pavilion.

"The club have proved good ambassadors for the city and their members were noted for their good sportsmanship and exemplary conduct." he said.

Seconding the motion, Cr O Marx said he felt the club was a trustworthy body and part owners of the building.

"They are, and everyone else is, proud of the building and by granting a key harm could not come of it." he added.

Cr Blizzard opposed the motion on the grounds that another club had been refused a similar request at the last meeting of council.

"I agree that some members are responsible and desirable but it is not true in every case." he said.

The Mayor said there acts of vandalism there at times and it was no handicap to let the Town Hall that a key was wanted.

"I think we are guarding the property well for these people themselves" the Mayor said.

Cr de Clerq – "The Ararat Football Club does use the building a good deal and it may be difficult at times to get a key, but on the other hand there are other bodies that use it. If we do it for one, we must do it for all."

Cr Johnstone – "I believe the club requires the key for convenience more than anything and I am sure that they will look after the building to the best of their ability. I believe their request is a very reasonable one."

Crs James and Murphy opposed the motion on the grounds that if one organisation was granted a key all are entitled to one.

Closing the debate Cr Ford said acts of vandalism were not so likely to occur if someone was moving about more often.

"I would not like to be on the receiving end if football club members got on to vandals at the pavilion." Cr Ford said.

The motion was lost.

*Ararat Advertiser Saturday December 1 1962*

#### **AFC FRUSTRATED BY RESTRICTION IN ACCESS TO ROOMS**

Ararat Football Club could possibly be denied the use of its own club rooms for committee meetings, the James Fiscalini pavilion, towards the construction of which it contributed £2000.

A letter from Town Clerk, Mr Grenfell, said future applications for use of the pavilion must be forwarded in time to be presented at council meetings, otherwise your request will be refused.

Bob Falla jumped to his feet and declared "we are being treated like a lot of – I don't like to use the adjective – school children. We have a £2000 equity in that building and we should endeavour to get the building as and when we like. I am fed up to the neck about the whole matter.

*Ararat Advertiser Thursday January 8 1968*

#### **CLUB RENTAL FEE ABOLISHED**

A request by the Ararat Football Club for the abolition of the rental fee (\$1) for the use of the Fiscalini pavilion for committee meetings was granted by the City Council on Monday night.

*Australia's National Local Government Newspaper Online.*

#### **A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR OVAL**

A state of the art lighting upgrade at Ararat's Alexandra Oval means that State, or even national level sporting events can now be held in the municipality.

Last year Council installed four, 25 metre lighting towers with 24 2000 watt lamps, raising the facility's lighting to 100 lux, the Australian standard for club football.



The new lighting was funded using \$100,000 of the State Government's \$300,000 Local Works Infrastructure Program funding for drought affected communities.

Council is now in the process of delivering on stage two of the project, by installing two more lighting towers, at a cost of \$80,000.

Council will split the cost with Ararat Community Enterprise, an independent organisation that has chosen the Alexandra Oval Master Plan as its major community project. Ararat Community Enterprise operates as a Telco retailer, pouring profits back into community projects.

Mayor Councillor Gwenda Allgood said the lighting upgrade was a major achievement for all involved, including the Alexandra Oval Committee of Management.

"This project means that Alexandra Oval will have the highest level of lighting of any sporting ground in the Wimmera Grampians region," she said.

"Not only will our local sporting clubs enjoy this major facility upgrade, we'll be increasing our chances of hosting major sporting events in Ararat, which is fantastic on many levels."

*Ararat Advertiser March 1 2013*

### **ALL SYSTEMS GO FOR ALEXANDRA OVAL**

Ararat's sporting community is celebrating following yesterday's announcement of a \$1.15 million funding boost to develop the new multi-purpose pavilion at the Alexandra Oval Community and Recreation Centre.

In Ararat yesterday, Minister for Sport and Recreation Hugh Delahunty said the funding was part of a Victorian Coalition Government facility funding package for the popular sporting precinct.

"A key objective of the Coalition Government is to build healthy and active communities," Mr Delahunty said.

"To achieve this goal, we need quality community facilities that encourage local people to play the sports they love for many years to come."

