

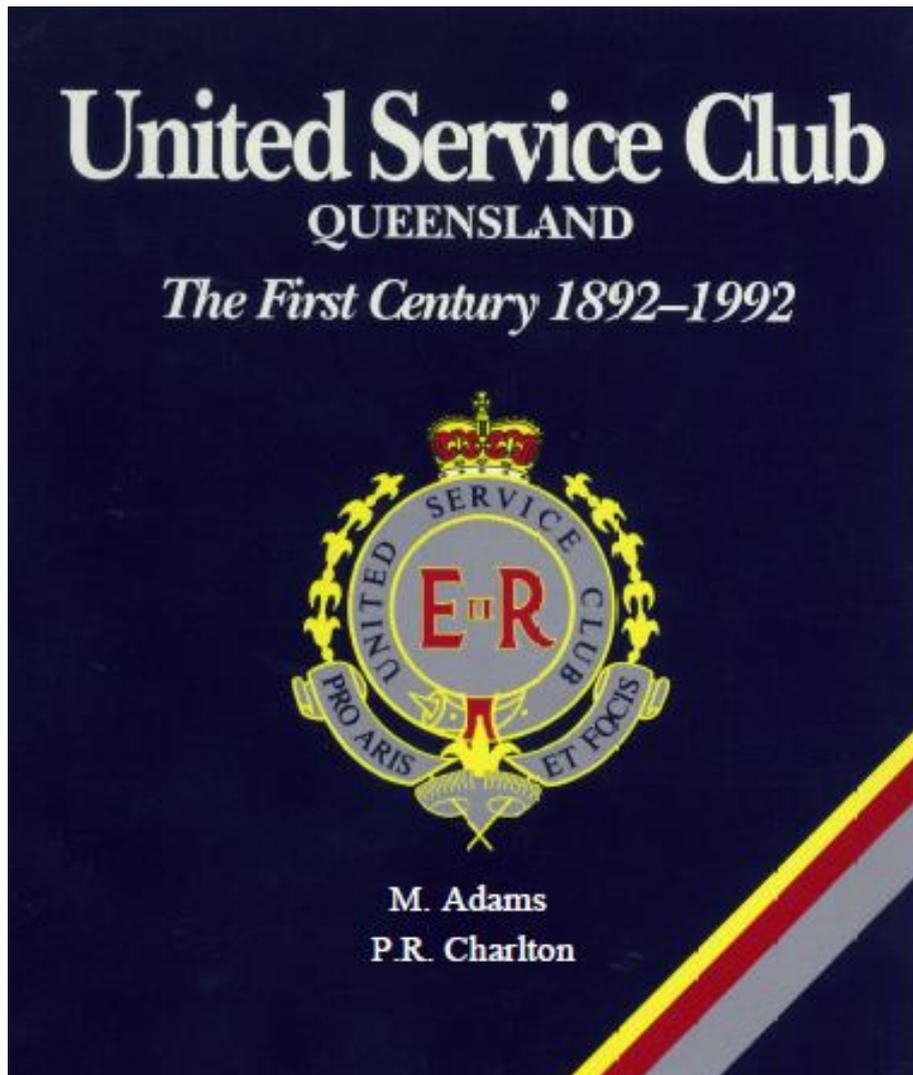


united service club

history & heritage notes

Club History 1892-1992

SECTION 1 (Chapters 1 to 3)



In the 1990s the Club 'commissioned' the late Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and the late Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton to compile a book that outlined the history of the United Service Club from its founding in 1892 to its centenary in 1992. Writing the Club's history had been planned and abandoned many times in previous years, and researching this compilation was a challenging task as our record-keeping was less than fastidious and much deduction and reliance on memories were required. The book is now out of stock.

*As we hold no more copies of the book, this electronic version was prepared in January 2016 to enable today's Members to appreciate the stories and personalities of the Club's first 100 years. There are some recurring themes across the years that may resonate today, eg membership, finances, social functions, catering quality and property proposals. Almost all the original format has been faithfully retained, including page-breaks, (to the limit of our volunteer's ability) with a few minor and inconsequential variations here and there. It is presented in pdf format after scanning, Optical Character Recognition (OCR,) and conversion to Word format, then to pdf. As the consolidated version is over 7Mb in size, the book is presented here in pdf format **split into five sections** for shorter downloads.*

We may have missed an occasional typographical error for which our volunteer apologises and blames on the OCR and the manual conversion processes combined with his unfortunate level of attention to detail.

UNITED SERVICE CLUB, QUEENSLAND

The First Century, 1892-1992

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the present Members of the Club who inherit a century of traditions created by very many past members whose efforts are described, however imperfectly, in these pages.

United Service Club

QUEENSLAND

The First Century 1892-1992

by

Flight lieutenant Murray Adams

and

Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton

1992
UNITED SERVICE CLUB
Brisbane

Authors' Notes

Anyone looking for the minutiae of Club life will be disappointed in the text. In this book, we have set out to write a history of the United Service Club's first hundred years in a readable and entertaining fashion. This has meant that we have had to confine details of committees, office holders and other important appointments to appendices at the end. There interested readers will find the detail they seek. It is as complete as we could make it under the circumstances.

This has been very much a joint effort. Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams carried out much original research, both in the Club's records and in other repositories of useful and relevant information. He also wrote Part One when it became clear that Lieutenant Peter Charlton's other responsibilities-as associate editor of *The Courier Mail* and, from 1989-1991, commanding officer of the 49th Battalion, the Royal Queensland Regiment - would not allow completion by the required date. Peter Charlton wrote Part Two of the book. The entire text was read, on several occasions during its preparation, by the Club's secretary and manager, Lieutenant Colonel Guy Bagot, and then finally by the president, Major General 'Digger' James, at the time of its completion. The authors thank both gentlemen and also members of the staff who have helped in various ways from supplying cups of coffee to making countless photocopies. Responsibilities for errors, however, remain with the authors.

As will be clear from the text, the Club's various committees over the years have not been particularly assiduous in preserving archival material. Much valuable correspondence and more than thirty years of minutes have been lost; memories of the more senior members provide an imperfect substitute. Within that limitation, however, and with the aim of providing an accurate, anecdotal history of the United Service Club, the authors hope that they have done justice to a task that seemed rather easier at the beginning than at the end.

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Foreword

ROBERT O'NEILL

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It must have been with considerable relief that Major General John Owen opened the United Service Club on 22 December 1892. He had had a difficult first year as Commandant of the Queensland Defence Force, having lost a political battle with a subordinate Volunteer officer who also happened to be a Member of the Legislative Council. At least Owen was able to take comfort in the knowledge that by then he and his fellow officers could enjoy the refuge of their own club where, no doubt, they refought their bureaucratic and financial battles with the politicians and recouped their morale over a drink or meal at the end of a wearisome day.

But as Owen said in his opening address, the Club was established to serve two objectives. In addition to its social function it was to promote the study of professional matters. Owen must have been aware of rising tensions in Europe. Kaiser Wilhelm II had dismissed Bismarck in 1890 before beginning to secure what he saw as Germany's rightful place in the sun. France and Russia, having formed their entente in 1891, agreed on a draft military convention in late 1892. That same year in Berlin, the new Chief of the General Staff, General von Schlieffen, dramatically re-cast German strategy for the conduct of the apparently inevitable two-front war with Russia and France. He discarded the more cautious plan of Moltke the Elder by which the Germans were to push the Russians back steadily while holding defensively against the French. Under Schlieffen the initial German blow was to be delivered rapidly and massively against France, even though the cause should be some remote problem in the Balkans. Chancellor Caprivi in November 1892 introduced his new military law to give the German Army the increased numbers it would need to subdue France quickly. At the same time Alfred Thayer Mahan's recently published theories of command of the sea were fuelling the ambitions of naval planners in Europe and around the Pacific.

These were stirring times for the foundation of a professional military club and indeed much of the succeeding century has had the same character. The long periods of tension which preceded the two world wars, the global struggles themselves in which so many members of the Club served their country, and then the four wars of the Cold War period have all offered a challenging context for the Club's social and professional exchanges of views. From a quiet post by its bar a silent observer might have eavesdropped on an absorbing series of conversation on virtually all aspects of war and strategic policy, from the personal problems of the individuals caught up in events and processes which were to strain them to the limit, through to dispute on the respective merits of commanders and statesmen.

Professional military clubs the world over are institutions of a special character; comfortable but not lavish, friendly but within the bounds of regimen and discipline, and acknowledging a central object of concern but not pursuing it beyond what voluntary paying members will tolerate. Most of these clubs are also well administered, by officers elected by their colleagues on the basis of their service reputations.

The United Service Club meets all of these criteria and has a well earned place of high and warm regard amongst the ranks of military fraternities internationally. It has sustained its members in their social and official lives. It has helped them to debate the professional issues on whose understanding so many lives have depended over the past century. Now it is fortunate enough to have its history recorded and analysed in this volume by two devoted members, Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton. Their work opens a new phase of military-social history in Queensland. It offers insights which will not only interest members of the USC but enlighten others, present and future, on how men of the 20th century built social institutions to enable them to withstand the stresses of war and military service in peace. I commend it as a thoroughly prepared, balanced work which sets out clearly the story of a significant institution seeking to improve its performance against a turbulent background of state, national and international events over the past hundred years.

Professor Robert John O'Neill was born in 1936 and educated at Scotch College, Melbourne; RMC Duntroon and Oxford University.

He was a Rhodes Scholar in 1960. He was mentioned in despatches for service in Vietnam 1966-67 and promoted Major in 1967. His appointments have included: Senior lecturer in history, RMC Duntroon, 1967-69; Head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, 1971-82 and Official Historian of the Korean War. He has researched and published a number of works on military history and defence.

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Major General John Fletcher Owen RA (1839–1924) Commandant Queensland Defence Force 1891–94. Founding President 1892. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)

Part One

CHAPTER ONE

Comrades in Arms

The profession of arms was alive and well in Britain during the early part of the nineteenth century; the long running struggle with France was continuing and London was the meeting place for officers during the intervals between their arduous campaigns. It was natural that those with common experience and allegiances should seek each other's company during these interludes and the only venues available to them were the, often unruly, taverns and coffee houses of the city. Clubs such as the Flanders, the Royal Military, the Peninsular and the Royal Navy flourished, even under these adverse circumstances of meeting places which lacked the decorum and exclusivity appropriate for the elite of His Majesty's armed services. The common desire within these groups for better facilities resulted in Lord Lynedoch, better known as Sir Thomas Graham the victor of Barrosa, calling a meeting at The Thatched House Tavern, St. James Street, London, on 31 May 1815, at which it was agreed by the 80 officers present to form a club and procure premises for its exclusive use. This meeting had the blessing of the Duke of Wellington who at that time was on the field of Waterloo awaiting the arrival of Napoleon.

Senior officers of the Royal Navy soon sought participation in this enterprise and so the United Service Club came into being, in 1816, and was the first gentlemen's club in London to have its own premises, and the first military officers' club in the world. Membership was restricted to officers of field rank who had seen service on the field of battle. An unknown author later wrote, 'There is no club which possesses more characteristic features than the United Service' and, 'for all, or for any of the purposes for which gentlemen meet, this house appears to be admirably adapted'. He went on to say, 'No corner in this vast metropolis is to us so much a subject for respect; for where in any country can the eye rest on men who have more nobly deserved of their country?'

Sadly, this admirable club, subjected to the same adverse economic factors which caused the demise of other London clubs in the post World War II period, failed to survive beyond 155 years. Actually, it did linger for another three years in an incongruous union with the Royal Aero Club, but in 1974 the name, United Service Club, finally disappeared from London directories. Fortunately, its magnificent

* From History of the *United Service Club*, Major General Sir Louis C Jackson KBE CB CMG 1937.

home at 116 Pall Mall, complete with its original furniture; the huge chandelier presented by King George IV to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo; the impressive paintings of that battle and of Trafalgar, and the military portraits remains intact and is faithfully cared for by its present occupants, the Institute of Directors.

Towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, in the Colony of Queensland, the Brisbane based officers of the Defence Forces used to foregather in taverns, much as their British counterparts had done eighty or more years earlier. One of the first meeting places was the Shakespeare (later renamed Cecil) Hotel in George Street but the Gresham in Adelaide Street gained favour later because it was closer to the drill sheds, as they were known in those days. There, it is reported, the officers had the use of an upstairs room on the Creek Street side, with liquor service from the bar below and a piano for the sing-song which was part of social life in that era before recorded music.

It appears that for some time the idea of forming an officers' club with its own premises had been favoured and talked about, but the drive and initiative needed to bring it about seemed to be lacking. At least, that was the case until Major General John Fletcher Owen arrived from England to take over as Commandant, Queensland Defence Forces in 1891. He was a man of action who had gained recognition for his part in the British defeat of Zulu King Cetewayo, at Ulundi, in 1879. Owen gave notice of his interest when, at the Commandant's Dinner on 19 August 1892, 'He also expressed the hope that before long some means might be found of establishing some place where the officers of the forces might meet more frequently in social intercourse, as the opportunities they had of doing so at present were few'.

As good as his word, he approached the Home Secretary (as ministers for local affairs were then designated), the Honourable] RDickson,* and the Government responded with the offer of a building for the use of the proposed club and a grant of 50 pounds per year. Then he set up a committee under Major James Gartside of the 1st (Moreton) Regiment to make all arrangements necessary for the establishment of the club. The other members of the committee were, Major J F G Foxtou ** (Field Artillery), Major W K McClintock (DAAG), Captain R McKie (Field Artillery), Captain R Dowse and Captain J W Green as secretary. The committee did their work well. and the official opening took place on 22 December 1892. The *Brisbane Courier* reported:

The Queensland United Service Club was formally opened on Thursday night by the

* Later, The Hon Sir James (Robert) Dickson KCMG (1832-1901). Premier of Queensland 1898-99. Auctioneer and company director.

** Later, Colonel The Hon Justin Fox Greenlaw Foxtou CMG (1849-1916). MLA Queensland 1883-1904. 'for many years chairman of governing body of Queensland *United Service Institution ...* ' (*Who is Who, Australia 1908*).

Commandant, Major General] F Owen R.A.. There was a large attendance of officers of the various branches of the service. Amongst those present were: Major General Owen, Colonel Drury,* Brigade Surgeon Thomson, Lieutenant Colonels Stanley and Newman, Majors Lyster, Gartside, M'Clintock, Foxton and Harris, Captains].]. Byron,]. W. Green (hon. secretary and treasurer), M'Kie, Hely, Larsen, Hellicar, Lavarack, Hutton, Hutchinson, M'Leod, J.C. O'Brien, Strachey (A.D.C. to Governor), Ackerley, L. H. Turner, Dowse and Hoghton, Surgeon O'Doherty, Drs Lyons, Connolly and Booth, Lieutenants Baxendall, Barbier, Tanner, Keely, W. H. Hart, Coxen, W. A. D. Bell, Lewis, Girling and Pocock.

[Major Lyster later became president of the Club, Major Foxton was chairman of committee for some years and, with Major Gartside, Captain Larsen and Lieutenant Coxen, are mentioned elsewhere in this text. Lieutenant Colonel Henry Charles Stanley was chief engineer of the Queensland Railways and later commanded the artillery brigade. He was a brother of F D G Stanley who designed the National Bank, the Queensland Club and other notable Brisbane buildings. Captain Cecil Wallace Lavarack had been a subaltern in an imperial regiment prior to migrating to Queensland. His son became famous as Lieutenant General Sir John Lavarack.]

The room presented a very pleasing appearance, and that the arrangements reflected credit on the committee, and afforded pleasure to the members, was made apparent at a later period of the evening by the fact that a vote of thanks proposed by the Commandant was cordially responded to by those present. The proceedings were opened by an address from the Commandant, who most concisely and ably put before the meeting the objects for which the Club was established namely, as a means on the one hand for enabling officers of the various branches of the force to meet together socially, and on the other by means of lectures, &c, to further them in the pursuit of a better knowledge of the profession. He pointed out that in any connected body, but more especially in a military one, the old adage, "Unity is strength", was a most true one and he trusted so good a commencement having been made that every officer in the force would try and further the endeavours of the committee by inducing all outside the pale at present to join. Colonel Drury said a few words of kindly encouragement and advice. Major Gartside gave an account of the working of the committee from the time of its appointment, and also responded on behalf of the committee, and the Commandant formally declared the Club open, and requested the members to proceed from labour to refreshment.

The Queensland Government Gazette of 7 October 1893 duly notified 'United Service Club, William Street' as a registered club.

The absence of any early Club records precludes the compilation of a complete

*Colonel Edward Robert Drury CMG (1832-96). Biog. note, Appendix III.

roll of foundation members but some additions can be made to the formal opening list, with a reasonable degree of certainty. In view of the fact that the Club did not come into being until very nearly the end of the year it seems reasonable to regard all 1892 entrants as foundation members and, on that basis, life members shown to be of that vintage would have to be included. They were: Lieutenant Colonel J H Adams, Colonel E Deshon, Major F L Jones, Captain C deF Pennefather, Lieutenant Colonel J W Boggie, Major General R S Browne, Colonel C D W Rankin, Lieutenant J W Wassell, Lieutenant H M Chester and Lieutenant Colonel T Pye. The ranks, of course, belong to a period long after 1892.

[Lieutenant Colonel J H Adams was formerly of the 72nd Foot Regiment and described by Major General R S Browne in *A Journalist's Memory* as 'a grim old soldier, who ran the supply, or commissariat as we termed it'. Major Francis Lionel Jones died in 1954, after 62 years membership, and had been the last of the foundation members. Major General Reginald Spencer Browne CB (1856-1944), an officer of the Queensland Mounted Infantry for many years, served in the South African War and on Gallipoli. He was a journalist with *The Brisbane Courier* and an enthusiastic polo player. Colonel CD W Rankin, a former Queensland Minister for Railways, was the father of Dame Annabelle Rankin. Lieutenant Colonel T Pye was a well known architect who served as president of the Club in 1919.]

Early Club historian, Major H M M Maddock, claimed in 1935 that Major A J Boyd and Lieutenant B M H E Ranken were also foundation members and by 1942 remembered the additional names of: Lieutenant G B Barnett, Lieutenant J F Church, Lieutenant A D Douglas, Major J G Drake, Commander Walton Drake RN, Captain R B Echlin, Staff Paymaster E V Pollock, Major J Irving and Lieutenant A Pixley.*

The *Brisbane Courier* reported 'a large attendance of officers' at the official opening and named forty of them but prefaced the list with the words, 'Amongst those present', which suggests that there were others. If the ten additional 1892 life members are accepted and also the further eleven named by Maddock then the total number of foundation members would be 61. It does seem likely that with approximately 150 officers in the Brisbane area, and their reported strong desire for a club, that there may have been other foundation members who have not been named. This probability is increased when it is remembered that Maddock's 1935 writing indicated some memory deficiencies. The fact that he joined the Club 14 years after its foundation also suggests that he would have been unlikely to have known all the foundation members. The actual number of early members must remain a mystery, but it seems likely that the subscription of half a guinea would not

*Lieutenant Arthur Pixley, was father of later members, Commander Sir Neville (Drake) Pixley MBE VRD and the late Commander Norman Stewart Pixley CMG MBE VRD

have deterred officers from joining a club which promised to be a congenial haven and, at the same time, offered facilities to advance their military careers.

His Excellency General Sir Henry Norman, Governor of Queensland and Commander in Chief of the Queensland Defence Forces, took a great interest in the new Club and was reported to have become: 'an energetic member thereof and a regular attendant at all functions, in addition to dropping in many times quite unceremoniously, in order to have a chat to the members present.'^{*} Gubernatorial interest in the Club has continued to the present day and several incumbents, in the manner of Sir Henry Norman, have paid informal visits in addition to their attendance on formal occasions.

Two, at least of the founding members went on to become generals and one, Lieutenant Walter Adams Coxen,^{**} as a Lieutenant Colonel commanded the Australian Siege Artillery in France from 1916 onwards. One historian of the period described him as 'the most distinguished artillery officer in the war of 1914-18'. In 1930, as Major General W A Coxen, he was appointed Chief of the Australian General Staff. The other one, Major General R S Browne, has been mentioned earlier.

Several officers who were commissioned in Queensland prior to 1892 and later achieved distinction were almost certainly members in the Club's early years. They included Lieutenant General Sir Harry Chauvel^{***} who had commanded the Australian Mounted Corps in Palestine and Major General] K Forsyth^{****} who became Quarter Master General of the Australian Military Forces in France. Another was Colonel P R Ricardo,^{*****} the commander of the force of mounted infantry sent to western Queensland to maintain law and order during the Shearers' Strike of 1891. Later he was Commandant, West Australian Military Forces, 1904, and commandant in Victoria from 1905 until his untimely death in 1907, following a fall whilst hunting with the Melbourne Hounds. His obituary noted that he was, 'The father of the Queensland Mounted Infantry which was made up largely of cattlemen and boundary riders.'

Other well known officers who commenced their military careers in Queensland and were probably early members of the Club also include: Lieutenant General Sir John Lavarack,[§] Major General Sir Brudenell White,^{§§} Major General Victor

^{*}*The United Service Club, A Short History*, Major H M M Maddock, 1935.

^{**}Later, Major General Walter Adams Coxen CB CMG DSO (1870-1949). Commissioned in Queensland Garrison Artillery, 1893.

^{***}Lieutenant General Sir 'Harry' (Henry) (George) Chauvel GCB GCMG (1865-1945).

^{****}Major General John Keatly Forsyth CMG (1867-1928). Commissioned Queensland Mounted Infantry, 1891. Permanent Staff, 1897. Served Gallipoli and France.

^{*****}Colonel Percy Ralph Ricardo CB (1855-1907).

[§]Lieutenant General Sir John (Dudley) Lavarack KCV O KBE CB CMG DSO (1885-1958) Australian Permanent Forces, 1905. Several important appointments. Governor of Queensland and Patron of the Club 1946-57.

^{§§}Major General Sir (Cyril) Brudenell (Bingham) White KCMG KCV O CB DSO (1875-1940). Member of the Club 1926-40.

Selheim* and Major General Brand.**

The reason why this new officers' club was named the United Service Club is not known with certainty but it is reasonable to assume that Major General Owen, as the founding president, would have had some influence in the choice of name and perhaps significant that four years earlier he had been admitted as a member of the original United Service Club in London. For some possibly similar reason the club which we now know as the Naval & Military in Melbourne, also, was called the United Service Club during the period 1886-9.

The Club took the motto of the Queensland Defence Force, namely, 'Pro aris et focus', which translates literally as 'for altar and hearth', but is interpreted more appropriately as: 'For God and country'. It is also the motto of the Royal Queensland Regiment.

The Club's foundation year was, in the world at large, an unremarkable one of comparative peace. Great Britain and the Colonies mourned the death of the Poet Laureate, Alfred, Lord Tennyson. In Europe, the great race for cavalry officers, from Berlin to Vienna, was won by Count Starhemberg of Austria with German officers placed second and third, followed by Austrians in the next 14 places. A postscript noted that 20 of the horses later died from their exertions. Whilst in Queensland trains were lighted with gas for the first time and, in New South Wales, a largely attended meeting in the town of Bourke unanimously called for an end to the importation of 'camels and Asiatics'.

The year was notable also in Queensland for Jack Howe's world record of 321 sheep sheared in one day, the removal of the ban on the importation of Kanakas to the cane fields and the inauguration of the Sheffield Shield competition for cricket. The decade preceding the formation of the Club had been one of unprecedented growth and prosperity in Queensland. Brisbane, from a town of 5,000 people in 1859, had become a bustling city of 100,000 inhabitants, although it was not proclaimed a city until ten years later. Its central business area was paved with wooden blocks, horse trams provided public transport and the streets were lit by gas supplied by The Brisbane Gas Company, but roads in the suburban areas remained unpaved and it was common to see cows grazing along the verges. Private transport was needed by suburban residents for travel to and from places of business and took the forms of riding horses, sulkies, buggies or carriages, according to means.

The great gain in population during this prosperous decade resulted in Queensland, at the time of the Club's formation, having the highest proportion of foreign

*Major General Victor Conradsdorf Morisset Selheim CB CMG (1866-1928). Served South Africa and World War I. Administrator Norfolk Island 1927-28.

**Major General Charles Henry Brand CB CMG CVO DSO (1873-1928). Commandant Victoria 1919- 21 and commanded 1st Division AMF 1921. Joined the Club in 1905.

born residents of all the Australian colonies. The vast majority had come from the British Isles, at a time when 95 per cent of Australian residents were of British stock, but significant minorities had arrived also from Germany and the Scandinavian countries. An example of the latter category was Vilhelm Larsen who, having completed a civil engineering degree at Copenhagen University, came to Queensland in response to an advertisement by a French firm then drilling for artesian water at Winton. This proved to be a short term position and so he came to Brisbane and secured work with the engineering department of the Queensland Government Railways. Soon after his arrival he joined the Brisbane Volunteer Rifles as a private and was commissioned in the Queensland Garrison Artillery in 1888 and, as Major Larsen, became its commanding officer in 1897. He was a member of the Club for 51 years, from its foundation until his death in 1943.

When Queensland separated from New South Wales in 1859 and became a Colony in its own right its first Governor, Sir George Bowen, was dismayed to discover that there was not a single soldier to defend his new territory and so, the following February he asked for two officers and 50 regular soldiers from the 12th Regiment to be transferred from Sydney. Half of the force requested arrived a year later and then he 'sought a few pieces of cannon' for the defence of Brisbane and 12 to 20 more pieces for 'the Corps of Voluntary Artillery which it is proposed to form' and suggested that some superseded 24 pounders would suffice. To give emphasis to his plea he said: 'I will only add that the Executive Council of the Colony remark with perfect truth that Queensland is probably the only Colony where there are no guns wherewith even to fire a salute on the birthday of the Sovereign'.*

Twelve of the superseded, 24 pounder, smooth bore, muzzle loaders eventually arrived the next year, 1862, and were used to fire a salute for Queen Victoria's 45th birthday on 24 May 1863. But, even in those days it was not possible to satisfy everyone and R R Mackenzie, the member for Burnett, during a Parliamentary debate, asked in regard to the Artillery Corps: 'What use would they be if an enemy came in sight? If the artillery force is to be maintained for the sole purpose of firing salutes, the expense might be done away with ...'.

In 1866 one of the guns was moved to the Windmill Observatory, not far from the present site of the Club in Wickham Terrace, and used to fire a 1 pm time signal each day. It was fortunate that the need to use artillery in defence of the Colony did not arise because these guns having been cast in 1798 were now decidedly old and the Queen's Birthday salute of 1879 ended in tragedy. One of the muzzle loaders fired prematurely killing two gunners.

In 1870 Governor Blackall informed the Secretary of State for Colonies that with 500 volunteer gunners and riflemen equipped with only 120 old English rifles with

**Volunteers at Heart*, D H Johnson 1975.

little ammunition, three field guns without any ammunition at all and 12 very old and worn battery guns, also without ammunition, the Colony's defence was in poor shape.

As the population of the Colony increased so did its defence capability but even during the command of Lieutenant Colonel John McDonnell* 1877-79 it was still only a poorly equipped force of part-time volunteers. The passing of the Defence Act of 1884 was the first positive step towards giving the Colonists some feeling of security against the variously perceived threats from the Russians, the French and the Chinese. This legislation was based on the recommendations contained in a report prepared by Captain F B T W Koch.** It provided for a decentralised Land Defence Force comprising a small permanent force headquarters, garrison and field artillery, mounted infantry, infantry and ancillary units manned by part-time soldiers plus the old Volunteer Force and the Cadet Corps. The Act, in addition, provided for conscription in the event that insufficient men offered for service but members of registered rifle clubs were exempted from this provision. Rifle clubs were popular throughout the country areas during these times, when a rifle could be bought for £5, and it is not known whether the exemption from conscription had any bearing on this popularity.

The choice of the Imperial officer to develop a new Queensland Defence Force, under the Defence Act of 1884, proved to be a most fortunate one. The ebullient, as one historian described him, Colonel G A French*** laid a very sound foundation during the years 1883-91. He was followed by an equally energetic and competent soldier in Major General J F Owen who had the misfortune to experience an economic recession and the political problems of the Volunteer Force. In his Commandant's Report for 1892, Major General Owen showed the total strength, officers and men, to be 4065, including Lieutenant Colonel the Honourable A J Thynne's**** Volunteer Force of 841. In addition there were 12 Cadet Corps comprising 25 officers and 542 cadets, about 1100 rifle club members and about 800 police, none of which were members of the Defence Forces but regarded as auxiliaries useful in an emergency.

In his first year Owen inspected units from Brisbane to Thursday Island, travelling by ship, coach and horseback. His report was generally favourable, although noting that attendance at inspection parades was not as good as it should have been and

*Lieutenant Colonel John McDonnell, Under Secretary Queensland Postal Department. Grandfather of Commander Sir Neville Pixley and Commander Norman Pixley.

**Colonel Felix Bernard Theodor Wilhelm Koch VD (1858-1944). Bank Manager.

***Later, Major General Sir George (Arthur) French KCMG (1841-1921). Commandant Queensland Defence Force, 1883-91. Commandant, New South Wales 1896-1902.

****Lieutenant Colonel The Hon Andrew Joseph Thynne MLC (1847-1927). Joined the Queensland Volunteer Force, 1867 and commanded it for many years. Founded the legal firm of Thynne & Macartney, 1893. He had a long parliamentary career.

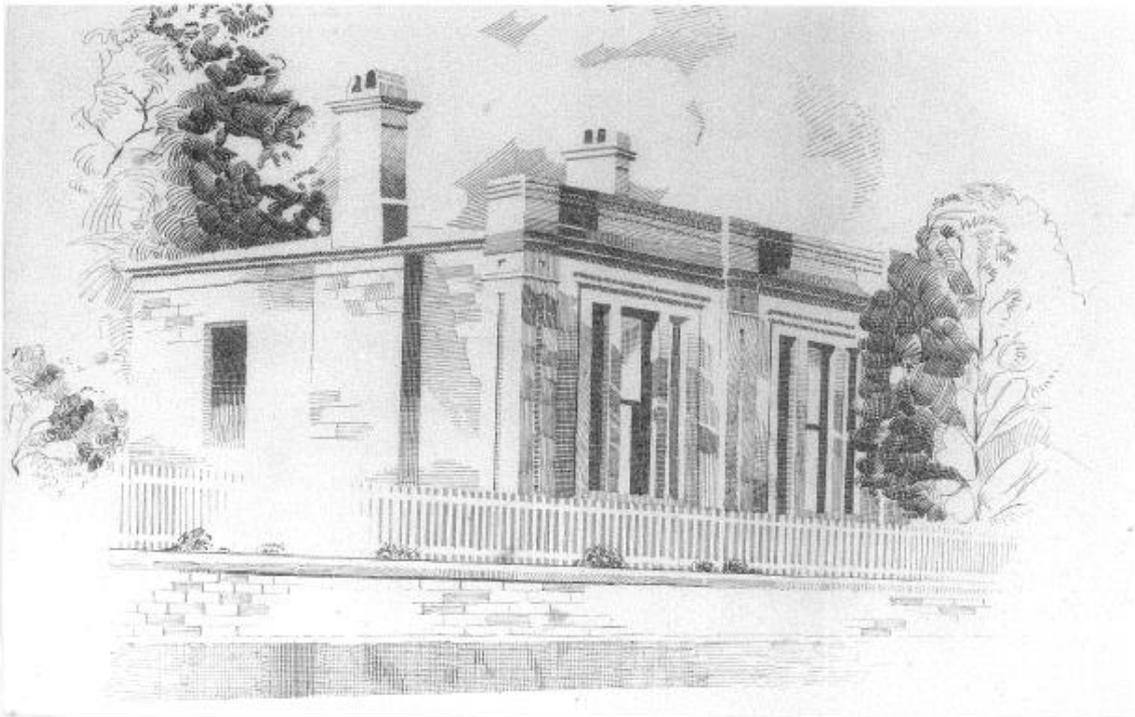


*Commander Walton Drake RN (1850–1940)
Acting Commandant Queensland Naval Defence
Force 1891–1900. President 1893, 1895, 1897
and 1899. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)*



*His Excellency General Sir Henry (Wylie) Norman
GCB GCMG CIE. Governor of Queensland 1889–
1895. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)*

The Club's first home in William Street.





The Hon Sir James (Robert) Dickson KCMG (1832–1901). (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)



Colonel Howel Gunter (1844–1902). Commandant, Queensland Defence Force, 1895–99. President 1896 and 1898. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)

Major Cecil Wallace Lavarack, foundation member. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)



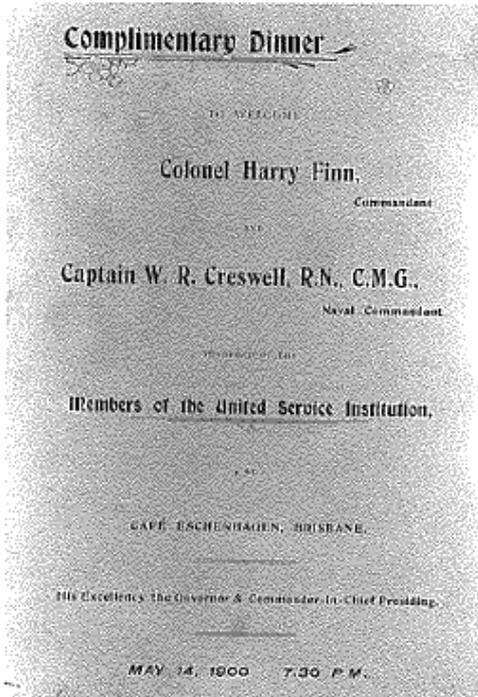
Lieutenant Arthur Pixley, an early member. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)





Aubigny, 293 North Quay. The home of the Institution circa 1900-04.

Two pages of an invitation to a dinner to welcome newly arrived Commandants.



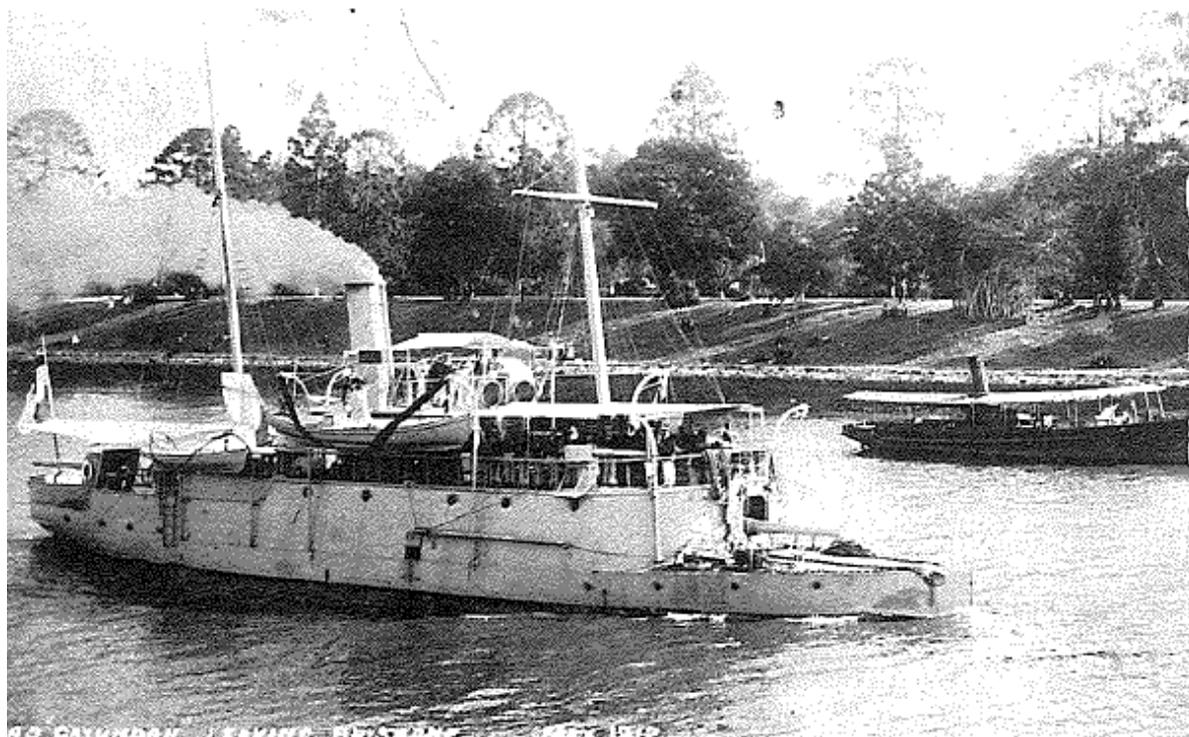


*Captain Frederick Tickell CMG CNF (1857–1919).
Naval Commander, Queensland 1904–07.
President 1905. (By courtesy of the John Oxley
Library)*



*Colonel John Sanderson Lyster, Commandant
Commonwealth Military Forces, Queensland
1906–12. President 1906 and 1908. (By courtesy
of the John Oxley Library)*

HMQS Gayundah, flagship of the Queensland Naval Defence Force. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)



suggested: ‘this was, no doubt, partially due to the prevailing depression which made it necessary for many members of corps to be away from their headquarters in search of work’. It is therefore an unfortunate coincidence that the Club was formed during an economic depression and is celebrating its centenary in the middle of another one.

His report was, however, critical of the standards of training and leadership of the Volunteer Force and there is a hint of an underlying animosity between the Imperial regular officer Commandant and the Colonial volunteer with political power, in this case, Lieutenant Colonel the Honourable A J Thynne. This personality clash reached a climax with ‘the volunteer trouble’ two years later when Major General Owen publicly countermanded an order by Lieutenant Colonel Thynne which was given with the apparent sanction of his government colleague, the Chief Secretary. Owen maintained that the order was contrary to the provisions of The Defence Act of 1884 and, with each man sticking to his guns, the Premier passed the buck to the Governor, as Commander in Chief. This removed the difficult problem from the political agenda but did not help the Commandant. His Excellency wrote a memorandum to the Government in the following terms: ‘He (the Commandant) is the officer appointed by the Queensland Government to command its forces; his only authority over it is derived from his appointment by that Government and from the commission issued to him as Commandant by the Governor of Queensland and the warrant to hold courts martial issued by the same authority. Not only is there no ultimate authority vested in the Major General apart from that which the Government of Queensland has entrusted to him, but in the agreement signed by him dated 1 May 1891 it was stated that “he shall in all things obey the orders and directions of the Government”, that is of the Queensland Government’. Clearly, the Commandant had lost that argument and was in an invidious position because Thynne, his subordinate in a military sense, could flout his authority when he chose to do so, with the support of the Government of which he was a minister.

Actually, the conflict between Commandant and the commander of the Volunteers had been inherited by Owen from his predecessor Colonel French who, in his final report to the Government, was highly critical of the standard of training of the Volunteer Force. This apparently rankled with Thynne who sought, unsuccessfully, to have the slur on his force removed by Major General Owen when he succeeded to the command. It was most unfortunate for Owen that throughout his tenure of office he had to contend with the enmity of one so influentially placed as Lieutenant Colonel the Honourable A J Thynne.

The Act of 1884 also provided for a Marine Defence Force and it was established with units at Brisbane, Rockhampton and Thursday Island, under the successive commands of Captain Wright RN 1885-88, Commander F P Taylor RN 1888-92 and Commander (later Captain) W Drake RN 1892-1900. The fleet consisted of the gun

boats HMQS *Paluma* and HMQS *Gayundah* together with two small torpedo boats, the Midge and the Mosquito, supported by various auxiliary craft.

Both the land and marine services suffered severe cut-backs in funding from a Colonial Government striving to remain solvent during the severe depression of the 1890's. The greatest stringency was in the year 1894-95 when the total defence vote was only £36,891 but before then, in September 1892, HMQS *Gayundah* had been decommissioned as an economy measure and the crew dismissed, with six months pay as compensation. She was not re-commissioned until 1899 when a permanent crew of 31 was signed on for three years. A further cost saving measure was the disbanding of both the Thursday Island Naval Brigade and the Rockhampton Naval Artillery Volunteer Corps. It is interesting to note, as reported by *The Queenslander* of 3 March 1894, that at that time the Imperial Government spent one third of its income on defence and the Australian Colonies only one thirtieth of theirs.

The total establishment of Land Force officers in Brisbane in 1892 was only 148, and with the small number of Marine Force officers, provided a very limited pool from which the new Club could recruit members. It is evident that a high proportion of serving and retired officers did join but in the absence of early records the precise numerical strength must remain unknown. However, with an annual subscription of half a guinea and the Colonial Government grant of £50 per annum the number must have been sufficient to make the Club a viable venture.

The president, Major General Owen, was a bachelor but appears to have been a sociable man, judging from the reports of the day, and one of his favourite means of entertaining ladies and gentlemen was by way of afternoon cruises on the steamer, *Miner*, from the city to Fort Lytton and return. Club members showed their regard for their founding president when he was leaving, at the end of his term as Commandant, by presenting him with a general officer's sword which they had specially obtained from London. The generations of members who have followed during the past century have also owed a debt of gratitude to the man who had the initiative and drive to establish the United Service Club.

The first home provided by the Colonial Government was the one time office of the Colonial Secretary and is described by foundation member, Major General R S Browne, thus: 'The Colonial Secretary's office was a little old building between George Street and William Street, the site now being covered by the Executive Building. There was an entrance from George Street, by a sort of lane between St John's School and the Police Commissioner's office. The main entrance was from William Street up a flight of stone steps'. Major F L Jones, another foundation member, added to this description by stating: 'The building stood immediately behind the chancel of St John's Church. I think it must originally have been built for a private residence as it had a large bow window onto William Street'. That was the Club's home for about six years until it was demolished to make way for progress in

the form of the sandstone Executive Building which still stands on the site. As a replacement, the Government provided temporary premises almost opposite the General Post Office in Queen Street. It was from there that the first members departing for the South African War were farewelled in 1899.

The keenness with which the Colony had embraced its military responsibilities to the Empire is evidenced by the following comments: 'In 1899, before Britain had even declared war on the Boers in South Africa, the Australian Colonies, led by Queensland, offered to send troops to join the struggle.' And 'Crowds of between 25,000 and 30,000 people- the largest Brisbane had ever seen- farewelled the seven contingents, totalling 3,000 men, which Queensland sent to the war.'* In addition to the men, approximately 2,500 Queensland horses went to South Africa to provide mounts for the troops. The majority of the 110 Queensland officers who went were Club members, and included Lieutenant C G Gehrman, ** a member of the 5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen distinguished by their puggrees (hat bands) of koala skin.

The first contingent of Queensland Mounted Infantry comprising 14 officers, 248 non-commissioned officers and other ranks, 284 horses and two machine guns was under the command of Major P R Ricardo and included the then Captain H G Chauvel.

In, probably, 1900 the Colonial Government gave the Club very comfortable quarters in 'Aubigny', situated at the northern end of North Quay. Previously it had been the home of the Honourable Patrick Perkins, the proprietor of the Milton brewery prior to the Castlemaine Brewery from Victoria acquiring a controlling interest, and had been so named after the Darling Downs electorate he represented in Parliament. There were adequate facilities for enjoying a drink and lunch cooked by the steward's wife and for the library but, in the words of Major Maddock: '... the institution did not possess a billiard table. Efforts were therefore made to obtain one and for this purpose a meeting decided that debentures to the value of £130 should be issued, the lowest debenture being of £5 value, and that these should be repaid when circumstances warranted, with 5 per cent interest added. At the meeting called for the issue of such debentures, everyone was agreeably surprised to find that they were subscribed in ten minutes.'***

A table was soon installed and the games of billiards and snooker have been a part of life in the Club ever since. A piano was also seen to be a necessity in the new premises and so individual subscriptions, limited to 10 shillings, were sought from members and within two months enabled the purchase of a suitable instrument. To

**Volunteers at Heart*, D H Johnson, 1975.

**Later Lieutenant Colonel Charles George Gehrman VD (1875-1958). Served South African War. Club honorary auditor 1935-57. Life member 1947. Father of Lieutenant Colonel A S Gehrman CBE

****The United Service Club, A Short History*, Major H M M Maddock, 1935

mark the occasion a smoke concert, with much singing, was held and it was reported that, ‘a very happy evening resulted’.

Sometime prior to 1900 the name of the Club was changed to ‘United Service Institution of Queensland’ and it became generally known as ‘the Institution’. The reason for this change in title is not clear but it would seem to be related to the annual grant of £50 from the Colonial Government and the obligation of the Club, in the words of Object (a) in the Rules, viz., ‘To promote Naval and Military Art, Science, and Literature by (1) Lectures and Discussions on Naval and Military subjects; (2) Maintaining a Library on Naval and Military matters’. Admittedly, that object is taken from the rules dated 1914, the earliest available, but there is evidence to suggest that they were substantially unaltered from 1892. It is historical fact that during this decade the new Labour Party had an increasing presence in parliament and it is conceivable that its members would not have much affection for an officers’ club, particularly after the confrontations between troops and striking shearers in 1891. In this context it is possible that members considered the change of name would be prudent in order to emphasise the educational function and to remove the word ‘club’, with its connotations of elitism and privilege. One clue is given by Brigadier RM Stodart, an 1898 member, who recalled in 1962 that the organisation was called Institution ‘whilst at North Quay and thus qualified for a small Government grant’. Until Federation this grant continued at the rate of £50 per year, and with the provision of free accommodation, enabled the Institution to carry out its functions.

A further important change in circumstances occurred in March 1901 when the newly formed Commonwealth of Australia took over all naval and military forces and, of concern to the Institution, refused to provide premises for its use as had been done by the Colonial Government. Fortunately the grant was continued, at an increased rate of £100 per year, and this assisted in the payment of rent for the new home at 21 North Quay; at the opposite end of the street to ‘Aubigny’. However, the change apparently took some time to be implemented and the most likely date for the move appears to be 1904.

Up to this time in the life of the Club, and Institution, its form of control was less than totally democratic, in that the presidents were not elected by the members. They were alternately the Commandants of the Land and Marine Defence Forces as titular heads while the work of running the organisation was carried out by a separate chairman and committee with an honorary secretary. It is known that the first chairman of committee, under the presidency of Major General Owen, was Major James Gartside and the first honorary secretary was Captain J W Green. Most of the early chairmen of committees and honorary secretaries are not known, with the exception that in 1901 the chairman was Colonel The Honourable J F G (Greenlaw) Foxton, the handsome Brisbane solicitor and Minister of the Crown, and the honorary secretary was the debonair Colonel F B T W (Theodor) Koch, a bank

manager by profession.

The same Colonel Foxtton made military history when he carried out an inspection of a full scale parade of the Field Artillery at Fort Lytton in 1900. His friend, James Trackson, who had recently imported the first motor car to Brisbane, a steam driven Locomobile, persuaded him to become the first reviewing officer to arrive by motor vehicle instead of the customary charger. When this new contraption came huffing and puffing and rumbling onto the parade ground the effect was dramatic - particularly on the horses which drew the pieces of the Field Artillery. In the words of the *Brisbane Courier* reporter: 'They snorted and shied and set off helter skelter - anywhere to get out of the reach of this mechanical menace. In a minute or two there was not a hoof on the camping ground'.

The first chairman of committee, by then Lieutenant Colonel James Gartside commanding the No.1 (Moreton) Regiment, met an untimely end in 1898, at the age of 46, following a fall from his charger. The military funeral with its long procession comprising representatives of all units of the armed services, fellow officers of the Railway Engineer's Department where he had worked, an escort of 200 men of his regiment, members of the public and three bands was described in great detail by the *Brisbane Courier*. Obviously, such spectacles had considerable public appeal in those times of scarce entertainment and the newspaper reported: 'The route was by Petrie Terrace, over the railway bridge and down by the River Road to the Toowong Cemetery. The Naval Brigade, comprising seventy eight of all ranks, joined in with a band of fifteen performers, under Bandmaster Bloomfield, at Petrie Terrace. Each band, the drum of which was draped with crape,* took its turn at playing during the long journey. There was an immense crowd at the cemetery, as there had been the whole way'. And so, after this long and tiring march he was laid to rest on top of the hill in the Toowong cemetery as, again, in the words of the *Brisbane Courier*, 'the shades of evening were falling'.

It has been mentioned previously that the commandants of the Marine Defence Force alternated with Land Force commandants as presidents of the Club or Institution, therefore it is almost certain that the second president was Commander Walton Drake who was Acting Commandant, Marine Defence Force, 1892-1900. Major General Owen left the Colony, at the end of his appointment, in June 1894, but his replacement, Colonel Rowel Gunter, did not arrive until May 1895. In the interregnum Colonel E R Drury was Acting Commandant and was president of the Club from June 1894 until Commander Drake again assumed the office towards the end of that year, in accordance with the system of alternation between the heads of the two services. Colonel Gunter, formerly of the Norfolk Regiment, in the opinion of one of his

*The French 'crepe' now commonly used

officers, then Major R S Browne, 'did not quite catch the Australian spirit' but the English journal, *The Navy and Army Illustrated*, dated February 1897, spoke in glowing terms of the Queensland force under his command. He would have been president of the Club in both 1896 and 1898.

The United Service Institution, as it was by then, tendered a complimentary dinner, on 14 May 1900, to welcome both Colonel Harry Finn as the new Commandant, Queensland Defence Force and Captain WR Cresswell who arrived at the same time to head the Marine Defence Force. Captain Cresswell was to become the first Chief of the Australian Naval Staff in 1911 and be recognised as the 'father of the Royal Australian Navy'. Colonel Finn became president of the Institution in the year of his arrival and Captain Cresswell in 1901 and 1903.

The Institution appears to have prospered generally and modestly in its early years, with only occasional periods of financial difficulty. One such, as Maddock describes it, was in 1902 when the financial report for the year revealed almost no profit from sales of stock. The dismissal of a dishonest steward appears to have cured the problem and his replacement by the totally reliable George Marsh Sye, who remained for 45 years, ensured that there would not be a repetition. Another time when funds were apparently low was in the early days at the No. 21 North Quay location when the Government of the day, inconsiderately, brought in a law requiring the annual payment of a licence fee of £25.5.0 to permit the sale of liquor and tobacco and to operate a billiard table. A special meeting of members to consider this outrageous requirement decided to forego the sale of liquor for a trial period of six months. After a week a musket could have been fired through the rooms without risk of casualties so the next expedient tried was to send the steward with individual orders to the nearby Longreach Hotel. This proved slow and inconvenient and a better plan was needed.

Maddock tells the story:

a scheme was then arranged whereby a keg of whisky and likewise of beer was brought into the premises and labelled in plain letters with the name of some member. The first I well remember was "Colonel Chauvel". Members partaking of the contents of this keg did not pay anything at the time, but arrangements were made whereby they duly paid their whack at the end of the month. During the whole of this time the club was closely watched by revenue officers, who tried on many occasions to catch us but were not successful, though on one such occasion, to the consternation of the steward, who was the only person on the premises at the time, the revenue officers arrived with a lorry and took away the whole of our liquor, under what they were pleased to call a warrant. Colonel, the Honourable J F G Foxton was at that time our Chairman of Committee, and also held the position of Home Secretary and on being informed of this seizure of liquor, he took immediate steps to have it returned, which was done the day after its confiscation. A special general meeting of the members was called to deal with the matter of a licence,

and it was pointed out by many speakers on that occasion that it was absolutely necessary to do so. The motion was eventually carried by the narrow margin of three votes, and from that day to this we have still remained under the ordinary Licensing Laws of the state and have had to contribute our quota to the revenue.

One memorable occasion at No.21 North Quay was the Institution's celebration, on 21 October 1905, of the centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar. The committee went to great trouble to ensure the correctness of every detail, even to the extent of having special, smaller than standard naval signal flags made because of the limited space available to display Nelson's famous message on the three masts, complete with cross trees, which had been erected in front of the club house. Precisely at noon on the day, before a large crowd of members and notable citizens, the order to hoist the signal was given by Lieutenant M G G Pascoe, a grandson of Flag Lieutenant Pascoe who gave the original order on HMS Victory exactly one hundred years earlier. That night Lieutenant Commander W Harris RNR gave a lecture on the Battle to members and Lieutenant Pascoe displayed naval trophies which had come down to him from his grandfather. It is interesting to note that on that occasion members' wives had not been forgotten; they were accommodated at the ladies club next door. A photograph of the premises at No.21 North Quay on this occasion, enlarged and coloured by Captain P Stanhope Hobday,* is still in the possession of the Club.

The year 1910 marked the end of the alternation of military and naval commandants as non-elected presidents and the rules were changed to allow the election of any financial member to this office, at the annual general meeting in each year. The first to be so elected was Lieutenant Colonel A Sutton. In the same year the Institution showed considerable initiative in the field of entertainment. A very large coal punt was hired and with much work and no little expense was converted into a house-boat to provide a viewing platform for a big aquatic sports meeting being held on the Merthyr Reach of the Brisbane River. It was a great social success and attracted a large gathering of members and their friends.

