

GLANCING BACK – No 3 – By Noel Pullen

100 plus years ago -1900-25

Hurlingham Park - Our Home

Since 1907 Brighton Union Cricket Club has made its home at Hurlingham Park where the two grounds are set in a large area now bordered by houses and busy thoroughfares. How different it is now to when the Club first used the ground more than 100 years ago, as no doubt players at that time had also remarked for indeed the history can be traced back to the early settlement of the Port Phillip area prior to separation from New South Wales.

The first development of the area occurred in 1841, when Henry Dendy took up a 'Special Survey' of 5120 acres which he purchased in England at £1 per acre. This land, which engulfed the Hurlingham Park of today, and indeed the greater part of Brighton, was described on the first plan as 'open forest land timbered with gum, oak, cherry, and honeysuckle'. It was diagonally cut by the squatter's main road through from Melbourne to Western Port, which today is Nepean Highway and which was originally known as Arthur's Seat Road. A competition organised by Dendy saw the area planned and subdivided into Waterville Estate and renamed Brighton Estate on 31st May, 1841.

By 1847 the Little Brighton Inn had been established on the corner of the present Union St. and Nepean Highway. To the rear and alongside this hotel, run by Robert Keys, was a large allotment of vacant land which as early as this had become especially popular as a sports ground. It was known as Key's paddock in the 1860's, and as Cullen's paddock for a time in the 1880's, no doubt after the proprietors of the hotel at the time.

It was used regularly for picnic race meetings, ploughing competitions, cricket and football, as well as for the Irish game of hurley and iron quoits. In 1857 the Councils rate book called the property 'Brighton Hurlingham', accepting Cullen's idea of it as a namesake of the Hurlingham of London, where pigeon shooting and polo were the principal sports. Cullen organised pigeon shoots quite regularly, and for some time it was the headquarters of the Melbourne Gun Club.

It was however as a racecourse that the place was best known and most patronized. Four thousand people turned out in 1880 to one of Cullen's meetings. Horse-drawn cabs transported the people from nearby railway stations.

In mid 1887 Cullen revived the track under the name of Hurlingham Park and ran fortnightly meetings from 1887 to 1891. The locals complained about the frequent meetings "with their attendant rabble of the lower orders of the turf."

At one meeting the judge's decision was disputed by an "infuriated gang of low-typed individuals" who besieged the enclosure, hurled missiles and smashed glass.

The "cabbies" cry of 'Hurlingham for a bob' which was part of the picnic race atmosphere was no longer heard in the 1890's when the owner of the hotel, and the land, Thomas Bent refused to renew the lease of the racecourse.

75 plus years ago - 1925-50

LEAN TIMES

Seasons 1932 - 1937 were not successful ones for the club as the best effort produced was a first grade runner-up in 1934-35 and this was the only time the first eleven made the finals, while the second eleven made the finals twice.

THE ARGUS NEWSPAPER dated 14 SEPTEMBER 1936 reported

The Brighton District Cricket Association has decided to grade as follows the 54 teams which have entered for the competition.

First Grade – Brighton Union, Brighton Footballers, Brighton East, Hurlingham, New Street Methodist, Princes Park, St. James, Elsternwick Thistle, St. Peters. North Brighton, South St.Kilda and Kooyong road Methodist.

Grade A – Brighton Union, Brighton I.O.R. Brighton Gas Company, Hampton Methodist, North Brighton, Were street Methodist, Sandringham Municipal, Beaurock, Sandringham Amateur Footballers, Cluden and Fern Lodge

The first eleven made the finals in 1937-38 but lost the semi final to Brighton Gas Company.

The scores were Brighton Union 127 (Smith 39) and 9/187 (Hindson 49 and Wonnacott 43) to the Gas Company's 130 and 231 with H. Turner taking the match figures of 12/106 and Richardson 8/135. Turner also won the Brighton District Cricket Association bowling trophy with an average of 5.7.

Union had many good players at this time including Cyril Hindson and his brother Clarrie who captained St. Kilda football club in 1935 and Percy and Cyril Parkinson. Cyril Parkinson later joined District Club Carlton. Other great players included Frank Saunders, a former captain and committeeman and one of the club's greatest fast bowlers and committee member Charlie Ralph.

Ken Wonnacott who played with Union from 1922 until 1947 and also served on the committee also represented the Victorian Amateur Football side and received mentions in the Metropolitan newspapers along with such other football greats as "Jiggy" Harris of Collingwood and Harold Matthews (ex Union) of St. Kilda.

THE ARGUS NEWSPAPER dated 3 MAY 1938 reported

OBITUARY

Mr. Thomas Moore

The death occurred yesterday morning of Mr. Thomas Moore aged 76 years of Landcox street, Brighton. Mr Moore who was a Customs officer at Swan Hill for some years had many exciting experiences in the pioneering days. He retired from the Customs Department about ten years ago. He was a keen lover of sport and was president of the Brighton District Lawn Tennis Association, the Hurlingham Park Tennis Association and the Brighton Union Cricket Club. He was a member of the Hurlingham Park improvement committee and of the committee of management. The funeral will take place at the Brighton Cemetery today at 2pm.