"I'm proud to say the Coalition Government's funding package is made up of \$650,000 from the Community Facility Funding Program - Major Facilities category and a further \$500,000 from the \$1 billion Regional Growth Funds, Putting Locals First Program," Mr Delahunty said.

Mr Delahunty said the project would replace the existing outdated change-rooms with bigger and better change-room facilities catering for football, cricket, netball, umpires and match-day requirements.

"It will also involve construction of a multi-purpose community space, meeting room, function space, commercial kitchen, canteen, first aid room and public amenities," Mr Delahunty said.

"The new multi-purpose pavilion will provide much improved sports facilities for local cricket, football, netball, tennis and an accessible community space that can be hired by the broader Ararat community.

"Our investment in this project is part of our plan to build more sustainable local venues that make a difference to local people," Mr Delahunty said.

"I congratulate the Ararat Rural City Council for developing the project and their investment of \$2 million, as well as the Ararat Community Enterprise for their contribution of \$100,000 and the Alexandra Oval Reserve Committee of Management for their contribution of \$70,000.

"This investment is just one of the ways we are delivering on the Coalition Government's strategy to grow the economy, build infrastructure and contribute to the health and wellbeing of the State.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional and Rural Development Peter Ryan said Putting Locals First was devised to support improvement projects that reflected local priorities.

"By helping local communities take action on their own behalf we can help them improve local infrastructure and contribute to a better quality of life for regional Victoria," Mr Ryan said.



*Ararat Advertiser November 17 2014*

## **COMMUNITY AND RECREATION CENTRE AT ALEXANDRA OVAL HAILED 'ONE OF THE BEST OF ITS KIND' AT GRAND OPENING**



Minister for Sport and Recreation Damian Drum has declared the Community and Recreation Centre at Alexandra Oval to be one of the best sporting facilities of its kind in regional Victoria. Picture: PETER PICKERING

ARARAT and the surrounding districts are set to benefit for decades to come following the official opening of the new \$3.8 million Community and Recreation Centre at Alexandra Oval.

Minister for Sport and Recreation Damian Drum has declared the state of the art facility to be one of the best sporting facilities of its kind in regional Victoria and said the redevelopment will have a profoundly positive impact on Ararat including attracting big events to the region.

"This is right up there with the very best," he said.

"It has been built to a standard higher than just a community facility, so we will have the opportunity to host AFL practice matches and the like, this will be a regional centre for all sports.

"It is an amazingly well built facility that seems to have ticked all the boxes and will give all of the participating clubs the facilities they need."

Minister Drum was joined by Victorian Deputy Premier Peter Ryan and Senator for Victoria and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Scott Ryan, along with more than 100 members of the Ararat community at the grand opening on Thursday.

Ararat Football-Club stalwart Harold Bright, 96, had the special honour of unveiling the commemorative plaque to mark the official opening of the multi-use facility.



Ararat Football Club stalwart Harold Bright had the honour of unveiling the plaque and is pictured with Ararat Community Enterprise chair Max Perovich and Deputy Premier Peter Ryan.

Among the crowd was Gayle Dadswell, who was the chairperson of the Alexandra Oval Committee of Management - the group that rallied for more than 10 years to get funding for the project.

Ms Dadswell said standing in the end result was an overwhelming experience and extremely satisfying to see the culmination of team work and determination.

"I just can't stop smiling," she said.

"I actually do feel really emotional, I don't think I ever thought this day would come and I am just so proud of a whole lot of people.

"Really it has been a team effort, from all the community members, Council, State and Federal government, everyone was pointing in the right direction and we have ended up with something that is bigger and better than any of us thought we would ever get.

"I think everyone involved has done a terrific job - I just can't wait to see community groups using it now and getting the most out of it."

Ms Dadswell said she would like to see the facility become a meeting point for the community to host an array of functions, which in turn will hopefully generate enough money to fund the second stage of the project, relocating netball courts to the rear of the reserve.

Councillor Gwenda Allgood, who has also been a strong advocator for the redevelopment for more than a decade, said this was one of the most significant projects Ararat has seen and one she is very proud to have been a part of.