The seventeenth and eighteenth annual reports, for the years 1909 and 1910 respectively, have survived and were both signed by Lieutenant Colonel C J Reade, Chairman of Committee; Major R M Stodart, Honorary Treasurer and Captain Herbert Maddock, Honorary Secretary. They indicate that the Institution was very active both socially and in the more serious area of lectures on military topics. On the social side there were the monthly smoke concerts with much singing and reminiscing, doubtless through a blue haze of tobacco smoke. There were also a considerable number of welcome and farewell functions, particularly in 1909. The lesser number of such activities in 1910 and an attendance of only 43 at the annual dinner,

*Captain Percy Stanhope Hobday, honorary librarian to the Institution and a talented photographer and caricaturist

compared with 70 the previous year, cannot be explained on the evidence available; unless, the death of the popular King Edward VII early in the year had had a dampening effect on social life. It is likely that the attendance at the previous dinner in 1909 was enhanced by the presence of both their Excellencies, the Earl of Dudley, Governor General, and Sir Thomas Carmichael, Governor of Victoria.

However, 1910 was not without its important occasions including a visit, and the customary leaving of an autographed photographic portrait, by the great Field Marshal Lord Kitchener* during his inspection tour of Australian Defences. The records contain no mention of any official function on that occasion, so it must be presumed that the visit was an informal one. But, it is reported that a special dinner was held in the same year in honour of Major General Kirkpatrick RE, Inspector-General, Commonwealth Military Forces, on the occasion of his first official visit to Queensland.

The Institution's educational role was also actively pursued during the year. Lectures covered a wide variety of topics, from Major AJ Boyd's 'Arctic and Antarctic Exploration' through Captain T Pye's 'Field Fortifications and Entrenchments', Lieutenant Colonel H G Chauvel's 'Staff Rides' to 'Evolution and Development of an Australian Naval Policy' by that well known artillery officer and man of many interests, Colonel the Honourable J F G Foxton. The library collection was augmented by 157 new books during 1909 and a further 120 the next year.

All this, it appears, was not enough because the Military Commandant, Queensland, Colonel J S Lyster, received a letter, dated 23 November 1910, as follows: '... the Military Board requests that you be good enough to forward for its information an additional statement shewing what value of an Instructional Military nature the Commonwealth receives, in return for the annual grant to the United Service Institution'. This action was precipitated by the Finance Member of the Board, located in far off Melbourne, who commented on the Institution's annual report, as follows: 'Having in view the immense Balance existing on 30:9:1910 - viz, £1176-10-9, I recommend that the grant to this Institute for 1910/11 be reduced to £50 notwithstanding the fact that a sum of £150 appears on the Estimates for the current year'. The Commandant wrote a spirited response and concluded by saying: 'The Advantage to the Commonwealth Government is immense. The Institution invites Citizen Officers to enter an atmosphere impregnated with Naval and Military subjects. Once inside the building citizen business is suspended, and the exchange of Naval and Military thoughts and ideas becomes constant by force of habit. It results in increased Naval and Military knowledge and cohesion, co-operation and camaraderie, all beneficial to the service. The principal expense is borne by the Officers, which is wrong, if the institution is considered of any benefit to the Nation.' No

*Field Marshal Horatio Herbert Kitchener KG KCB OM KCMG (1850-1916). First Earl of Khartoum and Broome.

record survives to show how effective the Colonel's letter was in swaying the might of the Commonwealth bureaucracy in Melbourne, but some doubts must linger regarding the competence of the Finance Member of the Military Board, in view of his calling the Institution 'this Institute' and his assessment of £1,176 as an 'immense Balance'.

Membership of the Institution in 1909 was as follows:

Town members	145
Country members	74
Life members	<u>8</u>
	227

By the following year it had increased to the following:

Town members	152
Country members	102
Life members	8
Absentee members	<u>18</u>
	280

Obviously, the modestly increasing membership was testing the capacity of No. 21 North Quay because in 1910 it was found necessary to increase the library space by moving the honorary secretary out of that room and, complete with roll-top desk and bookcase, into the dining room.

In the same year it was prudently decided to deposit £200 of the year's surplus into a savings bank account, as the nucleus of a building fund. This was the first small step by the Institution towards eventual ownership of its own club rooms.

* * *

The end of the first decade in the history of the Commonwealth was a time of increasing development in many areas. Transport was beginning to be revolutionised with motor vehicles and the first powered flight in Australia, by the ubiquitous Houdini in a French built Voisin in 1910, was a pioneering event of great significance for the future conquest of distance in this vast continent. The States' defence forces, which the Commonwealth had inherited, were being integrated into one cohesive unit which was gradually assuming a national character, with the interchange of senior officers between States. This circumstance, coupled with the concentration of command in Sydney and Melbourne, resulted in the Institution losing some of its higher ranking members as they were promoted to

senior positions in other States.

In July 1911 the loosely knit Commonwealth Naval Force was consolidated and given a new dignity as the Royal Australian Navy, under the command of a former president of the Club, Rear Admiral William R Cresswell. Not only was Cresswell a former Commandant of the old Queensland Naval Force but also very much a Queenslander by virtue of his experience working on out-back pastoral properties, from the time he resigned from the Royal Navy in 1878 until he rejoined in 1885 and was appointed to the South Australian Naval Force.

In the year 1912, for the second time in the Colony's history, men of the military confronted militant workers; on this occasion they were striking unionists in Brisbane. The men who worked for the British owned Brisbane Tramway Company were dissatisfied with their pay and were persuaded by southern agents that forming a branch of the federal union, sanctioned by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act and registered by the Federal court, was the way to achieve their aims. Joseph Badger, the American born manager of the Tramway Company, had other ideas and refused to either recognise the federal union or to permit his employees to be part of it. The final premeditated act of defiance occurred at 11 am on 18 January 1912 when 480 of the 550 tramway men attached union badges to their watch chains. Badge wearers were suspended from duty and by the afternoon a reduced tram service was being run by loyalists and volunteer labour. The word spread through the town and that evening a crowd of approximately 10,000 people massed in Market Square (now King George V Square) to show solidarity with the tramway men.

A combined meeting of Brisbane unions on 28 January voted for a general strike to commence at 6 pm on Tuesday 30 January and 20,000 workers went out, including police. The position for Premier Denham was clearly serious as law and order had to be maintained. Major Cahill, the Police Commissioner responded by swearing in special foot and mounted constables. He was inundated with volunteers and 3,000 were sworn in, including a large number of retired military and naval officers and all not already members were made honorary members of the Institution for 'the duration'.

All commodities were soon in short supply but the honorary secretary had a permit from the Police Commissioner which gave priority in the purchase of food and drink, and the Institution became one of the few places in town where a hard working special constable could quench his thirst or find a bite to eat. It is recorded that this circumstance had a very beneficial effect on the trading results for the month. The Institution also had the benefit of motor cars provided by the Police Commissioner for the transport of its needs. The President, Lieutenant Colonel G H Hopkins, lived a few doors away in North Quay and provided sleeping accommodation for about twenty members every night during the emergency.

The only serious confrontation occurred on Friday 2 February when special constables armed with rifles and bayonets stood across Market Square to prevent a crowd of 15,000 from forming up for an illegal procession. The crowd surged towards the constables who drew batons and inflicted some injuries as they chased offenders along George and Turbot Streets and North Quay. The strike ended officially on 6 March whereupon Brisbane and the Institution both gradually returned to normal.

Maddock records one amusing incident during the strike which, if it occurred in the present less accommodating times, would involve the police, the Club committee and the member concerned in all sorts of bother. He recalls: 'Two very well known members of the Club were in the premises, having been relieved from duty. One, Lieutenant Colonel (P J) Bailey being very tired had gone to sleep in a squatters chair on the verandah, when out came Captain Reggie (RAN) Plant, who was desirous of having a word with him, but he was so very sound asleep that several efforts to wake him proved unavailing. Reggie then proceeded inside and borrowed a revolver from one of the members (many of whom carried them during this period) and proceeding to the corner of the verandah where his friend was asleep, pointed the revolver in the air and "loosed off" a shot which went through the roof and the report of which brought Colonel Bailey up a very astonished man, who used language suitable to the occasion. However they "squared yards" and had a friendly drink'.

World War I and the Aftermath

An important milestone, in the 22-year history of the Club and Institution, was reached in May 1914 when it purchased a block of land at 70 George Street from the City Electric Light Company, for the sum of £1,600. Without delay, plans were prepared for a single storeyed brick club house, modest in size but solid and presentable. The contract price for the building was £2,498 and construction was completed the same year; which was probably just as well because World War I broke out on 4 August with consequent man-power shortages and the banning of nonessential building projects.

Records of the period have not survived but it must have been a memorable occasion when the members, few in number by present standards, moved into the first home of their own and experienced the pride and security which comes with ownership. It was to be the centre of activities for the Institution and the Club for the next 33 years. Its location was convenient for the majority of members; many of whom were public servants working in George Street, business men in the city or on the staff of the University which was then at the end of the street. The story is told that during a later period the staff of the surveying department at the University knew that in case of need their head, well known member Lieutenant F W (Freddie) James, could usually be found, just down the street at the Institution, sharpening his skill with a billiard cue. It was a convenient place of refuge and comfort for those whose places of work were nearby.

This was an era when a drink after work was considered to be a wise precaution before facing the rigours of the homeward journey, by tram or steam train and, of course, there was no more agreeable place for a man to honour this custom than at his club. Therefore it became a regular meeting place for many members around 5 pm. The middle of the day was another time when many members foregathered at the Institution for brief social intercourse and a hearty lunch washed down with a glass of ale. In that comparatively leisurely age time was allowed for such indulgences, for the good of both body and mind. As in all clubs, there were regular groups which met for lunch each day and one table became known as 'the doctors' table', and others were occupied also by common interest groups.

Reports on life in the George Street premises during the early years are scant but those who enjoyed its amenities much later had happy memories. The late Sir Frank

V Sharpe* became an active member there in 1926 and long afterwards recalled the good camaraderie and the social occasions enjoyed with his fellow officers. There were the young ones like himself and the 1914-18 veterans, most of whom were also comparatively young but some carried the physical and mental scars of the bloody campaigns of Gallipoli and France which had aged them beyond their years.

The earliest surviving member, Lieutenant Colonel T B (Tom) Stephens** who joined in 1924, remembers there was a jolly atmosphere in the Club during the 1920's and 1930's. Members had a common interest in military affairs and as he says: 'Officers were an elite group in the community who liked to dress in uniform, ride horses and give orders to their troops'. Prominent among his early contemporaries, were three dashing young naval officers, later to take important roles in the management of the Club; they were, Engineer Lieutenant H S Platt, Lieutenant N S Pixley and Pay Lieutenant G H Mocatta.***

Lieutenant Commander H M Gashler, a 1931 member, has memories of the first patron, His Excellency Colonel Sir Leslie Wilson,**** being a frequent visitor and getting to know most of the members; of the annual ball at the Trocadero being one of the highlights of the Brisbane social season and of a close-knit membership with pride in their Club. He also recalls one colourful day in the Club each year as officers of the three services returned, in full uniform, with swords, from the King's birthday levee at old Government House and gathered in 'relaxed order' around the bar to discuss the topics of the day. The stewards at the time were the ever cheerful and courteous George Sye and Harry Woollard, whose tact and skills were sometimes tested by junior officers showing reluctance to leave at closing time or seeking unfair advantage in use of the one billiard table.

Captain E R Blackmore,***** a man with a prodigious memory who lost his sight not long after joining the Club in 1944, has clear recollections of the fine quality napery on the tables at George Street and of the excellence of the food. He says the standard lunch consisted of soup, roast of the day with vegetables and a choice of several desserts, all for the sum of one shilling and sixpence. Wing Commander N W Martin, of 1937 vintage, had a similar recollection and also remembered the complaints, much later, when the luncheon price was raised to two shillings.

*Lieutenant Colonel Sir Frank (Victor) Sharpe CMG OBE (1903-89). Tool merchant and pioneer in radio, aviation and avocado growing.

**Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Blacket Stephens. Born 1902. Profession, law.

***Later Wing Commander George Houlton Mocatta OBE (1903-77). Commissioned in all three services. On fall of Singapore sailed a junk to Perth. Club honorary solicitor for many years.

****His Excellency, Colonel The Rt Hon Sir Leslie (Orme) Wilson GCSI GCMG GCIE DSO (1876-1955). Governor of Queensland 1932-46.

*****Captain Edward Richard Blackmore MBE. Born 1910. Founder of E R Blackmore Pty Ltd. President, Queensland Branch, Blinded Soldiers' Assn since 1965.

Major A F S Ohman remembers being elected to the Club in 1933 and was one who often took up station at the far end of the lounge around 5 pm on week nights. The procedure was to put a shilling into the 'kitty' and drink rum at four pence per nip. Many good stories were told and particularly memorable were the anecdotes and repartee of Colonel F A (Gus) Hughes. Mid-day on Saturday was another assembly time when the stewards would produce sandwiches, or a plate of hot savouries, to be taken with drinks prior to members' departure for sporting fixtures.

During the winter months ladies had access to the Club, with their escorts, for monthly supper dances in the dining hall, and Major Ohman says the regular attenders included: Lieutenant Colonel F M de F Lorenzo, Brigadier E M Ralph, Major C A McEachern* and Captain F V Sharpe, with their wives. All recall these functions as being very pleasant ones and there is no doubt that the Club benefitted in couthness and other ways from this occasional infusion of feminine charm and wisdom.

Little is known of the activities of the Institution during World War I or the immediate post-war period but, obviously, there must have been a significant growth in membership during 1919, 1920, and probably beyond, as the many officers commissioned during the war returned to Queensland.

A number of members, 22 in all, paid the supreme sacrifice in defence of Australia and the Empire in a war that was notable for its high toll of human life. An early post-war committee decided to erect a memorial to these officers and Lieutenant Colonel T Pye undertook to design one. The result was the Honour Board, expertly carved from a fine piece of Queensland maple and unveiled by the Governor of the day, His Excellency The Right Honourable Lieutenant Colonel Sir Matthew Nathan. It can be seen on the wall of the entrance hall in the present Club.

Several Queensland officers achieved great distinction during 1914-18 and were rewarded with high appointments in the immediate post-war period; a circumstance remarked on by Major General R S Browne in *A journalist's Memory*. He commented as follows: 'Under the Defence Act (1884) ... Queensland took the lead in Australia in military training. The greatest tribute to Queensland's system was to be seen in the reconstitution of the Commonwealth General Staff after the Great War.' Appointments of Queensland officers included: Lieutenant General Sir 'Harry' G Chauvel, Inspector General Australian Military Forces; Major General Sir C Brudenell B White, Chief of the General Staff; Brigadier General V C M Selheim, Adjutant General; Brigadier General J K Forsyth, Quarter Master General; Brigadier General W A Coxen, Chief Staff Officer Artillery; Brigadier General C H Foott, ** Chief Staff Officer Engineers and Brigadier General T H Dodds, Military Secretary.***

* Later Brigadier Cranston Albury McEachern DSO ED. Biog. note Appendix III.

** Brigadier General Cecil Henry Foott CB CMG (1876-1942)

*** Brigadier General Thomas Henry Dodds CMG CVO DSO (1873-1943)

Other appointments included: Brigadier General C H Brand, Commandant Victoria; Brigadier General O F Phillips, Staff Officer Artillery; Colonel D P White, Base Commandant Tasmania, while Major General Sir (Thomas) William Glasgow* took a political path and was elected to the Senate in 1919.

The Club has traditionally entertained visiting celebrities, particularly those with military connections, but very nearly missed out on one important personage. Major Maddock tells the story:

‘An important and interesting function in August 1920 was the visit to the Club of the Prince of Wales and it may be of interest to members to know how such a visit was brought about. After intimation having been received that it would not eventuate owing to either bungling or misunderstanding on the part of the then Honorary Secretary, it appears that the Club (then known as the United Service Institution) was confused with the Social Service Institute ... On a certain day at lunch at the Club, the writer made some rather pointed and pertinent remarks on the failure of the then Committee to arrange for HRH to visit us and was asked by a member of the Committee if he could have managed any better ... the reply was “yes” which brought forth the rejoinder “perhaps you could manage it even now”, which remark caused amusement and laughter and put me on my mettle to such an extent that my reply was, “if one of the members of the Committee would accompany me to Parliament House (the Prince’s residence while here) I will certainly have a try’. Lieutenant Grant Hanlon immediately expressed his readiness to go with me and off we went. The fact that I was wearing uniform was a factor in aiding us to gain admission to Parliament House, there being two sentries on the gate, and we were only just in time to get an interview with the military secretary to the Prince (Colonel Greigg), **who was about to start for a game of golf. He was most courteous and kind to us and recognised the desire of our Club to entertain HRH but explained that owing to some misunderstanding we had been omitted from the programme and at that late hour he would not be able to alter the existing arrangements. We seemed to be at a dead end, when it occurred to us to ask Colonel Greigg to see the Prince and try to get him to visit the Club if only for a few minutes which, the Colonel, a fine sport, consented to do, and asking us to wait and smoke a cigar went “up top”. Returning in about ten minutes he brought the good news that the Prince had graciously agreed to curtail the length of a function that afternoon and would be at the Club at 5.30 for half an hour or so. This decision we took back to the members who had awaited our return not imagining that we should have had any luck. But when they realized that the Prince was really coming everyone was pleased, and arrangements were made to inform every member available

*Major General Sir (Thomas) William Glasgow KCB CMG DSO VD (1876-1955). Commanded 2nd Light Horse, Gallipoli; 13th Infantry Brigade, France, 1916 and 1st Division 1918. Senator, 1920-33; High Commissioner to Canada, 1940-45.

**Actually Colonel Edward William Macleay Grigg CMG CVO DSO MC and later first Baron Altrincham (cr.1945) PC KCMG KCVO DSO MC (1879-1955). Governor of Kenya 1925-31. Minister Resident Middle East 1944-45. Profession, journalism.

by telephone. As a result at 5.30 pm there was a big muster and the function passed off most successfully. HRH at the conclusion kindly presented a signed photograph of himself to the Club.

On 31 May of the same year future member, Squadron Leader HJ L Hinkler* created a solo long distance record by flying non-stop from London to Turin; the first of many notable flying achievements prior to his tragic death in the Apennines thirteen years later.

In the time of the presidency of Lieutenant Colonel P Currie, on 27 October 1921, at a special general meeting called for the purpose, the United Service Institution of Queensland changed its name back to the original, United Service Club. No explanation for this action is available, because no records remain, but it could be presumed that the reasons which prompted the previous change had ceased to have any relevance, and it was merely a return to normal. After all, the primary reason for the Club's creation was, as Major General Owen had so adequately expressed, to provide 'some place where the officers of the services might meet more frequently in social intercourse'. 'Club' in every respect, would appear to be the most appropriate title for such a meeting place.

In the same year the Club gained a third armed service with the birth of the Royal Australian Air Force but it was to be another 18 years before an Air Force man occupied the president's chair. However, the junior service had arrived and demanded to be noticed. The role of aircraft in war had become increasingly important as the 1914-18 conflict progressed and was set to become much more so in the future.

The first Royal Australian Air Force officer to become a member was Flight Lieutenant A M Charlesworth, in 1924, followed by Squadron Leader H J L Hinkler in 1928, three more in 1930 and a further three, including Air Commodore Sir Charles Kingsford Smith** in 1931; making eight out of a total membership of 388, as at 30 September 1932. It is interesting to note that of those 388 members no less than 38, or nearly one in ten, were Companions of the Distinguished Service Order and 35 were holders of the Military Cross; testimony to the recognition achieved by Club members in a war which had ended 14 years earlier.

The ultimate award for bravery, the Victoria Cross, was received by a future Club member, Major Edgar Thomas Towner*** for his heroism in the attack on Mont St Quentin on 1 September 1918. He had served in the Middle East prior to going to

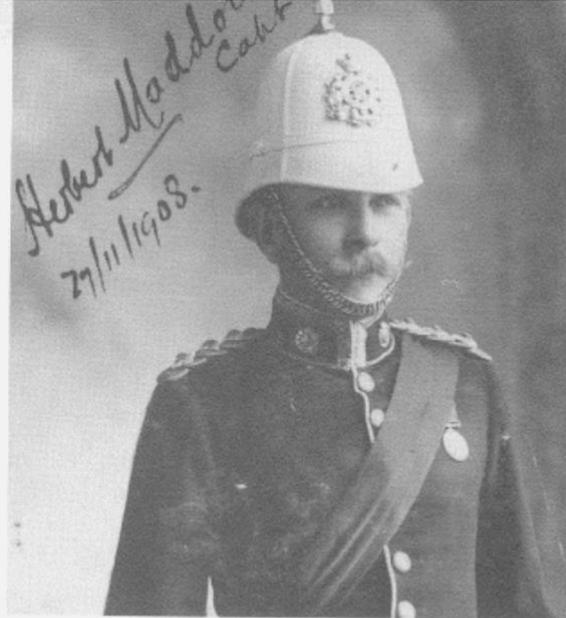
*Squadron Leader Herbert John Louis Hinkler AFC DSM (1892-1933). Holder of numerous records in light aircraft.

**Air Commodore Sir Charles Edward Kingsford Smith MC (1897-1935). Pilot of first aircraft to fly Pacific Ocean. Pioneer of passenger flying in Australia.

*** Major Edgar Thomas Towner VC MC (1890-1972) Kaloola Station, Longreach.

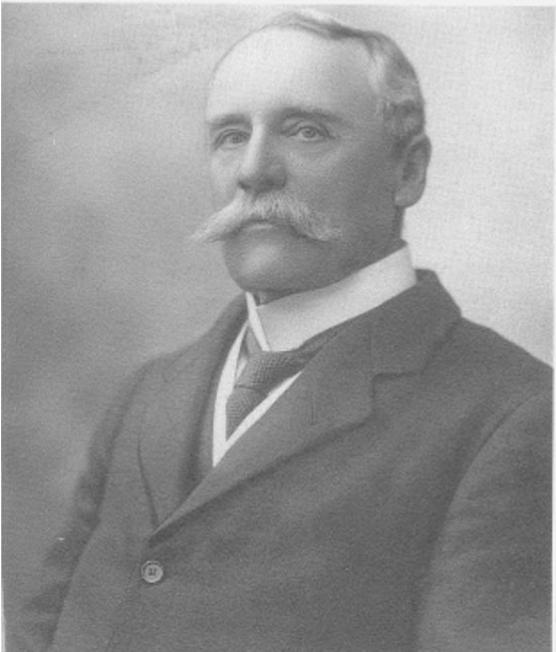


Major General, The Hon Sir (Thomas) William Glasgow KCB CMG DSO VD (1876–1955). Member 1920–1955. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)



Major Herbert Mark Meadows Maddock VD (1870–1945). Hon secretary 1909. Club historian 1935. Life member. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)

Colonel The Hon Justin Fox Greenlaw Foxton CMG (1849–1916). Foundation member. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)



The centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar, 21 North Quay, 1905. (from a photograph by Captain P. Stanhope Hobday)





Lieutenant Colonel Hubert Reginald Carter VD. Died 1934. President 1930. (By courtesy John Oxley Library)



Lieutenant Colonel Francis Augustus Hughes DSO VD (1881-1951). President 1920 and 1931. Life member 1937. (As a lieutenant) (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)



Lieutenant Colonel Henry Arthur Goddard (1871-1955). President 1913-14. (By courtesy of John Oxley Library)



Captain Percy Stanhope Hobday. Institution honorary librarian between 1900 and World War I. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)



70 George Street.
The Club's home 1914-46.

Note: The captions on the top three photographs have been corrected from those shown in the 1992 book. They are now linked to the correct men, ie (from left to right: Carter, Hughes and Goddard). This 2016 correction is based on the names shown on the back of the original Club photographs.

France, where he had been commissioned in the field, awarded the Military Cross and twice mentioned in despatches before winning the Victoria Cross.

Apart from the few members recorded in this text very many more had served Australia well and were men of whom the community and the Club could be proud. The majority of the committee members and office bearers in the period between the world wars were from this group and their work and collective vision were largely responsible for the rebuilding in 1929, survival during the Depression and for decisions which laid a sound foundation for the great development after World War II.

The annual report for 1927-28, the earliest surviving since 1909-10, reveals only a modest growth in trading results over the 18-year period but a substantial gain in net assets from £1,180. 14.9 to £3,641. 12. 7. In the latter year the Government grant of £100 per annum shown in 1910 is no longer evident but it is compensated for, in some measure, by rent of £60 received from the Naval and Military Institute for the room it occupied in the Club. It seems likely that, in 1921, when the United Service Institution reverted to its original name of United Service Club, the grant would have been transferred to the Naval and Military Institute* which now provided the military library and lectures.

The membership growth in the same period is shown in the following comparison:

	1910	1928
Town members	152	260
Country members	102	126
Life members	8	16
Absentee members	<u>18</u>	<u>31</u>
	280	433

This increase in numbers would, almost certainly, have been largely the result of a post war influx of reserve and retired officers following demobilisation, and represented an important step in the growth of the Club. Membership remained between 400 and 500 for the remainder of the years between the wars, with the exception of 1932, in the depths of the Depression, when it sank to 388.

The committee, in 1928, recommended to the annual general meeting that Lieutenant Colonel RA Stanley** be honoured with life membership in recognition of his 'long and continuous valuable services to the Club'. These services included two years as president (1925-26), a further year as chairman of committees and three months acting secretary during the illness of the incumbent, and membership since 1892.

* The predecessor of the present United Service Institute.

** Colonel Raymond Augustus Stanley DSO VD (1883-1930). Biog. note Appendix III.

The annual report for 1927-28 contains a reference to reciprocal arrangements with other clubs, as follows: 'Your Committee have been in communication with Naval and Military Clubs in other parts of the British Empire and have already arranged reciprocity with several of such Clubs'. This facility has been of mutual and considerable benefit, for nearly 70 years, to members of the participating clubs who travel interstate and overseas.

It was also in 1928 that Lieutenant Colonel W G Allsop* became the first paid secretary, on a part time basis; an arrangement which continued, with five successive secretaries, until it became a full time position in 1943.

Later in that year the committee judged that the time had arrived to provide more accommodation for the increased membership of the Club, and it was fortunate that when the building had been erected in 1914 foundations had been provided to carry an additional storey when required. The Club architect, Lieutenant G F Addison,** was asked to prepare alternative plans for an additional floor and the Bank of New South Wales was approached for an increase in the overdraft limit, to £3,750. Plan no. 2 was the one accepted and the bank agreed to the loan, repayable at the rate of £100 per annum, with interest calculated on daily balances. Tenders were called in December 1928, a builder's quotation of £2,000 was accepted, the work proceeded and the extensions were opened with a smoke concert, popular in those times, on 23 August 1929.

There must have been some concern that the current income might prove to be insufficient to service the increased overdraft, and so a special general meeting was held on 22 February 1929 to seek approval for an increase of ten shillings in the subscription rate. Dissent was rife on this occasion and, after numerous points of order and some spirited debate, all motions and amendments were lost. The president, Lieutenant T R Beamish, called another special meeting a month later and this was more successful, after an initial point of order and a disagreement with the chairman's ruling. A motion by Colonel Hughes increasing town subscriptions to three guineas, country to one pound five shillings and junior to one guinea was finally agreed to. Brigadier General C H Foott then moved, 'That the extra amount so raised be definitely earmarked for providing additional comfort for members and for alterations to the Club buildings, and that the members of the United Service Club have every confidence that the Committee will apply the funds of the Club for the greatest benefit of the Members'. After this vote of confidence in the committee was passed by a large majority all went home secure in the knowledge that there would be sufficient funds to service the loan for the extensions.

Apart from the major decisions, the committee continued to wrestle, often laboriously, with many comparatively insignificant questions, such as the purchase

* Lieutenant Colonel W G Allsop CMG DSO

** Lieutenant George Frederick Addison (1889-1955).

of an additional secondhand poker machine and the right of the chief steward to sell the empty bottles from the bar. The latter problem was solved by giving him an extra five shillings per week in lieu of the bottles. Another matter requiring considerable discussion was whether the poker dice, which were available from the steward, should be permitted in the new lounge and it was finally agreed to restrict their use to the bar, presumably in the interest of maintaining good decorum in the quieter area of the Club.

One interesting comment on changing fashions was provided by the decision to have the brass fittings removed from the piano. They were not to know that many years later such adornments would be eagerly sought by collectors to restore old instruments to their former glory.

At the annual general meeting, held on 23 October 1929, Captain T R Beamish was re-elected and became the second person in the Club's history to hold the position of president for three years in succession; the first having been Colonel D E Evans,* 1922-24.

The discussion which took the most time at this meeting concerned the additional honorarium to be paid to the secretary. Some members wanted to give him an additional £150 on top of the fixed amount of £100, to which he was entitled under the rules, while others favoured £200. The matter was finally resolved by a typical committee compromise agreeing to give him a monthly bonus at the rate of £160 per annum.

The immediate pre-depression period had been one of considerable activity and progress but had not been without its minor troubles and vexations. One such concerned the behaviour of a Mr Stevens, a guest of Captain RAN (Reggie) Plant. The secretary reported to the committee a complaint from the waitress, 'who had to ask Mr Stevens not to touch her while performing her duties'. He also said, 'that he had been interfered with by Mr Stevens while remonstrating with Captain Plant'. The committee thereupon requested Captain Plant to refrain from bringing this gentleman into the Club and, a few months later when he did so again barred him from introducing any guests until further notice.

An indication of the wages of the time is given by the decision to raise steward Woollard's pay to £4. 11.0 per week, and of the relativity between male and female rates by an increase in the housekeeper's wage to £2. 10. 0. This increase was apparently insufficient inducement to the good woman, because a month later it was reported that she was to be given two weeks pay on retirement and a testimonial fund was to be opened for her benefit.

At the same meeting the matter of members' credit was regularised by limiting wine accounts to three pounds, and IOUs to a total of ten shillings at any one time.

* Colonel Daniel Edward Evans DSO VD (1885-1951). Biog.-. notes Appendix III.

In that far from affluent period most committee meetings had to deal with the suspension of credit of individual members, for debts which by today's standards seem to be trifling amounts, and the restoration of credit facilities to those who had paid their outstanding balances. Sometimes these lists included members who, later on, became Club presidents or prominent citizens in other spheres.

It is believed that 1929 was the year in which the Club acquired one of its most treasured trophies, namely, the navigation lights from the cruiser HMAS *Sydney*, famous for vanquishing the German raider *Emden* at Cocos Island in 1914. They are now mounted on the port and starboard sides of the front door of the present building and add distinction to the Club entrance, particularly when illuminated at night time. Maddock makes reference and says that Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt purchased them for the Club 'in the south'.

In February 1930 a letter received from the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Imperial League of Australia, Queensland Branch, invited the Club to be part of 'a deputation to the Mayor regarding the closing of places of amusement on Anzac Day'. Clearly, the committee saw in this proposal implications with which they would not agree, such as the closing of the Club on that day, and so they declined on the grounds that they did not know the opinions of their members on this matter. That was only the beginning of what proved to be a long running and contentious issue. On 3 April 1930 it was decided that the Club would be completely closed on Anzac Day but, only two weeks later, this was rescinded by a special meeting which opted for normal opening, restricted to members only.

With the RSSILA still pressing for complete closure on 25 April the matter was raised again at the annual general meeting, on 24 October 1930. It was decided, on the motion of Captain T R Beamish and Colonel D E Evans, 'that it was the opinion of the members of the United Service Club that Anzac Day should not be observed as a holy or sacred day or any other adjectival day and ... that it should be observed as each man thinks fit'. The whole matter of Anzac Day observance generated considerable heat in community forums, with the RSSILA hierarchy in favour of a closed day and others, including the Club, interpreting the wishes of former soldiers as being for a combination of remembrance and fellowship.

The matter was not to be resolved to the general satisfaction of the principal protagonists until after another world war had been fought. The Anzac Day argument accentuated existing divisions within the community with the churches, the wowers, the pacifists and those of that ilk being for a closed day and opposing them was an equally determined group, including most members of the Club, who were firmly of the belief that victory and the attainment of nationhood were worth celebrating.

During this period of controversy on Anzac Day observance decisions on in-house matters appear to have been reached without difficulty; one being acceptance of the

house and finance committee recommendation that Old Taylor scotch whisky be given a trial at ninepence a nip and thirteen shillings and sixpence per bottle. A further suggestion that it should be supplied also to the bowling club of the auditor, Lieutenant Colonel R G Groom, at the same price, was not endorsed.

The Club has always been generous in its entertainment of suitably qualified visitors and this was extended to the Netherlands naval squadron which was in port for some time in November 1930. An 'at home' was tendered to the Rear Admiral, the captains of the vessels and ten wardroom officers. In a kind gesture to another visitor that month, Captain F R Matthews, who had just flown in from England, was allowed a telephone call to his wife at a cost to the Club of eight pounds.

The amicable landlord and tenant relationship with the Naval and Military Institute was endangered when that body advised that it could no longer afford to rent the front room from the Club. It appears they were in dire financial straits but the Club committee, anxious to assist an organisation with which it had an affinity and many members in common, decided to seek to continue the arrangement. This was achieved by the Club agreeing to accept a greatly reduced rent until such time as the Institute's finances improved.

There appeared to be a political motive in the finance sub-committee's recommendation, at this time, to return to the donor, a Mr Gall, the picture of officers in camp and ready to maintain law and order during the shearers' strike of 1891. The committee disagreed and saw the picture as being a part of Queensland Defence Force history. They ordered that other pictures be rearranged to make room for it.

The same committee showed considerable forbearance in their treatment of the second steward, Harry Woollard, who failed under interrogation to give satisfactory explanations for after midnight visits to the Club by non-members, variously alleged to include an off-duty policeman and a waitress, who was the daughter of the housekeeper. The matter was put in the hands of the police for investigation and a special committee meeting was held to consider the resulting report which, apparently, included an adverse finding on the steward's conduct. After hearing all the evidence it was moved by the Club solicitor, Lieutenant G H Mocatta, and seconded by the president, Lieutenant Colonel H R Carter, that the steward, the housekeeper and her daughter all be dismissed and given one week's pay in lieu of notice. But, an amendment by two influential members, Major C A McEachern and Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt, that the two women be dismissed and the steward be retained was carried. This was not a first occasion for Woollard who had received an occasional reprimand in the past but had held on to his job due, one suspects, to a bond of affection that existed between this likeable but slightly wayward man and the members he served. Or perhaps they remembered the times when the good humoured leniency of superior officers had saved them from the consequences of youthful indiscretions.

In those times when ships provided the only means of travel to foreign parts the Club frequently offered honorary membership to the officers of passenger liners for the duration of their visits. To facilitate this practice Captain D A Scott,* a member who was a Moreton Bay pilot, was invited to give notice of the impending arrival of vessels and to propose their officers for honorary membership. It was also usual to offer honorary membership to the members of visiting English test cricket teams. That, of course, was in the days when test cricketers were mainly gentlemen and behaved accordingly.

The matter of tardiness by some members in paying their Club bills continued to be a problem and, in one case, respect for the clergy was probably the reason for unusual leniency on the part of the committee. A certain chaplain whose account was in disarray not only disregarded the secretary's letter asking him to reduce his indebtedness but had compounded the felony by increasing it substantially. Reluctantly, the committee instructed the secretary to communicate personally and advise the man of God that his credit, on earth at least, was stopped until the debt was cleared.

For many years no money was either demanded or accepted from deceased estates. On the demise of a member it was the custom for the committee to write off whatever indebtedness existed in his name and in one recorded case the amount involved was substantial enough, one would imagine, to be of considerable comfort to the widow in her grief.

In 1931 the popular Lieutenant Colonel F A (Gus) Hughes returned to the president's chair, having occupied it previously in 1920. During 1932 he played host to both the retiring Governor, His Excellency Lieutenant General Sir John Goodwin, and to his replacement, His Excellency Colonel Sir Leslie Wilson, who was to have a long and close association with the Club.

A notable guest entertained in the same year was Captain C W A Scott, after his record breaking solo flight from England and indicative of the acclaim accorded pioneer aviators was the action of the Club, a totally male domain, in inviting Miss Amy Johnston to luncheon on 31 May 1931, after her epic flight from England.

On 13 December 1932 an interesting guest was the creator of the inimitable Sherlock Holmes who signed the visitors' book as 'A Conan Doyle, Massachusetts, USA'. The circumstances surrounding his visit are a mystery and his military connections are not obvious, but it is known that in the latter stages of his life he forsook the London haunts of his protégés, Holmes and Watson, and migrated to the United States of America. And, there he indulged to the full his preoccupation with the world of the spirits. One newspaper report of his visit observed: 'Spiritualism in Australia is stimulated by the visit of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle'.

* Captain Dudley Adams Scott (1878-1960). Father of -present members, Captain D J Scott and Captain D A Scott

The severe economic depression would have been a factor in the net loss of 33 members for the year 1932-33 and for a decrease in the profit from sales. Nevertheless, the overdraft, arranged with the Bank of New South Wales for extensions to the premises in 1929, was reduced by £104.7.8 while both the premises and services to members had been well maintained. They were results which reflected very favourably on the leadership of 'Gus' Hughes and the diligence of his committee.

The big social event of 1932 was the annual ball in the City Hall at which 25 debutantes were presented to the Governor General, His Excellency Sir Isaac Isaacs, and the Governor, His Excellency Colonel Sir Leslie Wilson. The committee had previously decided that the debutantes should be led by Miss Kathleen Evans, 'in recognition of Colonel Evans' service to the Club, and the esteem in which he is held'. The Prime Minister, Mr S M Bruce,* and Mrs Bruce were also guests of the committee and despite the difficult times the attendance of 676 people was a record. Tickets cost fourteen shillings per head and included a supper of sandwiches, sausage rolls, oyster patties, savouries and desserts and, as fortification against the cold air of the wee hours, a cup of beef tea just prior to departure.

The great economic depression of the early thirties had apparently had little effect on the ball but was felt in many other ways. In November 1930 the committee, faced with the need to make ends meet, had reduced the secretary's salary by ten shillings per week, the wages of the housekeeper by five shillings and the stewards by eight shillings. The Club's tenant, the Naval and Military Institute, sought another reduction in rent because they had not received their government grant.

In the month of November 1931 twenty resignations of members were accepted by the committee, doubtless due in many cases to an inability to afford the subscription of three guineas per annum. Two months later the committee gave a special dispensation to seven good loyal members who were 'known to be heavily affected financially by the bad times'. The decision meant that their debts, ranging from three to seven pounds, could remain unpaid, without penalty, until their positions improved, on condition that the debts were not increased.

The fact that the Club was able to survive during the horrendous Depression of the early thirties is evidence of the desire of its members to preserve, whatever the sacrifice, an organisation which they saw as important to their way of life. Regular, militia and wartime officers, generally, were not necessarily the most affluent members of society. But, they all shared a comradeship greater than most other occupational groups and a common bond in loyalty to King and Country, and for these reasons they saw their Club as the centre of life away from home and office. Nothing much had changed since Major General Owen had enunciated these needs in 1892.

* The Right Honourable Stanley Melbourne Bruce PC CH MC (1883-1967). Prime Minister 1923-29. Later Viscount Bruce of Melbourne.

The decline in membership from 433 in 1928 to 388 in 1932 was a trend with ominous possibilities for the future viability of the Club and, as such, was worrying the committee and a number of concerned members. One attempt to arrest this slide was the creation, in 1930, of the junior member category for commissioned officers over 18 but under 21 years. They paid a subscription of only one guinea, as against three for senior town members, but two years later there were only 12 junior members, of whom Lieutenant Commander H M Gashler and Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen are still members of the Club. One by-product of the concern with membership was the publication of a complete list of members in the 1929-30 annual report; a practice which has continued approximately each alternate year ever since.

But, the first move towards positive action to turn around the drift in membership was the suggestion by Flying Officer A G Grant, to the 1932 annual general meeting, that a membership sub-committee be formed. The new committee acted promptly and set up such a sub-committee, comprising Major H R Carter, Lieutenant Commander N S Pixley and Flying Officer A G Grant, representing the three services, the latter two being co-opted from the membership and were not committeemen. These gentlemen formulated their own objects as follows: '1. To retain, as far as possible, the present members.' and '2. To seek further members amongst gentlemen eligible, without lowering the prestige of the Club.', and they approached the task with enthusiasm.

The results of their efforts can be seen in the total of 81 new members and a net gain of 20 for the year 1932-33. The president and members were generous in praising the sub-committee and their success was an important turning point in the fortunes of the Club. Within a short time Lieutenant Commander Pixley and Flying Officer Grant were both elected to the committee and later each served a term as president.

Members debts continued to be a problem for the Club and by January 1933 drastic action was taken by sending solicitor's letters to 42 defaulters, threatening cancellation of membership unless debts were cleared within one month. Another five were to receive letters from the secretary and a further ten were placed on the 'no credit' list. In these difficult times it appears that the secretary's salary was insufficient to keep him in the manner to which he had been accustomed because one month later his name was also on the 'no credit' list. Some time previously the old custom of cashing IOU's at the bar was abolished, as a further measure to curb reckless spending.

Surprisingly, in view of the close association with eight State Governors during its first 40 years, the Club had not invited any of them to be its patron and had no provision in its rules for such an office. A special general meeting held on 12 May 1933 created a new rule to allow for the annual election of a patron and His

Excellency Colonel Sir Leslie Wilson accepted the Club's invitation to occupy this position, as have the six succeeding Governors. It seems fitting that the Sovereign's representative in Queensland should be identified with a Club comprising persons who have held King's or Queen's commissions, and whose loyalty has been beyond question.

The diversions available within the Club had, from earliest times, consisted of billiards, bridge playing, monthly smoke socials, the bar, dances during the winter months, poker dice and poker or fruit machines. The last named were played with tokens purchased from the bar and, doubtless to avoid any embarrassment to the officers of the law who apparently turned a blind eye, no item in the financial accounts of the period can be identified as profit from them. It seems likely that it was included under the heading 'Returns from Entertainment'; in which case the gain must have been of modest proportions. But, with the advent of the year 1932 came a new device to entertain members in the form of a wireless set, as radios were then known. Initially it was on one month's trial but the absence of further mention suggests that it was retained at the end of that period.

The Club's record in regard to preserving its history had been a sorry one; all minutes, annual reports and correspondence prior to 1928 having been lost. An attempt to make amends for this neglect, in one small area, was made in August 1933 with a decision to erect an honour board of presidents. Unfortunately, in the absence of written records, reliance had to be placed on memories and hearsay which recent research has shown to be far from reliable in several instances.

The committee meeting in April 1934 took three actions to give the Club more identity. They were to provide uniforms for the stewards, to purchase two dozen ties in the Club colours for 34 shillings per dozen and to order, from Carreras Ltd, a trial consignment of 6,000 cigarettes carrying the Club crest.

Planning for the 1934 annual ball was carried out in as much detail as a military operation and left little to chance. The result was a spectacular social event with the Governor General and the Queensland Governor, and their parties, as the principal guests. To add colour to the occasion it was decided, as in Melbourne, to obtain, at a cost of ten shillings each, twenty Fortress Engineers or Garrison men in blue uniforms to line the entrance for the vice regal arrival and for the presentation of the 36 debutantes. The only departure from the prepared plan was that the debutantes were received by His Excellency Colonel Sir Leslie Wilson and Her Excellency Lady Isaacs, owing to the Governor General's inability to attend. The demand for tickets was so great that the number had to be limited to 600 and, according to the annual report, it was, 'a most successful and happy function'. The only slip-up in staff work was a communication omission which caused many members to bring their own liquor when, in fact, an adequate bar was provided. The other criticism that some debutantes had difficulty in managing their trains, despite instruction, was hardly the

fault of the planners.

In the same year the Club hosted another much bigger ball, on 6 December, at which the principal guest was His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester. The planning and organising went on for months and commenced with the booking of the City Hall which was given up, after a struggle, to Mrs Moore, the wife of the leader of the opposition, who wanted it for a charity function also concerned with the Royal tour. Then the Trocadero was hired and when it was realised that it would be too small some diplomacy was required to obtain a release from that contract. The problem of a venue was solved when it was decided to convert the top floor of Australian Estates Company's wool store at New Farm into a temporary ball room. The task was immense and after the wool had been removed, at a cost of £25, the area had to be cleaned and scrubbed, electricity and water laid on, temporary toilets, cloak rooms and bars constructed before the furnishing and decorating could commence. With the aid of much voluntary work by a number of loyal members and the good will and generosity of some good old Brisbane firms, all was ready to stage Brisbane's biggest ball. A host of casual workers was hired for the night, including policemen, bar stewards, girls for alcove service and many others; control being maintained with an internal telephone system borrowed from the army. Planning even extended to taking out insurance of £500 against the possibility of a death in the Royal Family which, because of Court mourning, would prevent the Duke's attendance.

About 1,100 guests attended and 300 gatecrashers were intercepted and prevented from entering. The whole function was judged to be a glittering success and reflected great credit on the Club. It was marred by only one serious defect; the deplorable standard of catering provided by McWhirter's Ltd. It was reported that the cups were dirty, the coffee cold, food poor and not available after 12.30 am, no wine service to the official party, waiters and waitresses were dancing in the supper room and their supervisors wore lounge suits or motor coats. This was hardly good enough for His Royal Highness and the Club very naturally refused to pay the bill. The matter was finally settled out of court long afterwards and not in the Club's favour largely due, it seems, to ineptness on the part of its legal advisers.

Altogether, Colonel Hill presided over a very social year including the first Club dinner for some years, which was held on 23 May 1935 to mark the occasion of the King's jubilee. The Governor, His Excellency Colonel Sir Leslie Wilson, in responding to the principal toast, pointed out that it was the eve of Empire Day, the birthday of the late Queen Victoria, and suggested that a dinner on this day should become an annual event. It appears not to have been held in 1936, doubtless because of the death of King George V, nor in 1937 but was listed in 1938 and 1939, after which social activities were largely suspended for the duration of the war.

The Royal fervour generated by the impending visit of the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester prompted the Club's attempt to acquire the prefix 'Royal' for its name.

It was hoped that the granting of this seal of approval would have coincided with the Duke's visit to the Club but, alas, ignorance of the procedure to be followed was one of the several impediments which reduced this effort to nothing.

The attendance of 120 members at the annual general meeting on 19 October 1934 was an exceptionally large one, and for no obvious reason. There was no divisive issue listed on the agenda; just the normal receipt of reports, election of office bearers, election of committee and the election of Major General R Spencer Browne and Colonel CD W Rankin, both foundation members, as life members. Despite the absence of any seemingly contentious issues and general satisfaction with the year's results the president, Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt, had a difficult task keeping control and at one stage reminded the assemblage that 'this was a gentlemen's Club and he expected members to co-operate ... and not to burlesque the meeting'. This lack of decorum was despite the absence of any official wining and dining beforehand, as had been the case the previous year.

The annual report showed a trading profit of £238. 9. 7 and the president modestly ascribed the better results for the year to improved conditions rather than 'the special ability of the committee'. Before closing the meeting, three hours after it had begun, he asked all members attending the forthcoming reception for His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester to wear the recently adopted Club tie. Presumably for the purpose of creating an appearance of solidarity; a condition which had not been particularly evident during this turbulent meeting.

During the following Club year, which ended on 30 September 1935, a record number of 33 committee meetings were held, not counting sub-committee meetings, with the minutes listing 375 separate items. Certainly, it had been a very social year, with the Royal ball, the annual ball, the jubilee dinner, the Exhibition week 'at home' and some informal receptions to entertain visiting celebrities but the number of meetings is remarkable and reveals a very much 'hands on' attitude by the committee; regardless of the demands on the time of its members. It was even more surprising in view of the fact that the secretary during that time was the well decorated Colonel W W Alderman, whose succinct yet comprehensive minutes suggest that he was a capable man who could be relied on to attend to all normal administrative matters, and even more so because the previous year he had served on the committee.

Units of the three services were encouraged to hold formal dinners within the military atmosphere of the Club but sometimes youthful exuberance caused problems. There was one such occurrence during June when the neighbours in George Street registered some protest regarding disturbance to their sleep. The committee reacted calmly and, perhaps with a tinge of bias towards the offenders, when it merely authorised the secretary to, 'inform members of unit dinners held in the Club that unreasonable noise causes complaints to be lodged by neighbours'.

Another small problem was overcome when the lock on the entrance gate was repaired and the caretaker was 'instructed to close the gate when the Club closes in order that undesirable characters cannot sleep within the Club enclosure'; evidence that the problem of homeless people in big cities is not a new one.

The current longest serving member, Lieutenant Colonel T B Stephens, has been able to throw some light on the following item in the committee minutes of 10 July 1935: 'Resolved that the application of Captain K Trotter to have members and friends secure drinks in bulk, and biscuits and cheese at 3d. per head, in order to congratulate Captain T B Stephens be approved. Wines at Bar prices plus 5%'. It was he recalls to celebrate his engagement to his future wife, now well known amateur actress Babette Stephens.

The annual general meeting in 1935 attracted an attendance of only 68 but produced almost as much vigorous debate and resort to motions of disagreement with the chairman's ruling as the previous year. Colonel Hill's troubles, as chairman, began when Lieutenant H N Vidgen moved that junior members be allowed to vote and he declared the motion out of order. Vidgen refused to accept this decision and promptly moved that the chairman's ruling be disagreed with but the chairman declared that motion lapsed for want of a seconder, whereupon Lieutenant Colonel Gehrman pointed out that he did not ask for a seconder. The tenacious Vidgen again moved that junior members be allowed to vote, seconded by his younger brother Lieutenant N O (Paddy) Vidgen, who was just out of junior ranks. The chairman again refused to accept the motion so the mover took one step backwards and moved that the previous ruling, regarding the lapsed motion of dissent for want of a seconder, be disagreed with. This motion was successful and then, after considerable argument and an appeal for an opinion from the honorary solicitor, Pay Lieutenant G H Mocatta, a further motion giving the vote to junior members was passed, but not before Captain T R Beamish had raised a point of order that the legal gentleman had been asked for an opinion not a sermon. The meeting then settled down to the business in hand, but only until consideration of the annual report when Colonel F A Hughes took the opportunity to soundly criticise the committee generally, and particularly in relation to the Royal ball. Matters got a little heated and Lieutenant G F Addison drew attention to the bad language used by Colonel Hughes who then withdrew the offending words and concluded by congratulating the Club on the excellent result for the year. Hostilities broke out again when Pay Lieutenant G H Mocatta took exception to criticism by Colonel Hughes but shortly afterwards, following a withdrawal and an apology, peace was restored and the normal business of the meeting was completed without further incident.

Two items of general business are of interest, in view of later events. One was a proposal that the committee 'have due regard to the conversion of the Club into a residential one, with particular regard to reciprocity with other clubs'. This is the first

mention in the records of what was probably a long nurtured desire to make the Club residential. The other was raised by foundation member, Lieutenant Colonel V Larsen, who expressed disappointment that no mention was made of the history which Major H M M Maddock was known to have written. The president gave an assurance that these matters would be considered by the committee.

One action taken by the committee in relation to the history was to ask each former president to write an account of his period in office; a forlorn hope considering the almost certain lack of time or inclination in most cases and the absence of any further mention seems to confirm this assessment. It was also decided that the president, Colonel J Hill, should edit Major H M M Maddock's work and have it published. It was published the next year under the title: *The United Service Club, A Short History* by Major H M M Maddock, VD, but reference to the author's manuscript reveals no evidence of any editing. This history of only 4,000 words, despite reliance on sometimes faulty memories and its limited scope, has helped to conserve an important part of the Club's history.

The provision of liquor of a standard and at a price acceptable to members is one of the important duties of club committees and, from time to time, changes have to be made in response to criticism or to meet new requirements. One such occasion was in December 1935 when it was decided that the quality of Castlemaine XXXX beer was unacceptable and that in future only Bulimba would be served. Perhaps it was realised that an error had been made or remembered that Club trustee, Colonel FA Hughes, was secretary of the Castlemaine brewery because one month later the committee recommended to the house and finance sub-committee that it should reconsider its decision to purchase from a brewery other than Castlemaine Perkins. Just prior to this time dissatisfaction had been expressed with the Club whisky and so quotations for alternative supplies were sought widely within the trade. After what must have been many pleasant tastings, it was decided to adopt 'Red, White & Blue Whisky (Gaelic Special Reserve)' as the new Club whisky and to purchase it in 20 gallon lots. It was distributed in Australia by Orme, Keigwin & Co. limited and its advertising slogan was 'Dearer but Bette'.

Rule 24 was clearly worded; it stated: 'Any member who shall have been indebted to the Club for a period of more than six months may be removed from the Roll of Members by resolution of the Committee, and no member shall be retained on the Roll who has been indebted to the Club for more than twelve months'. But, in February 1936, its implementation, or failure to apply it strictly, led to the loss of a prominent committeeman. Major C A McEachern, a well known solicitor, finding himself at odds with the remainder of the committee on the application of this rule to a member, rose, asked the president to accept his resignation and left the meeting.

At the same meeting the president reported that he had forwarded, through His Excellency the Governor, a message from himself and members of the Club to His

Majesty the King, Her Majesty Queen Mary and the members of the Royal Family expressing 'their heartfelt sorrow and sympathy in the loss of our late beloved King'.*

The previous month the committee had stood in silence to mourn the death of their well respected secretary, Colonel Alderman, and now applications were called for a replacement; members only being eligible for the position. Seventeen well known members, including one of the committee, were attracted to this part-time job with a salary of £208 per annum and the successful applicant was the Club's auditor of several years standing, Lieutenant Colonel R G Groom.** From that time on the accountant's touch is seen in the minutes, with meticulously presented statements of receipts and payments for each month. He was to be, for the next six years, the last part-time secretary.

