

Albury Sportsground

Greg Ryan

An 1859 map of Albury shows land east from Thurgoona St and the river through to Wodonga Place and south from Dean St to Hovell St "Reserved for Public Recreation." Smollett St then only extended west as far as Wodonga Place.

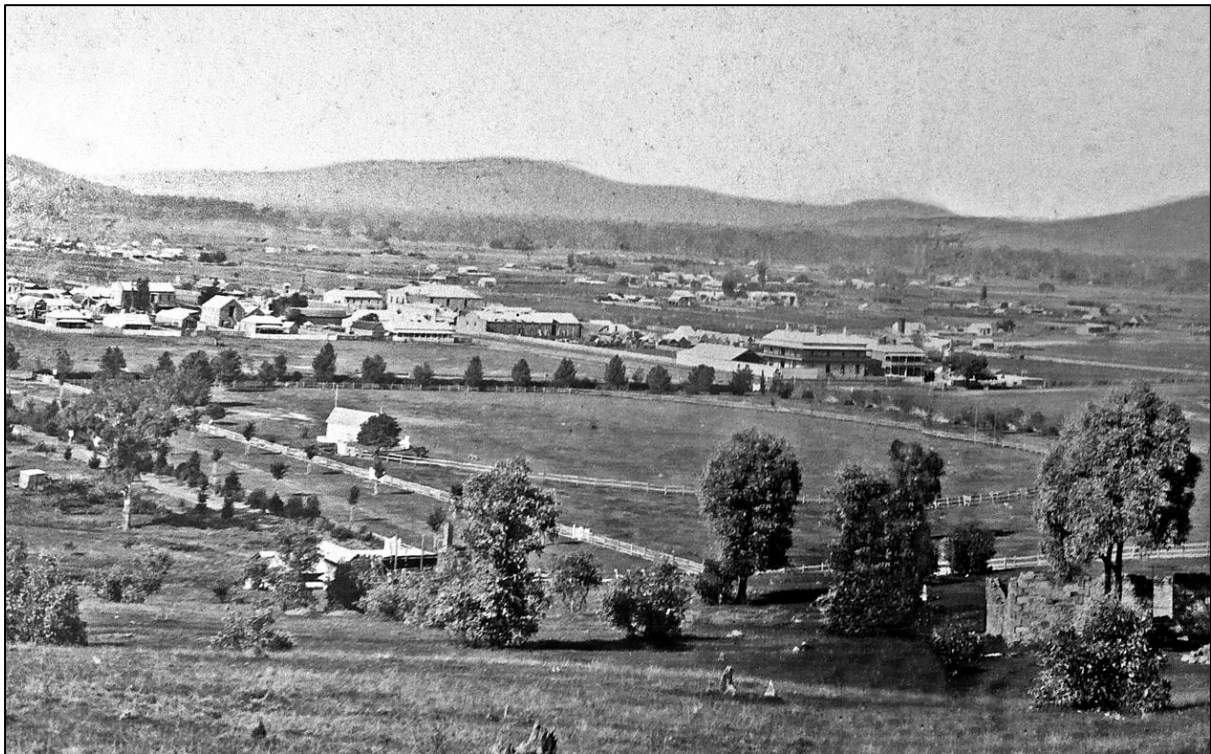
A Border Cricket Club was formed in September 1862 and they were instrumental in the early development of portion of the Recreation Reserve as the Albury Cricket Ground, later to become known as the Albury Sportsground.

In August 1863, cricket club secretary Edward Brown wrote to Council asking for "a portion of the Reserve on the west of the town for a cricket ground ... the ground to be vested in joint trustees, and the club to expend a sum in turfing, planting trees, &c."

Nothing came of that submission. Four years later Brown was chair of a sub-committee that returned to Council and we read in the *Border Post* of August 19, 1868 that "The Border Cricket Club have just finished fencing their new ground situated on the Recreation Reserve and granted to them until required for other purposes by the Borough Council."

The Border Cricket Club erected a pavilion at the northern end of the ground. At the official opening in March 1872 a flag was hoisted emblazoned with "BCC" and the pavilion described as "a good looking and well-built weatherboard cottage, built by Mr Frew and members of the Club."

The pavilion provided good use until in June 1891 it was destroyed by fire. A new pavilion was built and ready for the 1892-93 cricket season. It too came to a sad ending in August



The Albury Cricket Ground in about 1888
with the pavilion at the northern end of the ground.

1897, also destroyed by fire. Newspapers reporting that “the water plug could not be found” hampering efforts to save the building.

It was not until the early twentieth century that the ground became better known as the Albury Sportsground as it became home to many other sporting codes including football, cycling, tennis (the Albury Easter tournament was held there for many years) and others.

In early 1915 work started on construction of the grandstand on the western side of the sportsground, the tender of £772/8/ from local builder John Cochrane having been accepted. The grandstand was officially opened in June 1915, the *Border Morning Mail* describing the building as “in brick and reinforced concrete ... there are two dressing rooms, two refreshment rooms, two bathrooms, and one store room.” The building still survives in 2023.