"I have been on Council for 30 years and I think 10 of those have been spent fighting for this - I just think it is absolutely magnificent," she said.

"To actually see so many people here showing so much support for it, that really proves that Council has spent its money in the right areas.



"Already they are talking about what football finals can be held here and we have people from Melbourne looking at it and actually saying what a great facility it is, so what more can you ask for?"

"Sport and recreation has always been one of my great passions and now how great is this for those young ones who are going to come through the system."

Construction of the Alexandra Oval Community and Recreation Centre was made possible with funding from the Australian Government (\$500,000 from the Regional Development Australia Fund), two grants from the Victorian Government (\$650,000 from the Community Facility Funding Program and \$500,000 from the Putting Locals First Fund), Ararat Community Enterprise (\$100,000) and Ararat Rural City Council (\$2 million, including the Alexandra Oval Reserve Committee of Management's \$70,000).

The investment has delivered new football and netball change-rooms and showers for home and away teams, umpire change rooms, a separate trainers' room, coaches' room, first-aid room, offices and a timekeeper's box with sweeping views of Alexandra Oval.



The Fiscalini family - Donna, Perri and Ross, Chris, Heather Bennett and Peter Fiscalini - gather at the new James Fiscalini Pavilion, which is in honour of the former Ararat Rural City gardener.

Just as the previous building was, this section of the new building will continue to be known as the James Fiscalini Pavilion in recognition of the former Ararat Rural City gardener, who was instrumental in constructing and then maintaining Alexandra Oval.

The multi-purpose community space can seat 200 people, and features meeting rooms, an office space, a commercial kitchen, bar, canteen and trophy display cabinets at the main entrance.

It is estimated that in excess of 27,000 people will use the facility on an annual basis in a mixture of sports, celebrations, conferences, events and community activities.

Ararat Rural City CEO Andrew Evans said to cater for the demand Council had advertised for positions and selected an advisory group in recent weeks.

"Council is actually running the facility, so we have a Facility Coordinator who has been appointed and their job is to maintain, run and coordinate amongst the clubs the use of the facility," he said.

"The User Group is really positive, they are made up of representatives from each football club (Ararat Rats and Ararat Eagles), from the Grampians Cricket Association, from the community and Council and already they are all working very well together."

The centre won't be ready for public usage until January 1, 2015 however a public open day is being organised for the coming weeks, along with a 'test function' just prior to Christmas.

# WHY ARE ARARAT FACILITIES NAMED AFTER ALEXANDRA?

## Name given to Botanical Gardens

**From the Geelong Advertiser, September 4 1905** - *The gardens generally known as the Botanical Gardens, which a little while ago was little more than idle waste and extensively patronised by bovine herds, by the aid of working bees has undergone a transformation and with the £100 granted by the government it is hoped to make the place a "thing of beauty" – a joy forever. The councillors of the town have been impressed with the desirability of altering the name to Alexandra Park, the name given being a compliment to the Queen.*

<https://windowstoworldhistory.weebly.com/queen-alexandra-of-great-britain---queen-victorias-daughter-in-law-berties-patient-wife-and-her-own-person.html>

## Queen Alexandra of Great Britain: Queen Victoria's Daughter-in-Law, Bertie's Patient Wife, and Her Own Person



Princess Alexandra of Denmark, later Queen Alexandra of Great Britain, enjoyed a historical heritage before her birth and a landmark life for 80 years afterward. In 1863, she married Albert Edward, Prince of Wales and she reigned as Princess of Wales from 1863-1901, the longest time anyone held that title. When Queen Victoria died in 1901, Albert Edward became King Edward VII, and Alexandra his queen-empress from 1901 to 1910. From the time of King Edward VII's death in 1910 until she died in 1925, Queen Alexandra was the dowager queen and the queen mother of the reigning King, George V.

She set fashion trends all over the world and in England she tried to influence her husband's family and British ministers to favor Greek and Danish interests. On a more personal level she withstood her husband's infidelities, a domineering mother-in-law, the loss of two of her sons, and managed to develop her talents for woodworking and photography despite her extensive charity work and fulfilling the duties and obligations of being both the Queen and the Queen Mother.