One of the first tasks for the new secretary was to correct the president's honour board by having the initials RN placed in proper relationship to Captain Cresswell's CMG, for each of his four listings. Due to the absence of early records or later historical research, neither he nor the committee were to know that the name was wrong also because Captain Cresswell was not in Queensland during any of the four years in which his name was shown on the board.

Half a century ago, in contrast to modern community tastes, traditional balls were the major items in Brisbane's winter social calendar and anybody who was anybody, or aspired to be, had to be seen in all their finery at one or more of these functions. The United Service Club ball was one for which invitations were eagerly sought; possibly because it was colourful with uniforms and medals and had an elitist air about it. Another factor may have been that military officers had a talent for organisation and patrons appreciated the manner in which it was conducted. The committee minutes of 17 June 1936 list some of the preparations for the ball which throw light on the social customs of the era. Preliminary arrangements were as follows:

Sale of cigarettes and Aspros

Captain Blackburn offered to see if a suitable girl could be obtained to sell cigarettes and Aspros at the Ball.

Guests

Resolved that the following guests be invited: Governor General and Lady Gowrie.

All State Governors in Queensland on 17 August with their ladies.

Lieutenant Governor and Lady

The District Naval Officer and Lady

* King George V.

** Lieutenant Colonel Roy Graeme Groom VD (1877-1945).

The Commandant 1st District Base and Lady
The Premier and Lady
The Leader of the Opposition and Lady
The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress

Press: (One card to each paper - *Courier Mail, Telegraph, Truth, Smith's Weekly, Bulletin*)

Officers of the visiting Naval Squadron:

H.M.A.S. <i>CANBERRA</i>	Admiral and Staff Captain, 10 wardroom officers, two gunroom officers
H.M.A.S. <i>STUART</i>	Captain and four wardroom officers
Three destroyers	Captain and two wardroom officers each

Supper:

Resolved that Webster's quotation of 6/6d. per guest be accepted and that Colonel Smith see Websters with the view of altering the menu to include turkey in place of some of the other items.

Other matters included approval of the list of 25 debutantes, the engagement of Miss Peggy Chauncy to train them, the fine old firm of John Hicks & Co again offered to provide the furniture for the official alcove, at no cost, and Mr A Kerr's offer to supply a band of ten players for £23. 2. 0 was accepted. However, the invitations to the Governors were not sent because the death of King George V and the consequent Court Mourning would have prevented their attendance, so Admiral R H O Lane-Poole,* commanding the visiting Naval Squadron, was invited to be the principal guest and to receive the debutantes.

Advice was sought, without success, on the correct music to be played as a salute to the Admiral on his arrival and, in the absence of official guidance it was decided to pipe him on board, have a roll of drums as he proceeded across the floor and a few bars of Rule Britannia as he arrived at the official alcove.

The ball was judged to be very successful, with an attendance of approximately 750 filling the City Hall and a profit of £300. Some light is thrown on the drinking habits of the period by the reported consumption on the night of 25.6 gallons of whisky, 20 gallons of draught beer, 288 bottles of ale and comparatively insignificant quantities of other varieties of liquor. Cork tipped State Express 333, Craven A and Capstan plain were by far the most favoured brands of cigarettes and a total of 4,000 were sold

* Later Vice Admiral Sir Richard (Hayden) (Owen) Lane-Poole KBE CB (1883-1971). Commanded Australian Squadron 1936-38.

during the night.

Other social events during the year included several 'at homes' and receptions also for The Right Honourable W M Hughes* and for Sir Geoffrey Whiskard. **

Previous mention has been made of the relationship between the Club and its tenant, the Naval and Military Institute of Queensland, and this was further clarified by a new rule adopted by the Institute at its 1936 annual meeting. It was as follows: 'The Institute shall be affiliated with the United Service Club, and all members of the Club shall be ipso facto honorary members of the Institute, but shall have no power to vote at meetings nor any voice in the management of the Institute. The privileges of such honorary members shall be as provided in the by-laws. Any by-laws relating to such honorary members shall not be adopted or altered without the approval of the United Service Club. Members of the Institute shall not, by reason of such membership, be members of the Club nor entitled to the use of the premises of the Club other than those rooms during such time as they are made available to the Institute'.

The updating of the membership list had apparently not received the meticulous care it should have during the past few busy years because, at the September 1936 committee meeting, it was resolved to remove the names of Major General J F Owen and Air Commodore Sir Charles Kingsford Smith from the list and the first named had died in 1924.

At meetings during the latter part of 1936 there were several references regarding the desire for new premises to meet three basic criteria, namely, additional space, proximity to the central business district in Queen Street and live-in accommodation for members. To this end approaches were made to the Commercial Banking Company and the Bank of New South Wales, both of which were rumoured to be planning new head offices in Queen Street. The thought behind this action was that one might be willing to incorporate in its plans accommodation tailored to the needs of the Club. The Bank of New South Wales expressed interest but stated that it would be at least a year before any construction would take place and no further moves were made, except to recommend to the incoming committee 'that the matter not be lost sight of'.

The new committee, true to its instruction, very quickly set up a top level subcommittee comprising the president, Colonel D E Evans; the vice president, Lieutenant Commander N S Pixley; the treasurer, Colonel G H G Smith; Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt and the honorary architect, Lieutenant G F Addison to investigate the possibility of finding 'more centrally situated premises'. The sub-committee, with commendable diligence, made widespread enquiries,

*The Right Honourable William Morris Hughes CH (1862-1952). Prime Minister 1915-23.

**Sir Geoffrey (Granville) Whiskard KCB KCMG (1886-1957). United Kingdom High Commissioner to Australia 1936-41.

inspected several buildings, drew plans, costed various propositions and presented a detailed report after nine months of seeking a solution to the Club's problem. None of the buildings offered much more floor area than the Club had in its own building and, in even the cheapest option, the Club, it was calculated, would only be able to afford the rent and additional costs if it could obtain 50 more town members and increase bar sales by 90 per cent. Clearly, the chances of acquiring 50 new members with the capability of lifting liquor consumption by that amount were remote indeed and so, one special general meeting and one committee meeting later, it was finally recognised that the scheme was totally lacking in viability.

At various times in the Club's history its rules have been amended to meet needs created by changed circumstances and during more recent times to broaden eligibility for membership. It is known that amendments were made in 1914, 1921, 1930, 1936, 1944, 1949 and on several occasions in following years. The prime purpose in 1936 was to vary the age qualifications for junior members. Since the category had been created in 1930 it comprised commissioned officers or cadet officers aged 17 years but under 21 years, elected in the same manner as ordinary members but paying a subscription of only one guinea per year. The new rule required that they be 21-25 years, have the benefit of the lower subscription rate but able, at any time, to gain full rights by paying the subscription prescribed for ordinary members. Another rule change was to remove the right to acquire eligibility for life membership by payment of fifty pounds, either in 'specie or value'.

Despite the many amendments to the rules over the years the objects of the Club have suffered only superficial changes and convey the same intentions as they did nearly a century ago. Basically, they affirm still that the Club exists for the purposes of promoting interests contributing to the defence of the nation, promoting *esprit de corps* among officers of all branches of the services and providing facilities for the accommodation and entertainment of members generally.

The Club's interest in sport remained strong and with the 1936 Test cricket series about to commence invitations were extended, as usual, to the managers, captains and members of both the English and Australian teams to be honorary members whilst in Brisbane. Golf was also very much in mind and an offer by Lieutenant Commander N S Pixley to donate a trophy to be played for by Club members was accepted, and the Pixley Cup is still being competed for 55 years later; a memorial to a fine sportsman and a wonderful Club member. Norman Pixley had a lifelong interest in tennis also and was still playing when over eighty years of age; an interest that was inherited from his father, Lieutenant Arthur Pixley, who had been captain of one of Brisbane's early tennis clubs in 1894.

Early in 1937 foundation member, Major F L Jones, produced a 500 word history of the Club which differed in a few respects from Major Maddock's earlier work; one being the name which Jones said was United Service Institute and Maddock asserted

was Institution, both having overlooked the fact that it was originally registered as United Service Club. Forty five years after the foundation of the Club the memories of early members had become hazy and legend had, in many cases, filled the gaps and so the recollections of these worthy gentlemen were sometimes in error for reasons beyond their control.

In June 1937 it appears that coffee with lunch was a new innovation, at a time when the aromatic bean from Brazil was starting to gain popularity in this tea drinking nation, and that man for all seasons, Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt, volunteered to instruct the caterer in 'the art of making coffee'. The redoubtable Platt was the Club's honorary engineer, its maker of model ships for decoration at functions, purchaser of the HMAS *Sydney's* navigation lights, president 1932-33 and served a total of 25 years on the committee. Throughout the history of the Club special purpose sub-committees have rarely failed to produce good results, and so it was with the library sub-committee comprising Flying Officer Grant, Major N M Gutteridge and Pay Lieutenant F L Strevens. Their proposals to rejuvenate the rundown library were as follows:

1. It is considered that the Club library should be built up without delay.
2. It is recommended that twenty guineas be immediately voted to the sub-committee for books from general funds and that it be a recommendation to incoming committees to vote this as an annual expenditure.
3. It is suggested that new members and honorary members be encouraged to mark their entry to the Club by donation of a suitably inscribed book or books.
4. It is considered that a drive be conducted amongst members of the Club to donate books and that this take the form of a printed blank order form directing the bookseller to supply books to the library sub-committee up to a value of an appropriate amount; the onus of collecting the amount from the member to be upon the bookseller.
5. It has been volunteered that the incoming overseas ships will in future be scanned for suitable unused or finished books.
6. It was decided to welcome suggestions from members of the general committee.

Such a devilish combination of extortion, coercion, scavenging and begging could hardly fail to succeed, and it does appear to have achieved its object.

During the year efforts had been made to build up the attendance for the Friday luncheon but the standard of the meals left something to be desired, and was tending to defeat the object of the exercise. Therefore, the secretary was instructed to tell the caterer that the committee were dissatisfied and to give him definite instructions that dogs and cats were to be kept out of the kitchen. There is reason to suspect that by this time the caterer, Miller, a man somewhat lacking in culture and not quite up to officers' mess standards, had been marked down for marching orders at the first

opportunity. The chance came a month later when Pay Lieutenant F L Strevens discovered a married couple, named Burston, with better credentials. The committee engaged them and gave the hapless Miller two weeks pay in lieu of notice and a final unlamented farewell.

The year ended 30 September 1937 had been a good one for the Club with a greatly increased attendance at lunch times, a restocked library and the second highest cash surplus on record. Certainly, the economic climate had improved markedly since the depths of the depression at the beginning of the decade but members had benefited also from the energetic endeavours of a comparatively young committee, under the very experienced leadership of Colonel D E Evans. The annual general meeting reflected his influence, being completely devoid of acrimonious debate and was occupied with the adoption of the annual reports and little else. The attendance of 28 was a small one but that, and the absence of contests for offices or committee, are judged to be more due to satisfaction with the manner in which the Club was meeting the needs of members than to disinterest. Importantly, the bickering had stopped and decorum befitting an officers' club had returned to 70 George Street.

It seems likely that Colonel 'Dan' Evans, after having served three terms as president more than a decade earlier, had been persuaded to come back for a year to achieve this result. He had the stature for the task, being greatly respected for his record in World War I and as chairman of Evans Deakin Ltd, the leading mechanical and structural engineers in Brisbane. He was also a popular man who enjoyed the company of his fellow officers in the Club; the total of his monthly wine bill bore testimony to that. His departure from the chair marked the end of an era which had been dominated by veterans of a war which ended in 1918; 19 years earlier. Their contribution to the growth and maturity of the Club had been great but, now, they were about to be succeeded by younger men who, as yet, had lacked the opportunity to test themselves in war but had already shown some talent for club management. The reversal of the downward trend in membership and the improvements in Club services, which together had produced a satisfactory financial result, were due to their skills and dedication.

Another War and the End of an Era

When 39-year-old Lieutenant Commander N S Pixley succeeded to the presidency towards the end of 1937 he took command of a Club which was in good shape, having a healthy bank balance, its own building close to the seat of Government in George Street and a fine 45-year-old tradition. Members generally approved of the way in which the Club was being conducted but, nevertheless, harboured a frustration concerning the apparent inability of all concerned to find a viable way to make it a residential club.

Pixley came to face the tasks ahead of him with the advantages of comparative youth, the right background as the son of an early member and as an honorary aide-de-camp to the Governor, a good track record and with a well balanced committee behind him. It augured well for what was to be the beginning of a new period of management by post-war officers.

The new committee commenced briskly by organising the first Christmas tree function for the children of members, electric fans were installed in the dining room and the limit on cheques which members could cash at the bar was raised from three pounds to five pounds per day. There was new interest in sport, possibly reflecting the president's inclinations, which was shown in the changing of the name of the billiards and cards sub-committee to sports, billiards and cards and the planning of a golf match in aid of Legacy. But, billiards remained an important activity, as it had been since the acquisition of the first table at about the turn of the century, and it was decided that a donation by Captain RAN Plant should be used to purchase a perpetual cup for an annual billiards competition.

A matter requiring early attention was the request by the secretary, Lieutenant Colonel R G Groom, for protracted leave following his doctor's advice that a trip abroad would be beneficial to his health.

This was resolved by deciding as follows:

1. That the Secretary be given leave on three quarter pay for six to nine months on the understanding that Mr T R Groom* gives such services as Assistant Secretary as are determined by the Committee.

* Later Sir (Thomas) Reginald Groom (1906-88). Lord Mayor of Brisbane 1955-61. Son of Lieutenant Colonel R G Groom VD.

2. That the Committee appoint a member of the Club as Acting Secretary, such Acting Secretary to be responsible for such of the Secretary's duties as are not delegated to the Assistant Secretary by the Committee.
3. That the Acting Secretary is to receive the Ball Honorarium, plus £1/-/- per week. He (the president) explained that the division of duties contemplated by the Committee was that the Acting Secretary should be responsible for the control of the staff, attend to meetings, correspondence, club functions etc., while the Assistant Secretary should attend to the checking and payment of accounts, wages, stamping of relief tax schedules and insurance books and to the taking of cash from the register and poker machines, writing up the cash book, wine and members' ledgers, preparation of monthly financial statements and half yearly balance sheet.

The honorary treasurer, Colonel G H G Smith, whose wholehearted commitment to the Club had been demonstrated on many previous occasions, agreed to accept the additional duties of acting secretary. Lieutenant Colonel R G Groom, returned refreshed after nearly a year's absence and continued in the post for another five years.

The Club maintained its hospitable image by entertaining a number of distinguished guests, both local and foreign, during the year. The most colourful of whom was the German Count Felix von Luckner who happened to sail into our waters in the *Zee Teurfel*; much as he had done just prior to World War I. But, in making his escape after the outbreak of that war his *Zee Adler* stuck hard and fast on a reef off New Zealand, resulting in his capture and the blowing up of his ship by HMAS *Encounter*. The Count's invariable party trick of tearing in two his host city's telephone directory must have given him an easier task in Brisbane than it had in Sydney, having regard to their relative populations.

Members participated in a range of sporting events according to their inclinations. There was a billiards competition for the new Captain 'Reggie' Plant Cup, golf for the United Service Club Cup (donated by Colonel D E Evans and Lieutenant Commander N S Pixley) and tennis. Tennis appears to have been a new sport for the Club and was due to the initiative of the president in arranging courts at the Milton Tennis Club.

The social functions were all of traditional high standard and His Excellency the Governor Colonel Sir Leslie Wilson honoured the Club with his attendance at both the annual dinner, on the eve of Empire Day, and the annual ball in August. On these occasions the president was in the unusual position, for an honorary aide-de-camp, of being host to the Governor he served. The annual report stated that: 'The Committee's chief difficulty in connection with the Ball was to limit the number of guests desiring to attend; this year several hundred nominations had to be refused and still it was to some extent overcrowded'.

Club improvements were not neglected; the rear roof was replaced (in fibro cement sheeting due to a shortage of roofing iron), a sound-proof telephone booth had been erected and, in the bar, the most modern type of refrigerator was installed and four earthenware spittoons purchased for members use. It is interesting to reflect that 50 years ago spitting was socially acceptable, other than in the presence of ladies. Also, to further pander to the gambling proclivities of members two push boards of the type popular in the Naval & Military Club, Melbourne, were purchased, as a trial order.

The Club rules provided for the election of new members by secret ballot within the committee, after the names had been displayed on the notice board to give members the opportunity to object. For a candidate to be rejected one black ball, or more, in three had to be cast against him and because all prospective members were officers, and gentlemen by act of Parliament, to be black-balled has been a rare occurrence. However, during the year under review, one applicant did meet this fate which recalls a few lines of verse published in the first edition of *Punch* in 1841, anent some long forgotten incident of the time at the original United Service Club in London. It was as follows:

TO THE BLACK-BALLED OF THE UNITED SERVICE
Black bottles at Brighton,
To darken your fame;
Black Sundays at Hounslow,
To add to your shame,
Black balls at the club,
Show Lord Hill's growing duller
He should change your command
To the guards of that colour.

As in gentlemen's clubs generally, ladies were invited only on very special social occasions, such as dances. So when the Club's tenant, the Naval and Military Institute, sought permission to invite ladies to a lecture on the Great Barrier Reef one detects a note of reluctance in the committee's granting of this request, subject to the proviso that it was 'not to be taken as a precedent'. In the event, the privilege was abused to the extent that some ladies were observed in the lounge, whereas the permission related to the lecture room only, and appropriate expressions of displeasure were conveyed to the Institute.

It has been previously noted that although there had been poker machines in the bar for many years the profit from them was never mentioned as a separate item. This leads to the presumption that their legality was in question. The decision at the last committee meeting for the year that 'as soon as the new legislation is passed the poker machines be removed from the bar, and stored for future action' suggests that

a new law to put their illegality beyond doubt was imminent. And, the following year, after the committee had taken legal advice, they were placed in storage and never used again.

The annual general meeting held on 11 November 1938 took a course similar to the previous year, with praise to the president and committee for the progress made and with no discordant notes. Both the president and the vice president, Flying Officer A G Grant, were re-elected unopposed but there was a contest for committee which resulted in the election of three new members: Major FV Sharpe, Lieutenant E H Voss and Lieutenant L W N Fordham. The only question asked was the hardy annual regarding what was being done about new, or enlarged, premises. With the membership strength at 499, and tending to increase, there were again expressions of concern regarding the need for more space and for residential accommodation.

Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt, who had not been re-elected to the committee, obviously felt the loss keenly after so many years in the forefront of Club affairs and sought appointment as honorary engineer. The committee was not prepared to create such a position, but shortly afterwards Lieutenant Fordham was transferred to Rockhampton in the course of his employment and Platt was invited to fill the vacancy.

The Quetta Club, Baluchistan, India wrote seeking a reciprocal arrangement for the benefit of visiting members and this was agreed, on the condition that only officers holding the King's commission would be given such rights. Another request for reciprocity from the Naval & Military Club of Adelaide was given a similar reply because, even in those days, that club had some civilian members to whom the agreement would not apply. This was a brotherhood of officers of the three armed services, of British Empire countries, and others could only be admitted as guests of, and in the company of, members.

The traditional New Year's Eve party at the Club, for members and their lady friends, was the usual happy function, with an appropriately named Miss Smiles in charge of the music, but just slightly marred by the complaint of Major D R Harris that his daughter had been insulted by a member, who was also a well known barrister. The committee deliberated on this question, the honorary solicitor wrote draft letters but the barrister was a prickly character who was quick with a writ if given half an opportunity and, after further consideration of the merits of the case, and the risk entailed, it was decided to not send any letter. Instead, it was agreed that the president should speak to the member accused of this appalling breach of good manners and so the matter ended.

Early in 1939 moves were made to make new members feel more welcome and to entertain newly commissioned officers, doubtless, with the idea of encouraging them to join the Club. It was resolved to ask new members to telephone the president and arrange to have lunch with him, as a means of breaking the ice and meeting other

members. One of the first to avail himself of this invitation was recently elected member Lieutenant H L Trout, later well known community leader, Sir Leon Trout. The other measure was to invite a group of newly commissioned officers to a 5.30 pm reception at the Club to impress them with its attractions. It was also decided to invite officers attending camps in the vicinity of Brisbane to become honorary members for the duration of their stay.

The social season of 1939 began with a 5.30 pm reception on 11 May for the Governor General, His Excellency The Right Honourable Lord Gowrie, when 51 members assembled to do honour to the office and to a gallant soldier who had earned a Victoria Cross in World War I. The annual dinner was held on the customary date of 23 May and attended by the Governor when, coincidentally, the number present was again 51. The ball, on the Monday of Exhibition Week, again fully taxed the capacity of the City Hall and disappointed many members and guests who were unable to obtain tickets. The gaiety of the occasion would have been heightened by an excitement born of uncertainty as war clouds gathered in Europe; who could prophesy what the months ahead would bring?

Three weeks later, on 3 September, when the conflict commenced the Club went into war mode. Negotiations, nearing completion, to purchase the building next door were called off, the proposal for a squash court was abandoned and the president, called up by the Navy, left the Club in the capable hands of the vice president. Interestingly the secretary was instructed to look up old records to 'ascertain the general line of action taken by the committee during the last war and its affect on the finances of the Club'. Engineer Lieutenant Commander Platt went even further and volunteered to read, and make a precis of, the minutes for the whole 1914-18 period. Letters were forwarded to both the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence offering the facilities of the Club (for what purpose is not stated) and other letters were prepared asking members to advise when going on military duty and seeking forwarding addresses for those who had already gone. Club membership began to rise, war fever was taking hold and the quiet little Club in George Street was never going to be quite the same again.

The first war time annual general meeting took place on 10 November without either the president ; on duty with the Navy, or the vice president who was recovering from a major operation. As nominations did not exceed vacancies no elections were necessary and Flying Officer A G Grant became president with Lieutenant E H Voss as his deputy. Newcomers to the committee were Second Lieutenant A Boyd, Captain B T Cowlshaw, * Major LA Little** and Lieutenant Commander W K Kirkcaldie, two of whom were destined to become presidents and one to preside over a period of

*Later Major Bob Thompson Cowlshaw MC. Biog. notes Appendix III.

**Later Lieutenant Colonel Leonard Alfred Little MBE. Biog. notes Appendix III.

great change which could not be foreseen at that time.

War makes plans subject to change without much notice and Flying Officer Grant was in the chair just six weeks before the Royal Australian Air Force claimed him for active duty, as adjutant of 23 Squadron. Following the annual general meeting a special general meeting was held to amend the rules to create the office of immediate past president. The idea originated with Flying Officer Grant and was designed to retain the experience of the previous president on the new committee for a period of one or two years. The meeting agreed and the office still exists, having proved its value over the past half century.

Following the changes occasioned by Flying Officer Grant's departure Lieutenant E H Voss became president and, that old campaigner from World War I, Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith* was elected vice president, in addition to his existing position as treasurer. Lieutenant Commander Pixley became the first immediate past president (the rule stipulated that the recipient should be the president prior to the annual general meeting). Before the year was out there were to be further departures from the committee for active service but these were stirring times and rapid change was accepted as patriotic duty.

Experience from another war would seem to have been behind an early decision to stock up with 200 gallons of scotch whisky; just in case the present conflict went beyond the predicted six months. This quantity was increased later and by May 1940 the stock amounted to 370 gallons and, in a true spirit of conservation, it was decided to order normally for current requirements and to keep this quantity as a strategic reserve. On the other hand, 24 gallons of rum in store was to be used; rum being more of a lower deck drink was less essential in an officers' club.

Dress regulations were relaxed to permit Army shorts to be worn and serving officers were encouraged to make the Club their social focus in Brisbane. Members going on active service were placed on the absent on active service list with a suspension of subscriptions and, of the first list of 26, seven are still members of the Club including trustee, Brigadier J L Amies. **

There was uncertainty in committee minds, in this first year of war, as to whether or not it was appropriate to carry on with the annual debutante ball so they circularised town members for their opinions and the vote came back for social life as normal. The ball was the usual colourful function with the Governor receiving the debutantes and the attendance of 662 was a comfortable crowd in the City Hall and, in true patriotic spirit, £100 of the takings was donated to the Red Cross Appeal Fund.

The Christmas party for members' children, held at the Naval Depot in Alice Street

*Lieutenant Colonel George Henry Glenross Smith MC (1886-1968). For many years librarian of the Supreme Court of Queensland.

**Brigadier Jack Lowell Amies CBE ED. Biog. notes Appendix III.

and complete with decorated tree and Santa Claus, was again well attended and now in its third year was becoming a permanent fixture on the Club calendar.

As 1940, the second year of the war, was drawing to a close it was decided that saving paper was more important than sending Christmas cards and that none would be ordered. This was a sign of recognition of the need to conserve strategic materials but others, it seemed, had a more personal approach to conservation. Engineer Lieutenant Commander Platt announced to the September meeting that he had bought a quantity of petrol and arranged for a garage to store it for him and the secretary was instructed to see if a similar arrangement could be made by the Club for the benefit of members. The absence of further mention suggests that in the colder, clearer light of morning it was seen that this action could be construed by some people as being unpatriotic, and against the prevailing spirit of personal sacrifice in the interests of the war effort.

A novel request had been received from a group of officers seeking the formation of a branch of the Club at the large war time camp at Redbank. The feasibility of setting up what could be seen as a duplicate officers' mess within an Army establishment does seem to have not been well thought through by its proposers, but the president and Major B T Cowlshaw went out to investigate. Brigadier EM Ralph, the camp commandant and Club member, thought the idea a good one but the General Officer Commanding thought otherwise, so that was the end of that.

It appears that unreported and unrecorded movements of members in this early war time period had left the Club's membership list in some disarray and it was surely a desperate, and probably forlorn, attempt to restore it to order when the committee asked Lieutenant Colonel Smith and the secretary to go through the list and 'delete the names of absent members who are unlikely to return to Queensland'.

It took the 22 members at the 1940 annual general meeting only an hour to adopt the annual reports, without dissent, to elect the unopposed candidates for office and committee, to invite His Excellency the Governor to be patron for the ensuing year, to appoint Lieutenant Colonel C G Gehrman as auditor and to note the deaths of Major General Sir Brudenell White, Lieutenant Colonel A H Cory and foundation and life member, Colonel CD W Rankin. The cash surplus of £370 was equal to the previous year, but earned on a lower turnover due to reduced attendances. This loss of patronage occurred despite efforts by the committee to counteract the absence of members due to military service by offering temporary honorary membership to officers in war time camps in the Brisbane area. Membership rose by 51 during the year to a total of 575 but many of those gained were newly commissioned lieutenants and pilot officers; young men without much money or time to spend in the Club and awaiting movement orders to theatres of war. A total of 50 members were on the absent on active service list by the end of the year.

On the entertainment scene, to what must have been the keen disappointment of

the children, the annual Christmas tree party had to be cancelled because, due to the exigencies of war, the Naval Depot was no longer available and another site could not be found. But, the New Year's eve party did go ahead, with an attendance of only 47 and a loss of 6/8, and so ended a year with the war 15 months old, the defeat in France still a painful memory but with the Empire's spirits uplifted by the great victory of the Royal Air Force in the Battle of Britain.

The war was having an increasing effect on the Club, with more names being added each month to the absent on active service list and the whisky stock going down by ten gallons per month; reduced to 335 gallons by February 1941. The loss of trade was starting to worry the committee and in February the finance sub-committee was ordered to look into the matter and present their findings to the next meeting. Their report in March was negative; they had examined the accounts and were unable to make any recommendations to reduce expenditure. The committee took a positive attitude and decided that salvation could be gained through increasing membership; to this end members of the committee would carry out a recruiting drive by visiting militia camps, talking directly to officers and inviting them to join the Club.

Deteriorating finances did not prevent a sudden revival of interest in purchasing the property next door and a fresh approach was made to the owner, Mr Flower. However, by this time his attitude had changed and the property was no longer for sale, and even if he had been willing it is doubtful whether war time restrictions would have allowed such a transaction to proceed.

At the December meeting a most radical proposal was adopted, subject to its legality under the liquor act. It was to permit members to bring ladies into the library between the times of 4.00 pm and 6.30 pm on week days. However, the law did not decide the fate of this change to the traditions of the Club; it was years ahead of its time and many forthright opinions would have been expressed as word of it got around. Or, perhaps the news had spread because at the very next meeting it was rescinded, on the not very convincing grounds that toilet facilities for ladies were not available. One wonders what they did on dance nights.

In retrospect, 1940 had been a momentous year on the world stage with Hitler's Germany apparently invincible in Europe, failing only to bomb Britain into submission. The Australian Sixth Division was in Egypt and by the end of the year was part of a British army challenging the Italians and the German Afrika Corps for control of the Western Desert and Libya. It was all half a world away from Brisbane but with the absence of members on service, and with war time shortages starting to be felt, managing the Club was not without its difficulties.

The year 1941 opened with real prospects that the war still had a long course to run and that the problems of the Club in providing supplies for an increasing number of transient honorary and reciprocal members would become harder in the foreseeable future. Already, minor difficulties with supplies from the Australian Canteen

Service had been overcome by putting orders through the head of the Brisbane office, Lieutenant Colonel FV Sharpe, a member who had served on the committee before the war. Beer was rationed, by Government order, and suppliers of spirits were endeavouring to share diminishing imports among their customers as fairly as they could. Whisky drinkers had an alternative to scotch in an Australian brand of firewater named Corio whisky, after the locality in Victoria where it was distilled; a perfectly wholesome drink lacking only palatability. As the war dragged on customers were obliged to accept an increasing proportion of this local product in their whisky orders, and some drinkers even developed a liking for the stuff which lasted after the war; but only until scotch became freely available once more. Each month the secretary informed the committee of the level of whisky stocks and in April 1941 there was a reserve of 305 gallons, plus an additional 30 gallons which he had been able to purchase from The Australian Estates Company for 65 shillings per gallon. This compared with a price of 51 shillings immediately pre-war.

The same month was a good one for membership with eleven additional names being added to the roll but nine more members were notified as absent on service. The enrolment of new members was only barely making up for the wastage due to resignations, deaths and 'strike offs' for non-payment of fees. By this time 90 members were on the absent on active service list and the Club, increasingly, was providing hospitality and service to visiting reciprocal and honorary members. There was no reluctance to do this and in most quarters the influx of new people with fresh ideas was welcomed and the damaging effect on the beer ration could be offset, to some extent, by claiming some of them on the return of numbers which had to be submitted for the next ration.

At this time public and service admiration for the sailors who risked their lives through U-boat infested waters to bring essential supplies from England and America was running at a high level, and it was not surprising to find the committee deciding that 'if possible arrangements be made to invite the Captains, Deck and Engineer Officers of all Merchant Navy ships to become honorary members'. The matter was pursued as far as the District Naval Officer and in the absence of further mention in the minutes it is presumed that the difficulties of implementing the plan had, for the time being, proved to be too great.

The four valve radio purchased in June for £9.17. 4 was hardly of the quality and size one would expect in a leading gentlemen's club but, presumably, its function was to receive the war news rather than to faithfully reproduce the magic sounds of Beethoven. It was also consistent with the general patriotic policy of saving as much money as possible to invest in Commonwealth War Loans to assist the war effort, in the short term, and to create an investment fund to finance the Club's post war development.

War service continued to take members away and the July list included the Club

solicitor, Pilot Officer G H Mocatta, who had just changed services from Navy to Air Force. Among the new members was Lieutenant J H Somerville who had a business in Calcutta, making coin-in-the-slot weighing machines which were reputed to be on nearly every railway station in India. He presented one to the Club after the war and it is now in the second floor gentlemen's toilet, still weighing accurately but modified to operate without a coin.

The ball was held in the City Hall and the Governor received the debutantes, as in past years, but there were fewer dancers than usual which made for greater comfort and a financial loss of about £30. The only casualties in the social program were the August 'at home' and the children's Christmas tree party; the president's reception in early December and the New Year's Eve party were held but attendances were down. The committee showed their appreciation of the goodwill visit by an American naval squadron in August, four months before the US entry into the war, by inviting the senior officers to a luncheon at the Club.

Another luncheon was arranged to entertain Major General J M A Durrant,* Commandant Queensland lines of Communication Area, and, in view of subsequent events, it seems likely that the committee had an ulterior motive in inviting him.

Billiards play continued through the year with matches against old rivals, the Johnsonian Club, and tournaments for the Plant Cup and for other prizes. The annual golf day was held at Indooroopilly this year and produced the fine result of £87 to be donated to Legacy funds, clearly indicating that golf had not been a war casualty.

During this period in the Club's history its financial management was in the very secure hands of a cautious and conscientious treasurer, Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith and a secretary, Lieutenant Colonel R G Groom, who was a chartered accountant with a well respected business of his own. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Club continued to do well financially, in spite of operating in difficult times. The result for 1941 was a surplus of £153 and the trustees, Brigadier J Craven, Colonel FA Hughes and Colonel F W G Annand** noted in their report: 'For the eighth year in succession, the Trustees have pleasure in commending the action of your Committee in paying to the credit of the Trustee's Account a sum forming part of the trading surplus'.

Although it had been a satisfactory year, in terms of conserving funds, there had been disquieting signs in a lower return from trading and a net loss of 39 members. This prompted the committee to warn that results might decline even further unless something could be done to turn this trend around by attracting more of the officers stationed in and around Brisbane to seek membership, and spend more of their time

*Major General James Murdoch Archer Durant CMG DSO (1885-1945)

**Colonel Frederick William Gatsby Annand DSOVD (1872-1958). Trustee of the Club 1928-58. Life member 1941.

and money in the Club. The answer to their problems was soon to be found in a different way; but at the time they were not able to foresee the dramatic event that would occur in three months time, on 7 December at Pearl Harbor.

The annual general meeting was uneventful, with Captain E H Voss relinquishing the presidency at the end of his two year term and being succeeded by Major General J M A Durrant; the recent luncheon guest who had not previously served on the committee. Military duties precluded Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith from continuing as treasurer, and he was replaced by Lieutenant A Boyd, but he accepted re-election as vice president. At the same meeting Colonel F W G Annand, who had been a trustee for at least thirteen years and had given distinguished service to the Club, was honoured with life membership.

In vacating the chair, Captain Voss stated that Mr B F Caniffe was prepared to sell his property in Adelaide Street to the Club for £5,000, and the new committee appointed a sub-committee of two trustees and the vice president to investigate the offer. Colonel Annand had made enquiries before they met and was able to produce an up-to-date copy of the Commonwealth Bank policy on advances which prohibited any lending for the purchase of property and that made any further consideration of the matter pointless.

Another early problem for the committee was that the presidents' honour board was full and there was nowhere to record Major General Durrant's name. As was frequently the case in matters as diverse as the installation of electrical equipment, the acquisition of war trophies or structural problems Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt ('Plattie' to his friends) had the answer; he would have a new board, an exact replica of the old one, made at his own expense and donate it to the Club. It was quickly resolved that Commander Platt's 'generous offer be accepted with great pleasure' and, as good as his word, he had the new board up on the wall within a very short time

One can imagine the excitement which followed the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December and the realization that Australia, and Brisbane in particular, was no longer remote from a war zone. By the time the committee met on 22 December some American personnel had already arrived, and it was resolved that letters be sent to all the American units in Brisbane inviting their officers to become honorary members of the Club. The president offered to endeavour to obtain a list of the names of the commanding officers. The later influx of American members was to have a very beneficial effect on the finances of the Club, as well as promoting understanding and cordial relations between allies.

A permit for the sale of liquor after normal hours was obtained for the New Year's Eve party, but it had the proviso that there must be no dancing after 8 pm. At this distance in time the logic behind such a restriction is impossible to fathom, unless it was an attempt by a misguided bureaucracy to appease those extreme moralists,

found in all communities, who consider ball room dancing to be a sinful pastime.

Although the war was getting closer the committee were not impressed by a letter from the Town Clerk on the subject of air raid shelters and it was resolved to take no action. Nor were they moved by a just announced increase of one halfpenny per bottle in the price of beer at hotels and decided that the Club would continue to sell it at 1/5 per bottle. But, two months later the matter of air raid precautions could not be ignored and so, reluctantly, it was decided to purchase the articles prescribed by the regulations and to consult the Club architect about an air raid shelter. In due course the architect advised the committee to wait until ordered by the City Council to construct a shelter; a course of non-action which they were pleased to adopt.

At this time Pay Lieutenant R Kennedy was added to the absent on active service list and resigned from the committee. He was replaced by another naval officer, Commander R B Thomson, but that was not the end of military service inroads into the committee. At the same meeting a letter was received from Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith tendering his resignation as vice president due to his posting to Boggabilla. His resignation was accepted with great regret and Major B T Cowlshaw was elected in his place. The good news at the meeting was that the Club's beer quota had been increased by 60 gallons per month; not enough but better than nothing. The last decision that night was to instruct the secretary to insure the Club building for £3,700 against war damage.

There appears to have been a serious difference of opinion regarding the position of the billiard table which produced a decision at one meeting to make the billiard room into the lounge and vice versa and one at the next meeting to rescind it. But changes were made to give players more elbow room and to make it easier for them to concentrate on their shots. The platform was ordered to be removed from the end of the room, together with all chairs, and no drinks were to be served in the billiard room to anyone other than players. In addition, the architect was asked to investigate the possibility of extending the room and, clearly, victory had gone to the players.

Pay Lieutenant R Kennedy's interstate service with the Royal Australian Navy was apparently much shorter than anticipated because, having resigned from the committee on that account in February, he was invited back in May to replace Lieutenant Colonel Smith.

Through the middle of the year the committee had no matters of substance to deal with; but the billiard room argument had continued to simmer. When the Club architect, Lieutenant G F Addison, reported that it would be impossible to enlarge the billiard room without major alterations to the toilet block and that, in any case, it would be against National Security regulations to make such major alterations Engineer Lieutenant Commander Platt disagreed. He was given authority to discuss the matter with Captain C E Plant, who was not a member, and a plan was submitted to the following meeting but the committee decided to take no action. This failure

to act obviously displeased some members but the National Security regulations enabled the committee to rid themselves of a troublesome issue.

By the end of the Club year, 30 September, the scotch whisky reserve had dwindled to 120 gallons, from a peak of about 380 gallons early in the war, and the decline was beginning to worry members who appreciated the finer things of life. This prompted a committee discussion in which it was alleged that the recent heavy consumption was not entirely attributed to the members and their invited guests, so a sub-committee of three was appointed to select a suitable person to act as watch-dog to prevent unauthorised entry to the bar. During October the situation deteriorated still further with a consumption of 36 gallons and, clearly, the committee was concerned and therefore decided as follows:

1. That an identification card be issued to all members and honorary members.
2. That Major Maddock be invited to accept the position of membership officer on a weekly basis.
3. That he be present at the Club from 11.30 am to 7 pm six days each week.
4. That he be paid a retainer of £3 per week with a free lunch and dinner.

The matter was reviewed at the next meeting and it was decided to extend Maddock's appointment for another month, subject to him 'carrying out his duties properly'.

Additional bar staff had become necessary with greater patronage and in September 1942 John Collins began his long and loyal service with the Club. His engagement was only temporary pending finding a returned soldier for the position, but none was ever found and later on Collins joined the merchant marine service and qualified as a returned serviceman to be re-engaged after the war. At this time there is the first mention of a female bar steward when it was resolved that she be supplied with a uniform consisting of a skirt, blouse and white open-neck coat. The girl in question, Marie Sorrenson, remained in the service of the Club for twelve months before resigning to get married.

The fact that the Club was 50 years old in 1942 did not pass unnoticed but celebration in a manner appropriate to such an occasion was just not possible in the middle of the most widespread and devastating war of all time. The best that could be done was an informal gathering of the president and 30 members in the dining room from 6.15 to 6.45 pm, just prior to the annual general meeting. The president, in proposing a toast to foundation members, paid tribute to them for creating and carrying on an institution which, apart from the social benefits, had done a deal of good from a military point of view.

The three surviving foundation members, Major General R S Browne, Major F L Jones and Lieutenant Colonel V Larsen each, in turn, responded to the toast and it is unfortunate that their words do not survive for inclusion in this record.



*Major General Sir (Cyril) Brudenell (Bingham)
White KCMG KCVO CB DSO (1875–1940).
Member 1926–40.*



*Colonel Daniel Edward Evans DSO VD (1885–
1952). President 1922–24 and 1936. Life member.*

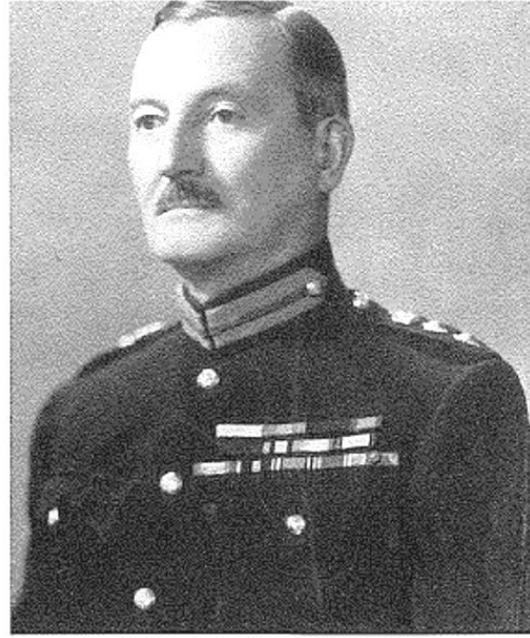
HRH The Duke of York leaving the Club, 1927.





Major Edgar Thomas Towler VC MC (1890–1972). Life member 1956. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)

Commander Norman Stewart Pixley CMG MBE VRD RANR (1898–1989). President 1937–38. Trustee 1964–88. Life member 1977.



Colonel Sir Leslie Orme Wilson GCSI GCMG GCIE DSO. Governor of Queensland 1932–46. Club patron 1933–46. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)

Lieutenant George Frederick Addison (1889–1955). Club Hon Architect for many years. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)



The 1942 annual report noted that normal social activities, such as the annual ball, 'at homes' for members and receptions for distinguished visitors had been abandoned because the committee considered that the time was not opportune for them to be held. Likewise, the annual golf competition was a victim of the war. Meanwhile, the Club was demonstrating its patriotism by investing £1,000 of its profits in the Commonwealth 3 per cent loan. It recorded also that: 'Officers of the Royal Navy, Mercantile Marine and American forces have been invited to become Honorary Members, a privilege of which they have largely availed themselves'.

The only matter of a general nature raised at the fiftieth anniversary annual general meeting was, appropriately, the history of the Club and it was recommended by Captain D A Dowling, and supported by others, that the incoming committee should take steps to have a history written. There is little doubt that they had in mind a well researched and competently written record of the first fifty years of the Club's existence. The attempt by Major H M M Maddock seven years earlier had failed to meet these criteria but, possibly, it had served to whet the appetites of members for a better knowledge of their past. After fifty years there were only three foundation members left; all of an age when memories tend to be less than totally reliable. And, to make matters worse, all the early records had been either lost or destroyed by unknown Club officials who were, apparently, devoid of regard for posterity. The task of researching the history of the Club's early life without the benefit of minutes and annual reports would have been difficult then, as it has been now, half a century further on.

It seems that organising the production of a history was too much for a committee beset with all the difficulties of running the Club in the middle of a war that was coming ever nearer to Brisbane and which was reducing the availability of essential supplies whilst, at the same time, creating a greater demand for them. They compromised by offering Major Maddock ten guineas to catalogue the Club's pictures and write a short history of each. He did prepare a list of 102 items, mainly photographs and drawings with meagre descriptive notes, which still exists in hand written manuscript form. The project was effectively finalised in November when the committee agreed, on the motion of Lieutenant Colonel LA Little, to pay Maddock the promised ten guineas and take no further action.

Many of these pictures and other articles have long since disappeared and one missing item of considerable historic interest was a letter written by General Sir John Moore, on the field of Corunna in 1807, and addressed to Colonel MacKenzie. Among others, the whereabouts of which are unknown, is a 1908 group caricature by Captain P Stanhope Hobday, a talented artist and photographer who was honorary Club librarian for many years. This Club, in common with many others, has endured such periods when the administration has been less than equal to the task of conserving its treasures and its history, to the detriment of succeeding generations of members.

The beginning of 1943 was a time when the military population of Brisbane and environs was growing at a rapid rate due to south eastern Queensland becoming a large assembly, training, transit and supply base for the war to the north, and this resulted in the intake of 33 new members in March and another 25 in May. American officers were present in large numbers also and were being offered honorary membership for the duration of their stay, and special invitations were extended to Rear Admirals Barbie and Christie, to Lieutenant General Krueger and his staff and to Lieutenant Colonel Martin.

Some of the American officers desired to be identified more directly with this Club which had taken them in and offered them its hospitality; they wanted some type of membership for which they paid a fee. The committee grappled with the task of devising a means of accommodating the allied officers (there were a few Dutch and other nationalities as well as the Americans) within a constitution which stipulated that eligibility for membership rested on possession of a King's commission. They arrived at an eminently suitable solution by a simple addition to the rules, as follows:

Any Gentleman holding commissioned rank or the equivalent or status of commissioned rank in the Navy, Army or Air Force of any allied country shall be eligible for membership as an 'Allied Member' of the Club for the duration of the war at present existing and for a period of twelve months thereafter. Provided however, that such 'Allied Members' shall have no voice in the management of the Club nor shall they be entitled to any share in the distribution of assets in the event of the winding up of the Club.

The first intake of allied officers took place in June, when 20 Americans and two Dutchmen joined 14 Australians as new Club members. By the end of the Club year, 30 September, there were 48 allied members and the Australian membership had grown remarkably during the previous twelve months from 616 to 865. The Club had become a lively and crowded focus for off-duty officers speaking in predominately Australian and American accents, sharing the liquor ration while it lasted and cursing together when it ran out. The extent of the growth in patronage is indicated by the bar profits for 1941 (£1,149), 1942 (£2,023) and 1943 (£3,552).

The whisky stock each month was now reported at committee meetings under the three headings of Club scotch, other scotch and Australian and with the once substantial strategic reserve now largely depleted it had become a hand to mouth operation. The stocks in April 1943 were Club 32 gallons, scotch 37 gallons and Australian 18 gallons and in order to eke out the inadequate supplies being received each month bar consumption was limited to half a gallon each morning and one and a half gallons each afternoon, until further notice. But, happily, by August the stock had increased slightly and the ration was increased by one bottle of scotch and one bottle of Australian; a mere 52 extra nips per day.

Early in the fifty first year of the Club's existence an important decision was taken to meet the administrative needs of what was now a rapidly growing organisation. Lieutenant Colonel R G Groom had done an excellent job as part time secretary over the past seven years, but there was a need now to expand the operation and so a decision was taken to employ a full time secretary at a salary of £400 per year. Until the most recent time the secretaries of the Club have had little authority delegated to them; they have been clerks rather than managers. Some have served the Club well and some poorly but, in fairness to them, none had been given much scope for initiative by committees which made all the decisions, even down to detailed administrative matters. For instance, a minute of the committee meeting of 28 August 1944 read: 'Junior clerk, Miss A Casford tendered her resignation to take effect from 2 September. The filling of this vacancy was left in the hands of the President'. The position of first full time secretary was offered to the well liked Commander R B Thomson, who had served on the committee for the year 1941-42. He accepted the position and Lieutenant Colonel Groom was retained as the Club accountant at a fee of £100 per annum.

Another first-time decision taken during this period was one to offer a modest superannuation plan to employees; prompted it is imagined by the realisation that a club is best served by old retainers who know the members and understand their idiosyncrasies. It was too late for George Sye, who had been a loyal servant of the Club since 1902 and was nearing the end of his working life, but it was taken up by the second steward, Harry Woollard, who would contribute £7.10.0 per annum while the Club put in £30. At a later meeting it was also decided to establish within the reserve fund of the Club a 'Staff Welfare and Provident Fund' to assist 'at the committee discretion, such members of the staff as may retire, be retired or become ill from time to time and who are not participants in the Staff Superannuation Scheme'. These measures, together with small increases in wages which had been granted on several occasions, reflected growing committee appreciation of the sterling service rendered by the staff under trying war time conditions. In particular, it related to the bar stewards who literally had to be diplomats and acrobats to serve members and visitors in an often grossly overcrowded bar, and to refuse insistent demands for whisky after the allocation for the period had been consumed. It transpired that Woollard was not to benefit from the superannuation scheme because he failed to pass the medical test and was invalided out of the service of the Club shortly afterwards but with a generous payment from the benevolent fund.

The obituary list at each committee meeting included both old members expiring from natural causes and the young who had lost their lives serving Australia, or in a few cases allied members serving the United States of America. But, in one instance, that of Lieutenant Commander P E Carr, the report appeared to be premature because a hand written amendment to the minutes read: 'returned alive'.

Major General] M A Durrant's second, and last, presidential report to the annual general meeting, held in November 1943, noted the unprecedented increase in membership mentioned previously. Again, the traditional social activities had not been held but the president had arranged a luncheon for Major General Stantke, his successor as General Officer Commanding, Queensland Lines of Communication, and the visiting president of the Navy, Army and Air Force Club, Melbourne, Captain F H Wickham had been entertained. In addition to this formal hospitality many members of reciprocal clubs, whose war time duties brought them to Brisbane, had been made welcome. The reciprocal clubs at that time were the sister institutions in the other five Australian states and the Junior Army and Navy Club, London.

Major General Durrant was succeeded in the chair by his loyal vice president, Major B T Cowlshaw; Captain D A Dowling became vice president and Lieutenant Colonel L A Little returned to the committee after a break of two years. The only recommendation from the floor of the meeting was by Captain RAN Nowland that a testimonial fund be set up for chief steward George Sye, who had served the Club faithfully for over 40 years and was looking forward to retirement.

Remarkably, stocks of whisky had improved by 59 gallons in the two months leading up to the November meeting, to totals of 62 gallons of scotch and 52 gallons of Australian. In one of the rare recorded cases the committee actually gave the secretary discretion, in this case, to dispose of the surplus as he saw fit. The new committee set about tightening up procedures and security and, for a start, ordered that a notice, in letters one inch high, stating TIPPING IS NOT PERMITTED be placed in the bar. One would suspect that the American presence had something to do with this and, apart from the fact that tipping is just not acceptable in gentlemen's clubs, to condone it would give too great an advantage to the much more highly paid American officers.

They limited the duration of honorary membership to one week and reminded all concerned that honorary members were not entitled to introduce visitors. The stewards were not to serve more than one drink per person at a time and to put up the barriers to protect the stock at all times when the bar was closed. To deter the ingress of the unentitled a prominent notice, bearing the legend: UNITED SERVICE CLUB, MEMBERS ONLY was ordered to be attached to the front gate.

Lieutenant Colonel LA Little had sponsored a motion that those members who were the recipients of war time decorations be congratulated in the 1944 annual report. No mention was made in that report but the following year there was a general congratulatory message without names because, unaccountably, no list had been maintained. Record keeping was an area in which the Club administration had been sadly and inexcusably deficient and, as a result, in addition to the absence of a list of awards for distinguished service there was no complete list of members who had paid the supreme sacrifice. One consequence of this negligence was that no memorial

listing the names of members who had died in the service of their country could be erected in the Club at the end of the war. How these omissions could have gone unnoticed or unattended by the war time committees is beyond comprehension, unless one takes the view that they were totally obsessed with the problems of the moment to the exclusion of responsibility for the future. Perhaps if committees had confined their activities to policy making and overall supervision, and been prepared to hire secretaries with the necessary talents for club management, and had given them scope to use them, things may have been different.

Successive committees had never lost sight of the aim to acquire larger and better club rooms, to provide residential facilities and to provide accommodation for a rapidly increasing number of members, but war time restrictions prevented the realisation of any major scheme involving the construction of premises. Even the acquisition of an existing building, if a suitable one could be found, would be subject to government permission so future development was put on hold until the end of the war. For these reasons an offer to purchase the Club's building, received in May 1944, had to be declined. But it was not too early to plan for the future, and so the following month the committee decided to circularise members seeking their opinions regarding the desirability of moving nearer to the centre of town. The results of that survey are not recorded but, two months later, a Mr Hawkins spoke to the committee regarding the possibilities of Coronation House, Country Press Building and Anzac House as future club premises. None were favoured but Engineer Commander H S Platt was authorised to approach the head office of the Commonwealth Savings Bank to ascertain if rooms could be obtained in their city branch building. Nothing came of those negotiations.

With the benefit of hindsight, it can be considered fortunate that a move to new premises was not made at that time because it is unlikely that the committee would have foreseen the extent of post war membership growth and, therefore, the accommodation it would require. This inability to assess future needs could easily have resulted in the acquisition of a building which, in a few years, would have been as overcrowded as the present one. At best it might have been a short term solution to a problem which had been bedevilling successive committees for many years. There was also the question of location for the new Club premises, and at times it had appeared to be the overriding consideration; but in the end it proved to be a secondary one.

