

GLANCING BACK – No 7 – By Noel Pullen

100 plus years ago -1900-25

BRIGHTON SOUTHERN CROSS NEWSPAPER dated 18 OCTOBER, 1913 reported

HURLINGHAM

NEW RECREATION GROUND FOR BRIGHTON.

A good deal of criticism has been levelled at the present Brighton Council owing to the many new members occasioned by recent retirements.

The new Council has been compared with the old one and has been found lacking in the cohesion that characterises a body of men who have been long associated together. The previous council gave particular attention to drainage and building regulations. The new council, however, though still somewhat raw, continues to show resource and energy. The first electric tram route has been agreed upon and the primary extension along Bay street approved. The introduction of electric trams means the reawakening of a long somnolent district.

Another important matter which has been faced boldly despite the difficulties surrounding it is that of recreation reserves.

The Brighton football ground becomes Brighton property with the annexed triangle at Brighton Beach.

The children's play ground in Berwick Street has been acquired, and at last Monday's meeting it was decided to purchase the balance of the Hurlingham Estate for recreation purposes from the executors of the late Sir Thomas Bent. The land proposed to be purchased comprises about 12 acres, the frontage to Nepean road being about 1,200 feet, and there is a frontage of 100 feet to Union Street.

The land was placed under offer to the council some time ago, and the East ward Councillors, particularly Cr. Cheeseman consistently advocated its purchase, but were unable to secure a majority vote.

The fact that the estate was liable to be subdivided for building purposes in the immediate future brought the matter under notice from the point of view of coming to a final decision. It is satisfactory to know that the purchase was agreed to unanimously by the Council. The price arranged with the vendors, the estate of the late Sir Thomas Bent, is understood to be £150 per acre, which property experts consider to be a very reasonable price considering the state of the property market.

The acquisition of the land for recreation purposes fills a long felt want. When about 5 ½ acres of the estate was subdivided recently 25 blocks facing Hurlingham and Francis streets were sold for £2,458. It has been reported that four acres fronting Nepean road may be sold with a view to reducing the cost to the Council for the remaining 8 acres to about £500.

The original Hurlingham is the ultra-fashionable London polo ground. The ground purchased by the council has also a sporting history. The licensee of the Brighton Club Hotel, had it laid out as a racecourse, and it enjoyed a reputation as one of several suburban courses. Subsequently the place was devoted to pigeon shooting, and rabbit coursing was also indulged in as a popular sport in its day.

The Brighton Union Club subsequently secured the ground for cricket, and the scarcity of local grounds has compelled them to allow the Brighton Congregationalists to share it with them this season. The Council's action will confer a boon on the youth of the district, and they will have the credit of carrying out an undertaking shelved on many previous occasions in the past half century of Brighton's municipal history.

75 plus years ago - 1925-50

BACK TO BRIGHTON DISTRICT

In a quiet way Union gathered its strength at the end of the war, returned to the Brighton District Cricket Association and defeated Hurlingham in the 1946-47 grand final before a crowd estimated in excess of 250. In a low scoring game Union made 54 and 97 to Hurlingham's 57 and 59 which were in contrast to such scores during the season of 356 amassed against New Street Methodists, 9/210 against Boomerang, 259 versus St. Stephens, 8/287 hit up against Brighton Technical School Old Boys and 8/248 against Brighton East.



FIRST ELEVEN PREMIERSHIP TEAM 1946-47

Back Row: – Len Cato (Secretary), Allan Nutter, Vern Gladman, Jack Pearce, Pat Bach, G.E. Lett

Front Row: – C.A. Patterson, Bill Bach, Alan Moore, Cyril Hindson, Terry Quinn.

Absent – J. Quinn, J. McAliece

The second X1 finished in third place.

Names that became the strength of the club included Cyril Hindson, Frank Edlin, Vern Gladman, Terry Quinn, Les Polson, George Polson, Jack Pearce, Allan Nutter, Pat Bach, Bill Bach, Len McAliece, Allan Moore and Len Cato.