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## Alexandra, the Danish Princess

The death of King Frederick VII of the Kingdom of Denmark in November 1863 marked the passing of the last Danish king of the older Royal branch of the House of Oldenburg. He was the last Danish monarch of the older Royal branch of the House of Oldenburg and also the last King of Denmark ruling as an absolute monarch. During his reign, he signed a constitution establishing a Danish parliament and making Denmark a constitutional monarchy. Frederick's death created a succession crisis because he ruled in both Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein and the succession rules differed in both territories. Holstein law prevented inheritance through the female line, but predominantly German Holstein, proclaimed independence and called on Prussia for help. In 1852, the great powers of Europe-Austria, France, Prussia, Russia and the United Kingdom, called a conference in London to debate the Danish succession. They agreed to a settlement including the principle that Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg would succeed Frederick and the prior claims of others including Christian's mother-in-law, brother-in-law and wife, were nullified.



Prince Christian received the title of Prince of Denmark in May 1852, succeeded the Danish throne as Christian IX in 1863, and received the title of royal highness for himself and his heirs. King Christian's heirs included a wife and six children. On May 26, 1842, Christian had married Princess Louise Wilhelmine Friederike Caroline Auguste Julia, daughter of the Landgrave Wilhelm of Hesse-Kassel, in Copenhagen. The couple had six children: Prince Christian Frederick William Charles; Prince Christian William Ferdinand Adolf George; Princess Marie Sophie Fredericka Dagmar; Princess Thyra Amalie Caroline Charlotte Anna; Prince Waldemar; and Princess Alexandra Caroline Marie Charlotte Louise Julia, born December 1, 1844 at the Yellow Palace, an 18th century town house next to the Amalienborg lace complex in Copenhagen.

Although Princess Alexandra or Alix as her immediate family called her, and her brothers and sisters were born into royalty, she and her family lived a relatively normal life. The family moved into a new official residence, Bernstorff Palace, but Prince Christian received a modest income of 800 pounds or 1,346 dollars a year from an army commission which did not allow for an extravagant lifestyle. Alexandra shared a drafty attic bedroom with her sister Dagmar, who would marry to become princess of Russia, and made her own clothes and waited on table with her sisters. They inherited music and sewing talents from their mother and a classic photograph shows Queen Louise and her three daughters playing quartets at two pianos. Nancy Edberg, Swedish women's swimming pioneer, gave swimming lessons to Alexandra and Dagmar. Occasionally, her parents invited Hans Christian Andersen to tell the children bedtime stories. The English chaplain at Copenhagen taught Alexandra English and she was confirmed into the Anglican High Church practice and remained a devout Christian all of her life.

### **Princess Alexandra Meets the Prince of Wales**

When Princess Alexandra was sixteen, she met Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, called Bertie by his family and friends, the heir to Queen Victoria's throne. A legendary story of their meeting finds Prince Albert Edward out shooting with a party of friends. One of his friends took a photograph of a beautiful girl wearing a white muslin gown and a loose white jacket with a black velvet ribbon around her throat and her hair smoothed back from her forehead. The Prince of Wales quickly discovered her identity and arranged to tour the Continent making a special stop in Denmark to meet Princess Alexandra. He met her at the Cathedral of Worms in southern Germany and while he talked to the princess, his personal servant took pity on a shy looking man wandering around the Cathedral. Thinking that the man was part of the retinue of the Princess, the servant spent some time chatting with the man. Later he learned that he had been talking to King Christian IX of Denmark, the father of Princess Alexandra.

The official story of the meeting of the future King and Queen of England is slightly less romantic. Acting on a request from her parents Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, Crown Princess Victoria of Prussia introduced her brother Albert Edward, the Prince of Wales to Alexandra on September 24, 1861 in Speyer, a city of Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. The Queen and King were searching for a suitable wife for their son Albert Edward, the Prince of Wales, although they didn't consider Alexandra one of their top choices. Queen Victoria had reservations about the suitability of the match because when the German Confederation invaded and annexed Schleswig-Holstein, Queen Victoria adamantly took the German side and Alexandra and her family just as adamantly embraced the Danish position. Albert Edward took some time to break off his affair with Nellie Clifden, but finally on September 9, 1862, he proposed to Alexandra at the Laeken Royal Palace, the home of King Leopold I of Belgium, his great-uncle.