Once again it was recognised that progress had overtaken the Club rules and the process of bringing them up-to-date was initiated by Lieutenant Colonel LA Little, on 22 May 1944, when he moved that a sub-committee be appointed to revise them. This sub-committee comprised the immediate past president, Major General J M A Durrant, the acting Club solicitor, Captain J Paterson and Lieutenant Colonel Little. They produced several amendments which had the effects of improving definition

in some instances, of accommodating new membership needs, of changing the method of election of committees and of strengthening the powers of the committee to regulate conduct within the Club. The junior member category was abolished, probably because it was anticipated that there would be a heavy post war demand for membership and that officers who had served should have precedence. Absentee membership was also eliminated, but replaced with provision for members leaving the State for long periods to have their names placed on an absentee list without liability to pay fees, but having no rights to use the Club, nor reciprocal rights with other clubs. They would, however, be able to regain membership status without payment of an entrance fee and without the need to be re-elected. Country membership was redefined as, 'members permanently resident and whose place of occupation is 30 miles or more from the General Post Office, Brisbane, or who shall submit evidence to the Committee that they are unable, owing to their occupation, to utilise sufficiently the full facilities of the Club for more than six months in the year.'

Previously the rules had been silent in relation to ladies but times were changing; women were assuming an increasing role in the armed services and were carrying out many men's tasks in industry and in the community generally. The mention of ladies in the amended rules was in relation to the prohibition of their entry beyond the secretary's office, 'unless by permission of the committee and then only to such parts of the Club premises as the committee shall determine.' This could be seen as an intentional thin end of a wedge which would ultimately lead to the admission of ladies on conditions which would have to be determined in the future.

The position of the immediate past president, inaugurated in 1939, was confirmed and printed in the rule book for the first time.

Members were given an added opportunity to participate in the election of the Club committee by an important advance on the previous system of restricting voting to those members who attended the annual general meeting. Under the new rule a fourteen-day period, closing on the day prior to the annual general meeting, would be allowed for members to place their votes in a ballot box located in the secretary's office but the president and vice president would continue to be elected, in secret ballot, by the members present at the annual general meeting. In the case of the president's tenure in office precedence was replaced by law and a rule was inserted which stated: 'No member shall hold the presidency for more than two years consecutively'.

There had previously been a rule prohibiting visitors in uniforms of non-commissioned ranks but that was amplified by adding: '(whether a member or not)'. The reason for this extension was that it was not unknown for junior officers who were frustrated in base postings during the war to resign their commissions and re-enlist in the infantry to get into action. Their keenness to come to grips with the enemy was

commendable but their presence in the Club, even as financial members, in uniforms other than those of commissioned officers would break down the rule and could not be condoned.

Major B T Cowlshaw, in his presidential report to the annual general meeting held on 15 November 1944, spoke of the continued difficulties in obtaining sufficient bar stocks to cater for the influx of members being demobilised. He observed, also, that the Club was 'still patronised by Officers of the Allied Forces, but not to the same extent as six months ago'. The year had been successful in a financial sense, with a further £1,700 invested in war loans to make the total now £5,200. The conclusion could be drawn that the result was very good but that it could have been even better if more liquor had been available to sell. Again, no attempt was made to hold the traditional annual ball and other social functions; the difficulties were too great in the face of war time shortages. The only social gathering was, as reported: 'On 6th March Capt.J. Herd gave a very interesting lecture on "Salvaging the Niagara's Gold", which was enjoyed by His Excellency the Governor, Sir Leslie Wilson, and by all those present'. The report regrets the death, during the year, of two foundation members in Colonel F B T W Koch and Lieutenant Colonel V Larsen but it seems likely that Major General R S Browne, an 1892 member who died in the same year, should have been included in that category too. Another loss was Major General T H Dodds, former Commonwealth military secretary and a member since 1906.

The new president was Captain D A Dowling and the vice president, Lieutenant Colonel L A Little, both elected unopposed, and they set about making their marks by initiating improvements in various areas. They and the committee first targeted the accounting system which, after considering expert opinion, was restored to the simple time proven form of three years earlier, before it had been made unnecessarily complex without any compensating gain in either safety or efficiency. The bar, as the income earning centre of the Club, was upgraded and the kitchen improved.

During the hectic days in 1942-43 when the Club became a temporary watering hole for hundreds of Australian and American officers, many of whom had been civilians a short time before and were not steeped in military traditions, some laxity in the observance of rules and customs was an inevitable result. The new regime under Dowling and Little took advantage of relatively quieter times to restore the level of decorum by prohibiting the purchase of drinks by guests of members, reaffirming the no-tipping rule and ordering that a copy of rule 51 be circulated to members. This rule sternly warned that the penalty for infringement of the rules or for 'conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman' could be expulsion, subject to five days notice to appear before the committee with or without witnesses to show cause why he should not be expelled; the Club equivalent to a court martial.

It was not long before rule 51 was put to the test because it had been reported that two members, a captain and a lieutenant, had settled their differences within the

Club premises in a most basic and unseemly manner; on the face of it a case of 'conduct unbecoming'. The committee interviewed the contestants separately, heard witnesses, deliberated at some length and judged that the defendants should forfeit their rights to remain members of the Club and agreed that the president should convey this decision orally and request their resignations. A seemly and fitting end to an unseemly affair one would have thought but the following month, after consideration of a letter from one of the officers concerned, the sentence was commuted to one month's suspension. But, within three years the captain had died and the lieutenant had resigned his membership.

The committee tended to temper their application of rule 51 with compassion, particularly in cases where it was felt that the offender's war experience may have been a contributing factor to an occasional instance of anti-social behaviour. There was the case of a flight lieutenant who was having a problem with the demon drink, and was wont to cause disturbances in the dining room, in which the committee adopted a kindly attitude. It was arranged that the steward would keep him under observation and when it was apparent that the subject was approaching the threshold of irresponsibility he was to inform the secretary, who would then take appropriate action to ensure that no unfortunate incident occurred.

By early 1945 the Club was having staff problems, with good labour being extremely scarce after five and a half years of war time man power controls and most able bodied men in the armed forces. Female bar stewards had been tried but, with the exception of the first one who left with the good wishes of the committee to be married after twelve months service, they had been less than satisfactory and a decision was made to have no more. George Sye, the chief steward, was the only retainer remaining on the pay roll and after 42 years service he was not as brisk as he used to be. It was difficult to maintain the full strength of four stewards with one at least being summarily dismissed and others coming and going and it was obvious the service was not quite up to scratch. The minutes of 16 April are expressive when they record: 'Stewards to be given shaking-up by Secretary'. However; the situation was about to improve with former well regarded steward Jack Collins due to return from service in the Merchant Marine and to take up his old post.

Meanwhile the George Sye testimonial fund had been open for two years and the committee decided to augment it sufficiently from the staff benevolent fund to enable the building of a house, for £750, as a retirement gift. This was a fitting reward for the man who had served two generations of members faithfully and well and had been a valued functionary from the early years at 'Aubigny' through twelve years at 21 North Quay and another thirty at 70 George Street.

Somewhat out of character, and despite the initial opposition of the committee and many members, the Club sponsored the candidature of Miss Margaret Robinson in the 1945 Miss Australia Quest. It was due to the persistence and energetic efforts

of Captain R A Nowland that the decision to participate was taken at a special general meeting and that the necessary money was raised. The committee laid down conditions: '(1) There must be no interference with the customary general comfort of members, (2) No action must be taken which is not within strict accordance with the law' and '(3) The Club, the Committee and/ or individuals may not be committed to any financial obligation without their express consent'. It would seem that there was a fear that enthusiasm for the cause might lead to an attitude that the end would justify the means. But all went well and at the end of the exercise the president, Lieutenant Colonel L A Little, presented Miss Robinson with a cheque for £231, which was the sum raised by Captain Nowland and his helpers.

Towards the end of the year the secretary, Captain RB Thomson retired and had the misfortune, at about the same time, to receive advice that his son Lieutenant D A Thomson had died while a prisoner of war. The committee were methodical in their procedures for seeking a replacement, by first preparing a duty statement and then circularising members inviting applications for the position, at a salary of £500 per annum. The successful applicant was a man of outstanding calibre, Lieutenant Commander E A Feldt, whose war time exploits had made him well known.

A break with the past occurred when it was decided to dispense with the accountancy services of R G Groom & Co, for reasons which are not clear. Lieutenant Colonel Groom had been a member since 1898, secretary from 1936 to 1942 and the Club accountant for many years. Another occurred when Lieutenant G F Addison resigned as honorary architect, again for unknown reasons. George Addison was a very well known architect and had designed the extensions to the Club building in 1929.

There is no evidence in committee minutes of the excitement and relief that must have been felt for the achievement of victory in the war, nor any change in the even tenor of mundane decision making. The minutes of the meeting held just two days after VP Day deal only with the usual correspondence, finance, reports, severe reprimands for two members whose misdemeanours arose from in judicious consumption of alcohol, five shillings per week rises for stewards and acceptance of a quotation for re-covering the leather chairs.

The annual report for 1945, by Captain D A Dowling, is much more effusive than normal and commences by referring to the cessation of hostilities in these terms:

PEACE

Since our last Annual General Meeting we have seen the finish of active hostilities, firstly in the European and then in the Pacific theatres of war. It is with profound gratitude that we have reached the end of the road marked with "blood, sweat and tears", and with optimism we look forward to the future. We would here record our everlasting obligation to the members of all our fighting services, and to those from other parts of the Empire,

as well as those of our Allies. We would especially wish to proclaim our appreciation of that great leader, Winston Churchill; and of the ordinary people of the mother country, whose steadiness in 1940 made the ultimate victory possible.

The report recorded the death of Major H M M Maddock; member since 1906, honorary secretary 1909, life member and erstwhile Club historian. It showed membership at the limit of 1,000 and referred to the difficulties being experienced in establishing communication with members scattered during the war, particularly as with the suspension of fees for those on active service there had not been the normal once per year contact with the secretary. Some had not been heard from for five or six years and often addresses had changed in that time and letters were returned undelivered.

Despite the difficulty in hiring satisfactory labour and the limitations imposed by food rationing, the caterer, Mrs Casford, prepared meals which many members regarded as being the best value in town and her, usually, full dining room lent weight to this assertion. In fact, every facility was being used to capacity and the Club was bursting at the seams.

The Club had come through the war well and proximity to active service areas had been to its financial advantage. Large numbers of new members, honorary members and visitors had made a substantial contribution to income and over six war years net assets had grown from £6,411 to £12,774. As 'Lal' Little observed, in an aside, long afterwards: 'During the war, with the help of the Americans, we drank the Club into a sound financial position'.

It was now poised to rise to new heights as a first rate Club, exclusive as always to gentlemen holding a King's commission in either the Navy, the Army or the Air Force. There were hundreds of eligible officers eagerly seeking admission. It was already a place where old comrades in arms could meet in congenial surroundings to partake of a drink and a meal in each other's company and, perhaps, re-fight a battle or make plans for some future contest on a sporting field. The problem was how to enlarge the circle to accommodate all those newly demobilised young officers waiting to come in. Clearly the only answer was to acquire new premises adequate to the needs; a well situated building providing ample space, comfort, overnight accommodation and having a dignity befitting the status of the Club.



Lieutenant Colonel Leonard Alfred Little MBE (1903–74). President 1945–46. Life Member 1947.

Part Two

CHAPTER FOUR

'Montpelier' is Bought

During July 1946, a well-disguised advertisement was placed in *The Courier-Mail*:

CONFIDENTIAL, inquiries for a city building to buy or lease, not less than 10,000 sq. ft. floor space bounded by North Quay, Botanic Gardens, Wickham Tce. & Petrie Bight. Full details covering price, rentals, annual charges in strictest confidence to CT 82, C Mail.

The advertisement produced a few answers and Little investigated the suggested properties. None of the buildings inspected after this advertisement, however, met the Club's requirements. The situation was becoming desperate when, in the street one day, Little met Major Maldwyn Davies, a Club member. Davies mentioned that his family owned a property in Wickham Terrace which might be suitable and added that he and his sister, a Mrs Dempster in Western Australia, were trustees of their father's estate. Davies told Little that he would accept a reasonable offer and would try to persuade his sister to sell if the Club was interested. Mrs Dempster, after some initial reluctance, eventually agreed to sell. Little, however, also needed to present the committee with an alternative choice.

On 3 July, 1946, after some solid work by the special sub-committee and as a result, too, of his own driving leadership, Little was able to report to the committee meeting that 'Beerwah' and 'Montpelier' were available as club premises. Lieutenant Colonel Jack Amies moved that the president be empowered to make all necessary enquiries regarding 'Montpelier'. Two months later, with Little in the chair, Amies reported on the financial valuation of 'Montpelier'. It was valued at £30,000; Amies, an accountant who had recently returned from the war and was establishing his own practice, prepared a detailed financial statement outlining the profits over the previous three years and, more importantly, expected profits.

Although the figures looked promising, there were still some doubters on the committee. One member, Lieutenant Colonel S L 'Sid' McIntyre complained that there was no information other than financial data on which to form a judgment. He wanted information about the buildings, how they would be converted to club use and how they would operate. As president, Little had the answers. He described the buildings, and added that the secretary of the Moreton Club had, only that day, made an inquiry about leasing the wooden building. The Moreton Club was Brisbane's

leading ladies club, a position it retains today from splendid premises in New Farm. Moreover, the only alterations necessary were the installation of a bar and billiard room. Apparently there were only small structural changes required. Little then read the information sheet for members, which was to be sent out with the notice of a general meeting.

As a building, 'Montpelier' had a fascinating background. William Davies, Maldwyn Davies' father, had made his fortune in Gympie during the gold mining years*. He bought the site, on which stood an old timber lodging house, in 1897, no doubt at an excellent price for the colony was then gripped by a severe depression and real estate values were extremely low. Then, in 1907, William Davies demolished the old house and erected a new brick structure of three stories, using first grade materials and good craftsmen. The contract price was £7000 and the building was designed specifically as a private hotel providing short and long term accommodation for gentlemen and their ladies. As a private hotel, 'Montpelier' had the highest standards for clientele, even decades later; the late Roderick S Colquhoun, the first Queensland manager for The Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, stayed at 'Montpelier' for a few weeks in 1938 while looking for a permanent residence. Colquhoun later recalled that his reservation was not accepted until he had arranged a recommendation by a well-known businessman.

William Davies first leased 'Montpelier' to Thomas A Morgan, then in 1910 to Annie Mabel Forsyth and then, in 1940, to Mary Kathleen 'Molly' Sheahan, a formidable lady from a well-known Stanthorpe hotel family. Miss Sheahan had been private secretary to R M King, Secretary (as ministers were then known) for Public Works and Public Instruction in the Queensland Government between 1929 and 1932. R M King was also the father of two 50 year United Service Club members, barrister Major R R M 'Rex' King QC and Major H M 'Harry' King. Miss Sheahan was also the aunt of retired Supreme Court judge, Charles D Sheahan.

Sometime in 1942, 'Montpelier' was requisitioned by the US military forces as accommodation for officers of field rank, but remained under the management of Miss Sheahan. One of the long-term residents of this period was a Colonel Johnston, personal physician to General Douglas MacArthur. Another officer who stayed for about eight months around this time was Brigadier-General Robert N. Van Bolkemberg, who commanded the 40th Coast Anti Aircraft Brigade. Van Bolkemberg was reported to have had a high regard for the fighting qualities of Australian troops. One of his officers, Lieutenant Colonel Irwin Brown, recalled on a post-war visit to Brisbane that there were several long tables in the dining room and the normally informal American officers remained standing until their general was seated. Brown

*Unlike Melbourne, Brisbane did not enjoy a huge building boom following prosperity on nearby gold fields. The surviving Victorian and Edwardian buildings, such as 'Montpelier', do not provide a glimpse of the architectural styles of those days.

also remembered that 'Montpelier' was a well-made building with a long verandah on the second floor which gave, in those days, a view of the river. The features which Brown remembered were all qualities which attracted Little to the building.

On Lieutenant Colonel Amies' motion, amending a preceding motion, the committee decided to proceed with negotiations to buy 'Monpelier' for £30,000, subject to confirmation by a general meeting. Authorisation was also given for the expenditure of another £20,000 on conversions and furnishings. The crucial committee meeting had lasted one hour and 15 minutes. Little, a no-nonsense man of action, might well have anticipated the decision of a special general meeting. Captain J K Kempthorne recalled that Little had earlier accepted the offer by Major Davies to sell, on behalf of the estate of William Davies, the building at 173-183 Wickham Terrace, to the club for £30,750. Little gave his personal guarantee to the Bank of New South Wales pending approval by the special general meeting. As president, Little put himself somewhat ahead of both the committee and the membership.

That general meeting was held within the month, on 30 September, 1946, and was attended by 165 members. The notice was signed by Eric A Feldt as the club secretary. Commander Feldt had won distinction as a coastwatcher during the war.*

The members were told that the Club was currently a tenant-at-will - a tenancy which may be terminated by either party without notice - of the Government. A move was clearly necessary; 'If the Club were dispossessed without alternative premises to move into, the result would be disastrous'. In the previous 12 months, the committee had investigated a number of possible alternative premises. These included: Glenrowan Hospital, Wickham Terrace; Coronation House, Creek Street; Commonwealth Bank Building, King George Square; St Luke's Hall, Charlotte Street; YWCA Building, Adelaide Street; Webster's Building, Mary Street; a property in Wharf Street, between Ann and Adelaide Street; ACB Building, Fortitude Valley; a property adjoining the Hotel Cecil, in George Street; McMur House, Edward Street; Desmond Chambers, Adelaide Street; 'Beerwah', opposite the Museum; Bayard's in South Brisbane; Naval House, Edward Street and 'Montpelier' in Wickham Terrace.

Such has been the pace of Brisbane's development in the past 20 years that few of these buildings still exist. Naval House in Edward Street would have been a splendid site, near the Gardens and at the other end of Alice Street from the Queensland Club. But that building was too small and lacked that essential accommodation which was a primary reason for the committee's choice. Similar problems existed with the other buildings, although 'Beerwah', opposite the old Museum, is still in use as a private hotel. However, it was then, and remains today, too far away from the business district to be suitable as a club.

*His account of the coastwatchers experiences, *The Coast Watchers* (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1959) is a minor classic of wartime writing and has frequently been reprinted.

The members were given the committee's recommendation. 'Of these, the only property recommended by the committee is "Montpelier",' they were told. It was on a prime location, for the site could not be built out,* it was within easy tramming distance of the city, and, most importantly, it provided ample parking space for cars.

Here, the committee's foresight is remarkable. No doubt many of the members owned motor cars in those early post-war years, but this decision was made even before the Australian manufacture of the Holden, and thus well before the motor car assumed its primacy of importance as a means of transport. 'Ample parking space' suggests that the committee understood, perhaps even instinctively, the potential of the motor car to change working, living and recreational patterns after the war. Now, of course, the 'ample parking space' has been made even more ample and is both a great convenience for members and a useful source of revenue. The 'tramming distance' was a reference to the tram which ran up Upper Edward Street and terminated - the turning circle is still visible - outside the Brisbane Grammar School.

Members were assured that the area of the proposed premises was large but, if it was found to be too large, the surplus could be disposed of. The two buildings - one of brick, one of timber - were in good condition and were suitable for conversion to Club uses within reasonable cost. If necessary, the timber building could be sold or leased without difficulty; already the committee had had an expression of interest from the Moreton Club.

As for the all-important question of finance, purchase and conversion of 'Montpelier' at a total outlay of £40,000, a price which could be met without increasing membership charges. There were, however, two important qualifications: Membership should not fall below 900 and that members should continue their Club. Assets stood at £11,000 in cash and securities, and another £9000 in land and buildings, which left £20,000 to be raised either by loan or by debentures. The committee's recommendation was that the £20,000 be raised by £10 debentures at four percent, issued to members. 'The virtue of this method is that, in the event of a depression, the Club will owe money to its members, not to an outsider,' the members were told.

The committee's caution is understandable and, after the events of the 1980s and the experiences of some other clubs,** highly laudable. In the post-war years, the shadow of that terrible depression of the 1930s was still long. Governments, both in Australia and overseas, were committing themselves to the goal of full employment; at the other end of the economic scale, club committees were consciously arranging their financial affairs to withstand another period of falling prosperity and rising

*An optimistic view; the splendid river views over the city and the River that so attracted Little have long been built out.

**Including the Imperial Service Club in Sydney.

unemployment. Equally, the committee's optimism that the membership would remain above 900 and that members would continue to offer their support was marked. But who was to say that, as the wartime officers returned to the demands of civilian life, to the ties of marriage and family, to the 'other hostages to fortune', that their time and motive for club life - so similar to war-time mess life - might not wane?

As attractions, the committee planned to use the tennis courts at the rear of the building, while noting there was ample room for squash courts. Apart from these facilities, the building could provide a large lounge, a dining room, a beer garden on the third floor and a residential section. 'In fact' members were assured, 'it can be made into what the United Service Club should be'.

The minutes for this all-important meeting are complete, and convey more than merely the motions and decisions. Colonel Hughes, as one of the trustees, strongly supported the proposal to buy 'Montpelier' and said so unequivocally. Other members seemed to agree with the proposal, but were interested in what income the Club might make from the leases still in force for the building. The lease still had 21 months to run, Little told the meeting, and an amount of not more than £1000 would be paid. Not surprisingly some of the members were concerned about the size of the loan and the Club's ability to trade sufficiently well to repay it, although one member voiced his objections on the grounds that the bar and the billiard room were to be situated on the second floor and, as there was only to be one lift, there would be too much congestion. Besides, he didn't like the idea of having to get a tram. This particular member, Major F L Jones, had a personal point. He had been admitted to membership in 1892 as a foundation member. At his advanced years, his objections were understandable. He wanted the committee to consider another building.

Major Jones was supported by Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith,* admitted to membership in 1919, who said he was not convinced by the committee's financial projections. The profit margin, according to Smith, was not sufficient, but if this could be improved, then he would consider supporting the scheme. Other members with more recent experience of the Australian Imperial Force thought there was no doubt that profits would continue to improve. The minutes note the essence of the Club's decision at the time. They are worth recording in some detail:

Lt-Col Lang spoke refuting the remarks of Col. Smith. By association with the Second AIF he thought that members of good financial standing and in good jobs would continue membership. From personal knowledge the majority of junior members are of good financial standing, and as 2ndAIF men made their way they would join the Club, provided

*Smith, the Supreme Court librarian, was well-liked and well-respected. Flight Lieutenant The Honorable Sir Edward Williams remembers him as a pipe smoker, knowledgeable, a good friend to young barristers but careful by nature.

it was in suitable premises, but if we carried on in premises as at present the Club would not go ahead.

It is possible to detect a distinct difference between the Second AIF men and the bulk of older members who had served with the First AIF. Lang was in a perfect position to speak about both classes of members. He had joined the Club in 1937, as Captain J T Lang, MC. During World War I, he had served with both the 53rd Battalion of the AIF and the Indian Army. During World War II, Lang had risen to the rank of lieutenant colonel.* In any club, there is occasionally an undercurrent of tension between younger and older members; at this time in the United Service Club, that tension was between veterans of the 1914-18 war and the younger men of 1939-45. 'Joe' Lang, not only a brave and resourceful soldier but a man of eminent good sense, could see the view of both World War I and World War II veterans; he moved quickly to dispel any suggestion that the Second AIF members might be less valuable than their predecessors. As well, that minuted remark demonstrates the dilemma, which is something of a chicken-and-egg argument: Do we move to a bigger, more expensive premises to attract more members? Will they be attracted by the new premises and facilities on offer? Will we, by moving, perhaps even alienate some of our older members? The meeting pondered these points.

In the event, the objections were few. Only two speakers opposed the motion and, Lieutenant Colonel J H Byrne, a former commanding officer of the 42nd Battalion and father of two present-day club members - themselves both lieutenant colonels** - thought the meeting had gone on long enough. Lieutenant Colonel Byrne moved that the motion be put. No doubt that Byrne, a forthright man of strong personality, thought that it was a good idea and deserved to go through. The president agreed, and weighed in with letters from 31 country members, all of whom were in favour of the proposal. Of the 166 members present, 165 voted in favour of the proposal to buy 'Montpelier', for the sum of £30,000. The following motion was for the purchase of its furniture and fittings; that, too, passed without any real dissension and the members also agreed to the very sensible suggestion of raising the money

*The official historian, Gavin long, describes Lang as a 'notable infantry subaltern in the previous war'. Lang was wounded in the street fighting in Benghazi in 1941, shot in the shoulder while sheltering in a recessed doorway. Lang was a big man and the doorway was not sufficient to hide his large frame. An electrical and mechanical engineer, Lang worked before the war for Evans Deakin and was in charge of steel erection during the early stages of construction of the Story Bridge, which was completed in 1940. Lang commanded the 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion in 1942-43 and the Buna Base Sub Area between 1943 and 1944.

**As Army reserve officers, J H Byrne RFD, QC commanded the Officer Cadet Training Unit and RJ Byrne the 49th Battalion, The Royal Queensland regiment.

through debentures. The meeting took little over an hour and then, no doubt, the members adjourned to the bar, rather pleased with their night's work. Now the committee had to translate that decision into action.

The Move to 'Montpelier'

The committee wasted no time in carrying through the general meeting's decision. On Friday, 4 October, 1946, it met. At this meeting were the president, Lieutenant-Colonel Little, the vice president, Lieutenant A Boyd, Engineer-Commander H S Platt, Lieutenant Colonel S L McIntyre, Major G A Regan, Major O D O'Brien, Captain W A Hawkins and Captain J Paterson, the honorary Club solicitor, present by invitation. Apologies were received from Lieutenant Colonel Amies, who had been instrumental in preparing the committee's case to members, and Lieutenant Commander Stevens. The minutes indicate the sense of Club feeling existed at this stage of its history. For example, Engineer-Commander Platt* moved that a notice be put on the board suggesting that members with interests in architecture and general builders' trades register their names with the secretary, 'thus following the policy of the Club to give preference to members'. That was a policy which had been in existence for some time; now, as so many members attempted to re-establish careers and businesses after the war, it was a policy of increased importance.

One of the first considerations was the need to finance the purchase of 'Montpelier'. Captain Paterson advised the committee that it would be necessary to apply to Sub Treasury to float the debenture issue; he offered to draft the necessary letter and debenture form. As a result of this meeting, a sub committee of three was formed to raise the necessary money. This was chaired by Lieutenant Colonel McIntyre, who was to become president in 1949, and included Lieutenant Colonel Amies, president in 1950 and 1951, and Captain R A Nowland, a National Mutual representative and well-known club member. At the same time, the committee voted to pay £1000 to Isles Love & Co as a deposit but there remained, among the other problems to be solved, the question of what do with the few permanent boarders who remained in 'Montpelier'.

During wartime, Brisbane had expanded beyond almost all recognition. At this time, war-time rationing of building materials still applied; housing was in short

*Platt, as his rank indicates, had been a naval engineering officer and was a skilled 'tinkerer' with all kinds of machinery and equipment. As well as being an enthusiastic committeeman, he was the Club's chief (and unofficial) handyman for many years.

supply and good quality lodgings, close to the city, were difficult to obtain. 'Montpelier' offered accommodation to 13 guests at the not-inconsiderable sum of £4/10/- a week. For this sum, the boarders received use of the facilities which had so attracted some club meetings, including the tennis courts where the car parks now stand. (This was when the average weekly earnings were less than £5 a week.) Commander Platt told the meeting he had approached Miss Sheahan about moving the existing guests into the Green House, as the timber building next door came to be known;* the Club might reduce their weekly rent to £4 because of the loss of amenities. This seemed suitable, although the Moreton Club also had made some inquiries about moving into the Green House. It was clear the Club could continue to do business along the lines suggested by Commander Platt until its ultimate occupation of all the premises; the secretary was to write to Miss Sheahan offering the accommodation in the Green House, with the exception of two suites and one room. Then, the committee moved to other serious business: the question of catering; the use of a temporary lounge until a bar was established and a proposal to give the secretary free quarters for himself and his family.

The committee was also perturbed about articles which had appeared in the city's three newspapers of the time - *The Courier-Mail*, the *Telegraph* and the *Truth*. Major O'Brien moved that the three newspapers be written to, asking that before anything was published about the Club, 'the type matter be referred to President as to fact'. Then, as now, newspapers had the ability to upset the committees and members of clubs by reports of inaccuracy and sensationalism. However, a diligent search of the newspapers' files has failed to produce any reference to the Club during this period; perhaps Major O'Brien had concerns about other aspects of the newspapers' reporting.**

Despite the fact that this was a committee comprised of busy men, it met frequently in the early days of the 'Montpelier' purchase. Less than a week later, it met again at lunchtime; it was clear that Miss Sheahan was trying to do a little better out of the deal. Lieutenant Colonel Little told the committee that Miss Sheahan now wanted £8500, made up of £7500 for the furniture and £1000 for 'disturbance'. Miss Sheahan, according to the president, was not quite certain whether she could obtain the necessary guests for the Green House and she had also received some advice, from an unspecified source, that 'she was not getting much out of the deal'. The point to

*The wooden building on the eastern side of the Club has always been known colloquially as the 'Green House' because of its colour. When the Club was repainted in the 1980s, this made one decision about colour choice extremely easy.

**Like so many Clubs, the United Service Club has always been reticent about airing its activities in the pages of the daily newspapers. This was certainly the case for this Club, except for a brief, out-of-character period in the 1970s when it paid for an advertisement in *The Sunday Mail* much to the horror of some members.

be decided, reported the eminently reasonable Little, was 'whether the terms are too stiff or whether we should stand out for a better figure'. There was the problem of Miss Sheahan's advice, presumably in running the establishment as a cash business during the transition to the club stage; the committee did not want to lose the benefit of that knowledge.

Lieutenant Colonel Amies said he did not think the Club should go above £8000. Miss Sheahan, he said, could find controlling 'Montpelier' on the present basis a losing proposition. It could be six months before the deal was finalised and the Club, according to Amies, should not rush in and close for a large figure. The committee resolved to fix the figure at £8000, recalling that the lease to Miss Sheahan still had nearly two years to run.

There was, however, a problem of delay in moving into the new premises. Although there was no great pressure to leave George Street, there was the question of prestige; Lieutenant Colonel Little said he thought the Club would suffer if it delayed moving into 'Montpelier', particularly as he thought membership would grow after the move. Little had a point; the attraction of any club includes its premises; 'Montpelier' clearly had its own attractions. Little pushed up the figure to be offered to Miss Sheahan by another £250. Captain Paterson offered to have the letter ready to sign if Miss Sheahan agreed to finalise for this figure.

Amid all the detail and negotiation for 'Montpelier', the normal activities went on. The committee met again on 21 October, 1946 with the purchase still influencing its thinking. That year's Christmas cards, for example, were to feature a half-tone block of 'Montpelier', and 1000 were ordered. Proposals to begin the painting were considered and refrigerators - one for bottles at £177 and one for the kitchen at £218 - were considered and passed. These prices, high by today's standards, were after a 20 percent discount.

But the war was still very much in recent memory and the minutes reflect strong residual bitterness towards the late enemies. A model - of what we don't know - had been made by a Japanese prisoner of war. Obviously it was thought to have had some attraction at that time, but now the committee was adamant: 'This model is not wanted in the Club and that same be donated to "Montrose" but not officially'.

The Club was clearly in good hands, with a busy active committee. It had 385 bottles of scotch whisky and 58 bottles of the Australian product. Its supplies of rum, gin and brandy were adequate. It had been offered reciprocity with the United Service Club of 29 Chowringhee Road, Calcutta, an offer which it accepted with alacrity. Alas the reciprocity with that Club no longer applies.

At this time, the Club had reciprocal arrangements with the Junior Army and Navy Club, London, the Imperial Service Club of Sydney, the Navy, Army and Air Force Club of Victoria, the Naval, Military and Air Force Clubs of Adelaide, Perth and Tasmania. As well, there were similar arrangements with the Otago Officers Club and the

Canterbury Officers in New Zealand, the Quetta Club in Baluchistan, (then India, now Pakistan) and the Peshawar Club of India. In Canada, two clubs offered reciprocity; the Canadian Officers Club and Institute in Toronto and the United Services Club in Montreal. Reciprocity with so many clubs of similar background and origins indicated that the United Service Club, Brisbane, was well regarded and accepted.

Most importantly for the Club's continued prosperity, on that night in October it voted in 118 town and 30 country members. Among the new members were Captain Richard Cameron,* who had won a Distinguished Service Order as a captain. Cameron later became a Club president and is a trustee; Flight Lieutenant Alec Clouston, later a prominent general practitioner in the eastern suburbs of Brisbane; Captain Derek Glasgow, son of the general and a former member of the 6th Division Cavalry; Major-General R H Nimmo, general officer commanding Northern Command and Captain W. 'Bill' L. Rudder, later a prominent Brisbane businessman and charity worker. Also admitted on that night were Wing Commander George Christensen, president between 1957 and 1959, Wing Commander Peter Delamothe, RAAF medical officer and Minister for Justice and Attorney-General between 1963 and 1971 and Queensland Agent-General in London between 1971 and 1973. Other prominent Queenslanders admitted at this time were Major Duncan Russell, Flying Officer Bill Brett, later general manager of Brett's timber and hardware group, and Captain Eddie Pearce, for many years secretary of the Queensland Sugar Producers' Association. The following month, another 65 town and six country members were elected. These included Major G A G Lucas, later a prominent Supreme Court judge and Major H D 'Blue' Steward.** Little's predictions about growth were well-made.

There were also some members for whom the return to civilian life was more than just a matter of form. At its meeting on November 20, the committee considered a letter from a former RAAF flight-lieutenant who wanted to be known as 'Mr' from now on. 'It was decided', the minutes record, 'if any member desired to be known as "Mr" and not by his Navy, Army or Air Force rank, his request would be acceded to.'

A glance at the accounts for the month give an idea of stock and trading in this busy, pre-Christmas period of the first full year since the end of the war in the Pacific. In October, 1946, the Club spent £1004/14/4 on purchases, mainly on foodstuffs and drinks; £29/5/1 on maintenance. Bar sales for the month totalled £1274/8/10. Bar profits for the year to September 30, 1946, totalled more than £5000, with a profit of more than 37 percent on sales.

The 54th annual general meeting was held on 25 November, 1946. Although two special general meetings were held earlier in 1946 (with the business of voting on

*Later Lieutenant Colonel Richard Cameron DSO, ED.

**Stewards's book *Recollections of a Regimental Medical Officer*, (Melbourne University Press, 1983) is a superb account of life in an infantry battalion, as seen through the eyes of its doctor.

acquisition of new premises), this meeting still attracted 166 members, evidence of the enthusiasm many were showing for their Club. The mood of the meeting was one of congratulations for the committee. Lieutenant N B Harper congratulated the treasurer on presenting what he described as 'the most favourable balance sheet in years'. The balance sheet reflected the strong trading position. Profit transferred to the accumulated account was £3319/1/7, while assets had grown from £15160/16/ 9 in 1945 to £18075/15/6. It had been a good year and the members were well pleased.

As well, there can be seen some emerging social trends. Part of this annual meeting was taken up with a discussion about the position of women and lady friends in the Club. The Green House was thought to be ideal for entertaining wives and lady friends, but one member, Lieutenant L E Crisp, went further. He wanted to see some provision for women who had served as commissioned officers in the war. In the 1990s, when women are still facing obstacles in membership of some clubs, some members had advanced attitudes to this issue. The question of women in the Club will be considered in a later chapter but even at this early stage, it was an idea exercising the minds of members. Yet it has to be said that not all members liked the idea of women in their Club. This meeting carried by only two votes the suggestion that a Ladies Night be held. For many members, particularly the older pre-World War II members, the Club was somewhere they could forgo the benefits of female company!*

In those months before Christmas 1946, planning for the move to Wickham Terrace gathered momentum. On 2 December, a further special committee meeting was held to settle more of the detail of the purchase and eventual move. This meeting also heard of the death of the former chief steward, George Sye, a long-serving and greatly valued retainer of the club.

The use of the Green House was concerning the committee, which was aiming to maximise return on this particular investment. Two days later, the Green House sub-committee - the committee had then a special talent for delegation - met to consider its use. The Green House was valued at about £5000, but with the wartime price control regulations still in force, a return of only 10 percent was the maximum allowed. The sale of this property was not thought to be prudent; the sub-committee members were told that the value of the property must appreciate. At the same time, the committee was worried that trading might not continue at the same levels into the future and that too much capital might be invested in real estate. Should this occur, the Green House could be sold - but at a better price.

*The attitude of the United Service Club in Brisbane can be contrasted with one of its southern sister Clubs. In one club, a wife rang and asked for her husband. 'I'm sorry madam,' she was told, 'there are no husbands in this club, only members.'

The sub-committee recommended that, apart from one room, the remainder of the building be let. An earlier decision that the chief steward be allowed to live-in was rescinded because of the expenditure necessary to make the space suitable for a family (and at a time when building materials were still rationed), as well as the simple economic fact that the rent the Club would need to charge would be beyond the financial ability of the chief steward to pay.

Clearly, with a site on Wickham Terrace, the Green House had potential for professional offices or surgeries. The sub-committee considered, quite rightly as it transpired, that 'no other class of tenant would return the same amount of revenue as professional or business tenants'. The potential rents, based on a minimum of 10/- per square foot, would be £22/6/- a week or £1200 a year.

The *minutiae* of committee decisions is also revealed in the minutes for this period. Apparently the committee was concerned about members' use of the Club telephones. The subject had been raised at the annual general meeting the previous month, when one member noticed that postal and telephone charges had jumped from £134 to more than £191. It was considered, Lieutenant Harper told the meeting, that all members should pay for their telephone calls. Part of the problem, it seems, arose from the stewards' lack of familiarity with the switch board; at the next committee meeting, it was resolved that 'the stewards receive instruction in the use of the switch board until they were efficient in the use of the same'. At the same time, the committee decided to impose a charge of threepence per call, and left it to the secretary to decide how the charge was to be made. There were no public or coin telephones in the Club at that time.

This seemingly high charge for a telephone call was quickly reduced. At the 16 December, 1946 meeting, the committee resolved to drop the charge by one penny, but only after some terse exchanges. The original decision to drop the charge was made by the president, acting apparently on his own authority. Supported by two of the committee members, this action was subsequently confirmed. Another member; however, objected to the president's apparent high-handedness. No, he said, the charge of threepence should stay and an amendment to that effect was put. The amendment was lost and the members remained paying twopence a call for the time being. With such momentous decisions are club committees so often faced.

The sub-committee had, however, other, weightier matters to consider; surplus furniture and fittings would now be available and, in the days of early post-war shortages, eagerly sought by members anxious to furnish homes or fit out offices. As the minutes record, 'Useless articles had already been sent to auction'. Alas, we are left none the wiser what the committee regarded as a 'useless article', but the Club had some surplus eiderdowns and blankets to dispose of, while deciding to retain all the linen. Again the wartime shortages of such goods had carried through into the early years of peace.

Although shortages might have existed in some areas, there was certainly no shortage of patronage. Some, more cautious committee members might have expected that sales would begin to slow down from the heady, immediate post-war days. This was not the case. For example, in November 1945, the Club recorded just over £1000 in sales. By comparison, sales in November 1946 were a very healthy £1572, with a profit of about 32 percent or more than £500. These increases are real, with virtually no items increasing in price in the period.

Part of the reason for the growth in sales was the number of new members continuing to join. In December 1946, 79 town and 18 country members were elected, including Squadron Leader E G Broad, who was also a member of the 1947- 48 Wallabies Rugby Union team to the United Kingdom. Eddie Broad was later to become a prominent District Court judge and chairman of the Brisbane Amateur Turf Club. Another member elected on this day was Lieutenant S P McCready, who had served with the 2/9th Battalion and was later to become Queensland manager of the Bank of New South Wales. A platoon sergeant at the beginning of the Battle of Buna in 1942, Steve McCready commanded what was left of his company at the end of that action. The last name mentioned at the roll of new members elected that night is that of Major C M Wrench, with his unit given as headquarters, Queensland Lines of Communication Area. 'Clarrie' Wrench won a well-deserved Military Cross in World War I and was, until his death in 1986, a stalwart of the 9th Battalions Association. Shortly before his death Wrench completed an excellent history of this battalion in World War I.*

Despite the growth of membership, gratifying to a committee anxious to see the expansion, there remained the vexed question of what to do with the Green House. Over Christmas, the president received approaches to use the premises from the Master Mariners Association and the Moreton Club. As well, the real estate company, Ray White, offered to lease the premises. After some discussion Lieutenant Colonel Amies moved that the Green House be let to the Moreton Club for a rental of £1050 a year. This was seconded and thus began the Moreton Club's geographic association with the Club. This committee meeting also examined the question of a third billiard room and the plans were amended to incorporate this most essential feature of a gentlemen's club. At this meeting, another 109 town members and 19 country members were added to the rolls. The secretary was kept busy during this period with new members; in February another 131 former and serving officers were added to this list with a similar number joining the following month and another 99 in April.

*Eddie Broad's rugby career can be found in Jack Pollard's *Australian Rugby Union -The Game and The Players* (Angus & Robertson, 1984) p94. Steve McCready is mentioned *passim* in the official histories and in Peter Charlton's *The War Against Japan* (Time Life 1988). Clarrie Wrench's *Campaigning with the Fighting Ninth* was published by Boolarong Press, accompany run by another club member, Captain L T Padman OBE.

None of the Club's correspondence for this period of its history has survived; a great pity, because the committee had received a letter from the Secretary of the Department of the Army about an impending visit from Field Marshal Lord Montgomery, who was due to tour Australia and meet many former members of the Ninth Division which had served in his Eighth Army in the Western Desert in 1942. Naturally the committee was anxious that 'Monty' should visit the new Club. He did so - on July 15, 1947 - and was greeted by many hundreds of members. The visit is not mentioned in the Field Marshal's memoirs, but he does talk about meeting members of the Returned Services League as a 'great joy' as so many were his former comrades-in-arms. On 7 July, the week before Monty's visit, the committee resolved to make both the Field Marshal and Lord Louis Mountbatten life members.

But most attention of this period was directed towards getting the Wickham Street premises ready for opening. A committee meeting on 25 February, 1947 heard from the architect, Mr Dods, the builder, Mr Stronach, the electrician, Mr Farrimond, and the terrazzo mason, Mr Petrie. 'Each of these gentlemen explained the present position with regards to their own departments. The total cost of the alterations, and additions ... will be approximately £8000 and the work is expected to be completed in time to open the top floor for Easter'.

Already the committee was looking ahead at decorations for the new premises. In March 1947, the secretary wrote to the director of the Australian War Memorial seeking the purchase (or better, the loan) of pictures which might be suitable for hanging in the Club. The director replied in April 1947, suggesting some pictures could be bought; the matter was deferred for some three months and to be dealt with then by the House sub-committee.

Although the move from George Street had gone easily, not all the facilities at the new premises were immediately available. 26 May, 1947, was set for the opening of the new bar at the Club. Traills Ice Works had supplied a refrigerator and cooling unit, at the cost of £175. This was necessary to bring the beer down to a temperature which members could find acceptable in Brisbane's steamy climate.* But the committee was also showing a remarkable degree of confidence about one future source of income. In May 1947, even before the new bar was opened, it resolved to acquire poker machines - set on the basis of 85 percent for the player and 15 percent for the Club. These machines were to be placed in the 'store ready for use'.** At the same time, prudent financial advisers such as Lieutenant Colonel Amies suggested that it was time to curb the spending. It was now time, he told the committee meeting,

*The correct temperature of the beer was a matter of continuing concern for the committee. Early post-war beer reticulating systems were not always efficient or capable of handling the volumes consumed by Club members and their guests.

**It was proved a long wait. At the time of writing, more than 43 years later, Queensland has only just got its first poker machines.

to take heed of the Club's position and defer further capital spending for another four months. The question of increased subscriptions began to be raised at committee meetings; clearly an injection of funds by this means would help the club considerably, but it was decided to postpone the pain - as it were - until after the new bar had opened. The psychology was neatly timed; the members would be given the 'facts and figures' at the opening of the new bar. One week before the new bar was opened, a committee meeting admitted another 72 members. Indeed, membership grew rapidly during this year. In his report for 1947, Lieutenant Colonel Little noted that membership had grown from 1200 to 2168.

Once in the new premises, the committee moved quickly to improve the range of social activities offered to members and their ladies. However, these were still austere years after World War II. In his presidential report, Little referred to shortages and the difficulty in obtaining many lines. Friday was a 'meatless and butterless' day, because of the difficulty in obtaining these goods; bottled beer was still in such short supply that it could not be sold to members for consumption away from the premises.

But now it was moving into winter, and in Brisbane, this means social activities and the Ball Season culminating in the Exhibition Week round of parties. That year, the committee planned to have the Ball at Cloudland. It was an important and formal occasion, even by the standards of those days. Debutantes could be presented to the Governor, so long as 'any debutante nominated has not previously attended an official ball'. The price of the tickets was fixed at 15/5 plus 7/1 tax, the 'tax' in question being an entertainment tax imposed by the Commonwealth Government as a war-time measure and not yet rescinded.

Post-war rationing and the general austerity of those years still provided problems. For example, planning for the 1947 Ball, a gala social occasion, was hampered by the inability of the breweries to supply additional quantities of beer. The minutes of the time note, rather forlornly, that Bulimba Brewery was unable to increase its supplies whereas Castlemaine could supply only an additional 60 gallons a week. With membership lists growing rapidly this increase - welcome as it was - still was insufficient to meet the demand.

For the ball, the committee resolved that members would have to make their own arrangements for liquor. The number attending was limited to 2100, including official guests. The club was to be open between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. on the evening of 11 August. The minutes reveal the meticulous planning which went into preparing for such an occasion. On 28 July, 1947, some two weeks before the big night, the special committee held a meeting; the planning is worth including in some detail.

For example, there were two rehearsals, the first on Sunday, 10 August, at 10 a.m. In the interests of uniformity, the Club supplied the bouquets for the debutantes, but no such floral offerings were provided for the ladies in the official party. There was

a gallery for the relatives of the debutantes. Evening dress was not compulsory for those in the gallery but they were to leave immediately after the presentation. Other matters discussed included employment of additional police, general duty men – ‘at the Club's expense’ - and the printing of the supper tickets in five different colours, presumably for ease of serving such a huge crowd.

Yet despite the difficulties in obtaining suitable liquid refreshments, the evening was a huge success. Cloudland was packed; all 2100 tickets were sold and alcoves were set up on the balcony to accommodate the overflow of guests inside the hall itself. Brisbane, which had felt the effects of the war rather more than other Australian capitals, returned only slowly to normal peace-time life. Social occasions, such as balls, were important in helping to regain that normality. The next morning, *The Courier-Mail* reported: ‘From the Gallery of Cloudland Ballroom the United Service Club resembled a brilliant mosaic, with distinctive service uniforms as a background for the swirling multi-coloured frocks of the feminine dancers’.

It seems that the ball that year might well have been too successful. At the committee meeting on 18 August, with the event still fresh in mind, the committee noted a number of ‘lessons learned’. These included limiting the number attending to 1500 or 1600 in future, should the ball be held at Cloudland again. And there was the difficult question of to whom the debutantes should be presented. In the planning for the ball, the committee had always intended that the Governor should receive the debutantes.* That year, however, the debutantes were presented to the Governor General, Mr William McKell, a former Australian Labor Party Premier of New South Wales, who was not a popular choice with many members. It was an embarrassment which should not have occurred and the committee was determined would not be allowed to occur again.

This was not the only problem facing the committee at the time. Members had been complaining that their hats were going missing from the cloakroom. (This was a time, of course, when no gentleman would consider himself dressed without a hat.) The secretary investigated, and found a bell boy was the culprit. The hat-napper was exposed and dismissed; members’ head-wear was safe once more.

As Brisbane gradually returned to normal, the Club’s social calendar also filled up. A social evening - Saturday night at home - was held on 20 September 1947, with no dancing although a band was hired for incidental music. The guest numbers were limited to 150 members. The catering was light fare, supplied by the Trefoil Cafe nearby. Clearly the growing membership was finding the Club attractive, not just as a place to meet for a quiet drink after work and to renew old friendships, but also as a place of entertainment. The membership grew strongly during this period. At the

*As the earlier chapters make clear, the United Service Club Ball was a major event on the Brisbane social calendar, often with both the Governor-General and the Governor attending.

1947 annual meeting, Little was able to report that the Club now had a total of 2168 members, of whom 13 had had life membership bestowed upon them. Overwhelmingly most of the members came from the city - 485 - but 670 others enjoyed country membership, evidence of the strong support offered to the Club by men on the land and in the important regional cities and towns of this decentralised State. More than 1200 new members had joined since the move to its premises on Wickham Terrace. 'It is very gratifying to note,' Little wrote in the annual report, 'that accommodation can be found in the Club for so many new members whom it would have been impossible to accommodate in our old premises. New members are still being nominated, and country members especially catered for, now that there is a residential section available.' Little was justifiably proud of the new Club; the pride was evident in his remarks. But equally, the president was determined to ensure that the other members who had helped make the move to 'Montpelier' a reality should be recognised. 'It is appreciated,' he added 'that difficulties would have been experienced if the Club had not received the professional services rendered by a number of members, and thanks are expressed to all those associated with the alterations and additions to the new premises, which have resulted in our new home becoming one of the finest clubs in Queensland and, when all our ambitions are realised, will be one of the finest clubs in Australia.'

The huge influx of new members, the overwhelming majority of whom had served in World War II as junior officers, gave the Club a youthful exuberance with which the committee had occasionally to contend. The minutes about this time note that one member had caused a 'disturbance' at dinner and was, as a result, invited to give his side of the story to the committee at its next meeting. He did so; the committee seemed satisfied at the explanation. Occasionally it seems that old wartime enmities towards other officers for real or imagined slights were never far below the surface. A few beers, a relaxation of the strict discipline of a wartime mess and words could be said. Yet the youth of the new members was obvious in other more innocent ways. The tennis courts were in heavy use, particularly the one lighted for night play. An internal cricket club was formed in 1947 and it, too, enjoyed some success. Later, especially during the early 1950s, some cricket matches of a high standard - virtually club level, if not first-class - were played by Club members. Some members were agitating for a squash club to be formed and for a squash court to be built. Perhaps wisely the committee had deferred serious consideration until after a 'permit to build' was acquired. In the immediate post-war years, building controls still existed and squash courts for private clubs did not have a particularly high priority.

For those members who preferred more sedentary challenges, the Club acquired several sets of chessmen, and arranged an invitation match from a chess master of the time a Mr Kable, who took on 14 opponents simultaneously. Perhaps not surprisingly after the end of this effort, few of the members were interested in playing chess,

although the sets remained available. The Club library was growing strongly at the time. In 1947, the committee spent £60 on 132 new books and appealed for donations of additional books from members. Financially the Club was in reasonable shape after two years' post-war trading although members had been tardy in taking up the debenture issue; in that year's annual report, Little noted that only 212 members, out of the 2168, had subscribed, representing debentures worth £8320. The club needed to raise £10,000 in this fashion and the committee thought it would have no difficulty in doing so, so long as most members subscribed at least £10 each. Clearly that optimism proved to be slightly misplaced, with so few members subscribing to the issue, although the amounts raised by those few members were indeed substantial. No doubt for many young members, struggling to re-establish themselves after the war, £10 was no mean sum.

Gradual Changes and New Members

A special general meeting held on 13 October, 1947, sought a number of changes in rules, including one that would see the president elected by the members. Previously, after declaration of the poll for the committee at the annual meeting, the members present at that meeting elected a president and a vice president from the newly-elected committee members. The notice of special general meeting sought to give eligibility as members of the Club to officers of the Mercantile Marine; to give members responsibility to elect directly presidents and to give committee members two year terms instead of being elected annually, as had been the case.

The latter two proposals were adopted and apply still; the first proposal was rejected. Almost certainly the most contentious issue was the proposal for Mercantile Marine officers to be elected as members of the Club; strong opinions existed both for and against. This meeting attracted 81 members and lasted two hours, during which time all the proposals were strenuously debated.

New members continued to be attracted to the Club, although by the end of 1947, the numbers being approved by the committee each meeting night were beginning to decline. At the meeting of October, 1947, for example, 46 new members were admitted, including a RAAF Squadron Leader, F W Boyle, who had a Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar and the French *Croix de Guerre*. As well, Captain J W Mott, who possessed both the Military Medal and Distinguished Conduct Medal, joined the list of new members.

The next month, another 48 members were elected. Included in the list at this time was Major Roy Thorburn, who had served with the 9th Battalion, Australian Military Forces, in all its campaigns. At the time of writing Roy Thorburn is still a very active member of the 9th Battalions Association, as well being a Club stalwart. That night too saw the admission of Captain A S Hind, who had landed with the original 15th Battalion at Anzac Cove on 25 April, 1915. He was seriously wounded during the subsequent fighting and evacuated to Egypt, where doctors wanted to amputate his hand. Stan Hind prevailed on them not to do so, and recovered sufficiently well to play rugby league and, later, golf off a handicap in the single figures. During World War II he was commissioned in the AMF and served as a railway transport and troop conducting officer for units moving to north Queensland.