DEATHS

*Moore – Brighton Union Cricket Club – Officers and Members of the above club are invited to attend the funeral of our late beloved president – **MR THOMAS MOORE** at the Brighton Cemetery.*

*The funeral will leave his late residence, No.2 Landcox street, North Brighton at 2pm **THIS DAY**
W.A.CUMMING Chairman of Committee*

Fifty plus years ago – 1950-75

AN AMAZING RUN STARTS

Union took the first eleven premierships in 1953-54 from Bayside and some of the trophy winners for the season were Club Champion and Club bowling – Geoff Smith, Club batting – John Gooding, Most valuable first X1 player – Les Polson, second X1 player – Ray Smith, third eleven – Geoff Smith, Best Under 18 player – Peter Smith and Best Clubman – Bill Ould.

A mainstay of the first eleven that year was George Polson, a player who was to become one of the top administrators and players the club has seen.

Vern Gladman was captain of Union's illustrious first eleven and his report on the grand final mentioned the excellent batting of John Gooding 54 and 59 not out, ably supported by the big hitting Lenny McAliece who scored 26 and 33 in quick time.

George Polson captured 6/63 and 4/48 with his deceptive spin but it was left to Peter Smith to swing the games Union's way by bowling two opponents out, running out another as four wickets fell in two overs.

At the 47th annual meeting held in the Higinbotham hall in Bay Street Brighton on 13 August 1954 saw Len Holford elected President and he gathered around him men who would lead Union to a record breaking six premierships in a row. George Polson continued as Club secretary and Les Polson as treasurer and Ken Williams as assistant secretary.

Other committee members included John Polson, Vern Gladman, Charlie Beal, W. "Dick" Beal, Arnold Palmer, Rex Baker and Basil Kennedy. The first X1 was the only side to make the finals however they were unsuccessful in the semi. This was Vern Gladman's final match and he took up umpiring in the BDCA the following season.

Club champion was Frank Edlin, Len McAliece won the club batting, Les Polson the club bowling and the most improved player award was won by John Egan who was later to become club President.

Four of Union's members were elected to positions on the Brighton District Cricket Association executive, Ken Williams (Secretary), George Polson (Assistant Secretary), John Polson (Registration Secretary) and Les Polson (Treasurer).

PREMIERSHIPS GALORE

Union's years of glory had evolved in the post war years and reached the zenith in a period that extended from 1955 to 1963. An era which saw six consecutive first X1 premierships also provided a seventh with a grand final loss halting the run and stopping a mammoth eight in a row.

The period from 1955 also saw two under sixteen premierships. Commenced in 1955-56, Brighton Union Greens and Brighton Union Gold's were the forerunners of today's junior teams. Managed by Les Polson (Greens) and John Polson (Gold's) these teams provided Union with a monopoly in junior cricket in the Brighton District Cricket Association.

The Under Sixteen Green side led by Bill Ould defeated the Gold team in that year's grand final, however the Gold side led by Peter Marcollo defeated the Green side the following season.

The First Eleven won the premiership in 1955-56 following the forfeiture of the match the Grand Final match by our opponents Hurlingham. The BDCA Executive suspended a Hurlingham player, Alan Kettle for swearing at an umpire in the game before the Grand Final and he was offered the chance to apologise but refused to do so and the BDCA then suspended him so the Hurlingham side refused to play in the Grand Final

The BDCA suspended the eleven players of Hurlingham for one year following the forfeit with the right of appeal, however following this the Hurlingham club which had been in existence for many years disbanded.

Trophy winners for the season included: Club Champion Frank Edlin, batting and bowling winner Brian Jones, Most Improved Ken Brown, Best Under 18 player Graham Hamilton and Best clubman John Polson.

As at August 1956 the Club had four life members of the BDCA, they were Norm Usher, George Toe, Frank Edlin and George Polson.

Twenty five years ago plus – 1975 – 2000 BACK TO A GRADE

Season 1976-77 saw a new team selection system introduced where the first eleven captain, club coach (if not the same person as the captain) and three or four independent selectors appointed.

The First Eleven promoted to A grade but the extremely wet season saw many drawn matches with Union finishing in seventh position. A notable performance this season was the victory over eventual Premiers Bentleigh Methodist to retain the Wright-Edlin Shield, the first time we had won the shield against a Bentleigh Methodist A' Grade team.

This Season saw a number of outstanding individual performances.

Club Coach Jack Vollugi was appointed as an approved V.C.A. coach and a selector and coach of the Cricket Union of Victoria Under Twenty-One team and the club decided to name the Junior Most Improved and Junior Encouragement awards be named in Jack's honour.

CON GOROZIDIS AND RUSSELL PURVIS SHOW THEIR CLASS

Con Gorozidis, Junior Club Champion for the third successive year, won the Club's Under Sixteen Bowling Average taking 50 wickets which also gave him the C.M.C.A. Aggregate Wicket Award and the Most Outstanding Junior Award. He was selected in the W.J. Dowling Under Sixteen team in which he performed excellently.