After her engagement, Alexandra traveled from Denmark to Britain aboard the royal yacht Victoria and Albert II, arriving in Gravesend, Kent on March 7, 1863 to a royal and literary welcome when Poet Laureate Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote an ode in her honor. Thomas Longley, the Archbishop of Canterbury, married Alexandra and Albert Edward on March 10, 1863, at St. George's Chapel, in Windsor Castle, a site that both the press and prospective guests considered too small. Invited wedding guests included only Alexandra's closest relatives disappointing the Danish people, and since Queen Victoria was still in mourning for Prince Albert, the ladies could wear only grey, lilac, or mauve. When the newlyweds left Windsor for their honeymoon on the Isle of Wight, schoolboys at nearby Eton College, including Lord Randolph Churchill, cheered them. Alexandra's father became Danish King Christian IX in 1863, and her brother George accepted the throne of Greece as George I.

After his marriage, Albert Edward continued his relationships with other women, including Lillie Langtry, the actress; Daisy Greville, Countess of Warwick; Agnes Keyser, humanitarian; American Jennie Jerome, the future mother of Winston Churchill; and society matron Alice Keppel. Alexandra knew about most of her husband's relationships and bore them with dignity, remarking, "He loved me the most." She permitted Alice Keppel to visit Albert Edward on his deathbed. Alexandra remained faithful to Albert Edward.

Prince Albert Edward and Alexandra settled into Marlborough House as their London home and chose Sandringham House in Norfolk as a country retreat. The newlyweds entertained lavishly, and Queen Victoria disapproved what she considered their excessive socializing. Her contemporaries reported that Alexandra was dignified and charming in public and

affectionate and fun loving in private. She enjoyed activities including dancing, ice skating, and she also was a skilled horsewoman and tandem driver. Much to Queen Victoria's dismay, Princess Alexandra also enjoyed hunting although the Queen unsuccessfully tried to make her refrain from hunting.

According to Queen Victoria, Princess Alexandra also performed many public and charitable duties "to spare me the strain and fatigue of functions..." The Queen reported that Alexandra never complained about her round of opening bazaars, attending concerts, and visiting hospitals in the Queen's place. Alexandra selected the London Hospital for special attention, visiting it frequently. During one of her visits she met Joseph Merrick, the "Elephant Man," who was a patient there.

Besides her family, Alexandra pursued her own talents and interests. She excelled at woodcarving and specimens of her work were featured at various exhibitions. In England, Queen Alexandra often visited the Technical Schools at Sandringham where handicrafts like woodcarving were taught. Queen Alexandra's chief hobby was photography and she took Kodak pictures during trips and tours. In 1908, the Queen Alexandra published a book of her photographs called Queen Alexandra's Christmas Gift Book to raise money for charity.

Because Alexandra had a small scar on her neck, she hid it by wearing choker necklaces and high necklines, inadvertently setting a fashion precedent that survived for fifty years. A bout with rheumatic fever in 1867 left her with a stiff leg and a limp, but society ladies even copied her limping walk which came to be known as the "Alexandra limp."

Alexandra didn't understand money well and she left managing her finances to her comptroller Sir Dighton Probyn VC, who performed the same role for King Edward VII. She practiced frugality when she had her old stockings darned for reuse and recycled her old dresses as furniture covers, but when her comptroller protested her more extravagant spending, she would wave her hand or pretend that she had not heard the complaints. Edward VIII, Queen Alexandra's grandson who would later become the Duke of Windsor, summarized her attitude about money when he remarked that her generosity embarrassed her financial advisers because whenever she received a letter asking for money she would immediately send out a check without investigating the organization or people requesting the funds.

### **The Social and Political Alexandra**

Even after the couple's first child, Prince Albert Victor was born, Alexandra socialized as much as she had before which caused some problems with her mother in law the Queen, especially since Alexandra hated Prussians and Queen Victoria favored them.