Still the tedious detail of running the Club continued. On 24 November, the committee convened a special meeting, largely to deal with a member who had

caused a disturbance in the dining room on Saturday, 15 November. Alas the details of the disturbance do not survive, but clearly it was serious - serious enough to warrant the member's suspension until the end of the current financial year, which was then September 30, 1948. Two other members were 'invited' to appear before the committee to give their accounts of the disturbance. The minutes for this period reflect the fact that the Club's membership at this time was comprised of a sizeable slice of young men who had endured years of hardship and dangers, and whose methods of settling disputes today would be considered excessively robust. It is to the very great credit of the committee at the time that, as such disputes occasionally arose, they were dealt with quickly and with common sense and equity on all sides. The war was still a harsh and recent memory; allowances had to be made.

Four days after this special general meeting, the Club held its annual general meeting, the first in the new premises. Little stepped down as president - his work was done. Little had been the driving force behind, not just the acquisition of the new building and the expansion of facilities, but also behind the push for new members. He realised the demand for this kind of club among the many young men who had spent the war years with comrades and, even now into peace, missed the camaraderie of the officers' mess or the wardroom. His restless energy, his clear determination and his ability to gather around him like-minded friends and colleagues who could translate plans into action made him an invaluable president during this period of expansion.

The Club was fortunate, too, that Little's wartime medical duties kept him confined to Australia; he was in the right place to appreciate the potential for growth and the need for larger and better premises. The time was right for the Club to move; Little ensured that it moved to the best premises that could be found. The shape and substance of the United Service Club today owes much to the presidency of 'Lal' Little.

In recognition of Little's efforts, that annual meeting conferred on him life membership. Lieutenant Colonel C G Gehrman,* who proposed Little for life membership - a 'well-merited honour, as the club's present position was due to him' - was also given this honour, in recognition of his efforts over the years. As well, life membership was granted to two prominent British commanders of World War II, Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein and Earl Mountbatten of Burma.** Both followed visits to the Club. From the floor now, as a life member

*Lieutenant Colonel Gehrman joined the Club in 1906 and had been honorary auditor since 1935.

**In the case of Monty, the honour was understandable. The Field Marshall had often expressed admiration for what he called his 'splendid' Australians. Years later, when he returned to the Alamein battlefield, he said bluntly: 'I could not have won at Alamein without the Australian 9th Division.' But Mountbatten had had little contact with Australian servicemen in any numbers. No Australian army units fought in Burma, when Mountbatten was at South East Asian Command; nor were there Australian ships under his command in the Mediterranean where he managed to have his destroyer sunk from beneath him. Even so, life membership of the Club-a membership tragically and brutally truncated by his murder in 1979 - was a fitting tribute to the degree of respect with which this charismatic and popular officer was held.

and immediate past president, Little proposed that the new committee call a special general meeting to discuss a fee increase.

Clearly this was something of a contentious issue. The members had before them Club accounts which indicated that the Club was in a sound financial position, although the response to the debenture issue had been rather uneven. Little had some opposition, not unexpectedly. Commander Eric Feldt, who had served for a time as Club secretary, thought the committee should wait a little longer before raising subscriptions. Little, however, was prepared for these objections. He told that meeting that 'fifty times' during the past half year he had been asked when fees were going to be increased. The members were not unobservant; they noticed the bigger Club, with its better premises and facilities. A fee increase, even in those pre-inflationary days, seemed inevitable.

Little's persuasive powers had not deserted him when he stepped down from the president's chair; only 10 members voted against the motion to refer the question of a fee increase to a special general meeting. It was carried easily.

At this distance, given the powers that committees have today, it seems almost quaint that such a question should be raised at an annual general meeting then referred to a special general meeting for consideration. It might be argued that members then were prepared to take more of an interest in the running of their Club, especially on the question of fees, whereas today they are quite prepared to leave that question to their committee.

Straight after this meeting, a special general meeting was held to consider the question of a levy on members - 5/- for town members; 2/6 for country members to cover gratuities. This was an attempt to ensure staff members received a better reward for their dedication. Lieutenant Colonel Amies told the meeting that it was difficult to keep staff because of the 'no tipping' rule and the small amounts put by members in the staff gratuity boxes. This move failed, probably because the infrequent users of the Club's services felt that frequent users should pay more. A flat rate was not acceptable. The Club only managed to get this issue right when an additional item, 'Staff Gratuity' was added to the annual subscription notice. This system, adopted some years ago, produces a generous return.

It seems clear from the minutes that this proposal produced some fairly heated discussion. Finally the president ruled that no purpose would be served by discussing the issue further. It seems curious today that so much time and effort was spent in the discussion of five bob once a year and half a crown for the rich members in the bush!

This meeting also produced some more discussion about the presentation of debutantes at the Ball. Apparently the presence of the Labor Government appointed Governor-General, Mr McKell, worried some members who wanted the debutantes presented to a 'senior veteran of the empire's wars'. The motion, again an untidy mass of amendments, lapsed.



Squadron Leader Herbert John Louis Hinkler AFC DSM (1892-1933). Life member 1928. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)



Air Commodore Sir Charles Edward Kingsford Smith MC AFC (1897-1935). Life member 1933. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)

Annual formal dinner 1937. 2nd & 3rd from left, HE Colonel Sir Leslie Wilson and Colonel D E Evans. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)

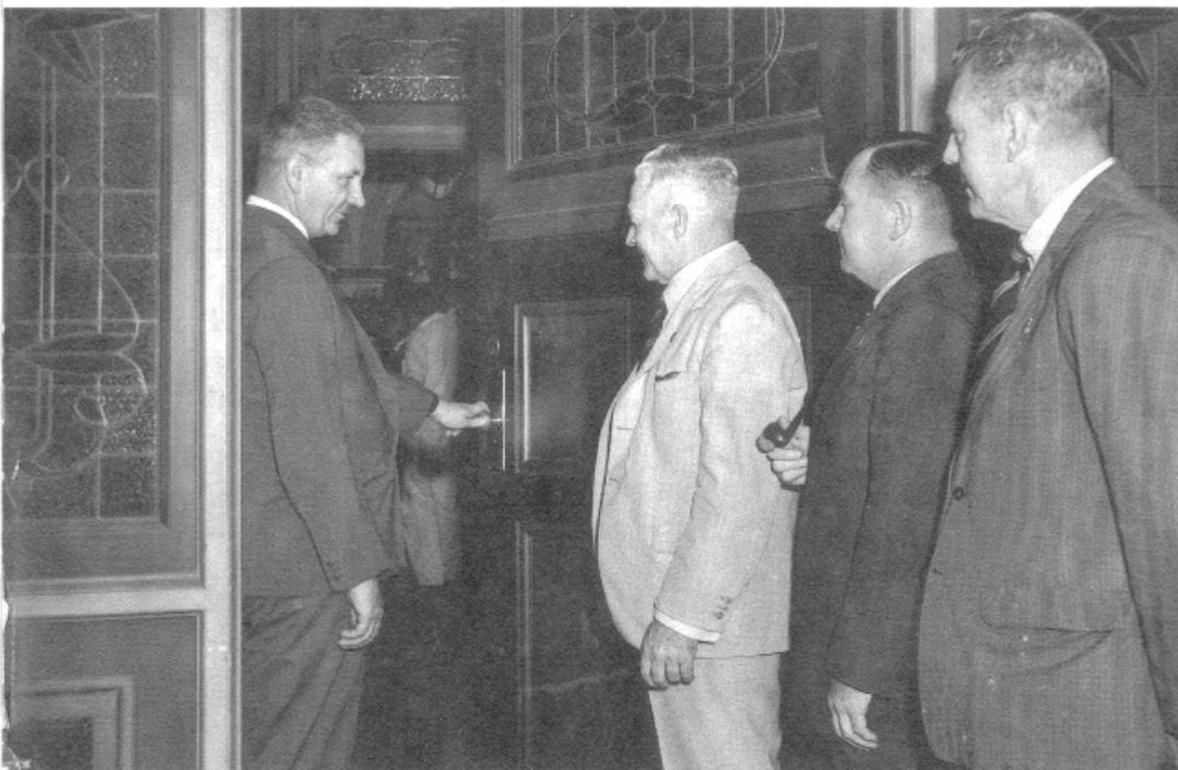




Farewell to 70 George Street. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)



Entering 183 Wickham Terrace. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)



The concern expressed by Lieutenant Colonel Amies about the difficulty in attracting and holding suitable staff was reinforced at the next committee meeting. The secretary pointed out that 40 staff members had joined and resigned from the Club's employment since 1 July, 1947. Post-war labour shortages, particularly for skilled bar and domestic workers, meant that clubs and hotels had to pay over-award payments to hold their people.

Staff problems were only one of the difficulties facing the new committee. After the huge expansion of membership, there was now a period of consolidation and the minutes for this period of the Club's history lack evidence of the major decision making efforts of the Little years. One matter, however, with which the committee had to deal immediately was the problem of illegal Sunday trading.

It had come to the committee's attention that the members staying in the Club, who were a more than useful source of revenue, were being illegally served with liquor on the Sabbath, in contravention of the State's licensing laws which were then a strict and slightly absurd mass of contradictions and restrictions. The police enforced those laws with enthusiasm; the last thing that the Club - or its new committee - needed was to be dragged through the magistrates' courts on charges of after-hours drinking. To do so would place the Club on the same level as a common sly-grogger. However, there was the question of the resident members' thirsts. These were respectable people, and an asset to the Club. Could they be served legitimately with liquor on Sunday? The matter was, very wisely, referred to the Club's solicitors for an opinion. That opinion does not survive but for all practical purposes, the problem was solved early in the New Year. The house sub-committee reported, rather gloomily, that there was no beer available to serve members on Sunday, licensing laws or no.

Indeed, January 1948 was a thirsty month. The beer quota was cut by 6 percent or 60 gallons per month. A little arithmetic suggests that the monthly quota was some 1000 gallons a month. (By contrast, today, because of drink-driving laws and changed liquor preferences, monthly draught beer consumption is a mere 20 gallons.) As well, no bottled beer was available. The committee responded to these difficulties by asking members to curtail their numbers of guests. Rationing applied to more than beer; coupons were necessary for the Club to buy new bath and hand towels.

Rationing, first imposed during the war years, continued until well in the 1950s. The Government's attempts to restrict drinking by rationing beer during the war years were, according to the official historian Paul Hasluck, 'resisted and evaded'. He added:

They (the attempts) saved some manpower and materials in the breweries but may have lost manpower not only to black marketing but by reason of the fact that drinkers either waited for the beer to come 'on' or, when it was on hastened to the pub so as not to miss

their share. They made it difficult and in some cases impossible for some sections of the community to obtain liquor Wartime experience makes it clear that beer and betting mean more than anything else in life to a considerable number of Australians.*

The period following the move to Wickham Terrace in 1947 was one of great conviviality for many of the World War II veterans who comprised most of the membership. They were young, making their way in the professions or business and able, at the same time, to maintain, in the Club, some of the war-time camaraderie. This was exemplified in the group which gathered at the south-west corner of the bar every Friday evening, at about 5 p.m. for drinks lasting an hour or two. Or, sometimes much longer, for those who had tolerant wives, or were prepared to take the criticism associated with a late and slightly unsteady homecoming. This group, sometimes known as 'The Unquenchables' was an institution for about 20 years until age, changed priorities and the advent of the breathalyser caused the numbers to dwindle, eventually to nothing. Attendance varied and, as some dropped out, others took their places, but most Fridays, 15-20 members would assemble at the appointed time. Early names included Flight Lieutenant M O 'Mo' Guthrie, Flight Lieutenant Jack Lock, Flight Lieutenant Frank Bottomer, Flight Lieutenant Jim Holliday, Lieutenant Herbert Mitchell, Major Don Petrie, Squadron Leader Bob Yeowart, Captain Ken Campbell, Flight Lieutenant Bernie McLoughlin (later His Honour Judge McLoughlin) Captain Jim Yates and Captain Bill Anderson, with others whose names have been forgotten. This group began and, indeed, thrived, despite the early rationing.

Although rationing was less severe in the immediate post-war years, there were still huge shortages of items which are now taken for granted. Indeed, the immediate post war years were characterised by industrial strife, as workers - freed from the constraints of wartime - now agitated for their share of the few luxuries that were around. In this period, railway workers, transport workers and miners all embarked on long and costly strikes; the committee was concerned about the possibility of admitting people 'with communistic tendencies' to the club as members or as guests, but particularly as members. The committee decided that the present methods of scrutiny were sufficient and no additional diligence was required.**

In January 1948, the new committee, under the presidency of Major G C Reid, began the new year's work of consolidating on the efforts of Little and his committee.

*Hasluck, Paul, *The Government and the People 1942-45* Canberra, Australian War Memorial. (1970) p274.

**During this period, some anti-communist organisations were formed, often based on a para-military framework. Little has been written about these organisations of this period, which tended to reflect the concern of former servicemen at the growing communist influence in the Australian Labor Party and in the trade unions. Ultimately the ALP was to split, partly over this question, but it is fascinating to see this kind of social concern emerging in the club minutes.

George Crowe Reid was the popular manager of Howard Motors in Adelaide Street. He had won a Military Cross in World War I and later served on the staff of the 9th Division headquarters in the Middle East during World War II. Reid joined the Club in 1936 and was president in 1947-48. Soon after World War II, he inaugurated the annual el Alamein dinner, for officers of the three services who fought in that battle. This dinner is held in the Club on 23 October. Since Reid's death in 1972, the dinners have been presided over by Lieutenant Colonel AS 'Gus' Gehrman.*

Little remained to assist, as immediate past president and vice-president, but it seems clear enough that Little wanted to step back and allow his successor a free hand. This meeting resolved that a Life Members' Honour Board be erected; the board now can be seen on the wall immediately opposite the entrance to the Royal Room.

Beer shortages continued to worry the committee which decided at this meeting to place notices in the Club, asking members not to bring 'visitors into the bar, until further notice, owing to the present beer shortages'. As well, this meeting also saw Lieutenant Colonel McIntyre formally move that the Club adhere strictly to the Liquor Act (then, as now, a cumbersome piece of legislation but rather more prohibitive in its scope). The committee was worried about Sunday trading, which had the potential to attract some unwelcome publicity. The house committee thought it had provided part of the answer to the Sunday trading difficulty; it had recommended that no beer be sold on Sunday because of the shortages! This meeting, too, provided more evidence of the success of the ball held during Exhibition Week the previous year. The committee decided to book Cloudland again for that year, on August 9, 1948.

Reports of the house committee from this time give a useful account of the difficulties in running a club - indeed, any business operation in what would now be called the hospitality industry - during these austere post-war years. Electricity, for example, had failed during several peak periods, with obvious problems for lighting and refrigeration. This too, in a Brisbane summer in the days before air conditioning! The committee decided that it needed, and as a matter of some urgency, electrical equipment which would prevent damage to refrigeration in such periods of unpredictable power supplies.

Austerity prevailed in other areas. To replace bath towels and table cloths, the Club needed to acquire ration coupons; 377 were obtained by the secretary, no doubt at some difficulty. The committee was also having problems with some of the more high-spirited members. The secretary told the house committee that a green snooker ball had gone missing, and that two white balls had been found in the garden of the

*Lieutenant Colonel 'Gus' Gehrman, CBE, DSO, ED, a son of the Club's former auditor and life member, Lieutenant Colonel C G Gehrman VD

nearby Union Jack Club. Quite clearly, some members were taking their snooker manners none too seriously, or perhaps were playing overly-exuberant games on the table, perhaps even 'slosh', much loved by young subalterns and frowned upon by mess and club committees.*

After the momentous decisions of the previous year, the committees of this time became involved with the banal and the mundane. The possible acquisition of a glass-washing machine was considered at length, and over several meetings. Eventually the committee decided that such a machine might be a good idea, but the members wanted a medical opinion. They resolved to approach Dr Fryberg, a member.**

Once his opinion was received, the Licensing Commission was to be approached. At this time, the Licensing Commission played an extraordinary part in what would today be the day-to-day running. It insisted, for example, that doors from food preparation areas be fly-screened, a necessary precaution certainly, but not one that would seem to require the active intervention of a government agency.

The banal and the mundane aside, this was an active committee, with a fine appreciation of the need for tact and circumspection in dealing with the members. At the meeting on 22 March, 1948, the problem of membership fee arrears was raised. Lieutenant Colonel Amies, ever the careful accountant, moved that 'a strong letter be sent to all recently elected members whose subscriptions...were outstanding, and a nice letter be sent to the older members whose subscriptions were in arrears'. It was the deference that youth owes to age, but the list of outstanding subscriptions was long and the committee's responsibility was clear.

Still, the problem of illegal Sunday drinking continued, with thirsty and inventive members finding a way to circumvent both the licensing laws and the committee's rulings. At the committee meeting in May, 1948, it was decided to take no action against 'certain members who posed as residents on Sunday, 18 April, 1948, and obtained liquor'. Indeed, the conduct of members continued to pose problems for the committee. In May, two members - one later a well known lawyer - were censured by the president and excluded from the Club for a month; another three members, all lieutenants, were required to give an explanation of their conduct in 'purchasing a bottle of rum and drinking same on premises after 10 p.m'. As well, the minutes give us a tantalising glimpse, but alas not more, of what the secretary rather cryptically called the 'Sydney incident' involving a member of the Imperial Service Club in that city. The boisterous behaviour of the war years had clearly not entirely disappeared. The incident involving the two members, including the legal gentlemen, had a sequel.

*And occasionally some senior officers. One of the authors has a memory, not altogether perfect, of playing slosh with a much-loved brigadier after a particularly long Infantry Corps dinner.

**Colonel Abraham Fryberg was director general of health and medical services in Queensland between 1947 and 1967. Later Sir Abraham Fryberg MBE, he joined the Club in 1947 after serving with the 9th Australian Division.

Apparently not satisfied at his treatment, the lawyer instructed a firm of solicitors to write to the committee on his behalf. This letter does not survive, but apparently it contained the threat of some legal or other action to bring about the member's reinstatement. Although their suspension was rescinded, a special committee meeting on 24 May decided that the two members be asked to show cause why they should not be dealt with under Rule 76, which could have seen their possible expulsion. However, within a month, the matter was settled satisfactorily; the two members were informed that, although the committee took a very grave view of the incident, 'in view of all the circumstances, and the apology tendered, (it decided that) no further action will be taken'.

Another member whose conduct had come under the scrutiny of the committee was not so fortunate. He had been involved in a disturbance in the Club late on the afternoon of Saturday, 22 May, 1948. On the instruction of the committee, the Club's solicitor wrote to him. His resignation was tendered at the special committee meeting on 2 June and accepted. Now, as the age of the members is in more mature figures, and the behaviour of younger members rarely troubles the committee, it is curious to reflect that the United Service Club had occasional problems of this nature. The problems were, almost certainly, those of men who had endured hard wars adjusting to the difficulties of peacetime.

The sudden flood of new post-war members was now down to a trickle, but a substantial trickle at that. In April 1948, 38 new members were elected, including Flight Lieutenant W A R Rae, later Sir Wallace, a Minister in the Bjelke-Petersen Government and Queensland's Agent General in London. But now, too, the committee was also moving to strike off a number of members who had joined in the early post-war period, and who found that the Club life was neither to their taste nor their financial capabilities.

In June, 1948, the Club lost its secretary, Captain L G Hitchcock, who resigned. Clearly the committee was unhappy that he should take this step; speaker after speaker thanked the former secretary for his help during the transfer period and offered him best wishes for the future. Once again, the invaluable Commander Eric Feldt stepped into the gap. It was a large gap to fill, with the wartime rationing still a problem, and the Club going through a teething period. But no detail was too unimportant for the house committee, which decided in June that the committee should purchase a 'club cigar'. The happy hours during which the committee members selected a suitable product for their consideration can only be imagined!

This was still a young man's club, at least in terms of the sudden influx of new members which had the effect of changing, virtually completely, its character. Sporting occasions were important and on 28 June, 1948 a meeting of cricket enthusiasts was held with the aim of conducting various fixtures during the coming summer season. It was decided to form a separate club within the Club, with its own

secretary, treasurer and office bearers, in an effort to lighten the work load of the already burdened secretary. Early opponents were to be the Tattersalls Club, then as now a predominantly sporting club with a fine tradition of cricket as well as other, more equine pursuits, and the United Licensed Victuallers Association. In subsequent years the cricket sub-club was to prove an important factor in the Club's activities. Other sports enjoyed by members at the time, golf and billiards (if the latter can be properly classed as a sport) persist to this day; alas cricket has disappeared from the Club's sporting calendar.

The latter months of 1948 saw the committee busy with the problems of staff reorganisation, with the ball (again with the lessons of the previous year's huge success still fresh in mind) and with consolidation of the rapid growth. In November, after another hugely successful ball during the Show week, the committee was still digesting the lessons it had learned. More than 1400 members and their guests attended the ball and, as the annual report notes, 'the function in every way maintained the high standard achieved by the club in previous years'. The members made it clear to the committee, however, that they wanted the ball kept as a social occasion and not as a revenue raiser. The committee had to be careful to do so. At the same time, however, the Club was attempting to acquire the prefix "Royal" for itself and the secretary was writing to the Royal Canadian Military Institute to ask how it had managed to come by the coveted title. This was consistent with the Club's continuing, strong loyalty to the Monarchy resulting, no doubt, from its military tradition. Now, too, the committee was busily preparing for the expected visit of King George VI the following April.

Amid all this excitement, however, the wisdom of Little's vision and effort in acquiring the new premises was apparent. A valuation carried out for insurance purposes estimated the premises, exclusive of electrical installations, lifts, refrigerator and cold room to be worth £53,432, with nearly another £10,000 in furniture.

That year's annual meeting, held on 26 November, saw only 42 members attend. Low attendance at such meetings is disappointing, but is also an indication that the overwhelming bulk of members believes the Club is being run efficiently and well. The minutes reveal no major decisions or motions and proceedings were over in a very respectable hour and 15 minutes. The shortness of this meeting is an indication of how business-like the committee was becoming. Not that previous committees had ever acted in an unwise or imprudent fashion but now the Club was being run rather more as a business, with increased powers being given to executive staff.

For example, in April 1949, the committee decided to give the secretary the power to hire and fire staff, the power to determine wages and even to caution a member who may misbehave. Such powers are today, of course, accepted but then the secretaries were rather more beholden to their committees for support in such matters. This was another legacy of the Little years; the Club was now being conducted as a business and a successful business at that.

Youthful Enthusiasms

In September 1949, the Club's secretary, Flight Lieutenant J B Riddall, had a melancholy tale to report to the committee. Members of the betting section of the vice squad of the Queensland police force had entered the premises on Saturday, 10 September and questioned a steward, one ED Linnan. As a result of this questioning, Linnan was later summonsed to appear in the Magistrates Court. Linnan was off duty on the Saturday afternoon and decided that he would visit the races. Being an obliging sort of chap, Linnan agreed to place some bets on behalf of other stewards, one for five shillings and the other for two shillings and six pence. At about 1 p.m., or an hour and a half before Linnan was due to go off duty, he was telephoned at the Club by a man claiming to be a member and using the name of McPherson. This gentleman asked Linnan to place a bet for him. The steward, being a law-abiding member of the community, replied that he did not take bets and could not participate in any starting price betting transactions.

Alas for Linnan, two men standing near him at the bar, and who were unknown to him as members of the Club, then identified themselves as detectives attached to the traffic branch. They asked Linnan whether he was carrying on the business of a starting price bookmaker, (or perhaps more precisely, as a bookmaker's agent,) in the Club. Although Linnan denied that he was either a bookmaker or a bookmaker's agent, the two detectives confiscated the pieces of cardboard upon which he had written the details of the bets for his fellow stewards.

The secretary, in his report to the committee, accepted Linnan's denial that he was neither a bookmaker nor a bookmaker's agent. 'Unless I have been purposely deceived,' reported the secretary, 'there has been no betting agent amongst members of the Club's staff for some considerable time.' Clearly the qualification of the final phrase suggests that illegal betting might have been going on at some time in the past. The secretary was perturbed enough to ask that, in the event of a conviction, whether the committee would want to retain Linnan's services? 'Is it wise,' he cautioned, 'to keep a man who must be an SP suspect to the Vice Squad and so encourage further visits to the club? Would the fact of our retaining his services be misinterpreted by the Vice Squad, and so lead them to believe that the club is prepared to condone SP activities amongst members of the staff?'

The Club's solicitor, Captain J Paterson, had already undertaken to be in court on

21 October, 1949, as the minutes record, 'to see that the Club's name is not brought into the hearing', an optimistic hope, considering the circumstances. Linnan retained a firm of solicitors to represent him at the hearing; a well-known barrister and Club member, Major R R M King, agreed to appear for the steward and very generously waived payment of his fees. Thus represented did our steward Linnan face the court.

The following month's committee meeting, three days after Linnan's court appearance, received a written report which does not seem to have survived. At the committee meeting the next month, the minutes record that the case against Linnan was dismissed for lack of evidence. At this distance, and with the popularity of legalised off-course betting through the Totalisator Administration Board, the efforts of the Vice Squad in those days seem curiously out of proportion. But the combined forces of the race clubs and the government, acting in both self and common interest, ensured that starting price bookmakers and their 'agents' - a rather grand term for some menial worker who undertook the leg work of the operation - were harassed by the police. It would be surprising if, given the secretary's careful report to the committee, the Club had been entirely free of SP bookmaking or agents among the staff. It is also quite possible that some of the members might have taken advantage of any such SP services that might have been on offer.

No doubt too, a competent barrister would have been able to make much of the fact that the two members of the traffic branch who were drinking at the bar when the hapless Linnan received his telephone call might themselves have been technically in breach of the licensing laws. Still, the matter ended well, and the committee was now aware of yet another pitfall in running a Club in the austere atmosphere of post-war Brisbane.

The case of steward Linnan provided the committee with an interesting, if perhaps unwelcome, diversion. The minutes during this period of consolidation of the Club's records show few momentous decisions; the meetings were spent with the day-to-day detail that, later, was to be left to the secretary. Indeed, many of the agenda items in the minutes for this time and which required the committee's decision, covered housekeeping matters. Only slowly did the Club and the committee grapple with the problems brought about by size and the need to consolidate. At the same time, however, the committee was called upon to make some tough decisions.

For example, members whose cheques had been dishonoured by the bank were expected to resign; the rules were specific. In these early post-war days, many former officers found difficulties in making the adjustments to civilian life; their financial affairs were not always conducted with prudence and forethought. The committee was called on to make some odd decisions. For example, as late as November 1949, the Club was still sending food parcels to at least one reciprocal club, the Army and Navy Club - colloquially known as the 'Rag'* in London. Britain was still in the midst of food rationing; no doubt the parcels from a distant part of Empire were

*From an early claim that its food was a 'rag-and-famish' affair.

considered most welcome. The committee thought that members should know about their own generosity, and so the bulletin sent monthly to members included this useful information. In May, 1950, with the lifting of rationing in the UK, the food parcels ceased. Letters of thanks or other marks of gratitude from the 'Rag' do not survive.

Occasionally, too, the committee needed to remind some of the more unruly members that their 'Club, we would point out most definitely, is an Officers' Club and not a pub'. In a special circular sent to all members in April 1950, just in time for Anzac Day, the committee issued reminders about dress, guests, language and damage to property. 'The order of dress is posted on the notice boards,' the committee said sternly, 'and it is not put there for decoration. It is the member's duty to see his guests are dressed in accordance.' Indeed, guests posed a problem, for the requirements that guests should be accompanied by members on all occasions existed not only in the rules, but also in the licensing laws. 'The complaints by many members regarding bad language are so numerous, members attention is drawn to the fact that apart from other members of the club objecting, it is not a very nice advertisement for visitors,' the committee added.

We have already noted the committee's concern about damage to the Club's property. Now, it reported to the members the collective concern; 'members will be astounded to learn that in the past, towel racks have been torn from the walls, billiard balls and cues have been thrown out of the window and deliberately broken. If any cases of this sort occur again, it is the duty of every member to report the name of the offender to the secretary'. And, added the committee, with more than a hint of sorrow, 'we would appreciate a few members using the suggestion book prior to going to the bar, or at least the following morning.' Quite clearly some of the younger members were providing their elder committee members with a few headaches.

There were, however, compensations and benefits from having such a youthful membership. The United Service Club was very sports-minded at this time with much attention being paid to such games as tennis, golf, lawn bowls, cricket, billiards and snooker. Some members had approached the committee to build a squash court on the premises, but ran into the difficulties of post-war restrictions on building. Expenditure was limited to £100 in any one calendar year; 'As the cost of a court even without spectators' gallery or dressing rooms, would hardly be less than £700 - £800, this would not be practicable', noted the building and maintenance sub-committee on 23 August, 1950. .

The 1950 Ball sub-committee had to contend with a less popular occasion. After the splendid success of the first post-war ball in 1947, its continued support by members might have been taken for granted. Initially, this was the case; the 1948 ball was even larger. But then in subsequent years, attendance began to drop away, perhaps because with returning national prosperity, more alternative outings and

social occasions began to appear. In August 1950, the ball sub-committee met to consider a report that the ball had actually lost £35/6/6, while the cocktail party had made a profit of £41/10/10, leaving a net profit on the combined functions of £6/4/4. Only 287 members nominated to attend the ball. Even with their partners, this was only half the number of people who attended the previous year. The sub-committee decided that Cloudland was becoming too expensive for the smaller numbers and decided that the following year's function would be held at the City Hall.

The minutes for the period record the distinguished visitors entertained by the Club. In December, 1950, the Archbishop of Canterbury was entertained at a reception at which was spent more than £14. Brigadier Jack Amies, who was president at the time, recalls that the Archbishops, who was Chaplain-General of His Majesty's Forces, arrived on a hot and humid day, hatless and wearing a long black cassock. His opening remarks to the members assembled at the top bar were: 'Gentlemen, relax, there will be no sermon. You may wonder why I am wearing this long black robe. It is because, like the Arabs, I believe it is the coolest garb and I don't have to wear anything underneath.' Another visitor during Amies' presidency was Air Marshal Sir Keith Park, who commanded the famous 11 Group, Royal Air Force, during the Battle of Britain. Sir Edmund Herring, commanded the 6th Division Artillery at the 1941 battles of Bardia and Tobruk, and then later commanded a division in Darwin and a force in New Guinea, was also entertained that month. 'Ned' Herring, as he was popularly known, served with distinction in both wars and left the army in 1944 to become Chief Justice of Victoria, a post he held until his retirement in 1964. Sir Edmund Herring was a very staunch supporter of the Naval and Military Club in Melbourne, and an honoured guest in the United Service Club.

The use and, as the minutes record, 'misuse' of the library concerned the committee. Under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Colonel Little and Major Reid, a library subcommittee was established in November, 1950. It met, discussed library policy at length, and adjourned, to meet again in another week. This time, the chairman, Little, noted that 'the question of augmenting the supply of books to the library was discussed in every angle'. Little could state that the committee was not unanimous. However, the decision was reached to buy a number of books, including mostly war-time memoirs. This was the beginning of the boom in publishing war-time memoirs and stories; a reading public anxious for personal accounts was served by the ending of paper rationing which had made wartime and immediate post war publishing so difficult.

Membership of the library sub-committee was no sinecure, for each book, as it arrived, was delivered to a member of the sub-committee for reading. The following week, it was put into circulation. The library sub-committee also thought they were in for some extra work: '...in view of the international situation, which will doubtless bring forth a crop of Colonel Blimps and their kind, and other amateur strategists and tacticians, that considerable attention should be paid to the type of books

purchased dealing with international politics, etc, etc, and etc.’ It seems that, even within a small sub-committee such as this that the potential for divisions was great. Very great difficulty was experienced in reaching any unanimity about what might constitute a suitable lending library.

* * *

By early 1951, the great immediate post-war expansion was over. The 1951 committee, under the presidency of Lieutenant Colonel Amies, was occupied with the great detail of running a now well-established Club and with providing for the members the kinds of services they required. The minutes from the time suggest that committee meetings did not last very long, unlike the immediate post-war years. For example, the first committee meeting held in 1951, on January 30, lists only ten items before general business and most of these were of a fairly pedestrian nature. With an influx of relatively young members, games continued to be important, particularly billiards, snooker, golf and tennis, while the cricket club was popularly supported and attracted some high standard players.

The 1951 committee was still undecided about future expansion of the Club, and particularly the use for the premises next door. Would it be possible that, at some time in the future, the Club might require those premises for its own use? Should they continue to be leased and thus provide a useful source of income? Should they be used for an Associates Club? The January meeting decided not to sell the premises occupied by the Moreton Club, but to extend the lease until 1955, at a rent adjusted to cover the increase in rates. Under the circumstances, this was a remarkably generous arrangement for the ladies club, for the early 1950s saw some inflation arising from the Korean War wool boom. Another committee, with perhaps more commercial instincts, might have opted to increase the rent. Later in the year, the September minutes record that the secretary was instructed to write to the Moreton Club’s president, instructing her that a further year’s tenancy would be granted, as ‘from the 15th April, 1952, but that the Club reserve the right at any time to give less than a year’s notice’. Quite clearly, the committee at the time had its own ideas, about the time-frame for development of possible other uses of these premises and it was not necessary to convey these ideas to the Moreton Club.

At this January committee meeting, members also considered the possibility of forming an ‘Associate Club’ for ladies. Little, as ever a force, chaired this subcommittee, of which more later. By 1951 too, the motor car was beginning to appear as the dominant form of transport. The two tennis courts were being considered for possible parking areas; the January meeting referred this issue to the grounds subcommittee for its opinion. Here, then, was the beginning of the Club’s long and profitable use of the flat area to the rear of its building.

The following meeting, in February, had similarly pedestrian matters to consider. The emerging cricket club occupied the committee's time briefly; its members were instructed to 'co-ordinate their business with that of the sports sub-committee'; perhaps the cricketers, a young and active group, were taking matters rather too much into their own hands, with confusion all around. The perennial problem of members' conduct emerged briefly too; the sports sub-committee apparently reported that some members had neglected to remove their cigarettes from their mouths while playing billiards and snooker. A notice was placed in all billiard rooms: 'Members must not smoke over the billiard tables'. The message was unambiguous; its language clear and forthright.

Service dinners, such as the annual el Alamein dinner, an important occasion for the many members who were veterans of the Australian 9th Division, and the Gunners' annual celebration on St Barbara's Day, began to be held at the Club.* The February 1951 committee meeting resolved that, not only should the Club hold the dinners, but that it should also run them. Any loss on the evening should be borne by the Club.

For the most part, the committee meetings of the 1950s were occupied with important detail, rather than with splendid visions of policy or weighty questions of future directions. Still, much house-keeping had to be done, often requiring deliberations on weighty matters. There were still adjustments to be made in the Club's formal structure to take account of the larger number of members and changing circumstances. Amendments to rules covering absentee members were considered during this time. As well, the committee accepted what were growing lists of resignations; members were finding that the demands of their civilian lives did not leave as much time for club life as perhaps they had hoped.

We get an interesting insight into this important day-to-day aspect of club life from the house sub-committee minutes, dated 27 August, 1951. During the previous month, the Club entertained the distinguished Royal Air Force officer, Sir Keith Park, at the cost of £2/7/-. It paid the secretary his travelling expenses for the month of July: 44 miles at sixpence a mile.** The house sub-committee also considered the installation of new carpets in the lounge and dining room; this task to be carried out by the old Brisbane firm of McWhirters Limited, whose name survives now only on the facade of the Fortitude Valley markets. Clearly the difficulties of 1934 over catering had long receded. The sub-committee also deliberated over the construction of a 'ring-stand' for napkins and, perhaps most importantly, considered the growing losses in the dining room as the result of increased prices. The sub-

*The el Alamein dinner is still held on 23 October each year for members of the three services who fought in that battle, and now for their sons and grandsons. St Barbara's Day dinners, on 4 December, depend very much on the strength of the 'gunner mafia' within the Club.

**By way of comparison, the club secretary now has the use of a motor vehicle and has had since 1985.

committee felt, according to the minutes, 'that the loss in the dining-room for the month of July is an indication of what may be expected from the constant rising costs, which, unfortunately, cannot be offset by an increase in charges without jeopardising the dining-room attendance'. Every little avenue was explored, including charging for coffee. The secretary reported that both the Sydney and Melbourne clubs (Imperial Service and the Naval and Military) charged members for coffee, and suggested that a similar charge of three pence a cup be made. This was rejected by the house sub-committee, which were undoubtedly aware of the reactions this would provoke from members.

Lest this be thought an isolated example, the house sub-committee meeting on October 2, 1951, is equally typical of the period. That sub-committee meeting decided to buy white jackets for the stewards from Rothwells Ltd, then the major mens wear retailer and tailor in Edward Street.* Each steward was to receive four coats. Apparently, too, the sub-committee had received a request that part of the dining room be set aside for non-smokers. However, the minutes record, somewhat sternly: 'This sub-committee is not prepared to consider non-smoking in the dining room', and indeed, the non-smoking area which now applies is relatively recent.

The rising costs continued to impose difficulties at this time. At the following meeting, in October, the secretary again spoke about the problems these costs were causing in various sections of operations. The costs were also having another impact; because of the high wages being paid in southern states, the Club was finding it difficult to hold good catering staff. Coincidentally, the committee resolved at that time to increase the secretary's remuneration to £1050 plus £150 a year entertainment allowance.

In September 1951, the Club lost one of its distinguished members and trustees, Colonel F A Hughes who died. Lieutenant Colonel Byrne Hart was appointed as a trustee. Sir Byrne, as he later became, had served with the 49th Battalion in France during World War I where he was awarded the Military Cross. After the war, he returned to Brisbane and established an accountancy practice.

At the 1951 annual general meeting, held on 22 November, tributes were paid to Colonel Hughes and to another distinguished member who had also recently died, Lieutenant Colonel S L McIntyre, the immediate past president. After the traditional minute's silence, the meeting moved on to the business of the evening, including consideration of the profit and loss accounts and the balance sheet.

The auditor's report that year said that the bar was the only trading department to improve its net earning capacity. The report added:

*For many years, Rothwell's were suppliers to military officers, with a service for ribbons and medals, uniform caps and the like. The company ceased operations as a mens wear retailer in the late 1970s and later, in its guise as a merchant bank, achieved notoriety as one of the more conspicuous collapses in the late 1980s corporate crash.

The following are the percentages of gross profit earned on each trading department of the club after charging against revenue, wages and costs of staff meals, together with the comparative percentage of the previous year.

	1951	1950
Bar	17.6	14.8
Accommodation	49.3	52.4
Dining Room - Loss	5.8	Loss 5.6

...Gross revenue in every section showed an increase, but in the case of both the dining room and accommodation departments, the increased costs of services rendered to members exceeded the increase in revenue received. The increase in turnover at £6890 resulting in a decrease in net profit of £109 indicates the extent of the increased costs incurred by the Club during the year. As the coming year will also bring heavy increases by virtue of the approved basic wage increase, careful supervision of the Club's finances in 1952 will be necessary.

Financially, the Club was in reasonably good shape, although it had an overdraft and was losing money on the dining room. Lieutenant Colonel Amies assured members that the commitments were being met, that expenditure was closely controlled and that members had really no cause for concern. Thus assured, the accounts were passed without further discussion and indeed, the item attracted only two speakers, an excellent indication of how well the Club was being run - or at least, the members' belief that it was being well run.

The election of officers proceeded equally smoothly and the items of general business were few. Perhaps concerned at the need to obtain booth licences (a way of selling liquor without a full hotel or club licence) and the like or otherwise avoid the provisions of the Queensland Liquor Act, one member suggested that the annual ball be held on Commonwealth property. Should this be possible, with perhaps fewer members attending, the member suggested that the committee look at restricting the attendance to a member, his wife or partner and members of his immediate family, subject to the approval of the committee. Here, perhaps, we get an early indication of members looking inwards. Earlier balls had been grand social events, attended by many prominent people who were not members. Indeed, the United Service Club balls in the immediate post-war years were considered to be a highlight of a busy social calendar. Now, it seems, that some members were happier to restrict attendance at their ball and keep it 'in-house', as it were.

Few other items were transacted that night. The meeting voted for an 'expression of goodwill', of manner unspecified, for the members then serving in Korea and Malaya, and the meeting was formally declared closed at 9 p.m., one hour after it had opened. Other annual general meetings had taken much longer.

For the new committee, there were relatively few major issues to consider. The next meeting heard some discussion of possible use of the premises occupied by the Moreton Club as an 'Associates Club'. It was not an idea that received great support; at the time few members would have willingly accepted the idea of wives and other associates having the club next door.*

The new committee, at its first meeting, accepted 'with regret' the resignations of some 32 members. For the first time, the reasons were listed in the minutes: they include a significant number of men who had moved inter-state and others who, for financial or similar reasons, found that they were unable to use the Club. Against this loss, 17 new members were elected that night; clearly it was a constant task to maintain membership interest.

The suggestion about holding the ball on Commonwealth property was quickly investigated. The barracks at Kelvin Grove, a major Citizens Military Forces (as the Army Reserve was then known) depot was investigated, but was found to be impractical. Few buildings were large enough to hold the ball and the few that were large were, in those days of serious ball-room dancing, quite impractical. Besides, the onerous provisions of the Liquor Act could not be avoided, simply by holding the function on Commonwealth property. However, despite the apparent shortage of buildings offering facilities similar to those at Cloudland or the City Hall, the committee decided to press on with investigating the Kelvin Grove option.

In March, the committee approached the general officer commanding Northern Command with a view to holding the ball at the Kelvin Grove Barracks; the Club's solicitor was also asked to seek counsel's opinion on the legality of consuming alcohol on Commonwealth property. In the end, the Kelvin Grove option was not pursued; the ball went ahead at Cloudland and was probably less successful than in previous years. Perhaps, by now, the initial post-war novelty had worn off; now the ball was beginning to lose money. The predicted losses for 1952 were £130 pounds due, thought the sub-committee, to the 'non-interest of members'.

At that time, Brisbane's afternoon newspaper, the *Telegraph*, often used to publish caricatures of prominent sporting identities. The committee thought that a series of such drawings of prominent members with sporting affiliations might be suitable for publication and asked the secretary to write to the newspaper with that suggestion. Sadly the newspaper's editor does not appear to have shared the committee's enthusiasm; no such drawings appeared.**

*Little, typical of many members of the time, always maintained that a gentlemen's club was a place where a member could get away from his family for a time and relax in the company of men of compatible interests and standards. He was, however, an attentive husband and father and enjoyed female company. At the annual general meeting in November 1966, where it was decided unanimously to create a category of associate members, Little reminded members he had first proposed the idea nearly 20 years ago. At the time it had not received sufficient support.

**Two *Telegraph* editors have been members of the Club. Lieutenant John Wakefield and Flying Officer Lionel Hogg.

Throughout 1951, the minutes of committee meetings contain many references to the proposed tour by King George VI, a much-loved and respected monarch. Optimistically, members expected the King to visit their Club during the time in Brisbane; it would have been a splendid occasion for the members who were then, perhaps rather more than now, fierce in their support and admiration for the Monarchy and especially for King George VI, whose personal courage and leadership during the war years was marked. Thus, it was with great sadness that members learned of the King's death in February, 1952. His passing was marked with a minute's silence at the February committee meeting.

More than six years since the end of World War II had now elapsed and the committee was anxious to mark, in a permanent fashion, the members who had lost their lives in that conflict. A suitable war memorial was thought necessary but its design and acquisition were matters to be taken seriously and not rushed with any precipitate action. On 8 February, 1952, the executive sub-committee (as the name implies, a smaller version of the full committee but empowered to make executive decisions) met to consider a proposal prepared by Major T G MacMinn, the Club architect, who had been instructed to come up with a suitable memorial. One of the first problems to be addressed was the relation of the World War II memorial to the existing memorial for members who had died during the 1914-18 war.

Major MacMinn told the sub-committee that his proposal was to create a composite memorial that would embrace the two wars. The proposal, very much a compromise between members with World War I service and those younger members who had served between 1939 and 1945, was accepted. The memorial was to include the words: 'and to Members who gave their lives in World War II -1939-1945'. The subcommittee also decided, with aesthetic prudence, to have the old memorial re-gilded 'to bring it into line with the new'. At this distance, such a decision might seem the obvious thing to do but this was a matter of great sensitivity. Many members who had endured the horrors of 1915-1918, particularly those who had served in France and Flanders and who had seen their units suffer grievously with casualties, felt that the 1939-45 conflict was somehow less of a war. Certainly the casualty figures for the two conflicts show that Australia lost more men in World War I than in World War II, despite a much larger numerical contribution to the later war.

Perhaps MacMinn and the committee also took an easy way out. As we have already noted, no accurate list of members who had lost their lives during the war had been kept; much work would have been involved in compiling such a list. It is not to the credit of the committee then that an Honour Roll, equivalent to that of 1914-18, was not produced. In their entertaining history of the RSL, Peter Sekules and Jacqueline Rees relate how returning 1939-45 diggers were actively discouraged from joining particular RSL branches. 'The story is told in different parts of Australia how persistent inquiries about membership were met with suggestions that the "new boys" establish

their own sub-branch. The new members did form their own sub-branches and in some cases revitalised old ones.’* The animosity shown by some World War I veterans to their 1939-45 counterparts was exacerbated by the AIF-militia differences in the latter war and by the Federal Government’s inept handling of the situation by creating, in effect, two different armies. The differences in the Club at the time were nowhere near as marked, but some differences existed and the committee had to show a deal of sensitivity on such issues as memorials; perhaps this attitude helps to explain their decision to prepare such a less than satisfactory memorial.

The question of the dining room losses continued to vex the committee. In February, 1952, it was felt the losses had gone far enough; tough action had to be taken. The house sub-committee suggested that lunch charge be increased from three shillings and sixpence to four shillings and sixpence. But that was just a suggestion; it was up to the full committee to ratify it, which was subsequently done, but only after a deal of discussion.

The day-to-day management was posing problems. Some ambiguities seem to exist about the roles and responsibilities of the secretary - this was, of course, long before the days of duty statements and management objectives. Many of the decisions made by the committee should properly have been made by a manager, or at least by a paid official with wider powers and responsibilities than the secretary appeared to have. The position was complicated further by an employee, a Miss Maslen, who appeared to be efficient, if perhaps officious, and who was assuming for herself responsibilities which might properly have belonged to others, including even committee members. In April, the committee held a special meeting in an attempt to resolve the issue; Should the Club change its organisation to have a manager, not a secretary, or should it have a secretary and assistant secretary? Again, this was a problem created by the rapid growth. Major MacMinn expressed the questions to be considered with admirable succinctness: ‘Is one man capable of carrying out the full duties, of a secretary of a club of this size? What position does Miss Maslen occupy in relation to the secretary?’ Major MacMinn also, very sensibly, sought the views of the retiring secretary on whether a second-in-command or assistant was required. Finally, the committee agreed with MacMinn’s suggestion that the secretary be asked to explain how often he was ‘required to entertain new members, country members and sundry visitors of importance’. There appears to be the suggestion that some committee members might have thought the secretary was rather too interested in this aspect of his work, although he also had other shortcomings.**

*Sekules, Peter and Rees, Jacqueline, *Lest We Forget- The History of the Returned Services League, 1916-1986*, (Rigby 1986)

**Major-General Sir Louis C. Jackson, in his *History of the United Service Club*, observed: ‘No members’ club can be run entirely by the committee. The secretary must be a man of capacity and an administrator, while the committee are there to decide on policy and carry out the wishes of the members. Poor Smart was not and could never be more than a clerk ...’ The majority of the Club’s secretaries were in the same category as Smart.

Once these questions had been formulated by the committee, the secretary then attended the meeting. His answers are recorded. Yes, he thought that one man was capable of carrying out the full duties of secretary. Miss Maslen occupied the position of second in command to the secretary. Of the other questions, the minutes simply record 'the secretary spoke generallyadvised the amount of time put in on the job'.

In April, the committee was told that a member, Flight Lieutenant I G S Purssey had been reported missing in action in Korea. Ian Goodwin Swan Purssey was a pilot with 77 Squadron and a casualty during the heavy air fighting in the early months of 1952. A former bank officer, he had enlisted in the RAAF in 1942 and had served with 450 Fighter Squadron (The Desert Harassers) and 3 Squadron before the end of the war. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1952, before he was shot down on 22 April. Purssey was the Club's first casualty during the Korean War. His mother was presented with his DFC by the Queen in March 1954. *

Four members of the Purssey family have been service members of the United Service Club. The original member was Captain Roy Swan Purssey who was repatriated as a sapper from France in 1918. In World War II, he served as an infantry officer in the Middle East and in a training battalion. He played an active role in Club affairs in the early post-war years and his death in 1950 was confirmed to be as a result of extended war service.

Ian Goodwin Swan Purssey was Roy's eldest son. The second son, Major Brian Swan Purssey was commissioned in the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps in 1951. Dr Purssey served 20 years in the CMF, including four years with the British Army's City of London Field Ambulance during studies and work in the UK. In 1967, Brian Purssey served in Vietnam with the Australian Surgical Training Team. A third son, Captain Ronald Swan Purssey, was commissioned into the Royal Australian Air Force in 1953 while serving with 23 City of Brisbane Squadron. After completing four years operational flying training, he spent three years in the UK, serving for a brief period with 410 City of London, Royal Auxiliary Air Force. On returning to Australia, he transferred to the Royal Australian Engineers, CMF, and retired in 1970 after 10 years' service. Ron Purssey served for six years on the Club's committee in the 1970s and, during his time as the Club's honorary architect, was responsible for the major transformation of the top bar, and the downstairs lounge, bar and dining room. Two of Ron Purssey's sons are now members of the Club; indeed, something of a dynasty and one of several families where members of successive generations have been members of the United Service Club.

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The April, 1952 committee meeting was held just three days after Anzac Day. The secretary told the committee that at about 7 a.m. on Anzac Day, he had received a

*See O'Neill, Robert, *Australia in the Korean War, 1950-1953, Volume II Combat Operations*, (The Australian War Memorial and the Government Printing Service, 1985)

telephone call from an inspector in the Licensing Branch, pointing out that Anzac Day was a prohibited day under the Licensing Act. Was this prohibition being observed by members? The minutes note: 'At approximately 12.30 p.m. Sgt Walsh and Constable Harris visited the Club and asked whether any liquor was being sold on the premises. A request was then made by them to visit the bar, which was granted, and after they saw the bar was closed, they left the club premises'. At this distance, it might seem oddly ironic that the Licensing Branch should concern itself with such trivialities but the non-liquor observance of Anzac Day was important to officials, if not all the members, of the RSL. It was a sacred day, not one to be spent in boozing. Liquor was prohibited but later, the laws were relaxed to enable liquor to be sold in the afternoons, after the Dawn Services and marches.

The April meeting also appointed Major A W Booth as secretary, to succeed the retiring Flight Lieutenant J B Riddall. Booth was invited to live in the Club; the accommodation charge was £2/5/- a week. Later, his salary was fixed at £1200 a year. By comparison, a four ounce glass of beer was sixpence and a seven ounce glass eightpence halfpenny.

Then, as now, one of the requirements of a good committee is to be aware of the commercial possibilities, as and when they arise. The tennis courts were proving popular to members but to some members of the committee, the courts represented vacant land capable of being converted to an income-earning asset. In May, 1952, a special meeting was called to consider buying a property at 432 Upper Edward Street. The property, with a frontage of 33 feet and extending 98 feet back to join the vacant land next to the tennis court, would provide much-needed access. 'Without that access,' said Lieutenant Colonel Amies in his special notice to members, 'the tennis courts area has little real monetary value, as it has no outlet except by the narrow lane to Wickham Terrace through the remainder of the Club's land'.

The purchase price, £3500 with improvements, was, thought Amies, 'very reasonable'; sufficient funds were available in the current account to provide the sum. It was, indeed, a very good buy and the 29 members who attended the lunchtime meeting on 30 May thought so too. They approved the motion to buy the land quickly and the meeting was over in 10 minutes.

The Club also found itself with surplus accommodation. Some of the rooms could be occupied by visiting members, and members of other clubs, but much of the accommodation remained vacant. In August 1952, the committee decided that a maximum of six rooms could be made available to non-members, providing that at all times rooms were available for members who required them. The visitors would be eligible for honorary membership, but required to be vouched for by members that they were of the 'necessary high standard'. Clearly this was the first entry into the Club of people with a non-service background; even then, it was a matter of financial prudence and the future viability.

Royal Tours and Life Members

So frequent have royal tours become in recent years, it is difficult today to imagine the excitement that accompanied the preparations for the 1954 Australian Royal Tour. Queen Elizabeth the Second, the recently-crowned Monarch of a British Empire that was then rapidly diminishing and perhaps even already over, was already a popular and loved figure. As one of the 'princesses' of popular imagination, she had shared the trials of wartime Britain, serving as a driver in the Auxiliary Transport Service. The Royal Family was not then subjected to the kind of scrutiny and intense criticism which it endures today; the Monarchy was thought by an overwhelming percentage of the population to be a force for good: brave and resourceful in its leadership during war; objects of affection and respect in peace.

