

Controversial start for city's iconic high-rise

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Among Albury's best known landmarks, the Colonial Mutual Life (CML) building, standing on the corner of Dean and Olive Streets, did not come without controversy.

Known as Daniel's Corner owned by Mr A G Daniel, former Alderman and Mayor of Albury. Gilpin's Drapers were trading there at the time of sale. The CML paid 12,000 pounds for the site in April 1923. Construction commenced in June 1924 with the building opening in October 1925, as CML House, costing 32,000 pounds (\$2.2m today).



Daniel's Corner, Ryan's Market Hotel on south-west corner c1905

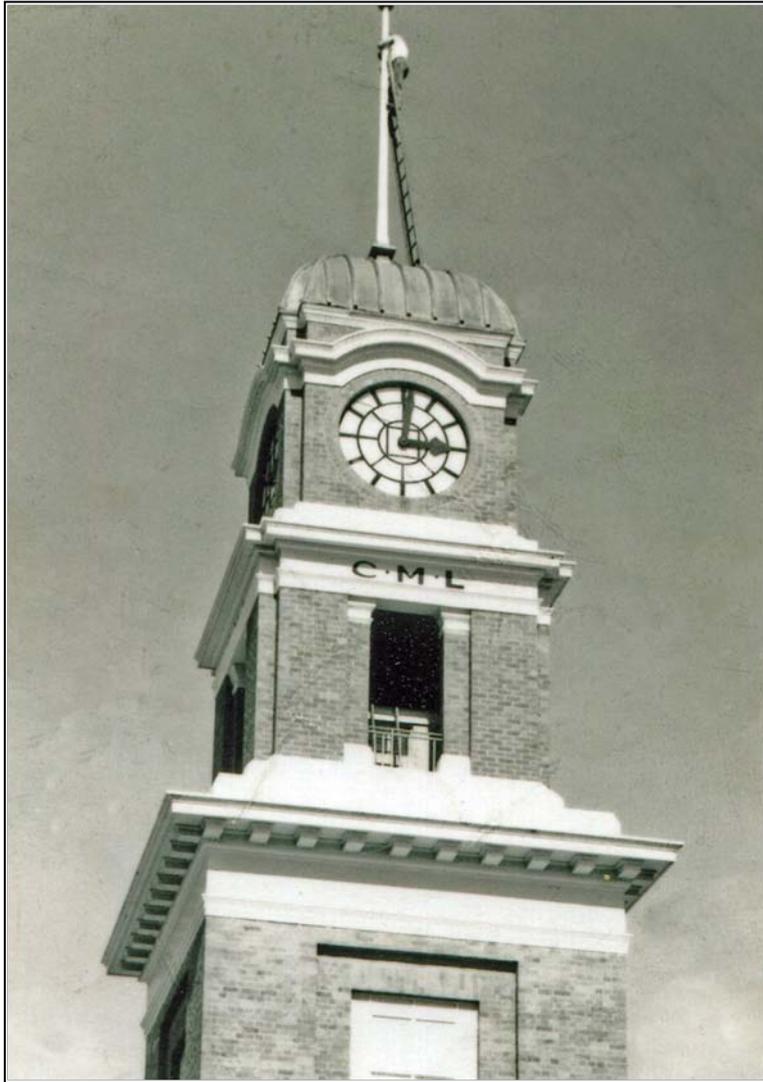
The *Albury Banner* told its readers "To mark the opening of the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society's buildings ... a dinner was held in Malcolm's Reception Hall, when there was a very large attendance of citizens of Albury and district."

Architect was Mr Nahum Barnet and builders Messrs Hudson and Gairn, all of Melbourne. Much angst accrued during construction when it was found that the Olive Street alignment encroached by seven inches onto the footpath. It wasn't until March 1925 that Council's Works Committee recommended no action be taken by Council over the encroachment, ending over 6 months of procrastinations by our civic leaders.

Floodlit at night, the top of the flagpole stands 99 ft (30 metres) above the pavement. After dark it rivalled the Monument in defining Albury's night time skyline.

In 1937, a two storey extension, including several shops, offices and around eight apartments were added.

The correct alignment of this extension is now clearly visible at 494 Olive Street.



All in a Day's Work - Romley Evans
up the CML flagpole, 1967

The clock tower played its part during WWII, being used by Albury's Volunteer Air Observers Corps as an observation post looking for unidentified or unwanted aircraft. Local legal identity Patricia Strachan, as a 12 year old, was their youngest recruit.

Pictured is Mr Romley Evans working for S & E Gordon Builders, in 1967. His task was to replace the broken flagpole rope so that the flag could be flown for Remembrance Day. The wooden flagpole of those days has since been replaced by a steel one. A repeat performance in the 21st century might see Occupational Health & Safety issues develop.

Romley Gordon Evans passed away on Friday, 8th September 2017.