Although the two women were genuinely fond of each other, the relationship between Alexandra and her mother-in-law Queen Victoria could at times be strained. From the beginning Alexandra, the Princess of Wales, enjoyed immense popularity with the British public, much like her 20th century counterpart Princess Diana. Her beauty captivated many of her subjects, but her enormous charm made them love her. For many years she and Prince Bertie were the public symbols of British monarchy, because Queen Victoria secluded herself after Prince Albert's death and did not attend public functions. The Queen did not give the Prince of Wales any real responsibility, forcing him to serve his country in indirect ways and perhaps encouraging his womanizing. As the years passed, Alexandra endured her husband's philandering with dignity, which further endeared her to the British public. For a long time, Alexandra was the most popular member of the royal family and at times the crowds would cheer her and boo the Prince of Wales. Queen Victoria must have noted this and perhaps resented her daughter-in-law's popularity.

The Queen also gave the young couple unwanted advice on many matters, eventually including the names of their children. Albert Edward and Alexandra had six children. Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence and Avondale; Prince George who later would become King George V of the United Kingdom; Louise, Princess Royal and Duchess of Fife; Princess Victoria; Maud, Queen of Norway; and Prince Alexander John of Wales born in the spring of 1871, who lived only a few hours.

The births of Alexandra's first two children, Albert Victor and George were premature, but she survived them in good health. The birth of Princess Louise on February 20, 1867, was quite different. After the delivery Alexander became ill enough for the doctors to ask Queen Victoria and her own parents to come to her bedside. Her husband carried on his social life and flirtations, and did not appear. Alexander survived, but recovered as a changed person, both physically and emotionally. She had been an active, outgoing young woman, but now had a noticeable limp and her illness had aggravated her otosclerosis, abnormal bone growth in the middle ear that causes hearing loss, and she became increasingly deaf. She used her charm and grace to deal with her otosclerosis that some biographers say she inherited from her mother.

The early years of Alexandra's marriage were taken up with her husband and children and her siblings. Princess Alexandra spent the spring of 1877 in Greece visiting her brother King George. During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, Alexandra favored Russia and lobbied for a border adjustment between Greece and Turkey, favoring the Greeks. In 1881, Alexandra

and Albert Edward travelled to Saint Petersburg after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II of Russia to represent Britain and provide comfort to Alexandra's sister Marie who had become Tsarina at Alexander's death.

During a visit to Ireland in 1885, Alexandra and Albert Edward in the City of Cork encountered a crowd of over two thousand people waving sticks and black flags favoring Irish nationalism. She smiled her way through the crowd's hostility and in the same visit accepted a Doctorate in Music from Trinity College in Dublin. Prince Alexandra placated the Irish, but she continued to hate Germans. Her biographers including David Duff in his 1980 biography *Alexandra: Princess and Queen*, contend that the Albert Edward and his advisers denied her access to his briefing papers and excluded her from some of his foreign tours so that she could not be involved in diplomatic matters.

She still distrusted Germans and opposed anything favoring German expansion or interests. In 1890, Alexandra wrote and distributed a memorandum to senior British ministers and military people warning them against exchanging the British North Sea island of Heligoland for the German colony of Zanzibar. She pointed out the strategic significance of Heligoland, arguing that either Germany could use it to launch an attack or Britain could use it to contain German aggression. The ministers and military ignored her warning and continued with the exchange. The Germans fortified the island which became a keystone in Germany's maritime operations. Alexandra detested and distrusted her nephew Wilhelm II of Germany, calling him an "inward enemy."

Alexandra never recovered from the death of their oldest son Prince Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, who died on January 14, 1892, during an influenza epidemic. Much like her mother-in-law Queen Victoria did for Prince Albert, she left her son's room and possessions exactly as they had been the day he left them.

In 1894, her brother-in-law Alexander III of Russia died and her nephew Nicholas II became Tsar. Alexandra traveled to Russia to support her widowed sister Marie Sophie Fredericka Dagmar or Maria Feodorovna, Empress of all the Russias, as she was known in Russia. She slept, prayed, and stayed by her sister's side until Alexander was buried and stayed on in Russia for some time despite the objections of her mother-in-law Queen Victoria. The death of her mother Queen Louise of Denmark in 1898 added to her mourning.