Fifty plus years ago – 1950-75

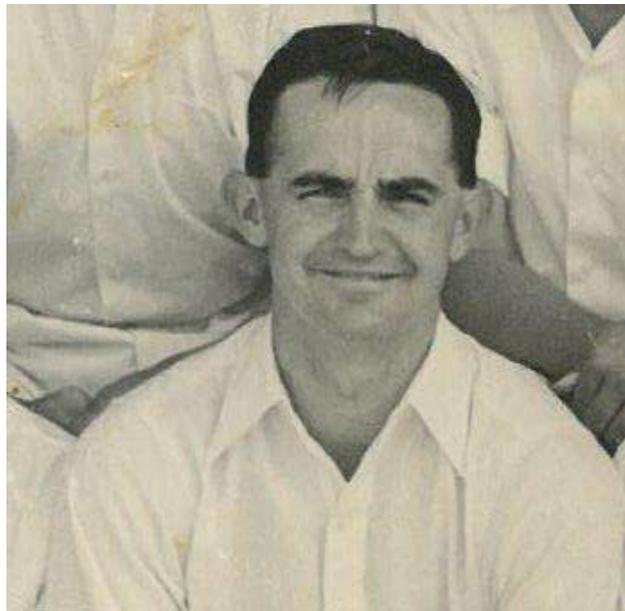
SIX CONSECUTIVE FIRST ELEVEN PENNANT

The sixth consecutive first X1 pennant was won in 1960 – 61 when we defeated Southern Cross and that team was John Polson (Captain), Les Polson, George Polson, Peter Smith, Graham Hamilton, Brian Jones, Les Woods, Graeme Bindt, Howard Leigh Watkin, Jim Egan and Alan Kay

Some of the trophy winners for the season were – Club Champion George Polson, Batting average Peter Smith, Bowling Average George Polson, Most Improved Jim Egan and Best clubman Les Polson.

1961 – 1966

Les Polson – elected Life Member (1961)



Les in his playing days

Les joined the Club in 1943 and played an estimated 250 games over 18 seasons including 9 First eleven Premierships. Again club match records are not available but Les' best bowling return was 8/14.

He started as a leg-spinner and evolved into an accurate into-the-wind opening bowler who won five bowling averages in the BDCA and the CMCA.

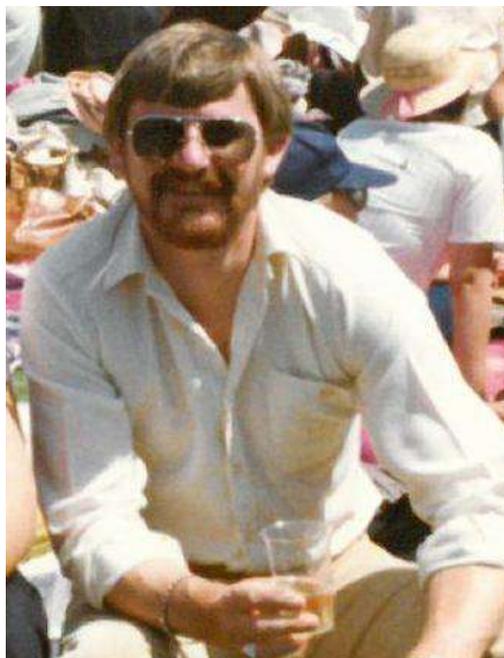
Les was considered one of the greatest ever players in the district.

He was First eleven captain in 1959-60 and Senior Club Champion on one occasion.

Les served on the Committee for 15 years, as Treasurer from 1948 to 1963,

Twenty five years ago plus – 1975 – 2000

Ian Collins – elected Life Member (1980)



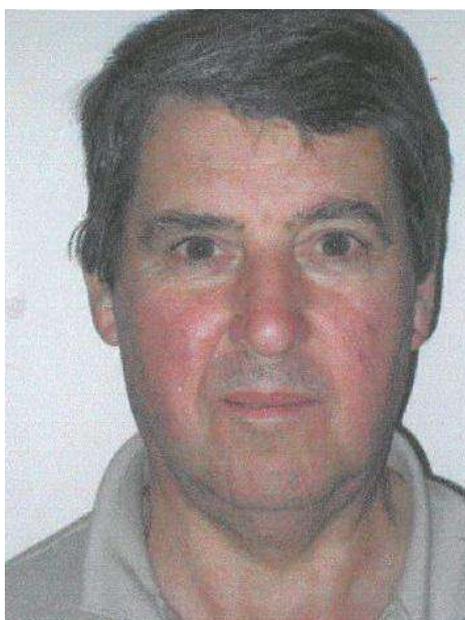
Ian joined the Club in 1967 and played 127 games over 15 seasons and was captain of the third eleven for one season.

