

OUR ROOTS #1



by Gary Bartholomeusz



Albany experienced organised Australian Rules football for the first time when **John Angove**, secretary of the town's Road Board, held an afternoon social game at the Parade Street Recreation Reserve on Thursday May 6, 1886. Albany businesses were closed on Thursday afternoons during this era but opened all day Saturday. Players were asked to be at the ground early so two sides could be selected.

The following teams were published in the 'Albany Observer' newspaper for a May 20 match...

H Knight (Captain)	J Kennedy	M Moir (Captain)	H Keyser
A Baesjou	Charles Keyser	W Baesjou	L McKenzie
G Baggs	Edwin Keyser	W Cooper	W Piesse
W Brown	Colin Matheson	H Franklyn	R Robinson
? Dance	T Palmer	G Harris	W Sherratt
J Green	G Pearson	? Hartland	G Waters
S Hayman	C Simmons	A Keyser	D Wimbridge

John Angove continued to be the town's chief organiser of social football matches until Monday May 13, 1889, when a meeting of footy enthusiasts was held at the London Hotel. **John Kerr** chaired that meeting and **Edwin Keyser** acted as secretary. **? Hogarth** moved, and **Edward Troode** seconded, that an Albany football club committee be formed. The motion was passed. **William Knight** and **? Bendall** were elected, along with the four mentioned in this paragraph, to a social games organising committee.

This trend continued until 1897 when, on Thursday April 29 at a meeting in the Royal George Hotel, it was decided to form the Albany Wanderers Football Club and its committee being responsible to co-ordinate an official competition. Another open meeting was conducted at the Royal George Hotel on Wednesday May 5 and, on this occasion, Edwin Keyser was elected chairman. **William Noonan** moved "that three clubs be formed so players could join whichever club they choose." The motion lapsed for the want of a seconder!

However, the growing overwhelming feeling from the majority of town folk was to launch East, North and West Ward teams as per the already-established successful Albany Cricket Association. It was decided that three separate meetings be organised to discuss this alternative and that the four delegates listed be assigned to a meeting and present a report at the next open forum...

EAST WARD : Edwin Keyser, William Nunan, Percy Patterson & A Robinson

NORTH WARD : ? Dudley, Charles Edwards, George Edwards & Frank Handley

WEST WARD : Stan Chester, Ernest Marchant, Walter McCallum & Charles Milne

One week later (Wednesday May 12) a follow-up public meeting was held at the Royal George Hotel where **Edward Moffatt** and **Reg Greenwood** respectively reported that North and West Ward clubs were officially launched on the previous Monday. Edwin Keyser informed the meeting that East Ward failed to attract enough people to start a club but stated "it will inevitably happen" and Percy Patterson, A Robinson and himself accepted responsibility to ensure it becomes a reality! Even so, William Nunan moved that the Albany Football Association be formed as the parent body and this was unanimously carried. The East Ward Football Club was not officially announced until Saturday June 5, 1897, prior to its inaugural match when it defeated West Ward by six points.

Social football lasted four decades in Albany - the last three operated alongside Albany Football Association's official competition. These were Albany Brass Band, Albany High School, Albany Military, Albany Young Mens Social Club, All-Comers, Broomehill, Butchers & Bakers, Cadets, Coal Lumpers, Commercial Club Married, Commercial Club Single, Commercial, Convent & Grammar, Denmark, Drew Robinson & Company, Edward Barnett & Company, Fire Brigade, Forts, Gentlemen of the Coal Trade, Government, Grassmere & District, Guildford, Juvenile Lodge of Good Templars, Katanning, Katanning Government School, Loco, Mercantile, Midland Junction, Naval Cadets, Navy, Non-Smokers, Offices, Old Brigade, Old Buffers, Patriotic Fund, Plantagenet, Railway Workshops, Returned Soldiers, Rifle Volunteers, Round Drive, Rovers, Royal Australian Artillery (Albany), 'Runic' - a passenger ship, Shipping, Smokers, Social Club, Star of the South Juvenile Temple, State School, Unemployed, WA Land Company, Woodanilling, Young Australia Football League and Young Mens' Mutual Improvement Society. #

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Albany Football Association 1897 - 1941

Recess 1914 - 1918 and 1942 - 1944 due to War



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Southern Districts Football League 1945 - 1990

Great Southern Football League 1991 - current