### **Princess Alexandra Becomes Queen Alexandra**

After Queen Victoria died in January 1901, Albert Edward became King Edward VII and Alexandra his Queen-Empress consort. In March 1901, the King and Queen's son George and their daughter-in-law Mary embarked on an extensive tour of the empire, leaving their young children with their grandparents. While George and Mary toured the Empire, Edward and Alexandra minded their grandchildren and prepared for the coronation of Edward Albert as King Edward VII in June 1902.

A few days before the coronation, King Edward became seriously ill with appendicitis and Alexandra stood in for him at a military parade and attended the Royal Ascot races in his place so the public wouldn't be alarmed at his absence. The coronation was postponed and Dr. Frederick Treves of the London Hospital operated on Edward to drain his infected appendix. After he recovered, Alexandra and Edward were crowned together in August 1902, with the Archbishop of Canterbury Frederick Temple crowning Edward and the Archbishop of York, William Dalrymple Maclagan crowning Alexandra.

In 1910, Alexander set a precedent when she became the first queen consort to visit the British House of Commons during a debate. For two hours she sat in the Ladies' Gallery that overlooked the chamber while members of Parliament debated the Parliament Bill which would remove the right of the House of Lords to veto legislation, a bill that Alexandra opposed. A few weeks later while Alexandra visited her brother, King George I of Greece in Corfu, her family sent her word that her husband had been stricken with several heart attacks. She arrived home on May 5, 1910, and on May 6, she personally administered oxygen from a gas cylinder to help him breathe. King Edward VII died on May 6, 1910, and Queen Alexandra observed that she felt like she had been turned into stone, "unable to cry, unable to grasp the meaning of it all."

Edward VII and Queen Alexandra's son George became the new King and later in the year Queen Alexandra moved out of Buckingham Palace to Marlborough House, keeping Sandringham in Norfolk as her residence. Her son, the new King George, immediately faced a decision about the Parliament Bill, and he reluctantly agreed to Prime Minister H.H. Asquith's request to create an adequate number of Liberal peers after a general election if the House of Lords continued to block the legislation. Although she opposed the bill, Alexandra supported her son.

In 1911, Alexandra did not attend the coronation of King George because tradition dictated that a crowned queen should not attend the coronation of another king or queen, but she continued her charitable work. One of her favorite charities was Alexandra Rose Day, where women volunteers sold artificial roses that disabled people made to raise funds to aid



hospitals.

World War I only intensified Alexandra's dislike and distrust of Germans. She detested her nephew Kaiser Wilhelm II and voiced her revulsion in no uncertain terms during the controversy about the banners of foreign princes. During World War I, some people criticized the custom of hanging the banners of foreign princes awarded the Order of the Garter, Britain's highest order of knighthood, in St. George's chapel, Windsor Castle. The critics said that since the German members of the Order were fighting against Britain their banners should be removed. Bowing to public opinion, King George had the banners taken down, but he went a step further and ordered both the Prussian banners and Hessian banners removed. In Alexandra's opinion, their Hessian relatives were just soldiers or servants acting under "that brutal German Emperor's orders."

On September 17, 1916, Queen Alexandra endured a Zeppelin air raid close to her Sandringham residence, but the Russian branch of her family suffered much worse. In Russia, the Bolsheviks overthrew her nephew Tsar Nicholas II and murdered him and his wife and children. In 1919, *HMS Marlborough* rescued the Dowager Empress, Alexandra's sister Marie, and brought her to England where she lived with Alexandra for some time.

In her senior years, Alexandra no longer traveled abroad and her health deteriorated. On November 20, 1925, at age 80 she suffered a fatal heart attack at Sandringham House in Norfolk. She was buried on November 28, 1925, beside her husband at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle.

Tradition has it that when Diana became Princess of Wales on July 29, 1981, well-wishers handed her a biography of Queen Alexandra by Georgina Battiscombe. They believed it would be a helpful guide to coping with her new position, the same position that Alexandra had assumed on March 10, 1863 and filled so successfully.

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