He made 1082 runs but his prowess was with the ball where he captured 294 wickets at an average of 13.5 with his best haul being 7/26

He served on the committee for ten years, during which time he was assistant secretary for six of these years.

He was also a selector and junior team manager for one season and an outstanding organizer of social functions.

Doug Lovell – elected Life Member (1980)



Doug also joined the Club in 1967 and played 153 games over 13 seasons.

Doug was a dour opening bat that always put the side first and made 3325 runs with a highest score of 76. He captained the fourth eleven for one season.

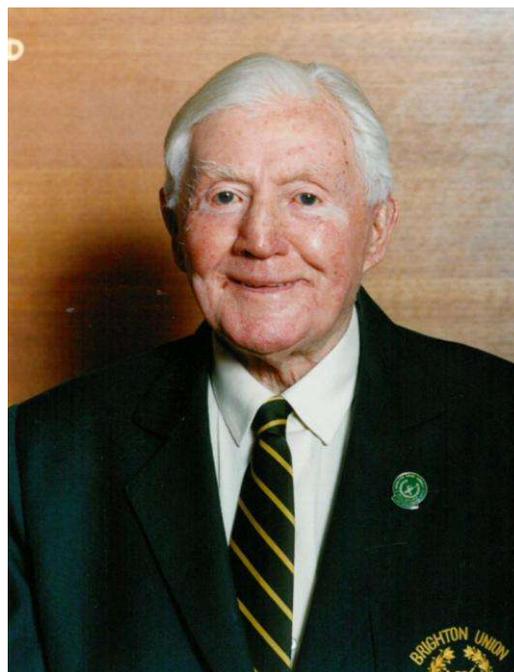
He served on the committee for ten years, seven of them as Treasurer and was a junior team manager for three years.

In more recent years he has volunteered as the Club's auditor.

This is a true story

Doug invited everyone down to his house for a novel social function – frog racing. The big crowd that turned up were stunned to see wooden frogs not live ones in action. Eight lanes a metre wide and 10 metres long were marked on the ground. Contestants were in pairs one at each end of the lane. They held each end of a long piece of string threaded through a frog. The people at one end held the frog at their end of the string with their arms at full stretch vertically. Upon commencement of the race, the person at the other end held their end of the string as low as possible to the ground and, keeping the string taut, jiggled away in order for the frog to move from one end to the other. The winner was the first person to get their frog over the line without touching it. As usual the bookie lost and the punters won. Despite no real frogs it was one of the greatest “turns” held at Union.

Jack Vollugi – elected Life Member – 1980



Jack joined the Club in 1971 following his retirement from full time work at the age of 65.

Jack was so impressed with the attitude of Doug Lovell's Under Fourteen team of 1970-71 that he had presented the Premiership Shield on behalf of the CMCA he volunteered to take on a coaching role at the Club.

Jack has coached the Club for the past nine years, been a selector during that time, served on the committee for five years and won the Best Club Member award on three occasions.

Josie Wingfield – elected Life Member – 1980



Josie came to the club in 1965 as she was David Wingfield's fiancé. She fitted in very well and was soon involved in preparing afternoon teas and working at social functions.

A florist by profession Josie became involved in the Seventy Fifth Year anniversary function organizing all the table arrangements and the flowers for the wonderful evening.

Josie and David married in 1966 and their homes were always available for functions such as Christmas parties and Presentation functions which Josie did all the preparations for.

Although the club rooms were not very inviting Josie organized after match food for players and members for many years which was greatly appreciated by everyone.