Both here and in the United Kingdom, scarcely a newspaper report referred to the young Queen without describing her as 'radiant' and, although the cliché was overused, it was also apt. There was a kind of glow about the Queen and, indeed, about the entire family. Her husband was a dashing handsome naval officer who had been in Australia briefly during the war and was remembered by many Australians with affection. The death of King George VI in 1952 had meant the end of his planned visit to Australia, a loyal dominion during the war. The King had died while Princess Elizabeth was in Africa, *en route* to Australia. That visit was cancelled. Now a tour by Queen Elizabeth II, and so soon after the Coronation, brought to the surface deep feelings of imperial loyalty and duty to the British Crown. In the early 1950s, Australia was a very different place; the first wave of post-war migration came from the United Kingdom, and these immigrants brought with them an innate respect for the Monarchy. Then, to use the phrase made famous much later by the Prime Minister, Robert Gordon Menzies, Australia was still 'British to the boot-straps'. The members of the United Service Club, Brisbane, were proudly - even fiercely - loyal; they were quick to defend the Monarchy; they looked forward, with eager expectation, to the visit to Brisbane of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1954.

At the 1952 annual general meeting, 57 members rose to their feet and observed what the minutes record as 'the customary silence' to mark the death of their King and 19 of their fellows.* In 1953, the committee decided to hold a formal dinner to

*Including Engineer Commander W K Kirkcaldie, convener of the house sub-committee and Captain O C C Moffatt, who had been nominated for membership of the committee.

mark the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth. II. It was a suitably formal occasion, with the members in Winter mess kit or tails, which meant white tie, a form of formal dress that has all but disappeared today.*

After some initial consideration by the house sub-committee, the idea was proposed that the Club should fund the dinner, with the members to attend being chosen by ballot. That idea, however, did not gain much approval and the dinner was held, on a payment basis, with 90 members attending, as well as the Minister for the Army, Captain Josiah Francis (who was also a Club member), the Chief Justice of Queensland, Mr Justice Neal Macrossan and the state director of the Royal Tour, F A Manning, then a senior public servant.

Indeed, Coronation Week, 1953, was a splendid week for the Club. Buoyed by the news that Mount Everest had been conquered, and that their Queen was soon to be crowned, the members enthusiastically embraced the social side of the Coronation celebrations, holding a third, and easily the most successful, cocktail party for the year. The 1952/53 annual report includes this description, which also gives a good idea of the prevailing sentiments about the Monarchy.

The Club during Coronation Week was flood-lit, thanks to the good offices of a resident member, and the central theme of the decoration was a huge Crown standing over the Royal Cypher with a stand of flags surrounding the Crown. The flags consisted of those of Australia and the three services, the Union Jack and the Club Flag. At night, the façade had a most pleasing effect, restrained but colourful. For the Royal Visit, further decorations will be effected without over-shadowing the central theme.

Fortunately, we retain still some idea of the nature of these ‘restrained but colourful’ decorations with their ‘pleasing effect’. In the snack bar of the Club hangs a photograph taken during the Royal Tour, neatly and well illuminated. ‘God Save Our Queen’, proudly proclaims the sign over the Crown. The Coronation Dinner was a hugely successful occasion and augured well in preparations for the visit the following year.

The visit itself took place from 9 March to 12 March, 1954. At the time, the Brisbane *Courier-Mail* devoted pages and pages to the event, quite the biggest news in the city since the end of the Second World War. Its reports, gushing by today’s more restrained standards, indicated a city more than slightly obsessed with the Royal Tour. From the Club’s point of view, it is necessary only to quote the annual report of that year:

* In Queensland, winter mess kit has virtually disappeared from public view; more than a decade ago, the Australian Army decided that winter did not exist in Queensland and opted to wear summer uniforms all year around. The one exception is the Army Officers Ball, a not-always-annual occasion.

The whole of the brickwork in the front of the club has been repointed and glazed during the year. This was work which had to be done and the finish of the work coincided with the Royal Visit, enabling Members to feel proud of the impeccable appearance of the Club, which was passed on two occasions, once by day and once by night, by the Royal Visitors.

In these comments, there is a quaint, almost touching note, as if to suggest that the Royal Couple were on some kind of tour of inspection to determine whether club premises had been restored, refurbished or renovated. But the members, indeed, could be proud of the appearance of their premises; the committee had been working hard and deliberating long to ensure the best possible appearance for the occasion. And in this, the committee members were not alone; Brisbane's residents were urged by the civic leaders, and the newspapers, to make a special effort to spruce up a city that was still, nearly nine years later, showing the effects of the war. Some residents responded in surprising ways, as the journalist Keith Dunstan* reported. One householder in Kingsford Smith Drive took a lawn mower to his sloping lawn which lay on the Royal Route. With careful strokes, the proud householder cut the legend 'E II R' in the long March grass.

One of the consequences of the Royal Tour was the decision to make Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, a life member. That decision was passed by a special meeting held on Monday, 8 March, 1954. Another indication of the prevailing imperial sentiment can be gained from the attendance figures; 51 members were present and another six sent apologies for a meeting that must have been, surely, a mere formality. At the meeting, the president, Wing Commander A F McSweyn, told members that the Club had written to Prince Philip's private secretary asking whether 'His Royal Highness, The Duke of Edinburgh, [would] honour the Club by accepting life membership'. Needless to say, the members hoped that, during the Royal Tour, the Duke of Edinburgh might be able to visit the Club, the chairman told members that no notice could be given to them of such a visit because the Club itself would receive only a short notice. On 11 March, 1954, from the Government House, Brisbane, Commander Michael Parker, the Duke's private secretary, wrote to the secretary, Major Booth: 'His Royal Highness has asked me to say that he would be delighted to accept life membership of The United Service Club of Brisbane and would be grateful if you would convey his appreciation to the President and Committee'. Then, five days later, Commander Parker wrote again: The Duke of Edinburgh was hoping very much that he would be able to visit the United Servtce Club, Brisbane, in the few days we are here, but unfortunately It now seems clear that it will be impossible to fit in. I know His Royal Highness is extremely sorry about this,

*Himself a member of the Club, as Flying Officer J K Dunstan. His autobiography, *No Brains at All* (Viking, 1991) is hugely entertaining and full of Dunstan's quirky, self-deprecating humour.

but I feel sure you will be very understanding, although somewhat disappointed.’* The life membership was a way of formally recognising Prince Philip's visit to Brisbane, if not to the Club. The committee meeting following the Royal Visit read letters of thanks from members of the Royal Tour party who had been given honorary membership while in Brisbane. Among that party was a former Royal Australian Air Force navigator and Commonwealth detective, R W Whitrod, who was later to have honorary membership again while serving as Queensland's police commissioner.**

Important as the Royal visit was in the life of the Club, other weighty matter that year had to be considered. The 1954 annual reported devoted almost as much space to a report of the installation of a new instantaneous beer cooling system in the main bar. As the president reported, the cold cabinets previously in use could not keep beer at the temperature required. Indeed, in March that year, the convenor of the house sub-committee told a full committee meeting that he had received a complaint about warm beer and lack of ice on an important day, the day of the RSL rally. Why should this be so? The secretary's reply was illuminating; it reveals the consumption of beer by thirsty members of the time.

...the average consumption of beer for Tuesday and Wednesday over the past six months was 13 kegs, six on one day and seven on the other. On the 16th and 17th [the days complained about by the irate member] 37 kegs were used and beer had to be obtained from forward quotas. No extra beer was made available and the only way to stock up was to ask the breweries to deliver ahead of time. This was done by Queensland Brewery only. On the day in question one hundred and ten visitors were signed into the visitor's book.

And, added the secretary, although one hundred and ten visitors were signed in, undoubtedly a number of other visitors did not go through the required formalities. The same problem applied with ice; the demand simply outstripped the supply for what was considered 'normal needs'. However, it was with this kind of demand in mind that the committee decided to invest in improved beer cooling equipment. Now, as the president, Wing Commander McSweyn, said, 'with the new equipment all beer is served at a constant 42 degrees' (Fahrenheit). It was an important decision and took several committee meetings to reach after quotes were received from several leading refrigeration engineering suppliers.

*Happily, these letters survive, some of the very few from the Club's one hundred years. **Ray Whitrod later joined the Club as a service member and, although resident in South Australia, retained his membership until September 1990. In controversial circumstances, detailed in G E Fitzgerald's report into corruption in Queensland, Whitrod was succeeded as Police Commissioner by Terence Murray Lewis. Later knighted, in 1991 Lewis was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment on corruption charges. He was an honorary member while he was Police Commissioner, an honour withdrawn smartly on his conviction.

In the early 1950s, sport played an important part in Club life, particularly for the many members who joined after 1946 and who were still young men. Billiards and snooker had been played since the very beginning of the Club, but at this time, cricket and golf were the main outdoor games, but tennis and bowls also had their supporters and later a fishing club enjoyed brief support. Occasionally, too, more energetic sports such as squash had their adherents among members but most attention was paid to cricket and golf with cricket seeming to capture public attention outside the Club, and to a degree quite remarkable today.

Members played in cricket matches of a remarkably high standard. Take, for example, a game played on 24 November 1954, between the United Service Club and a team comprising members of the Press covering the 1954-55 Marylebone Cricket Club tour of Australia. The Press team included the former Australian opening batsman Lindsay Hassett, the graceful and elegant Jack Fingleton and the great spin bowler of the Bradman era, Bill O'Reilly. One newspaper report suggested that Hassett was still good enough to open the batting for Australia, and added that Fingleton, too, was confident of his ability to make runs - so long as he could be given a 'spare knee, a deputy runner and a fielding substitute'.

As well, the Englishmen Bill Bowes who played in the notorious Bodyline series, Fred Brown, a former MCC captain, former England players Eric Bedser and George Duckworth turned out for the press team. Proceeds from the guinea entrance fee to Perry Park went to Legacy; even the president of Legacy chose to contribute a cheque for the privilege of watching this game. Hits over the fence were encouraged, even in these days well before the advent of Kerry Packer and World Series Cricket; a six was worth a pound in donations. The donations were made by Brisbane business firms to ensure some bright cricket in what was essentially a light-hearted match between two teams of skilled players with the aim of raising funds for a very worthy charity.

The United Service Club team was captained by Flight Lieutenant Jock Tuckfield, described in one newspaper report as a former Victorian grade cricketer. Tuckfield had certainly played cricket at his school, Scotch College in Melbourne. He was a most enthusiastic cricketer for the Club and assumed both the duties and the privileges of captaincy with alacrity. Most importantly, the Club team included the former test player, Flight Lieutenant Bill Brown, who owned and operated a sports store in George Street. Other players included Major Murphy, a fine cricketer who was later a long-time president of the Queensland Cricket Association, as well as a Club president of distinction. At the time of writing, Douglas Murphy is still turning out for the occasional game of cricket as a Lord's Taverner and turning in very creditable performances as both a wicket-keeper and late order batsman. In 1991, he was 78. *

*Douglas Murphy was also the first graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, to become president of the United Service Club. He was immediate past president for nearly five years. He fulfilled these roles with grace and wisdom.

The other team members were: Major Heaton Blackman,* Flight Lieutenant A Aydon, Captain J Chisnall, Captain J Girdham, Major J Mahoney, Captain R Richards, Flight Lieutenant Len Summers and Wing Commander J Wright. It was a splendid team, comprising high-spirited and still young men, who had survived a war, the challenges of peace and were enjoying the pleasures of the game by playing with friends, occasionally against high-class competitors and always in a spirit of good fun and grand sportsmanship.

The umpires for this match - three sharing the duties - were the English broadcasters Arthur Gilligan and John Arlott, along with the former Queensland international Dr Otto Nothling. The commentator - the match was broadcast over a loud-speaker system - was Clive Harburg of the Australian Broadcasting Commission. Hours of play were 1 p.m. to 5.45 p.m., with tea at 3.15 p.m. Batting time was halved.

The surviving newspaper clippings in the Club's records suggest there was great public interest in this game, played in the presence of the Governor, His Excellency Sir John Lavarack. Leading up to the game, Brisbane's newspapers devoted much space to the fixture and, as play proceeded, the various editions of the then Brisbane *Telegraph* produced running reports. We don't know which captain won the toss but the Club batted first, with Bill Brown, then captaining Queensland, scoring 30 without offering a chance before being stumped by Woodcock off the spin bowling of the wily 'Tiger' O'Reilly. Douglas Murphy topped the scoring with 59 before being given out in front of the wicket to Eric Bedser, who would have been making that ball swing on a hot and humid November afternoon.

With the addition of 57 by Richards, Brown declared the Club's innings closed at seven for 187. Despite some spirited batting by Fingleton, Hassett and Percy Beames, the Press team could manage only 160 runs. Fingleton's fears about knees, runners and substitute fieldsmen proved to be well-grounded; he retired hurt after scoring 35 runs which had all the old elegance of this most attractive batsman. Lindsay Hassett scored 22, Percy Beames managed 41 and E W 'Jim' Swanton, long-time cricket correspondent for the London *Daily Telegraph*, added 24. Swanton had made a full recovery to health after being a prisoner of the Japanese during the war. It was a fine victory for the Club over a team of excellent players, admittedly some of whom had passed their prime. That evening, both sides joined Sir John and Lady Lavarack for a reception at Government House.

Two years before, also during Legacy week, the Club's team had taken part in what was the first night cricket game to be played in Queensland, and probably one of the first to be played in Australia.** A Composite side, which included players such as

*The following year, Blackman won the Major Reid Trophy for outstanding performance, by taking a hat trick in his first match of the season.

**The claim is made in one of the press reports that this was the first night cricket game to be played in Australia. If this is so, and it seems likely, then it is ironic that nearly 40 years later, Queensland is one of the few states without the facilities to stage night cricket.

Wally Grout, Jack Fingleton, Peter Burge, Dick Whittington and Ron Archer was formed. It also contained two visiting South Africans, manager Ken Viljoen and batsman Gerald Innes. For the past 20 years, this country has had no sporting ties with South Africa and indeed, the last cricketers from that country to play here toured in 1965.* But in the immediate post-war years, the bonds of friendship between South Africa and Australia were strong; the South Africans, allies during the war, were welcomed as honoured visitors. The presence of a touring South African cricket team was an excellent opportunity for a demonstration match to be played under lights. Reported Harry Jeffries of the Brisbane *Telegraph*:

Queensland's first night cricket match and the first of its kind in Australia is being organised for the Exhibition ground on December 3, before the first South African Test. It will be in aid of Legacy. All RNA ticket holders will have to pay admission. The United Services (sic) Cricket Club, which is organising the game, will play against former interstate and international players, and pressmen touring with the South African side. Night cricket was only introduced to the world a few months ago in England. In one game Len Hutton's side played the Kangaroos eleven. The Australian footballers later reported the game had been a 'huge success'.

The cricketers used the existing lighting at the Exhibition Ground, which was then focussed on the speedway track. Jeffries reported that the game would be played between 7 p.m. and 11 p.m. 'Legacy secretary, (Mr S B Walker), anticipates a huge crowd for the night. He also has no doubts that the idea will catch the public's fancy.' And, added Jeffries in a wry footnote: 'Perhaps it is night cricket that Queensland cricket needs. Queensland Shield players can't do any good in the day time.'

On the night, more than 2500 people watched the Composite side comprehensively defeat the Club's team. Of a total of 302, made in just 114 minutes, Wally Grout scored 70, Fingleton 69 and Peter Burge 52. Against this total, the Club's cricketers could manage only 179, of which Douglas Murphy scored 54. Ron Archer, playing for the Composite side and later a Test cricket and a well-known Brisbane businessman, took three wickets for nine runs and Bill O'Reilly 3 for 20. In its report the next morning, *The Courier-Mail* said: 'Specially prepared white balls were used, but the other material was standard equipment. When the ball lost its shine a new one was introduced. Bowlers did not bowl beyond medium pace and batsmen said that these deliveries could be watched all the way.'

That morning, too, *The Courier-Mail* carried a photograph of a young woman spectator watching the game in what was described as 'a backless sun suit'. Added the newspaper, 'In October last year a woman who appeared in the members' stand at

*As this book was going to press, a South African cricket team was in Australia to participate in the World Series competition.

the Brisbane Cricket Ground wearing a backless sun suit had her ticket cancelled by the QCA.’ The newspapers took a great deal of interest in the attire of the women spectators. Reported *Truth* on Sunday, 23 November: ‘Twill be interesting to see if our femmes possess sufficient originality to set a fashion precedent for “night cricket wear” for the rest of the States to follow.’ More importantly, the game raised nearly £ 300 for Legacy.

In the early 1950s, New Farm Park was a popular venue for important cricket matches. On 29 November, 1956, the Club's team again met an Interactional Press Team, captained by W A ‘Bill’ Bowes. This team included Jack Fingleton, Dick Whittington and Bill O’Reilly, who had played in earlier matches. Allan McGilvray, the former New South Wales cricketer who was the voice of ABC cricket for so long* was also in the team, as was Victor Richardson, grandfather of the Chappell brothers and a superb cricketer for both South Australia and Australia. ‘Jim’ Swanton was again in the team as was Vivien Jenkins, who had the distinction of being a double blue at Oxford, for cricket and rugby. Jenkins played county cricket for Middlesex and was capped for Wales as a fullback; at the time, he was a BBC broadcaster.

For the Club, Bill Brown and George Gooma opened the batting, with the rest of the team consisting of Gordon Robertson, J C Mahoney, R Quinn, Tuckfield, Richards, Blackman, Dearnley, Girdham and Summers. The Empire Press team, as it was described, scored nine for 186. However McGilvray took four wickets for 17 and the Club’s side could reach only 155.

The cricket club was easily the most active of the sporting groups, fortunate in having such useful cricketers as Bill Brown, Jock Tuckfield and Douglas Murphy among its members; there existed with these men the impetus for organising games against visiting Press teams or against other local clubs, in the best of friendly competitive spirit.** It is ironic that night cricket in Australia, first played in such a pleasant and worthwhile atmosphere in Brisbane, should have degenerated now into a raucous opportunity for excessive drinking and boorish behaviour. It is also ironic that Bill O’Reilly, today still writing for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and one of the fiercest critics of what he dismissively calls ‘pyjama cricket’, should have taken part in the first game to be played under lights in this country.

But if cricket was thriving in the early 1950s, tennis was under threat. Not from any lack of interest among members, for this was still a time when suburban houses boasted lawn and gravel tennis courts, before the seemingly relentless advance of rezonings made such large properties attractive to property developers. But the

**The Games Not the Same without McGilvray* (ABC Books, 1986) was the title of his autobiography. Sadly, it is not. .

**It was very much a ‘club within a Club’. The minutes for this period suggest that the committee was not always pleased with the independent spirits of the United Service Cricket Club, including Jock Tuckfield.

tennis courts at the rear of the Club had fallen into some disuse and the purchase of the Edward Street property made their conversion into car parking a more than merely attractive proposition.

On 28 June, 1954, the committee heard from Major T G MacMinn * that when the cottage was removed from Upper Edward Street, a ramp would be constructed and the tennis courts covered with a load of decomposed granite. Then the area would be graded so that the water would run into existing spoon drains. And, as the minutes record: 'With regard to the roofing of the lower car park, an approach would be made to the responsible official in the Brisbane City Council Department of Planning for the necessary authority for work to commence.'

The question of covered car parks disappears from the minutes for some meetings and emerges in 1955, only to be dismissed. The 1955 annual report summarizes the progress: 'Work will begin immediately on the car park and ramp entrance from Edward Street. Although several propositions have been discussed by the committee, it is felt that we should undertake this work ourselves. Members will thus have the benefit of parking on a bitumen surface as against the mud walk which they have accepted for so long.' Of course, the roofing of a section of the car park has taken rather longer than might be imagined from the 1954 minutes. It was completed in 1991. In fairness, however, the Club only parked on its property by 'let', not law. To seek to cover what was effectively 'illegal' parking places had its dangers. In 1991, the Brisbane City Council approval to erect covered parking places was obtained only after a great deal of care.

* * *

By the mid 1950s, ten years after the war's end and well beyond the boom period for membership, the Club was beginning to experience some quieter times. Although membership was not declining greatly, the level of resignations was worrying some of the more thoughtful committee members who wondered about the future viability of the Club. Certainly the nature of the membership was changing. As Major Murphy wrote in the preface to the April, 1955, Bulletin: 'No longer are we concerned alone in welcoming new and returning members from the commissioned ranks of two World wars. Additionally today applications for admission come from the Permanent and Citizen Forces of the three Services from veterans of the BCOF [British Commonwealth Occupation Forces] in Japan, from Korea and Malaya- to many of whom conceivably the earlier Wars are of abstract concern only.'

At this time, successive committee meetings record concerns about the level of

*MacMinn was an architect and, at one time, the honorary Club architect. Later president, he died in office after swallowing half a toothpick in the Club dining room, a fact not recorded in the minutes.

trading activities. Costs were rising and, although trading was still strong, gross profits were beginning to fall. It also seems clear that some of the initial rush of enthusiasm for the Club by the new newer, post-World War II members was beginning to wane. Many of these men had now settled into comfortable, if demanding, domesticity; the relative freedom of the war years to spend time with their old comrades was now circumscribed by duties and responsibilities in the home. It was in this general atmosphere of rising costs and perhaps peaking use that the Club looked at disposing of some of its property. The Green House, next door, looked to be a likely candidate.

On 23 February, 1955, the establishment and maintenance sub-committee recommended that the premises and land 'known as the Green House should be disposed of by sale'. Today, nearly four decades later, the reasoning behind this recommendation makes interesting reading.

First, argued the majority of members on the sub-committee, the premises would require painting externally within the next 12 months. Secondly, dry rot was evident in portion of the building. Thirdly, the paintwork was drab and could be brightened; fourthly, the building was estimated to have a life expectancy of approximately 20 years during which heavy maintenance would have to be met. After much detailed financial examination of rentals and comparisons with other buildings, the subcommittee thought it would be better to capitalise on the Green House premises. Driving the arguments, it seems from the minutes, was the feeling that timber buildings had finite lives and that the Green House was reaching the end of its life. This was, of course, before the current enthusiasm for restoring old wooden buildings, both domestic and commercial. Brick was thought to be a more attractive option for building and for renovating; the relative benefits of brick, as opposed to timber, were thought to lie in the costs of maintenance and repair. Little, if any, thought was given to the aesthetics of timber buildings, well restored to near-original conditions and well maintained by comprehensive and regular services.

The sub-committee's report was effectively blocked by the full committee. The minutes note that the chairman, Major Murphy, thought disposal of the Green House was far too important a proposition to be considered in haste. He also knew well that the membership would object to the sale of any of the Club's property. If the valuable asset of this building were to be sold, a strong case - stronger than that prepared by the sub-committee - would have to be prepared for submission to members. And when this case was prepared, members would have to refer to the 1947 policy on property; sale of the Green House would run directly counter to that policy. Of course, it was open to any new gathering of members to change policy at any time; it had been done frequently, if marginally, in the past. But this was different. Here was a proposal effectively to sell a large slice of the Club's property holdings to fund some improvements - improvements which should have been funded either by revenue generated or, if necessary, by limited and prudent borrowings. However, the

committee was aware of the reduction in use by members and of the possibility that one day, the Club might find it prudent to move to smaller, rather than larger, premises.

A special committee meeting to deal with the question was called for 14 March. Unfortunately the minutes of this meeting have not survived but it seems clear from subsequent committee meetings that the proposal to sell the Green House came to nothing. In light of the Club's development since then, it is just as well that more cautious views prevailed.

Riding the Boom Years

Since the end of World War II, certainly, and probably before, committees of the United Service Club have prided themselves on moving with the times. Sometimes, of course, that movement was slow, even delayed. But eventually the movement occurred; the advances of technology such as improved refrigeration systems, air-cooling and later, air-conditioning were installed as soon as funds allowed. Power points were installed for electric shavers, as soon as these gadgets appeared on the markets; members were offered the use of the Club's shaver, held at the front desk, to freshen up before a night in town. As drip-dry shirts appeared, accommodation facilities were changed so that members could rinse their shirts in the hand basins and hang them up to dry. Even takeaway meals were offered by the Club once this form of dining became popular in the town. But some advances in modern technology did not necessarily attract committee members.

In November 1955, the committee had before it a letter from a member. The Club was in the middle of renovating the top bar, a long-overdue and eagerly awaited project. This member, who perhaps should remain nameless, had a bright suggestion: Could a pinball machine be installed? Pinball machines, today another method of young people mispending their youth, were then a relatively new phenomenon, although it takes some creative thought to imagine such a machine in the bar - even the bar - of the United Service Club. Major-General W A B Steele,* then the secretary, supported the request. He thought the Club might earn five hundred pounds a year from it. Major MacMinn, perhaps speaking with an even greater knowledge of the membership, opposed the suggestion, and it was referred to the house facilities subcommittee where, it seems, it died a natural, and given the circumstances, not altogether- unwelcome death.

At the time, the house sub-committee had more pressing matters to consider than the installation of pinball machines, however potentially profitable they might have been. Once again, the difficult question of accommodation charges was under

*Major General W A B Steele CBE was a regular officer who had served with the Light Horse in World War I and who had commanded both a Motor Division and an Armoured Division during World War II. He was born in Gympie in 1894 and is remembered today as a comfortable gentleman who spent much time, away from his not particularly onerous secretarial duties, sitting on the verandah with a gin in his hand.

review. The members of this sub-committee were well aware of the difficulties their colleagues on the finance sub-committee were having in framing the next year's budget. Brigadier Amies, on behalf of that sub-committee, recommended an increase in accommodation charges of 20 percent, as well as increases in dining room prices and in parking fees. As that year's annual report noted:

The dining room and snack bar has always showed a trading loss and the trend in 1955 did not pass unheeded as the year progressed. The committee noted the steady increase in costs, much of which was brought about by improving the quality of meals and services, but bearing in mind the relationship which this department bears to the bars and accommodation, it refrained from passing on all of the increase to members by way of higher prices. The extent to which the loss in this department is to continue in relation to the otherwise favourable trading results in other departments is a matter for further consideration and determination.

Here is a question of central philosophy for all clubs such as the United Service. Should one department or operation, itself intrinsically profitable, be used to subsidise other departments or operations? This question has arisen frequently in the Club's history, particularly since it moved to the existing premises on Wickham Terrace and attempted to offer a wider range of services to members. It might be argued that, as the services are provided for members, the question of one operation subsidising another is not important - so long as the final result is a trading profit across the whole Club operations. However, more prudent financial practice suggests that each operation should aim to cover costs at the very least. At the time, this question was largely unresolved, although Brigadier Amies' timely suggestion - that losses be kept to an absolute minimum - seemed to satisfy the committee for the time being.

The next meeting saw some detailed discussion of the proposed accommodation increases. No doubt the committee was apprehensive about the reaction of members to a 20 percent increase; at that time, double-digit inflation was not known and such an increase would have met stiff resistance from members. Flight Lieutenant Tuckfield offered this suggestion; because the accommodation operation already made a profit, why not keep charges as they were but embark on a drive to increase the number of people staying at the Club. This could be done, he said, by advertising in affiliated clubs and in the Club's bulletin. Brigadier Amies replied to this apparently sensible suggestion: The increased accommodation charges had been put forward to increase revenue in all departments. The next year, with its heavy expenditure, would mean additional revenue simply had to be generated. He doubted that additional numbers could be generated, because only a certain number of people travelled each month and there seemed no way of increasing this. The only solution was an increase in charges. Amies' view prevailed, particularly after



Major Bob Thompson Cowlshaw MC (1888–1974). President 1943.



Commander Eric Augustus Feldt OBE RAN (1899–1968). Secretary 1946.

The Club illuminated for visit of HM The Queen, 1954. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)





*Brigadier Jack Lowell Amies CBE
ED. Born 1913. President 1950-51.
Trustee 1988.*

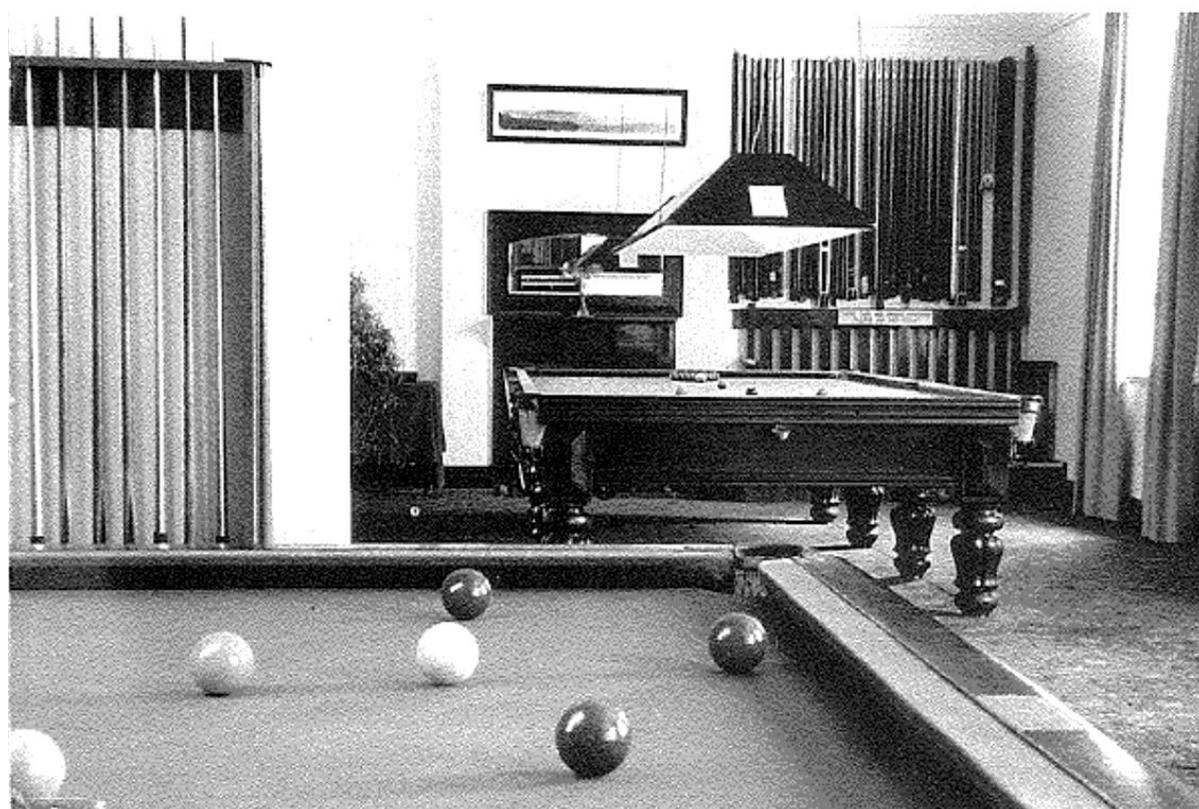


*Wing Commander Allan Francis
McSweyn MC AFC. Born 1918.
President 1952-53.*



*Major Douglas Gordon
Murtagh Murphy AM. Born
1914. President 1954-55.*

The Club billiard room.



he argued that dining room and bar charges were comparable to other establishments and therefore accommodation charges should be similarly set.

Even so, the setting of the accommodation charges involved a long and painful process. Comparative figures were sought and obtained from affiliated clubs, from the Gresham and National* hotels and from the Commercial Travellers Club. The Gresham, National and CTA Club are, alas, no more; victims of changing commercial practices and the extraordinary demand for central business district property. So, finally the committee approved the new accommodation charges: A single room increased from eighteen shillings to £ 1.5.0 a day; a shared suite from a guinea to £ 1.10.0, a single suite from £ 1.15.0 to two guineas and permanent guests had their accommodation charges increased from fifteen shillings a week to a guinea.

The 1950s were prosperous years and the Club entered the second half of the decade in good shape. Some parts of the Club needed renovation and the accommodation rooms might have been a little austere, but fundamentally the Club was financially sound and well used by members. It offered services that were popular; in the days before random breath testing and with more tolerant community attitudes towards drinking, many members were able to have a few drinks after work and still make their way home safely. The refurbished top bar was opened on Friday, 23 March, 1956; the collection of crests and plaques which now adorns it was begun in January 1957; but the annual reports for these years and the minutes give only cursory attention to the planning and preparation for the opening. But they do record that 'two or three members, much taller than the average, had asked whether consideration could be given to the safety rail at the windows of the top verandah so that it was raised as a protection from accidents'. Happily no member has yet fallen out of the top bar.

Proposals to impose a levy to help pay for improvements were put, and quickly rejected. Levies, the committee was told by some members, were only for organisations in imminent danger of financial collapse; that was certainly not the case with the Club. It was well-run and able, on its committee, to draw on an extraordinary array of talent and background. For example, the 1955-56 committee included a manufacturer, a bank officer, an architect, a real estate agent, a solicitor, a medical practitioner, a dental surgeon, an auto sales executive, an insurance representative, a chartered accountant, a textile distributor, a share broker, a lecturer and a planter.

But the second half of the decade was also a period in which membership

*The Gresham, situated on the corner of Creek and Adelaide Street, where the National Bank now has a building, was a splendid old hotel and fine example of architecture. Much loved by country people, the Gresham was a pillar of respectability. It was also where officers met after parades before the formation of the Club in 1892. The National Hotel, where Queen and Adelaide meet at Petrie Bight, was rather more risqué than the Gresham and was the subject of a Royal Commission that traversed much of the same ground as that held by G E Fitzgerald QC.

consolidated. Each committee meeting considered important issues and items on the agenda: a memorial plaque for the late George Sye; a life membership for the Victoria Cross winner E T Towner, the Club's only winner of this honour and so a member whose military career was mentioned briefly in an earlier chapter but is now worth recording in some detail.*

Edgar Thomas Towner was born at Glencoe Station, on a property owned by his father in the Barcoo country. He was educated at Blackall state school and worked with his father until his enlistment in the AIF on 4 January, 1915. He was allotted to the 25th Battalion. By February 1916, Towner had served briefly on Gallipoli and had been promoted to sergeant. By November 1916, he had been commissioned and was then posted to the 2nd Machine Gun Battalion. In September 1918, Towner was serving with this unit when he won the Victoria Cross at Mont St Quentin, near Peronne. Towner was also awarded the Military Cross. After the war, Towner owned a property, 'Kaloola', near Longreach and served briefly with the 26th Battalion, an Australian Military Forces unit, during World War II. He was also extremely interested in Australian history and geography, was a fellow of both the Royal Geographical Society of Australia and the Royal Historical Society of New South Wales and in 1956, received the Dr Thomson Foundation Gold Medal for his geographical work.

Towner's life membership was passed at a special meeting of members on Friday, 4 May, 1956. The Victoria Cross winner, along with others holding the highest award for valour, had been invited to London as part of the centenary celebrations. Before Towner left, the Club decided to honour him, and the award, with life membership. Not surprisingly, the meeting to do so was a mere formality. No discussion took place among the 22 members who attended; the motion was carried unanimously and the meeting ended eleven minutes after it began. Towner was respected in the Club; his bravery in wartime was unquestioned; his industry in peacetime was apparent. But he had had a hard life, had never married and reportedly did not have the capacity to make friends easily. The life membership was a fitting reward to a courageous soldier and in keeping with the objects of his Club.

* * *

The internal workings of the Club came under close examination at a meeting on 30 April, 1956. Captain Jim Yates raised the point that the committee, and only the committee, should appoint sub-committees. Furthermore, said Yates, no action should be taken on a sub-committee's recommendation until it has been voted on

*An assiduous search has failed to find any other member holding the VC; one likely candidate was thought to be Captain Harry Murray VC, whom owned a property near Hughenden after World War 1, but no record can be found of his membership.

by a full committee. Yates feared the possibility of what he called 'minority control', over such matters as 'pay, staff and other aspects of the club at present exercised by the full committee'. Captain Yates was worried about a situation that had arisen during a recent power strike, where a sub-committee had taken decisions - the detail of which do not survive - which should properly be exercised by the full committee. Although the president, by virtue of his office, was given the courtesy of selecting subcommittees, they had to have full committee approval to operate effectively. The Club bulletin was quoted as an example of a publication which was issued without the authority of the committee. Captain Yates wanted no further publication of the bulletin until its contents had been vetted by the full committee. Yates was president in the years 1962-63. Murray Adams recalls that he was a stickler for correct procedures and democracy.

In the 1950s, it was still illegal to open the Club on Anzac Day, as indeed, it was illegal for hotels to trade. This question had arisen earlier in the Club's history and indeed, is something of a recurring issue. Members felt unfairly treated that their Club could not trade on this 'one day of the year'. The Returned Services League, to use today's shorter title, was instrumental in obtaining this prohibition years earlier; the reasons are both spiritual and practical. The RSL always, and rightly, regarded Anzac Day as a day on which to remember the men and women who had made the sacrifices in war, but early Anzac Days also were marred by scenes of public drunkenness. Some committee members of the time felt, however, that the prohibition had outlived its usefulness. The issue was raised at the 30 April, 1956, meeting, five days after that year's Anzac Day. One committee member, Lieutenant R M Pendlebury, said full inquiries had been made about opening for meals and other refreshments. 'It was considered that, owing to the existing laws, no element of risk should be taken and there was no legal way in which the Club could be opened,' the minutes record. The committee was anxious to obey, not just the letter of the law, but also its spirit. One committee member suggested that a marquee be erected in the lower car park which was outside the licensed area. Lieutenant Pendlebury replied that, not only would the cost be prohibitive, but it would be outside the law.

Dress regulations continued to occupy the committee. Flight Lieutenant Tuckfield, a leading member of the cricket team, pointed out to committee members that Wednesday was sports afternoon. Many members who had played cricket, for example, in the afternoon liked to return to the Club for a drink. Tuckfield wanted the dress regulations relaxed to allow for cricketers to drink in the Club without first going home to shower and change. The house facilities sub-committee spent much time considering Tuckfield's eminently sensible suggestion. Its answers were formulated in terms of negative rules; standards of dress that were prohibited. These standards would have ruled out cricketers returning for a drink in their creams. Better, Tuckfield thought, that the Club lay down minimum standards. This was

done and remain largely unchanged to the present: Shirt with collar and tie and sleeves rolled down or short sleeves; long trousers with belt, but no braces; a tie or cravat must be worn at all times, other than with a safari jacket. For Tuckfield's colleagues, sports attire was permitted all day on Saturdays and Wednesday afternoon during the year, provided a tie or cravat was worn where a member did not wear a coat; where no tie or cravat was worn, a blazer, sports coat or other coat must be worn; long socks must be worn with shorts and at no time might a member enter the dining room without tie or cravat. With the decline of much organised sport, and with improved showering facilities at golf clubs, not to mention air conditioning, these rules have been modified, but only slightly. It is a shame that the Club's facilities could not run to a sportsman's bar, of the kind found in many messes, * but the committee was determined to preserve dress standards. Interestingly, the committee accepted then that officers in uniform will conform with the military dress regulations of the day. Today, of course, (although not then), an officer in Queensland wearing a tie is a rarity; all three services reserving ties virtually for ceremonial occasions only.

Among the distinguished visitors were Lieutenant General and Mrs Doolittle during the 1956 commemoration of the battle of the Coral Sea. James Doolittle had commanded the American Eighth Air Force in England towards the end of the war and had also taken part in the raids on Tokyo. Also that year, Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck also visited the Club on 29 May. Auchinleck was a former Indian Army officer who commanded the Eighth Army after Field Marshal Lord Wavell and before Montgomery.** Not all the distinguished visitors to the Club were, however, former Allies.

The April 1955 bulletin awarded 'a pat on the back for his broadmindedness' to a member who brought 'as a guest to the Club a Hungarian Flying Officer who fought against us.' And, late in 1956, the Italian cruiser *Raimondo Montecucoli* was due to visit Brisbane on part of a goodwill mission. The Italians had, of course, been the enemy during the early years of the war until the overthrow of Mussolini's fascists. Australians, including many members of the Club, had fought against the Italians in the Western Desert; they were not regarded highly as soldiers, but the professionalism of their navy and their air force was certainly acknowledged. At the meeting on 24 September, 1956, the committee decided not to issue a formal invitation to the officers on board the Italian cruiser in the same way that formal invitations were issued, almost as a matter of course, to visiting ships from former Allies. But memories of the war had begun to recede and the subject came up for discussion again at the next meeting, in October.

*Including the superb officers mess at Land Warfare Centre, Canungra.

**Thanks to the work of historians such as Roger Parkinson, Auchinleck is now thought to have been unfairly treated by Winston Churchill and, in part at least, responsible for the early victories that led to el Alamein in 1942.

The Italian visit had been arranged between the two governments. By then, Australia was receiving large numbers of Italian migrants and trade links between the two nations were developing nicely. The refusal of the Club to issue a formal invitation to the Italians had been noticed in high places; the senior naval officer in Brisbane, no doubt acting on orders from his superiors, had approached the president. Would the Club reconsider its decision not to extend formal invitations to the Italians?

There were two issues involved. Firstly, the matter of Italians being former enemies. Flight Lieutenant Tuckfield pointed out that the Italians were now Allies* and a country with which we wished to trade. Secondly, and perhaps more cogently, Brigadier Amies said the Club would be wrong to ignore the visitors. But, the cautious accountant added, 'too many receptions were being given to visiting warships and we should not allow these to grow out of proportion'. The Club should be firm in framing a policy and take no outside dictation. This was a good point; receptions had been increasing and the costs were significant when accumulated. Finally the committee decided to hold a small reception for the captain of the *Raimondo Montecucoli* and four of his senior officers.

At the risk of being flippant, we will leave it to the reader to decide into which category - enemy or ally - fitted the Federal Cabinet which visited the Club in June, 1957. At this distance, we don't know how the visit came about; the minutes are silent until they mention a letter of thanks from Richard Casey, then Minister for External Affairs in the Menzies Government. However, we do know that the visit was apparently successful and that one member was disciplined for 'gate-crashing' what was essentially an invitation-only affair. Indeed, at the annual general meeting that year, the president told members there had been two cases of members 'gatecrashing' that year.** But the president added that the visit was an outstanding occasion in the social activities. Mr Casey had informed him that it was the first occasion on which all members of the Cabinet had accepted and attended a gathering of its kind and that they had liked coming here.

The Club hosted the new Governor, Sir Henry Abel Smith, for the first time on 8 April, 1958. Sir John Lavarack, the previous Governor had retired in September 1957 and died on 4 December; the Government had appointed Sir Henry Abel Smith as Governor. His April visit was the beginning of a long and happy association between Sir Henry and the Club. It was during Sir Henry's period as Governor that the annual Patron's Dinner - each Governor since then has occupied this position - was begun.

Certainly the Club continued to take seriously its social responsibilities. The 1956

*Although certainly not in any formal sense. Indeed, Italy had not yet joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

**Actually, it was the same member both times, a tough and resourceful infantry officer who was probably too tough and too resourceful for his own good.

Ball was popular and well-planned. The minutes record a meeting of the ball subcommittee on 23 May; the menu is worth reprinting in detail. Seafood cocktail, sweet and sour duck with fried rice and noodles, decorated sucking pigs, carved by uniformed chefs, fried chicken pieces, fried fillets of fish, meat croquettes, fish cakes, hot savouries, including sticks made from pieces of fillet of pork and fillet of veal, skewered together deep fried and served to guests, side platters of assorted meats and garden salads, nuts, raisins and fresh fruit, ice cream novelties, lettuce, cheese and biscuits, tea and coffee. In those pre-cholesterol conscious days, the preponderance of fried food was more than popular; the menu would horrify a modern dietician.

From time to time, the committee had to deal with unruly behaviour. May, 1956, was such a time. Some young army officers, on leave from a course at the then Jungle Training Centre at Canungra, made a block accommodation booking through Northern Command. These young officers returned late one night, and found the front doors closed. Favoursing a direct approach to this little difficulty, they 'opened' the doors, doing some damage in the process. The matter came to the attention of the committee; the minutes suggest that at least some members of the committee were sufficiently angry to ban block bookings by Northern Command for three months. However, acting on a suggestion by Lieutenant Colonel Don Kerr, the president wrote to the general, pointing out the committee's displeasure. No doubt the general took the necessary steps to ensure that the rules of the Club were obeyed by officers accommodated at the request of Northern Command. At the same time, the committee heard a report about a visitor to the Club; it, too, is worth reporting in detail, although prudence suggests that the name of the visitor be deleted.

Captain Richards said he and Lieutenant G H Job were standing near the fire at the end of the bar when Mr B----- entered the bar. He invited Mr B----- to join them as it appeared he was on his own. Within fifteen minutes Mr B----- was abusive to both Captain Richards and Lieutenant Job who then left him on his own. He attempted to join the Legacy members with Lieutenant Colonel Marsh and interfered with their group, pushing himself into their party and acting in an aggressive manner. During this time two ladies' names were mentioned by Mr B----- in a most insulting way. Mr B----- then fell to the floor and was assisted from the club by a steward. Captain Richards gave it as his opinion that the conduct and language of Mr B----- was most offensive and unbecoming. Captain Yates who had entered the bar during this period... Captain Yates was informed by Captain Richards that the person named was creating a disturbance amongst the Legacy members. Captain Yates asked Mr B----- for his name and his qualifications to be on the club premises. Mr B----- became offensive and was asked to leave, to which Mr B----- replied with abusive language. When informed by Captain Yates that, as a member of the committee, he would report Mr B-----, Mr B----- broke down. He was then taken outside by a steward and put in a taxi and sent to Lennons Hotel.

The next day, the troublesome Mr B----- returned to the Club for lunch, unaware of his performance the previous night. He was quickly informed about it; the gap in his memory was now filled. Mr B----- apologised, but the committee wrote to his parent club, the Imperial Service of Sydney, with details of the unfortunate behaviour. That club wrote back and at the following meeting, the matter was discussed again. Lieutenant Colonel J E Staley asked to be heard on the subject. Staley had been approached by a member of the Imperial Service Club, Brigadier Sir Frederick Galleghan.* Mr B----- had apparently been a prisoner of the Japanese during the war. 'Blackjack' Galleghan, ever mindful of the welfare of his officers and men, was now interceding on his behalf. Galleghan had told Staley Mr B-----'s behaviour was undoubtedly due to 'war neurosis and that it devolved on all of us to help people like these rehabilitate themselves'. That argument, however, did not get much of a sympathetic hearing; the minutes record: 'Lieutenant Colonel Kerr** said that he had many occasions in which he dealt with people suffering from war neurosis, but this could not be a defence for improper conduct'. Kerr had also been a prisoner of the Japanese but clearly had little sympathy for the unfortunate Mr B-----. The meeting resolved to do nothing about lifting its ban on Mr B----- unless formally approached to do so by the Imperial Service Club. At this distance, the decision seems harsh. Although more than a decade after the war, Mr B----- was still clearly still affected by his terrible experiences. This was not merely a case of another obnoxious drunk; the attempt at intercession by Galleghan and Staley suggest that Mr B-----'s behaviour, while inexcusable, was understandable and certainly forgivable.

* * *

In July 1956, the price of Scotch whisky was increased by one penny a nip. Lieutenant Colonel Little, then still a committee member, asked why this has happened without first being referred to the committee. The secretary, very reasonably, pointed out that previous price changes notified to the Club by the United Licensed Victuallers Association (ULVA) had been automatically adjusted in the wine and spirits department. This automatic adjustment, however, did not please the committee. On the motion of Brigadier Amies, prices in bar and lounge areas were not to be adjusted until after they had been approved by the House Facilities subcommittee. In the bottle shop, ULVA prices were to apply. Here, once again, it seems that decision, which properly should have been those of a manager, were being

*'Black Jack' Galleghan, so called because of his slight West Indian ancestry, was a much loved commanding officer of the 2/ 30th Battalion during World War II and a fierce fighter for the rights of prisoners of war.

**Major General DR Kerr was, as a battery commander in the 2/10th Field Regiment captured at the fall of Singapore.

referred to a sub-committee, an unwieldy and cumbersome way of doing business. But the secretary was not a manager, an important issue to the committee of the day, which reserved the right to change prices for itself. After all, it was going to bear the criticism of members. Certainly whisky was a matter of some importance, particularly to Little, whose consumption was generous without any apparent ill-effects. The 1958 annual report recorded how difficult it was to obtain.

Unfortunately, good Scotch whisky is in short supply and all efforts to increase our quota have been in vain. During the past year, there has been some criticism by members of the standard of the Scotch served in the Club, but it must be realised that when orders are placed of the magnitude of ours, the suppliers will give us only a percentage of the order in the best brands. In order to obtain the quantity we require, we must of necessity take a proportion of inferior brands.

Whisky is still an important issue in the Club, although happily the supply situation has improved immensely. * * * Although prosperous, in many ways the mid-1950s were challenging years for the Club. Although profits from bar trading still were strong, the dining room was running at a loss and operating margins were being trimmed. On 27 August, 1956, a special general meeting was called to vote on a proposal to increase subscriptions: City members would, if the motion was passed, pay seven guineas, an increase of two guineas; country members would pay four guineas, an increase of one guinea. The chairman, Major Murphy, told the meeting that the proposal to increase subscriptions might have come as a shock to members, but it was no shock to the committee. It had been keeping a close watch on the trading surplus, which was declining. Steady rises in wages, food, rates, power and light, bank interest, gas and licence fees, had been apparent and, although the committee was reluctant to pass on costs to members, the time had come for a subscription increase. In particular, capital improvements had come from past profits, but the situation had now arrived where existing subscriptions and profit covered only fixed charges, such as the redemption of bank overdraft and debentures. Major Murphy's motion was seconded by Brigadier Wilson, who told the meeting he had initially been opposed to the idea of a fee increase but, after studying the financial position, had come to the conclusion that it was inevitable. Both Murphy and Wilson must have been persuasive speakers, with good arguments, because only three other speakers took the floor, all to support the fee increase, and it was carried unanimously. Even at seven guineas, the membership

was remarkably reasonable and there was no doubt that, of all the service clubs in Australia, the United Service Club in Brisbane offered value for money.*

In October, 1957, the finance sub-committee had before it a proposal that Colonel C G Gehrman should write a history of the Club. It was one of those good ideas, seemingly before its time. The minutes make no further mention of the project; no manuscript has ever been found; Colonel Gehrman's son, 'Gus' Gehrman has no knowledge of the project and C G Gehrman died two years later. Sadly, no real effort was made to retain the essential source material for such a history, apart from the minutes. All the Club's valuable correspondence, for example, and many other important records have been lost over the years. Future historians, working on the second hundred years, will find their tasks are made easier by the collection now underway of this essential material. Occasionally it is clear that relationships between sub-committees and the full committee were strained, to say the least. Take, for example, the 1958 annual report to members by the president, Wing Commander George Christensen, and particularly the section dealing with the library and reading room, a pet project area of Little going back more than a decade. The report is blandness itself:

During the year it was decided to investigate the library arrangements in the club and a special library sub-committee consisting of Lieutenant Colonel Staley, Brigadier Kappe and Major Murphy was formed, and this committee has put in a tremendous amount of work investigating all angles of the Library problem and also the question of the Reading Room. Several changes were suggested and tried, but the whole question appeared to be hampered by lack of space. It has now been decided that until such time as additional space becomes available, either in the Green House or in the present Club premises, the library will be housed in the Radio Room on the second floor. This will then give considerable extra space in the reading room, which will accommodate almost double the number of chairs that are possible at present, and furthermore, it will eliminate the question of persons wishing to obtain library books disturbing those in the reading room.

The blandness of the report, however, disguises the reality. At the committee meeting on 28 July, it had been decided, somewhat peremptorily as it happened, to relocate the library in the radio room. In protest, the entire library sub-committee resigned; 'It is most disappointing,' they wrote in their letter of resignation, 'that just when their work was about to produce desirable results, they find their efforts have been completely nullified. It is to be understood that these resignations have not resulted from pique on the part of the signatories who believe that the action of the committee will result in a great dis-service to members generally'. It was only after a

*And still does. The United Service Club is, on both entrance fees and subscriptions, the lowest of the 'great' clubs of Australia, service or other.

great deal of tactful handling between meetings that the library sub-committee was prepared to withdraw its resignation and work towards a harmonious solution of what seemed to be an intractable problem. Some of the committee were conscious of the growing role of the United Service Institute as the military history reference point and library in Queensland; and were happy to defer to this situation, bearing in mind also the Club's problems with space (continuing in 1992) for a modern library.

The Future of the Green House

The 1960s began with the Club's committee wrestling with the problem of what to do with the Green House. The 1959 annual report noted that the Moreton Club, which had rented the premises until mid-1959, had now moved to its own premises in Oxlade Drive, New Farm. 'It is fitting to record what a good tenant and neighbour the Moreton Club has been in the years that have passed since our move from George Street,' wrote Lieutenant Colonel Kerr in that year's report to members. The committee had been expecting the move and had been examining a number of propositions for the future use of the building. It had already had a proposal from a property developer, John D Booker Pty Ltd. This company had put before the Green House sub-committee a proposal for development of the site and drawings to illustrate its ideas. The site was to be redeveloped as a 'Medical Arts Centre' to continue the spread of medical practitioners along what had already then become a medical specialists precinct. As well, another possible developer, the architects Moulds and MacMinn,* submitted an idea for the site, but at this stage, not having sufficient detail to enable the sub-committee to do more than discuss it in broad outline. None of these proposals survive, but apparently the Booker proposal would have allowed the Club only a floor and terrace of the new building on the Green House site. In the process, however, the Club would lose the title to the land on which the building stood and would have to enter a lease agreement which would permit the building of parking facilities. As equity, the Club was to receive floor space in the new building.