The quality of Con and his great mate Russell Purvis came out in the final Under Sixteen game of the season.

Needing to win outright in a one day game to make the finals we met Bailey Park at the large Bailey Reserve.

Unfortunately Bailey Park won the toss and sent us in to bat. In a remarkable display we belted up 0/102 off 8 overs and then declared with Con unbeaten on 74 and Russell Purvis 23 not out.

Bailey were then routed for 42 with Con snaring 5/22 off 8 overs and Russell 4/15 off 7.4 overs.

Not having a big enough lead to force the follow on Con smashed a six in our second dig and we declared at 1/8 (2 wides as extras) in 4 balls.

Bailey Park struggled to 7/18 off 7 overs when stumps were drawn with Con taking 5/12 off 4 overs and Russell 2/4 off 3 overs, thus averting an outright loss.

As Con was leaving the field a group of opposition women were hurling abuse at Con and I suggested that they desist as our club will not be held responsible for his actions. They stopped.

As I was driving the young 15 year old Con back to Hurlingham he burst into tears and said "I have let the Club down". I replied "no you haven't what you did there today no one else could have done"

When Con arrived back at Hurlingham, Con was still upset and Coach Jack Vollugi gave him a big hug and said "You are a champion"

One of Con's best performances was winning the C.M.C.A. Cricket Ball Throwing competition and competing against international cricketers at the M.C.G.at the Centenary Test.

Whilst English cricketer Ian Botham won, Con put up a creditable performance for a youngster.

Brian Adams showed great application to win the 'A' Grade batting, was Club Champion and won the Most Improved Award. He represented the C.M.C.A. in all Association matches and played for the C.U.O.V. Under Twenty-One team.

That season also saw the election of great stalwarts Kevin McNally and Peter Fitzpatrick as life members.



Trophy winners and parents group together for a photo following the 1975-76 season presentation day

10 years ago plus – Year 2000 onwards

2005-06 Season

MOORABBIN LEADER NEWSPAPER dated 26 October 2005 reported

UNION HOME IN THRILLER

Give Brighton Union a big run chase and watch it go. Union, on Saturday climbed a mountain, topping Omega's daunting 6/271 in their CMCA Longmuir Shield match.

It was a thrilling win, achieved with only six balls remaining. The two Cons were outstanding, with skipper Pothitos cracking 90 and Gorozidis 94.

Omega had the Union innings in tatters at 4/33 early, but Pothitos and Cyril "Blankety Blanks" Campbell (41) set about rebuilding the innings with a 106 run partnership. When the eight wicket fell, Union still required 32 runs off five overs but Gorozidis and youngster Stuart Bell guided it home.

On field we had a very successful season with the recruitment of a number of handy players enabled us to get four of our five senior teams into the finals.

The first eleven overcame a slow start to sneak into fourth spot on percentage. Skipper Con Pothitos had a fine season to take out the Senior Club Championship award. Improvement of younger players especially Stuart Bell was also encouraging. A stirring win against Omega in the semi was a great performance, but we were outclassed in the preliminary final by eventual premiers East Sandringham.



Club Champion Con Pothitos plays a typical classic off drive.

The seconds benefited from improved depth to have an excellent season and finish runners up to Omega. A highlight was a thrilling tied game against Cluden in the preliminary final and young guns Ben Coupe and Peter Hughes really showed their class. New captain Jason Parsonage instilled an attacking attitude in this side.

The third eleven were unfortunately defeated in the finals while in the fourth eleven many junior players gained valuable experience especially Robert Blair and Antony Stojko. The One Day side finished fourth after defeating two of the three sides above them during the season but their semi was unfortunately washed out.

Special mention is made of the continuous work of Simon Russell as practice manager, first eleven team manager Rob Robinson and first eleven scorer Les Jason.

The junior section enjoyed a relative successful year. We fielded a combined under sixteen team with Cluden, and this team was leading the under sixteen A Friday grade until Private School cricket took away the best talent and ended any chance of finals. Dylan Chaplin-Burch was the star performer in that side.

Both the under fourteen A and under fourteen B sides narrowly squeezed into the finals, with the under fourteen A side storming to a great premiership defeating the two top placed sides. We were the only fourth placed junior side in the entire CMCA to win a flag. Robert Blair, Antony Stojko, Henry Hanlon and Taylor Jones excelled in a side where everyone contributed, with the bowling and fielding in a low scoring grand final simply outstanding.

Experienced team managers Peter Struck and James Campbell deserve credit in helping resurrect a season that looked all but gone at Christmas.

The under fourteen B side played "out of their skins" to upset Brighton in the semi, but went down narrowly to Ormond in the grand final. Jack Jopling and Tom Power-Horan had fine seasons.

Neither of our under twelve sides made the finals, winning five and four games respectively. The twelve A side were heavily dependent on Patrick Tiernan and a couple of other players for runs, unluckily lost a number of close games and Private School cricket ended any finals hopes. The twelve D side were a very young and inexperienced side and did well to be as competitive as they were.

Peter Hughes had a great season with the bat in the third eleven to finish with an average of 118.0.