This is a true story

Josie was the perfect host as usual and had baked a huge cake at a lovely get together at her home. Anyway she was offering the cake around and when she came to Jimmy Laurent she asked Jimmy what piece of cake he would like and Jimmy snapped "the biggest bit"

The First Eleven showed a marked improvement on the previous three seasons in 'A' Grade to finish in second position at the end of the home and away games. In the semi-final we made a massive 433 (Peter Head 121, Mark Olsen 100, Kevin McNally 52 not out, Kevin Adams 32). The match was a draw with West Bentleigh 2/98 at stumps. Peter Head and Mark Olsen featured in a magnificent fourth wicket partnership of 244.

The season ended on a disappointing note when we were well beaten by East Sandringham in the final.

The Club however regained the C.M.C.A. Club Championship Trophy, the fourth time we had had that honour in the six years since its inception.

10 years ago plus 2000 onwards

Obituary – John Egan (9.7.39 – 25.5.05)

On 25th May 2005 long-serving life-member John Charles Egan died after a long and courageous battle with debilitating illness. Huntington's disease (an incurable neurological condition) made its effects known in the late 1980s, and another cruel blow was cancer in the last couple of years. Despite these misfortunes John continued to visit the club whenever his health allowed and was greatly admired for his fighting spirit.

John Egan joined Brighton Union in 1953, aged 14. He played over 300 games for the club until his retirement in 1988. While our statistical records only date back to 1963, it is estimated John made 4350 runs and took 730 wickets. His best performances include 9/35 versus Southern Cross Social in 1959-60, 8/59 in 1969-70 (2nd XI), 8/58 in 1976-77 (4th XI), 148 (3rd XI, 1966-67), 156 (4th XI, 1974-75). Many of John's finest moments came with the ball, one example being in the 1969-70 C-grade final. After scraping into 4th spot with 7 wins, Union faced top team Benteigh ANA in the semi-final. In an extraordinary performance, Union speedsters John Egan (5/16) and Allen Thomas (4/8) routed ANA for only 32, the entire innings lasting a mere 20 overs. John took 46 wickets for the season, and the team were premiers. In the 1974-75 season he turned in probably his greatest individual effort in the F-grade semi-final, taking 7/59 against the previously-unbeaten Ormond Methodists in their innings of 153, then blasting a career-best 156 in our innings of 330. Not content with this, John took a further 6/74 in Ormond Meths second innings of 225. The team went on to win the flag, with youngsters Con Gorozidis and Spiro Layias putting on a fighting 74 run partnership in the grand-final when the match seemed to be slipping away.

John also played a vital administrative role, acting as club delegate to the BDCA and CMCA, committeeman, secretary, and President for 12 years. John's presidency spanned the club's turbulent 4 year stint in the VJCA, and the rebuilding phase after the club's acrimonious departure from that competition and return to the CMCA in 1974-75. This season saw the launch of the "Be Involved" campaign with all members throwing themselves body-and-soul into the club's revival. Six teams made the finals and the club won the inaugural CMCA Club Championship. After stepping down from committee work, John continued to serve the club as team manager for his beloved 1st XI.

John was part of a large family (he had 6 brothers and sisters), and leaves behind widow Denise and children Sean, Brendan, Kristine and Kylie. Sean and Brendan both played junior and senior cricket with the club. Over the years many enjoyable club social functions were held at the Egan home in Abercrombie St. In addition to his cricket involvement John was also very active in the St.Peter's Church East Benteigh (President of the Parish Board, commentator and regular reader at services) and St.Peter's Football club (club manager, assistant-coach and coach, club President), and was a fanatical North Melbourne supporter.

Over 400 people attended the funeral service at St.Peter's Church, East Benteigh, and many continued on to Springvale Crematorium and the following wake at Abercrombie St. In attendance were past Brighton Union greats George, Les and John Polson, Noel Pullen, David Wingfield, Brian, Graham, Kevin and Robert Adams, Brad Kreyborg, Con Gorozidis, Danny Frew, Tony Grant, Owen Morros, plus many other past and current players.

