

New Year's Eve in Albury

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For many years, Albury's Post Office corner was where locals saw in the New Year. There was a contrast between the mood during wartime compared with the revelry at the end of war. The following excerpts are from issues of the *Border Morning Mail*.

In January 1916: "While the time-honored custom in Albury of playing the old year out and welcoming the new one took place as usual on New Year's Eve, the crowd which assembled round the Albury Town Band in front of the post office was pervaded with the one idea, the fervent wish that 1916 would see the world's great war end ... Appropriate music was played for about 10 minutes prior to the ushering in of the new year. When the clock chimed, the band struck up 'Auld Lang Syne' and 'God Save the King' ... The police stated that a quieter birth of a new year had never before been experienced in Albury, as there were no evidences of the customary larrikinism."

With WWI ended there was a different mood "At the stroke of the town clock at midnight ... bells were rung, train whistles sent forth shrieks of joy and the Town Band played appropriate airs in Dean Street" (1919).



The tradition of farewelling the old and welcoming in the new on the post office corner lasted for almost 100 years, extended well into the 1960s.

The photo shows some of the 1961 revellers.

During World War II revellers let their hair down: "Albury said goodbye to 1943 with its triumphs and tragedies, and greeted the New Year with merriment reminiscent of the reckless gaiety of pre-war New Year's Eves ... Dance halls and theatres drew a large

percentage of the merry-makers, but big throngs gathered at the post office corner, as on many New Year's Eves of the past. Here the Town Band played and hundreds ushered in the New Year with laughter and song."

Then at war's end: "Last evening lights were turned on that had not shone on any previous New Year's Eve since the shadow of war ... Hundreds spent a delirious 10 minutes at the Post Office corner at midnight. The Town Band turned up on time as it has year after year and played with a will, while boys and girls linked hands and spun in lurching rings about it ... the cheers that greeted the first stroke of midnight could scarcely swell the din. A very blurred, but very enthusiastic version of 'Auld Lang Syne' rose to the stars, and gave place to renewed cheers and laughter ... by 12.30 the town had begun settling down to the New Year— 1946."