One of the prime considerations in these proposals was the future space requirements. This was by no means clear, for the general use by members had declined since the 'boom' years immediately after World War II. Moreover the Moreton Club had been a useful tenant and now the Club had to contend with the loss of revenue from the rental. The Green House building was regarded then as obsolescent and in need of heavy maintenance expenditure. The minutes recorded:

Proposals, therefore, are now being examined which are essentially of a capital nature and forward looking; that is to say, it is hoped to place before members a scheme whereby

*Major MacMinn had been a former committee member and president.

a new building can be erected on this very valuable site and which will remain under Club control with prospects of revenue accruing therefrom. It is felt that unless an exceptional cash offer was received for the site, and such proceeds could be diverted to the improvement of our existing premises, thoughts of present revenue should be subordinated to a sound scheme for development of this splendid site in the future as a coordinated plan.

As usual, the blandness of the annual report disguises the existing tensions over the idea. These proposals were put to members at a special meeting on 21 August, 1959, well attended by 128 members, with 12 apologies. The immediate background to the meeting was that the Green House sub-committee had met, considered the Booker proposals, sought legal advice and decided to recommend to the full committee that the proposal be put to members at a special meeting. The sub-committee, led by Major Murphy, had a series of discussions with the developer, John D Booker.

It was not until 13 July 1959, that the sub-committee learned that Booker's proposal did not include a full floor for the Club, as originally thought. John Booker, who attended a special meeting of the executive sub-committee on this night, did not supply a scaled plan, of the layout of the Club's entitlement, although he promised to do so. The subcommittee members were quite adamant; no proposal that did not provide a complete floor to become 'the property of the Club as equity for the surrender of tide of the land involved' would get their support, although no formal motion was put.

At the special meeting, the Booker plan was discussed at length. Major Murphy told the meeting that the Moreton Club had been offered the site, but had declined and moved to New Farm. Already the Club had looked at converting the building to its own use, rather than as rented premises. To do so, however, would have meant complying with additional and more onerous requirements of the Brisbane City Council; temporary alterations were both expensive and beyond the Club's ability to fund. Multiple ownership of sites - so-called strata title - was beginning to be popular; this presented certain opportunities and the John D Booker proposal had been received. All the committee was seeking at this stage was a motion to enter a contract with Booker which would have provided the Club with essential financial and legal safeguards while re-developing a site that was then without a major tenant and likely to become a financial burden.

This was not good enough for the members. Led by Captain J J Rowell, (later Sir John) a prominent Brisbane solicitor, members criticised the committee for putting forward the motion. It was clear that the members were vehemently opposed to any proposal that would see the site sold and what they regarded as inadequate safeguards and conditions. That ended, effectively, the Booker proposal and the committee was now forced to look at renting the Green House and retaining the building.

No sooner, however, had the members dismissed the Booker proposal, than it seems that the Green House sub-committee was back with another proposition from another major developer of the time, Reid Murray. Here, the sub-committee had as its task working towards a building on the site 'of much less pretentious proportions and with the thought that such a basic structure could be added to over the years, either for the use of the Club or as a source of future rental income'. The sub-committee looked at the proposition and found that erecting such a building was not economic. It had met with the Queensland manager of Reid Murray, which came up with the proposition of building for the Club,

... to the Club's design and satisfaction, a modern air-conditioned and appropriately fitted building WITHOUT COST TO THE CLUB having separate entrance, lifts and service lift facilities, floor space of not less than the Club's present built-over area, or 36,000 square feet, whichever is the greater, reserved car parking space for not less than 130 vehicles ...

As well, Reid Murray was apparently prepared to offer a number of other attractive conditions, including undisturbed use of the premises, separate title, and an architect of the Club's choosing. The sub-committee urged an immediate approach to Reid Murray on the terms and conditions that had been set out in the initial discussions. But Reid Murray's early enthusiasm for the project waned somewhat; the next meeting heard that, despite a formal approach from the Club, nothing more had been heard from the potential developers John D Booker and Reid Murray. Now, however, LJ Hooker was interested in the site.

By September that year, the committee was hearing reports that the developers were now not interested. Brisbane, it seemed then, was 'not large enough for a development on the scale envisaged'. And so the Green House remained in its existing form, which it retains to the present day. Here, no doubt, the Club was materially assisted by the economic conditions of the early 1960s, which saw then a Federal Government-imposed credit squeeze that sent many property developers into difficulties. Ironically the three developers mentioned in the Club's minutes at this time - John D Booker, Reid Murray and L J Hooker - all ran into later financial difficulties, although Hooker had its difficulties much later than the other two, being a casualty of the 1980s.

No doubt it was someone else's financial difficulties that gave the Club an offer which the committee must have found amusing. In November, 1962, a real estate agent approached the Club with a proposal that was as optimistic as it was absurd. Was the Club interesting in acquiring the Auto Service Co. site (presumably in Upper Edward Street.) The price, according to the agent, was '£120,000 or offer'. As the minutes note, 'The secretary was instructed to advise the vendor that the Club was not interested

in the purchase'. It was a price that had more optimism than value attached.

But the Club had its own problems just in dealing with the site. A measure of the difficulties being faced in deciding how to use what was then - and remains today - extremely valuable premises can be determined from the notes in the Midwinter Bulletin for 1960.

The 'Building next door' is once more fully occupied - not only by ourselves, but with tenants using portion of the Green House as professional rooms and offices. Thus a useful source of revenue is restored to the Club.* Your committee is very aware of the tremendous potential of our Club site and the ultimate future of the Club itself. With these ends in view, a thorough examination of proposals for the future development of the Club is being conducted by the Committee with co-opted advice of professional and technical experts. It is hoped to be able to give full details and recommendations concerning this planning to members at the annual meeting, if not before.

It proved to be an optimistic hope. The minutes of meeting simply record that the future of the Green House had yet to be decided and that Major Murphy, convenor of the sub-committee was thanked for his efforts. Later, however, the Green House figures again in the minutes, for the meeting of 28 May, 1962:

The secretary reported that, in spite of all precautions to the contrary, undesirable persons were still sleeping under the Green House. He considered that, because of the fire danger involved, the area should be enclosed to prevent unauthorised entry.

As a result, the underneath area of the Green House was enclosed, although not with the original expensive material suggestion and the 'undesirable person' were forced to sleep elsewhere.

This was a time for cautious budgeting. Even before the credit squeeze, in the late 1950s, the Club was in a condition of some financial stringency. Within a couple of years, the Club had gone from a very comfortable financial position to one which required some care and tight budgeting. At the meeting on 2 March, 1959, Brigadier Amies said the finances of the Club had taken a turn for the worse and future decisions on spending had to be watched closely. The bar, for example, was trading below expectations; bar stock had gone missing and the chef had been forced to return from holidays to sort out problems in the kitchen. Accommodation figures were also declining; in short the Club had to watch its spending. Under these circumstances, he thought the proposed purchase of property in Edward Street was not such a good idea and his sub-committee - finance - had recommended that the proposed purchase, for £9000, be dropped.

*Useful, of course, following the moving out of the Moreton Club

This meeting neatly illustrates the competing pressures on the committee. When Brigadier Amies sat down, Flight Lieutenant Tuckfield, chairing the house sub-committee got to his feet, with precisely the opposite view. The Club needed to spend money, he said. Alterations to the top bar were a high priority, as was a cold room. His sub-committee could see the immediate need to spend at least £3000. Brigadier Amies stressed that the Club needed to obtain what the minutes record as a 'firm quote' to cover these alterations. The minutes go on: 'It was resolved that resentment by the committee be conveyed to the president.' Presumably this was resentment by the house sub-committee at the conflict over finances. Not for the first time - nor, indeed, the last - was the question of money causing some problems. As always, the conflict was between those who wanted to spend money and those who did not. In the process of reaching decisions, however, this committee meeting managed to submerge its resentment sufficiently to vote for a larger car park space for the president, a more prominent sign and a fence.

The Club also experienced other trading problems. Early in March, 1960, the finance sub-committee gloomily reported that the trading accounts revealed 'a most unsatisfactory state of affairs. The figures for the bar have only one interpretation. The secretary reported that he had dispensed with the services of three stewards'. In future, stocktakes were done daily, sadly a necessary precaution with casual labour.

The last annual general meeting of the 1950s was held on 25 November, 1959. It noted the 'sterling work' done by the late Colonel C G Gehrman, who had given so much of his life to the Club. This meeting also noted the death of Lieutenant Colonel J E Staley, who died while a member of the committee.

The future of the Green House, still in the air at this time, and the library, were inextricably linked. It seems that, given the extraordinary time taken to make some of these decisions, that the Club was missing some drive and direction on the committee or perhaps it was just a time for more caution and for consolidation. Certainly the question of the Club's future, with apparent declining rates of growth in membership, was a continuing concern. The library, however, posed special problems.

The minutes for that last annual meeting of the 1950s also include a letter from Major R Jackson, complaining about the state of the library which was then closed. Jackson wrote that he had left Brisbane five years before. On his return, he found the library had fallen on what he called 'evil days'. He offered to help, an offer accepted with alacrity by the committee. Jackson's complaints were well-founded; successive committees had attempted to come to grips with the problems in the library but had got nowhere. Books were missing; about 2600, according to Jackson. 'The library was, and still is, quite useless, and, however, annoying it may be, its present closure cannot be avoided, in my opinion,' he wrote. After much work, Jackson recommended that the library be closed, the remaining books sent to Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital.

But if the library was to re-open, Jackson recommended that an attendant be present whenever the library was opened to members. Quite clearly he did not trust the members to borrow books and return them.

The members at the annual meeting shared Jackson's concern. They directed the committee to give 'full consideration to the problems of the library'. But they believed that retention of the library was desirable but until suitable accommodation was found, it would not be reasonable to reopen the facility for members. But despite the feeling at the meeting, the library was not a high priority for the new committee. By now, television had begun to make an impact and members had other distractions in the evening. The Club's library, like so many similar institutions, was a casualty of the early television days.

Although the Club was a very early pioneer in having ladies as members, its members in 1960 still retained an old-fashioned, perhaps even chauvinistic, attitude towards ladies. At a committee meeting in January, 1960, the president, Wing Commander Christensen, expressed his disapproval at the fact that ladies had been entertained at a function held by the Royal Flying Doctor Service. This, the president said, was not an 'authorised' ladies night; the minutes record that 'the secretary was instructed to convey to the member responsible an expression of the committee's disapproval.

However, soon afterwards the committee experimented with a mixed dining night, this time for members connected with the Mater Hospital. The committee qualified its approval with the following: 'Entrance to be provided *only* [emphasis in the original] through the 'Green House' and the coffee lounge to be suitably screened off'. Added the committee; 'Any similar departure from the normal Club custom in regard to entertaining ladies be referred to the full Committee for consideration'. The first cracks had begun to appear in the facade of masculine domination.

Another stalwart, Brigadier Jack Amies, resigned from the committee early in 1960. Brigadier Amies felt that he had made a major contribution to the Club and now it was time to concentrate on new ventures. His wise counsel, his careful approach to financial matters, his leadership with Little during the acquisition of 'Montpelier' his military and business acumen all made Jack Amies an extremely valuable club man. At about the same time as Brigadier Amies resigned, the Club also lost the services of Major Steele as secretary. Lieutenant Colonel N E Aley, then assistant secretary, was appointed to take Steele's place.

The first Patron's dinner was held in 1959. It was decided in 1960 that, due to the success of the second - a letter of thanks having been received from the patron, His Excellency Sir Henry Abel Smith - then consideration should be given to making this an annual event. At first, it seemed there were some complaints from members about the order of dress laid down - white tie or mess kit, both of which would have been

Exceedingly warm in September - but as the Midwinter Bulletin for 1960 pointed out, 'it was felt that a standard had to be set, and dress problems were easily solved'. In 1960, the function was held on Monday, 5 September; the General Officer Commanding, Northern Command had given permission for officers to wear tropical mess kit.*

There seems no doubt that the early 1960s was a highly social time for the Club; more than 20 separate functions were listed, with monthly dinner dances, a ball, the Exhibition Week 'at home', cricket dinners and frequent billiards and snooker matches against other clubs. But this year was also a period of economic recession and a Government-induced credit squeeze. The president, Lieutenant Colonel Kerr, who had been elected president at the previous annual meeting, noted in the Midwinter Bulletin for that year:

From the time of my assuming duties as your President, most business has felt the effect of the credit squeeze. The main effect on the Club has been on membership which is showing a steady decline. However, it is pleasing to report, that due to increased support from members, increased efficiency and economies in administration whilst still maintaining the high standard for which the club is noted, there has been a very satisfactory improvement in the club's financial position.

That, in the height of a tough credit squeeze, was no mean achievement. It was also an indication of the amenities which the Club provided for its members; a simple list will indicate what was available, even then: Main dining room and snack bar, with take-away meals 'suitably packed in pyrex or pottery dishes, served hot for the member to take home'; private parties; ladies night (Thursday night); a dinner dance on the last Thursday of the month; wine tasting; bottle department; car parking; accommodation; social functions; Anzac Day; cricket; billiards and snooker. Membership at this time stood at more than 2500 with the committee always anxious to sign on new, eligible people. And, in terms of convenience, the Club offered 'an electric shaver ... A mirror and power point have been installed in the ground floor wash room, so if you have an evening appointment and time presses, a few minutes at the Club will ensure your being able to face the evening with confidence'.**

Since the end of World War II, the Club has offered temporary membership facilities to serving officers visiting Brisbane on duty. This was a sensible arrangement, for Brisbane at the time was home to an infantry battalion, a field regiment,

*Today, winter mess dress has, virtually disappeared from Queensland and the white cotton mess jacket is worn the year round. 'Tropical' mess kit, sometimes known as 'Red sea rig', consists of a white short-sleeved shirt, no tie and mess kit trousers and cummerbund. This was decidedly not the 'tropical kit' referred to in 1960. The Club still specifies winter mess kit for formal occasions in winter.

**An elegantly phrased note from an anonymous author- perhaps Commander Eric Feldt- even down to the correct use of the possessive case before the gerund - 'your being able to'.

several major headquarters, with other army facilities, such as the Jungle Training Centre (as the Land Warfare Centre was then known) at Canungra, * nearby. As well, the naval use of Brisbane port was substantially greater then than today while Amberley RAAF base attracted many officers passing through.

The Club offered these officers facilities similar to their messes and wardrooms - perhaps even better - but at prices lower than comparable hotels were charging. Occasionally boisterous exuberance on the part of younger officers led to trouble but the arrangement worked well and to the advantage of the Club.

In late 1962, changes to the Club's rules made it doubtful that this comfortable arrangement could continue legally. The secretary, Lieutenant Colonel Aley, raised the issue at the December 1962 meeting. Initially the mood of the meeting was that the heads of the three services in Brisbane be told of the recent rule changes** and advised that officers who were not members of reciprocal clubs were now not eligible to stay at the Club.

While obeying the letter of the rules, a successful motion along these lines would have deprived the Club of much useful custom, both in accommodation and, with the thirsts of younger officers, in bar takings. Wiser counsel prevailed. Lieutenant Colonel Little and Major Murphy combined to give the secretary power to admit serving officers as 'temporary members for a period not exceeding seven days'.

Although the annual reports and minutes reflect a jaunty optimism within the committee, trading figures were down. Brisbane, like the rest of Australia, was suffering from the effects of the credit squeeze; the Club's trading was not immune. In April 1963, for example, the house sub-committee discussed the decline in trading figures, but noted that 'it is generally agreed that the position reflected the general trend of business in Brisbane during the period January to March 1963'. Then, as now, recessions and credit squeezes have immediate and damaging impacts upon disposable incomes; Club trading was very much a question of members' disposable incomes.

Still, it was a time for cautious purchases. The committee decided that an investment in a circular dining table would be worthwhile. Such a table, of the kind where, as the minutes record, 'members entering the dining room alone could foregather' would benefit the Club and 'add prestige to the dining room'. The local furniture firm of Harvey Brothers was thought to make suitable tables. At length the committee discussed types of wood, size and so on. Finally the committee decided:

*Many serving officers were members of the Club. In November 1955, the Bulletin wished members of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, 'good luck on its departure for overseas service in peacetime'. The 'peacetime' was relative, of course; 2RAR was the first battalion to serve in what later became known as the Malayan Emergency.

**Adopted at a meeting in September which was, according to that year's annual report, very poorly attended. Only 27 members, of whom 14 were committee members, bothered to come to the meeting .

Quotations would be obtained for three types of tables, ranging from £110 to £150. It was thought that such a table might help attract members to the dining room, improve trade and offset some of the trading problems which had arisen in recent months. At the time of writing, the circular dining table is in the television room, although the idea of having such a table, for members dining alone, remains attractive.

It is clear from the surviving accounts at this time that trading was quite depressed and the committee was struggling with attempts to improve the position. As was so often the case, the committee seemed to divide neatly into two groups - one which thought that, by spending money on material improvement, trading would pick up; the other believing that additional spending would not result in additional patronage. But there were improvements that simply had to be done; the kitchen in the early 1960s was creaking at the seams and plainly unable to cope with the peak demands put upon it.

One of those demands came from organisations which had members in common and which saw advantage in holding dinners and other similar functions at the Club. One such professional organisation with which the Club has enjoyed a long association was - and is - the Australian Dental Association. In 1964, however, the committee had been forced to tell the association that its members could not use the facilities that year. 'The presence of a female member of the association' had been detected at the previous year's dinner; this, in the climate of the time, simply would not do. Earlier it was the Royal Flying Doctor Service which had attracted attention, now it was the Australian Dental Association. By 1965* attitudes were beginning to change, or perhaps it was that the committee realised that business was business. Lieutenant Colonel Richard Cameron told the meeting that he, at least, was in favour of the dentists holding their annual dinner at the Club. This was a small break-through, but within months, the declining trading position, not to mention the growing acceptance of females in such establishments, forced the Club to reconsider its position. Reconsider, mind, rather than change.

The dining room was poorly used during the week, with the exception of Tuesday and Thursday nights. Why this should be so is something of a mystery. On the motion of Flight Lieutenant Izatt the committee discussed the idea that ladies might be admitted to the Club dining room 'between the hours of 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, as well as the usual Thursday night Dinner Dance'. The motion was lost on a show of hands but it was clear that times were changing. Wives were beginning to ask their husbands why they could not use the dining room as well. As the Midwinter Bulletin of 1965 noted:

*This was the year that a female university tutor chained herself to the public bar of the Regatta Hotel, Toowong, in protest over the licensing laws which refused females permission to enter such bars.

One thing which we lack and which is being considered by your committee is a room in which members may entertain their wives either for a drink or a meal. This amenity would be an advantage to country members who visit Brisbane with their wives. At present there is nowhere in the Club that a member can bring his wife other than on a Thursday evening or to a special function. Use can be made of the Green House for this purpose and the main Club building will not be affected.

That same circular also addressed the difficult, and continuing, questions of the future and the fees, two issues of fundamental importance to members. Brigadier McEachern, the Club's president, told members it had often been suggested that the Club had a limited future because of the 'increasing age of those members who became eligible during the 1939-45 war'. Said McEachern forcefully: 'I cannot and will not accept this view. In my opinion the Club can retain its present membership and even increase it for many years yet to come'. McEachern was an optimistic and far-sighted president; his optimism, however, hardly proved to be justified. On the other, difficult question - that of fees - the committee had been wrestling with this problem and sought the following figures: £12/10/- a year for town members; £7/10/- a year for country members and £2 a year for remote members with a further fee of £1/- a year. They were modest increases, but the Club was also under pressure from its bankers at the time.

A special general meeting was called on 16 June, 1965, to pass proposals for the increase in the Club's subscriptions. This meeting is worth noting in some detail, because it gives a fascinating insight into the thinking at the pre-decimal currency, pre-double-digit inflation times.

The meeting began at 8 p.m. No doubt many of the 47 members attending had gathered earlier, some perhaps in the top bar, to prepare and fortify themselves for the momentous discussions that were to follow. Thus prepared and fortified, they settled down for this meeting. First, they were told by the vice-president, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Cameron that subscriptions had not increased for some six years. For this reason, if no other, an increase was justified. Besides, said Cameron bluntly, the committee had been forecasting improvements and these had to be paid for.

There was another problem; the bankers would agree to increasing the Club's overdraft only if fees were increased. That was fair enough; clearly the bankers had a good idea of the money going through the Club and the contributions being made by members. Cameron's arguments seemed persuasive enough; Major General Kerr, speaking later, pressed for higher entrance fees on the basis that new members coming into the Club were gaining the benefits of amenities provided by the efforts and funds of previous members.*

*It is a persuasive argument, and one used recently by another Brisbane club, Tattersall's to justify quite substantial increases in entrance fees and subscriptions. For example, entrance fees rose from \$250 to \$1000 and subscriptions from \$50 to \$250.

Other speakers put the view of younger members who had 'yet to establish themselves in the commercial world'. Further issues were canvassed, including the then anomalous position of overseas members and allied members. Finally, in the discussion, the suggestion of a lower membership fee for members over 65 was put. In fact, these distinguished members enjoyed half-price fees; as the minutes record, 'The amendment was discussed very fully'. An hour and half later, the meeting ended; the fees were increased and the members present felt they had contributed greatly to the discussions.

Enter the Associates

Throughout its history, service rank distinction has never been particularly important in the United Service Club. A junior officer, even one of the most brief seniority, could expect to be treated equally to a member who had been a brigadier or a general. The only deference expected was, in the words of the novelist Evelyn Waugh, 'the natural deference that youth owes to age'. Occasionally, however, some curious disputes arose over the privileges that pertain, not so much to ranks, but to positions within the Club. Take, for example, the matter of the vice president's car park position, decided at a meeting in October 1965. At the time the vice president was Lieutenant Colonel Cameron who was also convenor of the house and finance sub-committee. In this latter role, rather than as vice president *per se*, Cameron had occasion to visit the Club more often than most other committee members. Because of this, suggested the president, Brigadier McEachern, the committee might consider the provision of a separate car park next to the president's car park. Flight Lieutenant Tuckfield, an active contributor to committee discussions, was not so sure. The members, he thought, might not accept the idea. This view was supported by Lieutenant Commander Vidgen, who said there was already a feeling among members regarding free car parking facilities. And, added Tuckfield, was the position being made available to the vice president, or to the convenor of the house and finance sub-committee? Although both positions were held by the same person at that time, this position easily could change. The weighty matter of the vice president's car park position was put to the vote and by a margin of two, carried.*

By 1966, the possible disposal of the Green House was something of a dead issue. The various proposals put forward in the early part of the decade had lapsed, partly because of excessive optimism on the part of the potential developers and partly because of the economic conditions at the time. The sub-committee set up to

*In one of those curious coincidences of Club life, the question of car parking privileges occurred while the authors were lunching in the snack bar during the preparation of this book. Why, asked one member at lunch, did the immediate past president warrant a car park? Gentle discussion followed for a moment or two until it was pointed out to the questioning member - ironically by Lieutenant Richard Cameron - that one way he could ensure a parking position as immediate past president was to run for the office of president himself. Discussion then lapsed. Now the immediate past president is also a member of the executive sub-committee, whose members are constantly at the Club for the Club.

consider proposals for the Green House settled into a kind of benign state, to be revived from time to time and then at never more than the suggestion level. As well, the members were well aware that they had assets of considerable value in the Club's property including the Green House; they were in no hurry to develop these assets or to allow others to profit from the foresight of their predecessors.

Running through the discussions on the use of the Green House, from the very early days of its occupancy by the Moreton Club, was the possibility of its conversion to a ladies annex. This would have filled several requirements: firstly, it would have offered ladies somewhere for afternoon tea after shopping or other pursuits; secondly, it would have gone some of the way towards solving the vexed question of women in the Club.

The proposal to convert part of the Green House into a ladies annex had been aired at the 1965 general meeting. As Lieutenant Colonel Little pointed out, the idea was by no means new; it had been first proposed in 1946, 20 years before, and rejected then. Now, however, the mood of the members had changed. Several speakers cautiously supported the idea and even suggested that ladies might be admitted as associate members. As was so often the case, it was Little who moved the motion; now the procedures were under way.

It was a tortuous process. When the matter was first aired in sub-committee, the wretched question of car parking arose. If the ladies were allowed to use the annex, would they also be allowed to use the car park? And if this was the case, members should be told. That information had better be included in the circular. Would the ladies be allowed to drink liquor in the annex? This was another important question, and one with clear licensing implications. Did the Club's liquor licence actually extend to the Green House premises? A moot point, but one which could have embarrassing consequences. Would members support the idea of their ladies being able to drink in the Club? Some sub-committee members appear, from the minutes at least, to have some quaintly old-fashioned ideas about the drinking habits of their ladies. Another problem for the sub-committee; another proposition to be put to members.

Finally, after some months of hard work, some questions for members were formulated. It seems that this process was akin to a medieval scholar examining a text, such was the care and consideration (not to mention the slow speed of the process). The questions, however, were simple and clear:

Are you in favour of establishing a ladies annex?

If so, are you in favour of amending the rules to include associate members?

Would you be prepared to nominate your wife or any other eligible person?

Members had some useful information upon which to base their decisions. If the

Club wanted to establish a Ladies Annex, then the Green House was the only possible place. No suitable alternative existed. There were considerable costs involved. One alternative, of taking over part of the ground floor, meant capital spending of about £2500 would be needed to take over a portion of the ground floor; running costs of this area, including the repayment of capital and allowing for rental loss, would be about £1600. The second alternative was rather more expensive. It proposed using the function room, in addition to the first proposal. Another £500 was required.

Quite simply, for either proposal to work, the ladies needed to be attracted to the Club, not just for afternoon tea, but also for luncheon. To have the ladies in for lunch would mean the provision of meals and liquor. This could not be done without creating a new class of Club member, that of associate, otherwise, under the licensing laws, ladies would have to be accompanied by members when visiting the Club. That was not the idea at all.

Eligibility for associate members was relatively straight-forward: 'wives of members; widows of deceased members; ladies who hold or have held a commission in the Armed Forces of any Commonwealth country'.* Here seemed to be an important breakthrough, not just for the wives and widows of members, but also for women who could join the Club in their own right, albeit as associate members, so long as they held the same qualifications for membership as the male members - 'hold or have held a commission in the armed forces of any Commonwealth country'.

At a time now when human rights legislation has forced other clubs to examine the question of female members, it is significant that the United Service Club, admittedly in a circuitous fashion, was looking at the issue a quarter of a century earlier. The proposal to offer associate membership to ladies holding a commission in the armed forces was, however, dropped before it got to the annual meeting. The membership sub-committee examined the question of admitting ladies who had held commissions in March 1969, and decided against the proposal. For the time being, at least, the question of ladies who held commissions in any of the armed services was simply put aside as one that was just too difficult to resolve.

At that time, members of the Club certainly comprised few feminist sympathisers; the minutes of a meeting soon afterwards are fascinating for their glimpse of masculine thinking. The Legacy Club of Brisbane wanted to hold a dinner and make a presentation to the matron of 'Moorlands', that splendid building on Coronation Drive used then as a convalescent hospital. Certainly, said the committee, but if the matron was to attend the dinner, she had to enter and leave the Club by way of the Green House annex.**

*This proposal was first aired in the decade following World War II. It attracted some support, but not enough to become a reality.

**Apparently, too, the Matron was happy to comply with this ruling. It is difficult to imagine a matron today doing so.

The circular, so long in its preparation and sending, was well received by members. By 21 March 1966, the president was able to tell the committee meeting that, of the replies received then, 404 offered unqualified support for the proposal, 24 supported the idea of the annex but opposed to giving ladies associate membership, 88 members supported both the annex and associate membership but were not prepared to nominate any associate members and 74 diehards opposed both the annex and associate membership.

There were really two questions for the committee to consider. Whether members supported the idea sufficiently to proceed with the proposal and secondly, irrespective of members' support, whether the annex would pay its way. There seemed to be some doubts among committee members, particularly Lieutenant Colonel Jack Kelly, a barrister and later a judge, whether the Green House would be granted a liquor licence. Kelly knew well, from his practice at the Bar, that the Queensland licensing laws were not always as clear-cut as they might have been and that the granting of further licences could not be assumed. Again, too, the question of the Club's future property needs impinged on the issue.

The committee members took the question very cautiously indeed. First, they agreed to the idea of the annex, no doubt with the support of members clear on this question. This refurbished annex was opened in time for Show week in August 1966. Later, members voted on the question of associate members at that year's annual general meeting. Again it is worthwhile to cover the debate in some detail because of the useful insights it offers into members' thinking at the time.

The motion to introduce associate members into the Club was moved by Brigadier McEachern. The amendments to the rules proposed that any lady elected as an associate member could use the annex in her own right, without it being necessary for her to be accompanied by her husband. This, however, did not deprive her husband of the right to entertain his wife in the Club should he so desire.

Squadron Leader Loxton asked whether associate members would be due for levies in the same way as male members, would officers of the womens' services be eligible for membership and could associate members invite guests into the annex. He was told that associate members would be liable for levies, that the associate membership should be restricted to the two classes - wives and widows - until the popularity of the annex and its capacity to handle the demand was established. On the other question, associate members could invite male members into the annex.

Few other questions needed to be asked; the meeting was told that the loss of rental from the annex was \$12 a week, the level of associate membership fees had been based on the capital outlay involved and the anticipated running costs. Lieutenant Colonel Little reminded the meeting that he had proposed such a scheme 20 years earlier. At that time, however, it lacked support. Little said he was pleased that the scheme had been introduced and that he thoroughly supported the motion. With

that, the motion was put and was passed unanimously.

The time was right for associate members, given that the majority of those members elected after World War II were now entering comfortable middle age, at a time when their children had grown and their wives had more time for visits to the city and for opportunities to use the annex. The changing age of the membership meant changing demands on the Club.

Within a year, 198 associate members had joined the Club. In the annual report for 1967, the president, Lieutenant Colonel Cameron, said the response had been most encouraging and there was no doubt that this section of the membership would continue to grow and the ladies annex continue to increase in popularity. It was perhaps the introduction of associate membership that caused the committee to look at the question of mixed accommodation. The question arose during a discussion on the use of accommodation by visiting officers, although the Naval & Military Club in Melbourne already had such accommodation and the experiment there was being eagerly watched in Brisbane. In June 1968, Lieutenant Colonel Cameron told the committee that it had the power to permit mixed accommodation. In this, he was supported by Flight Lieutenant Tuckfield, who reminded the meeting that the Club lost potential country members because the Club did not have mixed accommodation. The committee agreed to the proposal; it also agreed to making available to ladies the front area of the first floor, forward of the lift and front staircase with access through the lounge to the ladies annex.* Another barrier to the ladies use of the Club was removed in August 1969, when the committee decided that ladies could be taken to lunch on Saturdays. Previously this was considered an all-male privilege; little by little the barriers were coming down; the membership of the Club expanding and changing from the heyday of the immediate post-war years.**

* * *

The potential pool of membership of the Club for the Club grew in the mid-1960s with the re-introduction of national service for the Vietnam War. Young men were required to register for national service in their nineteenth year; the selection process was by ballot,*** with birth-dates being chosen until each intake had

*The authors have heard some anecdotal evidence about the presence of ladies in the accommodation areas on the first floor. 'No one minded much', recalled one member with a twinkle in his eye, 'so long as you smuggled them down the back staircase and out of the Club before breakfast'.

**Rather too quickly for one member, a retired station book-keeper who had been away when the all-important changes about females in the Club were taking place. One morning, he was sitting quietly in the downstairs lounge when a lady guest descended the stairs and walked out of the Club. The member's astonishment was matched only by speechlessness.

***Using the same device that was used to draw the New South Wales State Lottery.

sufficient young men. If passed medically fit, the young men so chosen had then to serve for two years in the army, with the possibility of being sent to Vietnam. Alternatively, a young man could opt to serve in the Citizens Military Forces. He had to join the CMF before the ballot and, if his birth-date was chosen, then serve for a total of six years. Many university students took this option and the Queensland University Regiment, then commanded by a Club member, Lieutenant Colonel R I 'Sam' Harrison, was particularly strong in the late 1960s-early 1970s. The expansion of the CMF created a demand for young officers; many university students were commissioned and, with the graduates of the recently established Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU), provided a useful source of new, young members. Other Club members then serving with the CMF in positions involving the commissioning of young officers were Lieutenant Colonels (as they were then) Colin Wilson and Vern Mullins. Both were enthusiastic and dedicated recruiters for the Club; Lieutenant Colonel Wilson, then commanding the 49th Battalion, The Royal Queensland Regiment, also held frequent dinners for his officers in the Club. These dinners were rarely quiet or sedate occasions.

The minutes for 6 February 1967 reflect this new source of young officers. Lieutenant Colonel Cameron noted there was a graduation ceremony for newly commissioned CMF officers to take place on 18 February. He had spoken to the OCTU's commanding officer and felt it would be of great advantage to the Club to invite these graduates to be guests at a drinks party some days before. No doubt, too, the advantages of belonging to the United Service Club would have been gently pointed out to these young men. In his annual report that year, the president noted that 'as a result of ... interest by the Club, the majority of young officers graduating from the metropolitan area of Brisbane have now joined the Club'. The interest was helped along in a material fashion, as well; the Club also donated a sword of honour to the top graduate of the OCTU. This sword, although donated by the Club, was actually presented to the student by the General Officer Commanding Northern Command at the time. Apparently some committee members felt that the ceremony should have been carried out by the president. This was discussed at the February meeting, and resolved to have 'appropriate discussions' for the next year. Many of the young officers who joined the United Service Club in this period have retained their membership as they have become prominent in business and the professions over the past two decades. Their ranks include three current Supreme Court judges - Mr Justice Paul De Jersey, Mr Justice John Byrne and Mr Justice John Dowsett, all of whom were commissioned as officers of the Queensland University Regiment in the late 1960s.

* * *

As the country came out of the early 1960s credit squeeze, the Club's properties continued to attract potential developers. In 1967 the committee was approached by Stuart Bros, a property developer and building company, with yet another proposal to develop the Wickham Terrace site. Several months elapsed before this proposal actually came before the committee, and it seemed to have changed slightly in that time. The correspondence does not survive and we are left only with the minutes and the annual reports for the period. Certainly by April 1967, the committee was considering a proposal that Stuart Bros would build a 120-unit motel block, with the Club occupying two floors on top. Stuart Bros also proposed that the Club become the mortgagor for the whole project; the developers would arrange for a motel organisation to take over the tenancy on a 20 year lease with the rental from this, plus the Club's own rental, to be the basis of the repayment of the loan. At the end of this period, the entire property would revert to Club ownership.

Consideration of the proposal took several months. In September that committee had three main concerns about the proposal: the financial standing of the lessee; could the lessee successfully run a motel and pay the proposed rental; and would the space allocated to the Club be sufficient for our needs, and would the proposed layout be practical. Again the committee drew on the legal expertise of one of its number, Lieutenant Colonel Kelly. As the Club was to be located on the top of the building, it was doubtful whether a separate licence would be issued for a bottle department on the ground floor. Lieutenant Colonel Kelly said the issue should be explored as soon as possible. It was clear that a special sub-committee should examine the proposal and report back.

On closer examination of the proposal, the committee decided not to go ahead. Lieutenant Colonel Kelly's point about the licensing requirement was one important factor in this decision but of over-riding importance was the economics. In a special report to the committee, the sub-committee noted:

The Club liability would also extend to retiring the present overdraft, if present improvements were demolished - as they would have to be - plus the cost of 'bridging' accommodation, pending availability of new premises. To this would have to be added the cost to the Club of furnishing its own new premises. One thing is clear- apart from the bridging accommodation, refurnishing, extinction of bank overdraft and depreciation, the Club would be committed to a fixed additional annual outlay of a minimum of \$26,842 or some \$500 a week. The prospect of this responsibility is formidable.

Still, the committee was keen on the idea of redeveloping the site, although negotiations with Stuart Bros petered out. The minutes note that 'any' proposal would be received and considered; Civil and Civic Pty Ltd showed an interest in the Club's premises. After the Stuart Bros proposal had been examined in some detail,

it was clear that motel type accommodation was not suitable for the site. Wickham Terrace, with the construction of the Tower Mill motel, was quickly assuming the mantle of 'motel row', although the committee thought that a building which contained shops and offices might be more suitable as it would be less expensive to construct and offered the possibilities of greater returns. This was before the construction of major international five-star standard hotels in Brisbane such as the Sheraton and the Hilton. At this time, motel accommodation was on the outskirts of the Central Business District, with a series of buildings along Wickham Terrace, others along Alice Street and across the river at Kangaroo Point. Proposals to convert the Club's land to a motel-type building needed to be closely examined at the time; the Club was fortunate to have committees comprised, in the main, of conservative and cautious men.

Lieutenant Colonel Little retired from the committee in 1967, after 26 years membership, including two years as president. As Lieutenant Colonel Cameron said in his annual report for that year, 'It was mainly due to his efforts and foresight that we own our valuable property in Wickham Terrace today.' But Little was back at the December 1967, committee meeting, where he was presented with a gold-plated key to the committee room, which he was invited to use 'at his pleasure'.* It was a thoughtful gesture to a man who had devoted much of his life to the Club.

In 1968, the Club changed the method of categorising allied members. Originally this category of membership applied to any person who held a commission in the armed service of any friendly foreign power. In 1962, this rule was amended so that the privilege of allied membership would not be extended to anyone not already enjoying that privilege. Apparently this had led to complications. However, there were a number of former American officers living in Queensland who had raised the possibility of their joining the Club. The 1968 rule change allowed them to do so.

At the same annual general meeting, Major Peter Henderson raised the question of the Club's catering. Later the Club's solicitor, always a good Club man and often an indefatigable questioner at annual meetings, Major Henderson was perturbed that the standard was not good enough to attract members to eat in the dining room. The financial position of the Club was strong still, but membership was declining, and the committee should take more positive steps to increase the number of members using the dining-room. It was a good point, because Brisbane's restaurants started to multiply from the end of the 1960s and the Club had some stiff competition for eating places. And, as Lieutenant Colonel Little said in his trustee's report, the feeling of pessimism among members at the financial status was not justified. The

*And, one occasion, to the embarrassment of Little and his family, the Club stalwart had mixed up his nights and was entertaining the family on the night of a committee meeting. Such was Little's personality, however, the committee members waited until their former president and his family left.

overdraft had been reduced by \$4000 and there was a surplus of real estate over secured credit of \$97,238.

The Club was soon to add to its property. In March, 1969, Lieutenant Colonel Cameron told the committee that his company had been negotiating with the owner of a property situated at No 51, Berry Street, Spring Hill. The price originally asked was \$21,000 but the owner had come down to \$18,000. Another property on the eastern side of Berry Street had sold for \$30,000 but Lieutenant Colonel Cameron said he regarded this figure as far too high. The new president, Captain K C Campbell, had arranged a loan of \$18,000 over eight years at 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ percent. Thus financed, the Berry Street property was bought and so the potential existed for improved car-parking facilities. As the annual report notes, the allotment with the frontage to Berry Street was immediately put into use as a car park. The property acquisition program continued with the purchase of San Remo on Upper Edward Street soon afterwards for \$26,500.

The late 1960s saw the introduction of the Club's monthly bulletin, UNISER. Previously, the Club had published a mid-winter bulletin but this was the first attempt to keep members informed of events in the Club on such a regular basis. This was essential for members were finding other attractions in a city that was, perhaps only then, beginning to emerge from the effects of World War II and the slowness of the post-war years. Keeping the interest of members was a constant problem, as Captain Yates, the 1963 president, had noted.

Gentlemen [he wrote in that year's annual report] we are inclined to overlook the fact that in addition to being members of a Club, we are members of a very considerable business and owners of a most valuable and spacious property. Therefore it behoves all of us to take a more active interest in the affairs of our Club. Your committee will always look forward to receiving constructive suggestions from members in this matter.

Yet during the 1960s, membership actually declined. The 1960 annual report lists 2601 members, down from the 2695 members the previous year. By the end of the decade, the Club had 2294 members, up slightly from the year before with 2265. In the 1969 annual report, the president, Captain Campbell wrote:

It is gratifying to note that our membership figures are improving. This, of course, is reflected by the attendance within the Club and at our very successful functions during the year by members and their ladies...It is gratifying to note that the reducing membership of the last few years has been arrested. This in no small way is due to the younger officers of the services who have seen the value of Club membership and their interest in the Club is greatly appreciated.

The 1960s also saw the Club begin to acquire gifts and property which continues to adorn the premises to this day. In 1967, for example, Sir Byrne Hart, then a trustee,

donated an elegant chandelier which was hung in the coffee lounge and which now hangs in the dining room. An allied member, Captain J F H ter Meulen gave the Club what was described as a 'a unique and very beautiful madeira tapestry which bears the seal of the Portuguese Government indicating that it is the only work of its kind in the world'. The 5th Light Horse association gave the Club a bust of long-time member Sir Donald Cameron, commanding officer of the regiment at the end of World War I. In the 1966 annual report, Brigadier McEachern appealed to members 'to honour the Club with art gifts for the enrichment of its atmosphere and as permanent expression of appreciation of the Club's objectives, its fellowship and its place in the affairs of Officers in several wars'.

The following year, Lieutenant Colonel Cameron was able to record that the Club had added to its collection: an Ivor Hele reproduction of signallers in action in New Guinea, donated by Captain A G 'Bert' Brayne; a shield bearing crossed kukris and the regimental badges of the four Gurkha regiments then still with the British Army, from Captain John Somerville; a frame depicting World War I colour patches from Major Bob Collier; a print of the First Australian Fleet entering Sydney Harbour from Captain Reg. Walter and from Captain Ken Campbell, an original painting by John Rowell of a pastoral scene. Although the donations of art works to the Club did not cease, subsequent annual reports for the rest of the decade make no mention of recent acquisitions.

In many ways, too, the 1960s saw the maturing of the Club and certainly of its members. The slow decline of the cricket club activities suggests that the dreaded *anno domino* was catching up with members. At the beginning of the decade, the annual reports listed about 20 fixtures either played or to be played by the Club. By the end of the decade, however the cricket club was scarcely mentioned in the annual report and only infrequently in the minutes; certainly the active cricketers of the early 1950s - the Tuckfields, the Browns, the Murphys and their like - were settling for the occasional social matches. The decade of the 1960s for the Club was also, for so many of the World War II members, their decade of the forties. It is a period in a man's life when the physical and sporting limitations imposed by encroaching middle age are finally, if at times reluctantly, accepted.

Although the late 1960s were turbulent years, the Club remained largely untouched. There is no mention in the minutes or the newsletters of the war in Vietnam, or the divisions that Australia's involvement had created here. Young officers were still choosing to hold their wedding receptions in the Club; younger members were contributing greatly to the Club's continued prosperity. The Club ended the 1960s in good financial shape, with solid membership lists, but also with a realisation among members that changed drinking and entertaining habits had made the position of clubs such as the United Service rather less comfortable than before. From now on, successive committees would struggle with the problems caused by reduced trading and with attempts to restore the position to something approaching that enjoyed in the immediate post war years.

New Challenges

A measure of the difficulties being experienced by licensed clubs in the early 1970s can be gained from the 1971 annual report. In it the president, Wing Commander Gordon Olive, had some gloomy news for members. The past year, he said, had produced a number of serious problems. After a normally buoyant festive season, member's support for both the bar and the dining room had declined dramatically. Unlike earlier years, which had seen similar declines, trading had failed to recover after the holiday season. The decline continued until August (Exhibition Time) when there was some recovery. Indeed, 1971 was not a good year for the Club. Profit dropped by nearly \$21,000, resulting from increased wages - up by \$12,000 - and a reduced profit from lower trading by \$9000. Added the president in his annual report:

Whilst it is expected that the higher annual subscription will assist in maintaining the Club in a reasonable financial state, a complete review of the staffing position has also been carried out, which has resulted in some retrenchments. These savings will obviously be reflected in our future figures but members must appreciate that this could result in some possible reductions of service. An example of this is that the Top Bar will in future not open until 11.30 a.m. and that on Saturdays drinks will be served from the servery bar.

Wing Commander Olive said several reasons were being put forward for the poor trading position. These included: 'Economic pressures mounting at an alarming rate, especially school and university fees which are believed to concern a majority of our patrons, especially the ex-World War II members; steep rises in the cost of food and drinks as a result of the very large rises in the liquor trades employees' award; increased dedication and devotion to duty displayed by police breathalyser teams; the somewhat protracted and hot summer which discouraged city-based members from "climbing the hill"; increased numbers of city members becoming members of other clubs which were much easier to reach, especially in the hot summer months; increasing number of our members making a determined effort to reduce their intake of alcohol on their doctor's advice'.

Whatever the reasons, said Wing Commander Olive, the decline in trading worried the committee and many questions about the future needed to be faced. 'Not the least of these has been the location of the Club and whether it is likely to be



Wing Commander Frederick George Christensen (1913-69). President 1957-59.



Major General Donald Ross Kerr CBE ED (1910-85). President 1960-61.



Captain James Thomas Yates. Born 1914. President 1962-63.

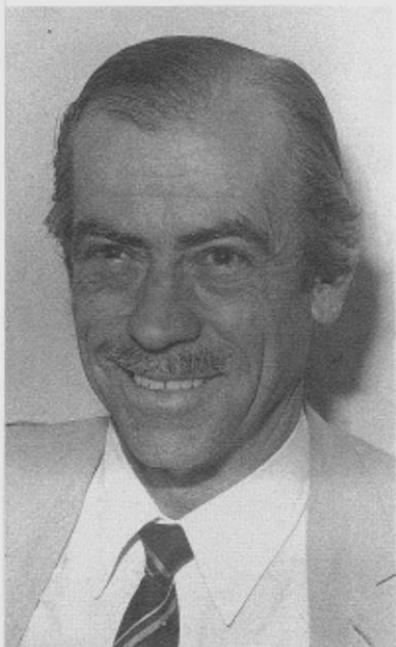
Club Ball, 1967. HE The Hon Sir Alan Mansfield KCMG receiving a debutante.





*Brigadier Cranston Albury
McEachern DSO ED (1905-
84). President 1964-65.*

*Wing Commander Charles
Gordon Chaloner Olive CBE
DFC AE (1916-88). Presi-
dent 1970-71.*



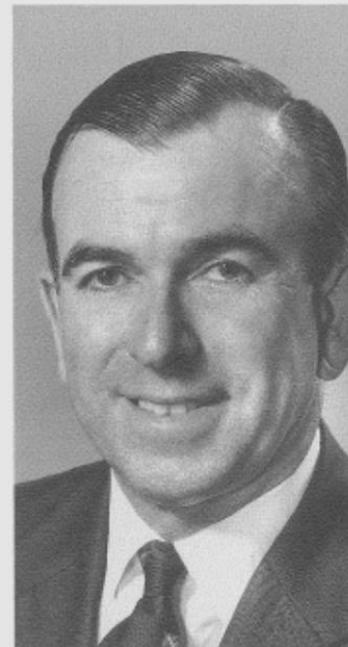
*Lieutenant Colonel Richard William
Cameron DSO ED. Born 1916. Presi-
dent 1966-67. Trustee 1984.*

*Air Commodore Deryck William
Kingwell CBE DSO. Born 1916.
President 1972.*



*Captain Kenneth Carlisle
Campbell. Born 1912.
President 1968-69.*

*Group Captain Percy
Raymund Smith. Born 1920.
President 1973-74.*



increasingly in the wrong place in the years ahead, as all members get older,' added Olive. It is an interesting point, and one which did not seem to emerge 25 years earlier when the Club first moved up to Wickham Terrace. However, as members became older, the long climb up Edward Street became less attractive to some, particularly in summer. It might well be that Gordon Olive was excessively gloomy in that report. The steepness of the hill up Edward Street does not seem to have deterred even quite senior members on the warmest of days. At the same time, the Club was losing a small but significant number of members to other clubs, the Queensland Club for professional men whose careers were well established; the Brisbane Club for businessmen; Tattersalls Club for sportsmen. In Brisbane, the United Service Club is *sui generis* and seeks neither to compete with other clubs nor attract their members.

Still occasionally at committee meetings, a disgruntled member would remark about the unfavourable comparisons between the standard of meals served at these latter two clubs and the standard of those served at the United Service Club. It was pointed out that both Tattersalls and the Brisbane Club could subsidise the operations of their dining rooms from the very considerable income from property investments and in the case of the latter, very much higher subscriptions. Still, the United Service Club was at something of a cross-roads. In his president's report that year, Olive also outlined the options available to members: negotiate with a developer to build on the site and thus modernise and consequently improve the Club's facilities - taking part of the new building as ours; sell the site for a suitable amount and build elsewhere in the city; discuss with other clubs of comparable status the possibility of promoting a club building which could house two or more clubs providing parking and possibly service facilities (kitchen and accommodation) in common. This had been achieved in London with some of our affiliated clubs.

As Olive said, one over-riding consideration was the size of the membership in 20 years time that could be predicted with any accuracy 'when most of us will no longer be the active supporters we are today and when a large potential membership resulting from World War II has declined to peace time dimensions with a potential of perhaps a fifth or less of the present membership. Remember, too, that if we are spared another war, the number of eligible people will fall off very significantly. Thus the space requirements of this Club could be much less than it is at the present moment which, right now, is considerably in excess of our needs'.

It is possible to detect in the minutes and other records for this early 1970s period a sense that, perhaps, the Club, and the various sub-committees, might have been trying to do too much. Certainly for some members the enthusiasm was still there for the Club's major activities each year - the Ball, the Patron's Dinner, the Show Week At Home - but some of the other events had begun to trail off. For example, in the 1970 report, the president, Captain K C Campbell, noted: 'There were occasions when we would have liked to have seen more of our members and their guests at some

of the functions, although the lack of members in no way detracted from the success of the occasion'. But that year, the committee had cancelled one planned social activity, a Swinging Seventies Night, and within the sports and social sub-committee, there was some careful examination of the number of functions the Club was holding.

On 18 January, 1971, the sports and social sub-committee met to produce an outline programme of activities for the year. Convened by Lieutenant Colonel Rodney Fay*, this sub-committee was mindful that, in the opinion of many members, too many functions had been held the year before. In the Club calendar, some functions were sacrosanct: The Annual Ball, Exhibition Week At Home, Patrons Dinner and Wine Tastings. The Governor-General had been invited to dinner; that, too, was an immovable feast so long as the Governor-General accepted. However, there existed clearly the feeling that each new sub-committee approached its task with enthusiasm, anxious to do as well, at least, if not better than its predecessor; the result was to impose a social burden on members. This, of course, is not uncommon in any organisation where the leadership changes on a regular basis. Most service men and women are all too familiar with the 'new broom' kind of leader who is anxious to show that he is going to do the job better than his predecessor - usually at the expense of his subordinates.

Lieutenant Colonel Fay was a member who enjoyed the company of his fellows, a 'clubbable man', to borrow Dr Johnson's description of his old friend Boswell;** he led a group of equally clubbable companions in Lieutenant Colonel Colin Wilson, Group Captain Ray Smith and Captain Bill Kidston. Even so, this sub-committee was forced to modify its programme to suit the demands of members perhaps less committed to the Club than themselves.

Still, apart from the social difficulties, the Club committee was continually assessing the real property potential and opportunities of their premises. In early 1970, the developers, Civil & Civic, approached the re-development sub-committee with plans for a car park to be built on or at the rear of the site. At the time, the Club was looking for a building project that would give a reasonable return but at a cost which the Club could afford. In this matter, Civil & Civic had as a member of their staff a Club member, Lieutenant Commander J E J Nottidge, who outlined in detail his firm's proposal. The car park, presumably similar to the one located just southeast of the Club, was to have lifts and air-conditioning. Because of Civil & Civic's reputation in the field, Lieutenant Commander Nottidge believed there would be

*Later Major-General Fay AO, RFD, ED, Chief of the Army Reserve.

** 'The clubbable man does not merely get something out of his club, but in addition, he contributes something to it. He possesses more than the mere 'fitness' for membership which is, after all, a negative virtue; the club will be, by however so little, the richer by his membership.' President's message, *United Service Club Bulletin*, Midwinter, 1960.

few problems in co-ordinating construction. Finance for the project could be arranged, either through the State Government Insurance Office, as Suncorp was then known, or through the MLC Assurance Association. The mood of this early meeting was enthusiastic, but also cautious. It was made clear to the Civil & Civic representative that any project should be self-supporting from the start, because of the recent rise in interest rates.

By now, a certain pattern was emerging in approaches to the Club for redevelopment. The ideas appeared to be attractive but often required the Club to assume a proportion - sometimes a large proportion - of the risk. The developer's profit, presumably, would be in the construction and subsequent letting. As Lieutenant Colonel Cameron pointed out at a later committee meeting, all the propositions so far put to the Club depended on the Club financing the development. The present Club site was profitable, acceptable to members and, if it was to be re-developed, the Club would have to move during the construction phase with possible adverse results on the activities. Here was a central problem for any re-development proposition: How was the Club to function during construction phase? Moreover, what was the point of going into debt to finance future facilities that were not then needed by members and might not be needed in the future?

