

## Stock Routes and the Albury Sportsground

*Joe Wooding*

Taking stock to market is part of every-day life for farmers and graziers. In November 1888, two events occurred, making this a little easier. Municipal saleyards, with a capacity of 30,000 sheep and 1,500 cattle were opened on the Sydney Road, east of Albury (now Albury Base Hospital).



On the way to market, a circa 1906 Scotsman's Hill view of Albury Sportsground enclosed by a high palings fence, the oval itself with a lower picket fence.

Note the kerosene street light near the gum tree.

Although completely unrelated, a substantial bridge at the west end of Smollett Street opened in 1888, giving pastoralists west of Albury an easier route to Victoria or the new saleyards. Termed the Southern Route, it was via Howlong Road (now Padman Drive), Smollett Street, Wodonga Place, Ebden, Macauley, Bridge and Schubach Streets. The Northern Route was via Old Howlong Road (now Pemberton Street), Thurgoona, Elm, Sackville, North and Keene Streets.

Other stock routes entered Albury along Urana, Wagga and Boundary Roads. All led to the saleyards. Permits were mandatory, with the routes sign-posted.

Every so often, Council made changes to the streets used. In the 1920s, Ebden Street was replaced by Nurigong Street in the southern section.

The photo above circa 1906, shows the Albury Sportsground.

In September 1868, this ground was opened as the Albury Cricket Ground. The first match was Albury versus Wahgunyah. The visitors in Albury arrived by paddle steamer, but had only

nine players and easily accounted for. Football was first played there in 1876. Albury Football Club was formed on June 3 of that year.

In 1900 the ground was closed for 18 months, remodelled and renamed Albury Sports Ground.

The *Albury Daily News*, May 27, 1901, relates to the first football match played on the new ground. Albury 4.5 (29) lost to Rutherglen 5.5 (35). Gate takings were £16, but the paper was critical of the umpiring. The central umpire, C Sewell was often too far behind play to detect breaches such as holding, running too far and throwing the ball etc. The free-loaders on Scotsman's Hill overlooking the ground, also got a pay-out from the press.

In 1937 a Bills' Water Trough was installed at the western end of Nurigong Street. These troughs were to provide relief for working horses, financed by a trust fund established through the will of George Bills. About 700 were installed across Australia. Albury's trough is now displayed near the Turks Head building in Wodonga Place.



The Bills' water trough and hitching post at Australia Park in Wodonga Place.