Efforts, too, to increase the membership were resulting in a spread of members. There were significant numbers of members who had joined before World War II; there were men who had joined in the huge expansion following that war and the move to Wickham Terrace and there were newer members, who had been commissioned in either the Regular Army or the Citizens Military Force since the end of the war and particularly in the expansion of the army for Vietnam.* This spread of members, while healthy for the Club's future, also made it difficult for committees to provide suitable social functions and at a reasonable price. What was a reasonable price to a World War II vintage member, now well established and comfortably off, was prohibitive for a younger member, with the responsibilities of families. For example, the sports and social sub-committee on 19 August 1970 noted that the number of members attending functions was declining: 160 had attended the Terrace Party; only 73 the 'April in Paris' evening of that year.

The reason behind the discussion was the concern the sub-committee has had for some time regarding the costs of 'In Club' functions. It is considered that the high costs are one of the reasons ...for the low attendances.

*To take the applicants for membership from one random meeting at the beginning of the 1970s, they included: Major M J Harris MC, who was an early 1960s graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon and later commanded the 1st Military District. Other members admitted on that day include at least two recent graduates of the University Regiment and a regimental medical officer for CMF field regiment. A 1967 member of the Club was Lt M J Keating an RMC graduate of that year and, at the time of writing, Brigadier Keating, commander of the 3rd Brigade in Townsville.

That year, too, the sports and social sub-committee had some problems with the ball. Held on 7 August at the City Hall, the official guest was the General Officer Commanding Northern Command, Major General A L MacDonald. The ball was extremely popular and attracted a large number of members and guests. However, as the annual report, somewhat cryptically notes, there were some problems: 'The committee is aware of the comments received from a number of members who attended the Ball over the enthusiasm of the bands, and this will be borne in mind when planning the ball for next year'. It appears that the music was simply too loud for all members, and not just those whose musical tastes might have been formed in days before bands played with amplifiers and elaborate sound systems. It must have been a difficult night, because the minutes of the sports and social sub-committee record: 'Despite efforts during the evening by the secretary to reduce the noise, it continued to be too loud'. And, added the minutes:

In future the sub-committee [is] to pay more attention to the engaging of the band, and if possible, hear them before making a decision. This will mean that it will have to engage the bands for 1971 early in the year. It is also realised that there was not sufficient difference between the sound of the bands and the type of music.

Following suggestions the previous year, the Club actually engaged two bands for the Ball so that there would be music most, if not all, the time. However the Club had yet to come to terms with the enormous changes that afflicted popular music in the 1960s and 1970s. Gone were the orchestras of earlier years; gone, too, were many of the smaller jazz bands who could have provided more suitable music for a ball.* What was left was a limited choice of sometimes indifferent musicians who disguised, often none too well, their lack of talent behind a wall of sound. The effect on the members and their ladies at the Ball can only be imagined; the sports and social sub-committee was suitably chastened by the experience.

In December 1970, at the annual general meeting, the Club took the then momentous step of admitting to the category of associate members those ladies who had held commissions in any of the armed forces. Speaking to the amendment, Lieutenant Colonel Cameron said that when associate membership had first been introduced, the committee had been conservative in its outlook until it had first ascertained how many ladies would take advantage of the proposition. At that time, the Club had 225 associate members who were, according to the annual report, using the facilities of the Club in greater numbers. Under these circumstances, the time had now come for the category to be extended to female commissioned officers.

*Like the Varsity Five, which played frequently at Government House in the 1960s and which featured on clarinet, a onetime Club member and later Colonel Lachie Thompson and, on banjo the now prominent Brisbane doctor and former RAAF medical officer, Mileham Hayes.

This, many years before other clubs were forced to open their members lists to women, the United Service Club was doing so, admittedly in the different - if not lesser - category of associate members.

The Battle of the Coral Sea, in May 1942, had always been commemorated in Brisbane, usually with a senior American officer, either from the US Navy or, sometimes the US Air Force, attending. In the late 1960s, perhaps due to the preoccupations of the war in Vietnam, those visits to Brisbane ended. In 1970, however, the American Government re-introduced the custom and the Club was visited by Rear Admiral David F Welch of the US Navy. The visit was a great success, with a well-attended address by the admiral in the top bar, after which he was lunched by the committee. The visit, however, did not necessarily mean that the following year's function would be simply organised and prepared.

In recent years, certainly since the New Zealand Government withdrew from the ANZUS Treaty, the Coral Sea celebrations have assumed a greater importance in Australian-American relations. In 1992, 50 years after the battle, the celebrations reached a peak of interest, helped on both sides of the Pacific by the visit of the United States President George Bush early in the year. Certainly interest on both sides of the Pacific has fluctuated over the years and will probably never be as great as in 1992. But in 1971, after a couple of years of low interest, there was some scepticism about the form of the day within the Club. Even before the identity of the official guest was known, the Committee was making it clear that they had some reservations about the day.

At a committee meeting on 2 February 1971 Lieutenant Colonel Fay said he supported the idea of a Coral Sea lunch, but members would not come unless the official guest was a serving officer. Group Captain Smith, who was also vice-president of the Australian-American Association, said the association's view was that the service implications of Coral Sea Day be played down, and the day be seen as a general mark of friendship between the two nations. And so the discussion continued. The American Government had decided to send out another senior naval officer, Admiral McCain, who was entertained in the Club in the usual manner. But the minutes suggest that not all the committee members were convinced the 'tradition' had been properly fixed. That meeting in February 1971 also decided to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Royal Australian Air Force and in some style, not surprisingly given the preponderance of former and serving RAAF officers on the committee at the time. These included: the president Wing Commander Gordon Olive, Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams, Air Commodore Deryck Kingwell, Flight Lieutenant jock Tuckfield, Group Captain Ray Smith and Squadron Leader Des Dyer.

Originally it was decided that the Club should hold a formal dinner, on 2 April 1971, to commemorate the birthday. It was thought to be an excellent idea, but one small problem existed: Who should be the guest of honour? At the following meeting

in March, the president admitted that, so far, he had not been able to come up with a guest of honour for the dinner. If no senior RAAF officer could be found, then the Club would invite the Governor, Sir Alan Mansfield, to attend. Then, at a meeting of the sports and social sub-committee on 10 March, the president reported that Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams had accepted an invitation to be the guest of honour at the Club. It was an inspired choice; 'Dicky' Williams, is regarded as the 'father' of the modern-day RAAF. The president reported that attempts were being made to have Sir Richard flown to Brisbane for the dinner, but if this could not be done, then the Club would pay the fare and, of course, provide accommodation for the night. Sir Frederick Scherger, a former Chief of the Air Staff and then general manager of Trans Australian Airlines, agreed to the Club's request to fly this distinguished Australian aviator to Brisbane for the dinner.* At the following committee meeting, Air Commodore Kingwell, then commanding RAAF Amberley, offered to provide transport from the airport to the Club for this most important guest of honour. The evening was a splendid success, with a capacity crowd.

About the same time the Club entertained the Governor-General, Sir Paul Hasluck. With the Governor-General was his army aide-de-camp, the young infantry captain and Vietnam veteran Guy Montague Bagot, later to return to the Club as its secretary and manager in 1985 after a distinguished army career. This, too, was a capacity house and was thought then by some committee members to be first time in its history the Club had entertained a Governor-General, although a distinguished Federal politician who subsequently became Governor-General, Sir Richard (later Lord) Casey had been a guest of the Club. The memories of the committee were short; this was not the case; before World War II, Governors-General were frequently guests at balls and other similarly important occasions.

* * *

By the middle of 1971, it was clear that the Club's profitability was beginning to suffer. Views on the cause of this decline differed: an increase in the cost of goods and services used by the Club, in particular wages; declining patronage because of poor service. At a meeting on 29 April, 1971, the financial position was thoroughly discussed. There seemed no alternative to the Club's predicament than an increase in subscriptions, a move that no incumbent committee approaches with much satisfaction. In the process of researching a possible subscriptions increase, some figures were extracted on the relationship between membership and profit. Membership of the United Service Club reached an early peak in 1956 at 2932. Then, little more than a decade after the Second World War, membership began to

*This took some negotiating. In those comfortable days of the two-airline policy, both airlines agreed that they would issue no free tickets. An exception to this rule was made for Williams.

decline until 1969. The figures also revealed, however, that there was little real correlation between membership numbers and a fee increase. On the two occasions since the war that fees had been increased - in 1960 and 1966 - membership the following year showed little falling off. Still, the president, Wing Commander Olive, could write in the 1971 annual report:

It has been a satisfactory year from the point of view of membership retention and extension, as the figures show only a drop of four members, which is more than catered for by natural causes, and it is very pleasing to see once again an increase in the 'under 25' group. Reduction of membership figures, due to an increase in subscriptions, is not reflected in the year under review, but as this report goes to Press, it can be seen that the year ahead will be extremely difficult, as the traditionally large number of resignations that accompany a subscription increase is already evident.

The early 1970s were also a difficult period for business, not just the Club. Although Australia was yet to experience the worst of the wage inflation that came in the period between 1972 and 1975, already there were shocks in the international economic system resulting from the United States' involvement in Vietnam and the huge effect that war was having on inflation in that country. A meeting on 15 July 1971 wrestled with the problem of declining use of the Club, worries about the Club's future, redevelopment proposals which would, if accepted, change fundamentally the nature of the Club and continuing competition from other interests. One proposal which the committee examined briefly was a joint arrangement with the Brisbane Club of locating both organisations in the same building. But there were other, more fundamental problems that needed to be corrected by the committee.

[The President] then stated that our standard of catering was poor and advised the meeting that the secretary had been directed to endeavour to correct this. The secretary had been advised that he is the manager and could implement committee policy and would have full authority of the committee.

There seems little doubt that the standard of the catering in the Club was less than splendid. It had been the subject of complaints by members in informal approaches to committee members; the topic also had been raised by a well-known Club member, Major Peter Henderson, at the previous year's general meeting. Only some months before had the question of steaks arisen during a committee meeting; apparently the catering staff were having difficulties in identifying rare, medium and well-done steaks to the satisfaction of members. After much deliberation, the committee decided that the steaks should carry appropriate flags showing the degree of cooking to which they had been subjected. If this is any indication of the sophistication of Club catering at the time, then it is little wonder that dining room

patronage was declining. The early 1970s saw the beginning of a restaurant boom in Brisbane, particularly in the cheap 'bring your own liquor' establishments. Changes to the licensing laws made it possible for these restaurants to open without elaborate lavatory and washroom facilities and the pattern of eating-out in Brisbane began to change. As well, too, motel chains such as the Park Royal and the Travelodge were offering quite sophisticated meals in their dining rooms; at the time, the United Service Club would have had difficulty attracting and holding dining room patrons even if it could get its steaks right!

But there was another fundamental problem in the Club: Was the secretary a secretary, or indeed a secretary manager? The minutes for this meeting suggest that a problem already had arisen and that the secretary, Lieutenant Colonel Aley, saw himself as a manager, implementing Club policy on behalf of the committee. This, however, was not how some of the committee members saw it, although after some discussion it was agreed that the secretary would carry out the duties of a secretary/manager.

Running through this period of the late 1960s- early 1970s is a distinct feeling that, perhaps, the Club was occupying premises that had become too large for modern day use. Social habits had changed; drink-driving was a very serious offence and one, thanks to modern technology, which was increasingly easy to detect. Club members, being respectable members of the community, in no way wanted to test the proficiency of the police in detecting this crime. Perhaps the Club was interested in selling some of its property? If so, there were members who might easily have been potential buyers.

It would be churlish and unfair to suggest that these members sensed that they might have done well out of the deal. However, the minutes for the period seem almost indignant in putting down any suggestion that the Club's property be sold. 'A question was asked on how the possibility of the Club property being sold had been publicised and in answer the President stated that a number of members had been inquiring about the future policy of the Club.' There is some sensitivity in the way these words were carefully phrased.

But it is clear that the committee was pursuing all avenues of improving the Club's performance. As Wing Commander Olive said in the 1971 annual report:

a great number of World War II officers who were eligible at the time, did not join the Club after the war. Most frequent reasons were inability to use the Club as they were busy on rehabilitation courses, raising young families and their financial position could not justify the expense. In many cases they are now phasing out of the high cost area of growing families and with the prospect of more time and less pressure on their hip pocket nerves, could find the Club eminently to their taste. Memembrs should consider people in their own circles who are in this category and make a drive to recruit more members.

As a temporary measure the Committee looked at the possibility of allowing members to pay their fees on a half-yearly basis. This idea had been examined on a fairly frequent basis and decided against because of the administrative and other costs involved. Still, it was a reasonable suggestion. Finally the committee decided on a concerted membership drive through the columns of UNISER and with existing members. As the president pleaded in the annual report:

Present experience indicates that we could easily accommodate twice the current membership, as we believe only one person in five or six who is eligible, has joined since the war, a determined recruiting effort by every member could do wonders for the Club. This is over to you all.

The Club after Vietnam

By the middle of 1972, Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War had virtually ended. The last infantry battalions had returned home earlier in the year; logistics troops were packing up and leaving; in Australia the numbers of young men being conscripted were reduced and their term had been shortened from two years to 18 months; public support for the war was almost non-existent; everywhere, the military seemed to be on the defensive. Although the heyday of the huge moratorium marches had passed, protest was by no means a thing of the past, the peace and anti-war movement - if such a disparate coalition of protest groups can be so described - seemed to be in the ascendant.

In Canberra the Liberal Government led by William McMahon - after a short experiment with John Grey Gorton - looked to be in serious trouble; relations with the United States were the differing approaches to the war in Vietnam; some American politicians and service officers thought that Australia had wound down its Vietnam involvement with rather too much haste. In the media, in the schools and universities, even in the public service, there were strong feelings against the war in Vietnam and against all matters military. Forced to bear the brunt of an unpopular war, the military seemed to retreat into a shell.* This anti-war, anti-Vietnam veteran feeling permeated many aspects of society, even going so far as to affect the United Service Club.

The Club had usually invited a senior serving American officer as a guest during the celebrations to mark the battle of the Coral Sea in May, 1942. In May 1972, however, the Australian-American Association reported to the Club that the Coral Sea visitor this year would not be a serving officer but the Embassy's Head of Mission in Canberra. This gentleman had only a limited time in Brisbane and the only time available would have been at 4.30 p.m. on a Wednesday afternoon. Clearly this was unsuitable; the Club had been in the habit of hosting a lunch which was very popular with members. As a result, 1972 did not see a Coral Sea Visitor to the Club or a lunch.

Unlike World War II, Vietnam did not produce a sudden rush of veterans who joined as members. Ironically, many of the new members who did join during the Vietnam years - 1962 to 1972-were members of the Citizens Military Forces and used that form of service as an alternative to conscription for two years with the possibility of a year's active service in Vietnam. The Vietnam veterans who were members of the

*Even going so far as to prevent soldiers going on leave in uniform.

Club tended to be professional soldiers who had joined while serving in Brisbane. At the time of writing, the Club has had two presidents who served in Vietnam as regular officers - Brigadier Lee Greville* and Major-General William 'Digger' James - as well as former Citizens Military Force officers such as Brigadier 'Sam' Harrison, Colonel Vern Mullins and Brigadier Colin Wilson, who were among the many who visited the Australian Task Force in Phuoc Tuy province for two week periods as part of their duties. However, relatively few national servicemen who were commissioned through the Army's Officer Training Unit** at Scheyville, near Windsor in Sydney have joined the Club.

Like the campaigns in Malaya and Borneo and, to a lesser extent, Korea, Vietnam was a war fought by professional soldiers. Many former professional soldiers joined during membership drives in the early 1980s, but few of the young men who spent eighteen months or so of their lives as national service officers during Vietnam were attracted to the Club. Certainly some joined, but found that the more sedate atmosphere was not to their liking. In at least one case, a former national service officer clashed with a Club secretary and had, in the vernacular, a 'full and free exchange of views'. The young man, now prominent in Brisbane business life, subsequently resigned his membership. It remains a challenge for future committees to attract as members a proportion of the 1500 or so men, now in their forties, who were commissioned at Scheyville during conscription for Vietnam.

* * *

In the 1970s, while the Club's committee was wrestling with important issues such as declining patronage, it also found time for the other, smaller, but no less important decisions that go towards making up a successful and well-run club. Memorabilia and insignia, for example. The Club's cuff-links, still a popular item with members, date from the early 1970s. The suggestion that the Club purchase cuff links with the crest on them had been around for some time. At a meeting of the house and finance sub-committee on 25 May, 1972, Flight Lieutenant Adams said he had investigated the cost of production. A two-colour set would cost about \$1.50. The meeting endorsed the idea and also decided to investigate the possibility of buying tie-bars with the matching crest. At various times in its past, the Club has offered blazer pockets, blazer buttons and, of course, Club ties. Sadly, blazer badges and

*Brigadier Greville DSO commanded the 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment on its first tour in 1968-69; Major General James AO, MBE, MC commanded 8th Field Ambulance in 1968. And, of course, a Vietnam veteran in the secretary and manager, Lieutenant Colonel Guy Bagot LVO.

**Among the former national service officers who have joined are Lieutenant Geoff Colless, a committee member from 1980 to the present and Second Lieutenant Bob Minnikin, who has been a driving force behind the Commonwealth Games, Expo and now the Gold Coast Indy.

buttons have lost their popularity, under joint pressures of changing fashions and costs, but the distinctive Club tie remains a popular item. With the restoration of the simple blue blazer or reefer jacket as a fashion item, it is time perhaps for the Club committee to investigate the purchase of distinctive Club buttons.

* * *

Certainly the financial pressures of the early 1970s forced the committee to look at methods of saving money. The Club was using a commercial laundry for sheets, etc and it was thought that a church laundry, very possibly the Holy Cross Laundry at Woolloowin, would charge a lower price than a commercial operation. Although several church laundries were approached, only one bothered to reply and its prices were comparable with the Club's commercial laundry. Every cent counted; savings were important in all areas of operations.

During this period, too, the Club's property continued to attract interest of potential developers. In May 1972, the Club had an approach from Westfield (Indooroopilly) Pty Ltd, indicating that they were interested in buying the property. The president, Wing Commander Olive, also told the May committee meeting that he had been also approached by Civil & Civic Pty Ltd. This company wanted to buy the Wickham Terrace site and provide the Club with a strata title facilities in some new, unspecified location. By now, the committee was well aware of the attractiveness of the Wickham Terrace site to potential developers and the need to be careful when considering prospective development proposals.

At this committee meeting, Lieutenant Colonels Wilson and Harrison, both men with wide business experience, urged caution; the prospective developers were invited to address the committee. These meetings were held over a series of months, but without any conclusive results. As well, the July 1972 minutes note that the Club was trying to arrange a meeting with the State Minister for Housing and the council architect. Wing Commander Olive told the meeting that he had taken no action on the suggestion because of the impending State elections. This meeting was to discuss the plans prepared by the State Government Insurance Office to redevelop the Central Railway Station site. These plans would have had a direct impact on any possible change of use to its site.

By the end of July that year the Club president was telling the committee that he had tried to arrange a meeting of Government and Brisbane City Council officials to clarify the situation on any future development of the site but had been unable to do so. In the meantime, the Club had yet another developer interested in the site. In many ways the early 1970s saw the beginning of the expansion of what we now know as Brisbane's Central Business District. The late 1960s-early-1970s had seen the construction of such buildings as the MMI and the T&G in Queen Street and the

SGIO Building, just below the Club in Turbot Street. As the business district expanded, the Club's property became more attractive to would-be developers.

Administratively the Club might have been well placed to deal with the plethora of development proposals that appeared briefly, at least according to the minutes, and then disappeared, never to be heard of again. Of course, any development proposal would have had to pass through several stages within the Club itself before it could be put to members. But minutes of a special committee meeting in August 1972 demonstrate the procedural steps which needed to be taken and, by a careful reading between the lines, indicate the reservations which many, perhaps most, committee members had about the kind of redevelopment proposals which were being put forward at the time.

This meeting had been called to examine various offers which had been made for the Club property. Wing Commander Olive told the meeting that committee should first examine whether any move should be made at all. That was an important question and one which has been central to redevelopment proposals for nearly three decades. Olive then told the meeting of the steps that had been taken by both the Naval and Military Club in Melbourne and the Imperial Service Club in Sydney. In both cases, he said, special sub-committees had been formed to analyse the position; these had presented reports to a special general meeting of members for their consideration. After outlining the procedures which he thought should be followed, Olive then told the meeting of the approaches then current: An offer by Security Projects Pty Ltd, the Westfield subsidiary. This company had inspected the Club, before making a proposition and now was pressing for a reply. The other interested party was the major developer Civil & Civic. According to the President, this company had inspected the site and expressed a general interest in acquiring it but had not gone any further. Civil and Civic's idea was to acquire the Club's property and offer it premises over the Central Railway Station in a building yet to be built.

In effect, four choices were available to the committee at this stage. First, to buy a new building in place of the existing premises on Wickham Terrace. This was estimated to cost \$900,000 without furnishings, carpeting and equipment. Even by 1972 standards, this figure seems remarkably low and certainly some committee members at the time favoured this course. Had this option been followed, however, the Club would have had to sell the existing premises; apparently there was no shortage of potential purchasers.

The second option was to move to the proposed premises above Central Station, which was only a minor variation of the first offer. The third plan, that proposed by Westfield, involved building a new Club with a frontage to Upper Edward Street. This proposal had much merit, according to some committee members who could see a smaller club, with parking space retained - thus leading to a better use of resources to fit a declining membership at that time. This would probably be the better plan

in terms of financial conditions. Finally the committee could opt for a complete facelift of the Club, estimated to cost about \$120,000. With existing interest rates a debt of this size borrowed from a finance company would cost about \$13,000 a year to service. In turn this would require both an increase in membership and in trading to service this debt; Wing Commander Olive said he did not think this was likely. These doubts were shared by other committee members.

As well, Anzac House next door was likely to come onto the market. Could the Club make use of this? Again every committee member seemed to have a strong preference. After 90 minutes of solid discussions, Air Commodore Deryck Kingwell moved that any further development or alteration to the Club take place in the present vicinity. And that, for the time being at least, was an end to that. A month later, a special sub-committee was formed to investigate the proposals for redevelopment being put forward. But without any real driving interest on the part of committee members to see the Club move, the deliberations of this sub-committee were to prove once more that members were very happy where they were and could not see the advantage in changing, just for the sake of change.

Indeed, this was precisely the outcome of the sub-committee's efforts. It was decided that the Club should stay put for five years, after which time the proposals would be re-examined in light of what had happened to other buildings in the vicinity. It seems no coincidence that this sub-committee was chaired by Lieutenant Colonel Little and included two senior committee members of sound commercial judgments, Lieutenant Colonels Cameron and Harrison, as well as the lawyer and former Club president, Brigadier McEachern. Air Commodore Kingwell's sensible advice and clear thinking also assisted this committee.

As Wing Commander Olive noted in that year's annual report: 'The committee recommended against the existing offer and further recommended the expenditure of up to \$100,000 for up to five years after which an attractive redevelopment offer should be readily available. I believe this is the right decision but it is the prerogative of a general meeting to review this if members are not in agreement with it.' At the annual general meeting, Wing Commander Olive repeated the remarks he made in the annual report, and added his view that the Club should retain ownership of the property on Wickham Terrace, whether it moved or not. Judging from the minutes, that view was largely supported from the floor of the meeting although Major Peter Henderson questioned the recommendation to spend money. He thought that any money spent should be applied first to the improvement of kitchen facilities and other expenditure should be closely watched. But apart from several speakers from the floor, each concerned with getting the best possible value from the \$100,000 to be spent, the members seemed content that their Club was being run efficiently and well.

The enthusiasm for redevelopment was always greater on the part of the prospective

developers than among members of the committee; this 1971 decision to postpone any plans for at least five years was to prove extremely valuable. The continued interest of property developers in the site merely served to underline, once again, the wisdom of Little's original efforts to move the Club from George Street after World War II even though the not-so-gentle slope of the terrain up Edward Street was proving an impediment to ageing limbs and lungs.

The decision not to accept any redevelopment proposals proved to be extremely wise. In December 1972, the Whitlam Labor Government was elected. Economic and other decisions made by this Government, the first Labor Government to hold office since 1949, led to huge increases in inflation. The Club's trading position suffered severely, not just from the changed economic and political climate, but also a quite different attitude towards drinking in the community. Certainly increased wage and salary charges now made it impossible for the Club to justify remaining open over holiday periods. It was during this time that the Club began closing over the Easter break and also over Queen's Birthday weekend.

However, it was not long before the Club began, once again, to look at the question of redevelopment, despite the decision to postpone plans for five years. Rising costs and reduced trading had made it difficult, if not impossible, to justify spending the proposed \$100,000. Anzac House was on the market and many committee members thought the Club's existing, and perhaps sub-standard, accommodation could be improved by the purchase of the building.

From the beginning of 1973, the committee was worried about declining bar trading results. Indeed, at the 31 January meeting in 1973, soon after the annual meeting, members were beginning to doubt whether it was prudent to spend \$100,000 on the Club. The Top Bar, in particular, had been trading very quietly and one suggestion was that it should be closed, and a bar opened instead in the Green House. The Dining Room was still closed to ladies at lunch time, a factor which affected trade but perhaps not so greatly as to make a major difference. The house and finance sub-committee thought that an independent survey of the Club's activities by an outside expert might be helpful, with one name suggested being that of Stan Webster, an executive with Carlton & United Breweries. A note in the minutes demonstrates the problem in a nutshell:

The statements of income and expenditure were examined and it was noted that returns from catering and rent were considerably lower than those for the corresponding month in 1972 and that expenditure was significantly higher in both catering and administration....

A special committee meeting on 18 June examined, once again, the vexed question of redevelopment. Air Commodore Kingwell set out the problem which had not

changed dramatically since the late 1960s when membership peaked. The Club's membership potential was declining; usage of the Club, as a result, was diminishing. As well, costs were rising. This meeting, an important one in the history of the Club, lasted three hours. It is worth covering in some detail because it canvassed the problems faced by the Club and the difficulties posed by those problems.

Firstly, there was the difficulty with declining membership and use. Was it, as some members suggested, because the Club was in the 'wrong' position? Increasingly in the documents over this period are there references to the Wickham Terrace site being a deterrent to members using the Club. These minutes give a good example:

The President asked why members were not using the Club. In reply Lt Col (C D F) Wilson stated that our position was a deterrent and felt that the Club could find it increasingly difficult to attract members to come up to Wickham Terrace. It was his opinion that the Club should relocate either in the centre of the city or move right out of town. Lt Col (R I) Harrison suggested that the committee should be able to present a general meeting with a concrete proposal including a suggested relocation site. He stated that our present site was badly situated as it was out of the reach of the average member. It was his opinion that our membership was becoming ever-increasingly older and felt that the Club should be relocated in the city with a reduced parking area.

It is interesting that these concerns only began to arise in the mid-1960s when, of course, the great bulk of post World War II members were now 20 years older. By the early 1970s, a decade or so later, the concerns are quite pressing, although not all the committee members felt the same way as 'Sam' Harrison and Colin Wilson. Flight Lieutenant Jock Tuckfield, for example, was adamant that the site did not inhibit members from using the Club. However, the meeting seemed to agree that the building was 'obsolescent' and a new one was desirable. But where? On the Spring Hill site? By buying and using Anzac House? The Anzac House proposal was put and lost on a show of hands.

The committee decided that the Club should remain on the present site and approach a panel of developers 'for a proposal to provide the Club with appropriate facilities including accommodation and car parking to the Club's specifications on this site with the provision that the Club move only once'. This was an important decision because now, it seemed, the impetus for redevelopment was coming from within the Club. The committee charged with developing this proposal consisted of Group Captain P R Smith as chairman, Lieutenant Colonel Harrison, Captain Kempthorne, Lieutenant Colonel Vern Mullins and Lieutenant T C Thynne.

One of the difficulties facing the Club during the redevelopment considerations was disposal of the existing premises as part of the transition stage. The difficulty was in selling the premises; a meeting of the house and finance sub-committee in October 1973 considered advice from the Club's solicitors against selling by tender.

The letter, written by Club member, Major Peter Henderson, survives and includes the following paragraph:

We have considered the transaction entered into by the Imperial Service Club in Sydney. The Imperial Service Club formed a company which purchased the site and leased it to a developer for a term of 125 years. The developer in turn sub-leased part of the new project to the Club at a rental which far exceeded the head rental. No cash transaction was received by the Club. This type of transaction is wholly inappropriate to the requirements of this Club.

Peter Henderson's advice was well considered and well-founded. It was precisely this kind of arrangement which helped the demise of the Imperial Service Club in 1985. Henderson recommended against the proposal to offer the property by tender on a pre-determined contract at the present stage. The matter should be left open for negotiation, when the Club would have a full choice of any practical and legal alternatives offering. Henderson also recommended that the Club should obtain, by independent valuation, specific information including the sale value of the whole property, the purchase price of 20,000 square feet of strata title at the relevant time in the future and rental as at this time.

The early 1970s were not good years for the Club. Although it enjoyed a strong committee, with talented members, the Club seemed to lack some of the drive of earlier years. It was, too, a difficult period economically and politically; the first of the oil price increases, as well as continued high inflation in the United States, produced difficult economic conditions. Typical of the committee meetings of this period was one held on 4 June 1973. The outlook seemed decidedly gloomy, judging from the minutes. First, the membership sub-committee reported that there had been a decrease in members under 25. Then, the sports and social sub-committee noted that a planned steak night* had been cancelled, although one committee member thought that once an event had been announced, it should be held 'irrespective of acceptances', not a particularly popular view. The meeting spent some time examining why members were not coming to the announced and planned functions. Was the Club holding too many functions? That seemed unlikely; the social program for the year was not particularly onerous.

At this meeting, the momentous decision to allow ladies into the dining room at lunchtime was taken, almost certainly under the pressure of saving costs rather than making a statement of about equality of the sexes.

*The steak night was the idea of Lieutenant Colonel Rod Fay, a committee member who knew his food and wine and who enjoyed both immensely. Murray Adams recalls that Fay's culinary ideas were excellent but perhaps too advanced for some members at the time.

Air Commodore Kingwell* had been elected president at the 1971 annual general meeting. In July the previous year, he had retired as air officer commanding, RAAF Amberley and was then the official secretary to the Governor, (and old RAAF colleague) Air Marshal Sir Colin Hannah. Kingwell thought that, after his retirement from the RAAF he would have sufficient time to devote to the duties of president. This proved not to be the case. In the 1973 annual report, Kingwell wrote:

I know it has been customary for the president to nominate for a second year of office but I do not intend to do this. The club is going through difficult times and requires all office bearers to give a lot of their time to discussing club matters and also to have time to think, study and plan for the benefit of the club. Unfortunately I have not had time to do this during the past year and cannot see it becoming available in the near future. This is the main reason why I shall not be standing for re-election together with the fact that I want to see younger men on the committee and at the helm of our club.

Apart from Brigadier Murray Brown in 1985, Kingwell was the only Club president in recent times not to have stood for a second term of office. However, the decision was based on Kingwell's keen appreciation of what was needed for the job and of his own, onerous responsibilities at Government House. Certainly his decision had nothing to do with the minor tensions over the redevelopment proposals.

The 1973 annual general meeting attracted 59 members, including the president. This was a small number, particularly considering the importance issue to discuss: the possible disposal of the Club's premises. Lieutenant Colonel Little sent his apologies. This meeting endorsed the proposition that the committee investigate proposals for the redevelopment of the Club site and rehousing of the Club. The mood of the meeting, although attended by relatively few members, was unmistakable. The members wanted to remain where they were, on the hill, and despite the walk up the hill. Still the committee explored all the possible options.

One developer approached by the Club at this time was the Brisbane builder, K D Morris & Sons Pty Ltd. Still run by its principal and founder Keith Morris, this company had built the nearby SGIO - now Suncorp - Building and had, at the time, a considerable reputation for construction and development. K D Morris & Sons undertook a feasibility study which included leasing the Club's site to the developer on a long-term basis; the developer constructing a high rise building on that site and

*On Anzac Day, 1971, Deryck Kingwell, hosted the usual luncheon for the heads of the three services at the Club. During lunch, he took his medals and ribbons from his service dress jacket and asked a steward to place them in his cap. A merchant sailor wandered in off the street, took the medals and sported them around town. According to an entertaining report in the *Sydney Sun*, Kingwell had some qualms about reporting the loss of his medals, particularly the DSO, to the Queen. He saw himself saying something like: 'Listen, Ma'am, someone's pinched my DSO. How about another one?' Fortunately the medals were recovered by the police, although the ribbons were grimy.

the Club's leasing back the top floor at a lower rental than that paid by the developer as ground rent. It was this third condition which was ignored by the Imperial Service Club in Sydney and which had helped to bring it down.

At the beginning the company was confident it could meet the conditions. However, the disastrous 1974 floods intervened; K D Morris's office was engulfed and the company was forced to seek an extension of time in which to make its investigations. The company did not meet the Club's requirements. Originally the committee had decided that it wanted to occupy the top floors, it wanted to continue to own the land and it wanted a return of income in the form of the rental differential. K D Morris could not, or would not, match these agreements, despite a second attempt. The Club looked elsewhere. As Group Captain Smith noted in the annual report:

Subsequently, negotiations were commenced in other quarters and a feasibility study, at no cost to the club, is presently being undertaken by a firm of Sydney architects on behalf of a client developer who is prepared to deal on our terms. It is only fair to alert members, however, to the hampering effect that the Central Railway Station site is having on proposals for our site particularly as part of that development is for an international hotel, one of the possible uses to which our site is suited.

As it happens, an international hotel, the Sheraton, was built on the Central Railway Station and, at the time of writing, the Club remains in the same premises, but rather more solvent than many of the developers, including K D Morris, which were interested in the site. It seems that the combination of a slow, at-times unwieldy Club bureaucracy, the innate caution of many committee members and some extraordinary circumstances, have prevented the Club being redeveloped. And that may be no bad thing.

Civilians to the Rescue

Under the pressure of reduced usage and difficult trading, the controversial question of civilian membership was finally faced by the United Service Club in 1974. In its history, the Club had always prided itself on its military origins, and on the military service of its members. In all its premises, it had much of the atmosphere of officers mess or wardroom; the same, easy, gentle rules prevailed; the same polite but not obsequious deference to rank, the same feeling of belonging to an organisation with a common purpose and being with fellows of a common background. Yet by the late 1960s the proportion of the population that were potential members - those with commissioned service in one of the armed forces - was declining. The future of the Club was at risk.

By the early 1970s, however, it became apparent that, were the Club to survive, it would have to open its books to members who might not have had the required service background. Already it had done so to a limited extent, with the introduction of the highly successful associate membership class. Now, however, it was possible that the entire nature of the Club might change with the influx of civilian members. The 1974 annual report simply noted:

Following two special general meetings, and the largest postal vote on record, an amendment to the rules to admit civilian members was approved by the large majority of 84 per cent to 16 per cent, demonstrating that most members recognised the necessity of some such step. Prominent business executives, professional men, and respected citizens of the community are now eligible for civilian membership. They can be proposed and seconded only by full members of the club, and they have no voting rights [sic] nor are they eligible to stand for the positions of president, vice-president or member of committee. This category will permit members to propose their sons for membership, and already a number of such applications have been received.

Those remarks of the president, Group Captain Smith, however, do not convey the extent of the debate over this category of membership at the time. At various times during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the question of widening the Club's membership arose during committee meetings, often in a desultory or less than convincing fashion. It was also the topic of conversation where members gathered and lamented that, perhaps, the Club had passed its heyday. Membership of the United Service

Club had distinct advantages for the many professional men with their offices or surgeries in the area. The medical profession, with its close links to the armed services,* was a clear source of potential members. So were the professions of architecture and engineering, as many firms had moved into offices in Spring Hill where the rents were less steep than in the central business district. Accountants, lawyers and business consultants, often faced with long waiting lists to the other city clubs such as the Brisbane Club and Tattersall's, found advantages in seeking membership of the United Service Club. Indeed, during the 1970s, the area between Wickham Terrace and Gregory Terrace started to be transformed with both residential and office developments. Each new professional office that moved into the area provided some potential members for the Club.

But among some of the more traditional members, those who clung rigidly to the idea that the United Service Club should be only for officers and ex-officers, a fierce resistance to expansion of membership existed. At the bottom of this resistance was the fear - perhaps real, perhaps irrational - that the Club would somehow be 'taken over' by civilians of less than suitable background. The experience of the sister club in South Australia, which had welcomed civilian members from before World War II, was often put forward as an example of the changes likely to take place. With this kind of resistance, often expressed more loudly than representatively, it is understandable that successive committees were content to duck the question. And, of course, there were other issues to occupy the minds of busy committee men.

In the early 1970s, new members slowed to a trickle, often just two or three a meeting, with as many or more former members offering their resignations. At the time, the entrance fee was \$30; the membership sub-committee thought, perhaps not unreasonably, that an entrance fee should be higher than the annual subscription, which was then about \$50. As one bulletin pointed out to members, this membership fee was between \$30 and \$90 less than reciprocal clubs (unspecified). Members were being implored to make more use of their Club. In the meantime, the membership sub-committee, under the leadership of Flight Lieutenant Tuckfield, was busily compiling statistics that would help the arguments for opening the books to civilians.

There was no doubt that the membership was ageing rapidly. A survey had shown that, at April 1974, 154 members were eligible for continuous honorary membership; this number would increase to 420 by 1979. 'It was apparent,' noted the minutes, 'that an examination of the possibilities of broadening membership had become necessary.' The imperatives were no longer those of preserving the Club's character, but perhaps of preserving the Club itself.

*In peacetime and in war, the armed services have always drawn on Reservists to make up the bulk of their medical officers.

The critical early months of 1974 also saw the Club experiencing some tight financial conditions; the minutes for this period include terse references to 'interviews with bank managers' about the size of the Club's overdraft, then running at about \$40,000. At the time, the Club committee entertained ideas of imposing a levy of \$12.50 on members, an idea that met with the wholehearted support of the Club's patient bankers. From the surviving accounts, it is possible to gain a picture of a Club that, under reasonable trading conditions, was battling to break even or end with a small surplus. 'Montpelier' was an expensive building to maintain; the Club's amenities - in the kitchen, the bars, the accommodation and the dining room - were barely of a standard sufficient to entice members to return often. What was good enough in the 1950s and even into the 1960s was not good enough in the 1970s. Brisbane had changed, become rather more sophisticated, lost much of its 'big country town' feel. Restaurants and modern hotels were competing with the Club and were, in many cases, winning. It is fair to say that the United Service Club in the early 1970s was somewhat fusty and old-fashioned.

Other problems existed. It is impossible to be certain about the causes, but during this time the percentage returns from bar and food trading were very low, despite some good trading. This suggests, at the very least, a less than diligent approach to supervision. As one member who examined the accounts for these years recently commented, 'the bats must have been in the belfry'. Under these circumstances, with financial worries and an ageing Club population, it is little wonder that some farsighted members sought to expand the membership base.

On 14 May 1974, the membership sub-committee considered a detailed statistical analysis. A complete copy of this analysis does not survive; we know, however, that the number of town members had increased by only 10 between April 1973 and April 1974 while the number of under 25 members had actually declined. This is partially explained away by the Whitlam Government's abolition of national service in December 1972, and the immense impact that decision had upon the Citizens Military Forces at the time. Fewer young officers, and thus fewer potential Club members, were being produced by the CMF. (Many young men who were members of the CMF left when their legislative obligation ceased in December 1972, including a number of junior officers who might have been active members of the Club.) More importantly, the age of the existing members was a cause for concern. In 1974, the average age was 53.5 years, with 210 members over the age of 65, 505 over 60 and 922 over the age of 55. The membership sub-committee noted:

(We are) united in the opinion that some disastrous results could occur if the present downward trend in membership figures and usage of the trading department of the Club continued. After lengthy discussion it was unanimously agreed to recommend to the full committee that a broadening of membership be proposed to the special general meeting

of the Club to be held on May, 10 June 1974 as follows: -

‘That the following new class of membership be approved "civilian member"; These members to be prominent business executives, professional men and respected citizens of the community; That this class of membership not to exceed 40 percent of the full membership of the Club, with the same restrictions of rights as apply to allied members and associate members: e.g. no voting rights, not permitted to nominate or second applications for membership, including civilian membership, except to nominate their wife as an associate member. Further that the entrance fee and subscription be the same as for present members. That reciprocity with reciprocal clubs be granted only to those clubs which have a similar category of membership.’

Thus the proposed levy and the new category of civilian membership were clearly linked; a special committee meeting held on 22 May decided to call a special general meeting on 10 June to consider both questions. That 10 June meeting was attended by 107 members, including the president; as might be expected on such an important and fundamental issues, provoked wide and at times heated discussion.

The first question considered was that of the \$12.50 levy. Lieutenant Colonel Colin Wilson presented the case for its imposition. He pointed out that the Club was experiencing a very difficult trading period: The 1971-72 year had resulted in a profit of \$12,000; 1972-73 had seen a loss of more than \$5000 and the trend for the current financial year was to a loss of about, or more than, \$18,000. The reason for these losses was spiralling wages. Administration wages had increased by 30 percent, from \$34,000 to \$46,000, a pattern that was evident in all departments. It was clear that trading profits could not make up this deficit and so a levy had become necessary. The committee calculated the amount of the required levy would be \$10 to cover the expected losses. However, experience had shown that similar levies imposed in the past had resulted in a spate of resignations. To cover this contingency, the levy was increased to \$12.50.

The second contentious item that evening was, of course, the motion to extend the membership. Discussion on this issue began with some minor procedural difficulties, in which the committee was embarrassed to have a former president and prominent lawyer, Brigadier McEachern, submit that the meeting should have been called under rule 39, which provided for 21 days notice to be given. The president, Group Captain Smith, also a lawyer, disagreed with his learned colleague; the meeting had been convened under rules 36 and 37 was therefore constitutionally correct. However, during the later discussion among members, the very strong feeling emerged that this meeting should have been convened under rule 39, which

also gave all members the right to vote by post on important issues. Indeed, this feeling dominated the meeting and finally the following motion was put:

That a special general meeting be convened under Rule 39 of the United Service Club rules and by-laws, on a date to be fixed. And that the proposal [to extend membership to civilians] put to this meeting....be circulated to every member.

Here was the membership, or a significant slice of it, exerting an important and very reasonable power; the right to make collective decisions on matters affecting the Club. As the minutes note, the feeling about civilian members varied greatly from 'downright opposition to complete agreement'. Although Flight Lieutenant Tuckfield had cogently argued the case for extending the membership, the feeling existed that this was not merely a matter for the committee or for a limited meeting of 100-plus members. This was, properly, a matter for the Club membership at large. The decision was deferred until the members could vote.

July, August and September 1974 saw a spate of resignations by members, as predicted. Unfinancial members resigning were reminded of their obligations; some, it seems might have even met those responsibilities. When the important issue, that of civilian membership, went to the members in July, it was overwhelmingly approved. More than 84 percent of the large number of members - a record of the actual number who voted does not appear to have survived - supported the idea of civilians joining the Club. The realists, particularly those with commercial experience, realised that bringing new members, people who would use the Club and its amenities, was the only hope for the Club's future viability and survival. But there were others who thought that the influx of civilians would mean the end of their Club as they knew it. These members made their continued opposition felt.

Now the difficulty to be faced was the method by which civilian members would be selected; the membership sub-committee minutes for 27 November note that 'members....express their disappointment over continuous endeavours each month, by some members of the committee to alter the method of selecting civilian members'. The sub-committee members pointed out, with much justification, that the postal vote on the issue brought the largest ever response; 'the 84 percent in favour of the rule change shows that the members of the club were behind this new category of membership'; although from the minutes, it is clear that some committee members did not totally support this new category of membership.

The introduction of civilian members brought some other problems. Could they, for example, wear the Club tie? Yes. They were members, albeit civilian members, and thus entitled to the tie. Was it appropriate for a member to propose or second a close business associate? No, thought the committee.* What of the risk of a black-balling,

*Quite clearly, a sentiment which has been unfashionable in recent years.

embarrassing to all concerned? This could be avoided by careful screening through the membership sub-committee. Originally it seemed that the committee, and the membership sub-committee, had some difficulties in determining whether potential civilian members met the criteria. It was hoped that the new category would enable many sons of members to join; this was indeed the case and the early minutes following the introduction of this category of membership show a satisfying number of sons being proposed by their fathers. Occasionally, however, some difficulties arose. The committee balked at one membership proposal where the occupation was listed as 'plumber'. This was for the son of a respected member; the father pointed out that as his son worked for the Government, the occupation could easily have been listed as 'public servant', which would have caused the committee no particular worry. In other cases, further information was sought where it was thought the occupation as listed was somewhat ambiguous.*

The matter was resolved with much common sense; the committee determined that there should be 'no prejudice', which is perhaps a more polite way of saying 'no snobbery'. It added, 'Responsibility as to the suitability for membership rested with the proposer and seconder and the rules for guidance, when published, should assist members in this regard.'

Leaving aside some minor teething problems, the new category of membership worked well; the members so introduced were clearly of benefit to the Club. Although they might have lacked the appropriate service background, the new civilian members adapted well to the ethos of the Club. Over the 18 years since civilian membership was introduced, the Club has grown, become more financially secure and had its future assured. Civilian membership was the initiative of insight of the decade, perhaps the most important single factor of the time and certainly a contributing cause of the Club's current financial standing. As the president was able to note in the following year's annual report, 209 civilian members had joined in the year since the category had been created. Importantly they had made an important contribution to the improved trading position, a surplus of \$15,126.

But trading was still difficult. According to the president in the 1975 annual report, the improved trading position that year, after adverse experiences for the previous three, had come about because of actions taken by the committee, including the initially unpopular decision to impose a levy. Without that levy in 1974, the Club would have experienced a very large deficit and, given the difficult circumstances of the times, might not have survived as a Club. That year, 1974, also saw improved patronage of the Top Bar which the committee had thought about closing. The

*Early civilian members include some names now extremely prominent in Queensland business, including Barry Maranta, part owner of the Brisbane Broncos rugby league team. Maranta did not keep his membership current for very long. Another name was that of an accountant and businessman who later went to jail for offences against the Companies Act.

other decision, albeit that of the Club as a whole, was to admit civilian members. Perhaps this move, more than any other, ensured the Club's financial viability.

As the president noted in the 1975 annual report, trading figures indicated clearly that the Club could avoid mammoth increase in charges. But the committee was also forced to take other, unpopular decisions. That year, 1975, saw the end of the category of continuous honorary membership which was worked out according to a formula but meant, effectively, that their contributions from subscriptions diminished alarmingly. Early in 1975, the Club committee began to look at this category of members. The annual meeting that year amended the rules to provide for a new category, continuous membership, which provided a free subscription only to those members with 35 years on the books and who had retired from full-time work. This was badly drafted and needed to be rectified at the next annual general meeting.

This meeting also saw the membership reduce the size of the committee from 12 to 9 members, a move that was to make for more efficient committee work and a much more wieldy structure. Progressively the members had given the committee more powers, including the power to impose levies, to set entrance fees and subscriptions. The sum effect of these changes was eventually to bring the Club onto a more business-like footing, with the committee being equated to a board of directors and the secretary as the chief executive. However, this final step was still some years away.

* * *

The mid 1970s saw a decline in popularity, perhaps even the beginning of the end, of the Club's annual ball. What had begun as a splendidly colourful occasion immediately post-war* was now less than popular with the members and a continued battle on the committee's part to ensure that it ran without a loss. Suitable venues were difficult to find; Cloudland was long past its prime and the Club was also long past being able to fill this singular building. The City Hall had been tried on a number of occasions but it, too, was large and cavernous and difficult to fill. In March 1975, the sports and social sub-committee recommended that the ball be discontinued unless a suitable military venue could be found. The sub committee's reasons included: catering and service provided by private caterers were sub-standard, although top prices were charged; the control of the function was taken out of the Club's hands and therefore it was powerless to take action that would ensure members received value. Added the sub-committee:

*And, of course, had been a major social event before World War II.

Nowadays the ball has not the appeal, nor is it the service spectacle of past years. Furthermore it is doubtful if these admirable features could be revived. They certainly cannot unless the function reverts back [sic] to Club control and is held at a suitable venue. The question must be asked whether or not the Club is flogging a dead horse in persisting with the function. Our sister Clubs think so since none of them now hold this event.

The 1975 annual ball, planned to be held at the Crest Hotel (now the Mayfair Crest) on 8 August, was cancelled by the President, Group Captain Smith. At the time, Queensland was experiencing a series of power cuts caused by disruptions to coal supplies. As well, beer supplies were threatened, clearly an unsatisfactory state of affairs for a ball. The president's decision provoked some criticism at a subsequent committee meeting; it had been made, according to one committee member, 'precipitately' and without reference to the full committee. While that criticism might be justified, it is difficult to see whether the full committee would have made any other decision. Indeed, the president was justified in making the decision as quickly as he did, because of the urgency of the position. No debutantes had been nominated for presentation at the ball, and so the large parties that normally accompanied these young ladies could not be expected. Indeed, by the mid 1970s, the practice of 'presenting' debutantes survived only in rural pockets.*

The decline of the Ball as a Club institution has several explanations. First, and perhaps most obviously, was the ageing membership. The immediate post World War II balls were huge successes but the bright young men, recently returned from the war with a chestful of miniatures on colourful mess kit, were now middle-aged gentlemen. And the more youthful members of the Club had not been brought up in quite the same ball-going tradition. If they were ball-goers, there were other, competing attractions at that time of the year. For the others, while many might have owned a dinner jacket, few would have had white tie and tails, another form of dress that added to the glamour of the spectacle. Secondly, there were the changes to drinking and driving habits. Even before the days of random breath testing and 'booze buses' in Queensland, a man wearing a dinner jacket and black tie, and driving home in the early hours of the morning presented an easy target to an enthusiastic police officer. Thirdly, there was the cost: taxis, baby sitters, new dresses for the ladies...all added up to an expensive night out for younger members, many of whom had family responsibilities. Fourthly, a factor that contributed to the decline of the ball as a spectacle was the decision of the Army to abolish winter dress in Queensland in the mid-1970s. This meant that few young Reserve officers commissioned

*The Club's rules had long provided for the Ball to be an opportunity for debutantes to be presented. That rule no longer survives and the practice of presenting debutantes has been superseded by the holding of school formal balls at the end of Year 12.

after this time went to the trouble and expense of acquiring winter mess kit; the summer 'ice-cream jacket' became mess dress for the year. Reservists, rather than regulars, were by far the larger proportion of the active list service members, both then and now. Thus the sight of officers in their multi-hued winter mess kit - red and white for the infantry, black and red for the artillery, maroon and yellow for armoured corps - disappeared. As the sub-committee said, military balls were no longer a 'service spectacle'.* And, while the abandonment of the annual ball was covered in the president's report to members, the topic provoked no discussion at that year's general meeting.

All was not yet lost. The sports and social sub-committee met in January 1976 to prepare the social calendar for the year. Under the energetic efforts of Lieutenant Colonels Rod Fay and Vern Mullins, both artillery officers with a fine appreciation of balls and social life, and with the younger, equally energetic Captain David McMaugh helping, this sub-committee produced a very full program. Importantly from the ball's point of view, this sub-committee recommended holding it on the premises. 'The sub-committee considers that by careful planning and by making full use of the entire Club ... the ball could be successfully held at the Club. It is believed that a ball offering much better value for money could be offered to the members and that the ball would have a more intimate and club atmosphere as the size of the parties would probably be smaller.'

The sub-committee proved to be accurate in its assessment. The 1976 Ball was held at the Club, with more than 250 members and guests attending, a full house. The Band of the 1st Military District played on the Terrace; the army assisted with the loan of chairs, suitably insured, of course, and, according to the president's annual report the event was reminiscent of past years. 'No doubt with a determined effort this event will return to the splendour of yesteryear. That will be the aim for 1977.' So it was; the Club also managed to encourage the presentation of some debutantes to the Governor and patron, Commodore Sir James Ramsay. The following year, the ball was held at the Club but, perhaps inspired by the successes of the previous years, the 1979 committee aimed for a bigger, better ball at the Riverside Ballroom. Originally the sub-committee had been content with holding the Ball at the Club but ambition intervened. The Riverside venue was not a success; the ball lost more than \$1500 and the committee's enthusiasm for future ventures of this kind was markedly dampened.

If enthusiasm for the Ball was declining, there was no lack of support for another important item on the Club's social calendar, the Patron's Dinner. Over the years,

*Indeed attempts by various commanders of the 1st Military District, effectively Queensland, to hold an Army Officers Ball in Brisbane have not always been successful. In recent years, regular officers have been virtually ordered to attend such functions to ensure their success. The effect of such an order on the Ball's popularity can only be imagined.

succession of former service officers as Governors;* thus the Patron's Dinner, which began in the days of Sir Henry Abel Smith, has from the beginning had a distinctly service atmosphere. The Club rarely has had difficulty attracting sufficient members to a Patron's Dinner. During the mid 1970s, the other important social occasions included the Anzac Day luncheon, the Melbourne Cup Calcutta, the Annual Art Exhibition, the President's Mixed Dining Night and the Family Christmas Dinner at the Club. Some of these functions have disappeared or been replaced by other activities but the extensive heavy social calendar continues.

* * *

By the late 1970s, 'Montpelier' was certainly showing its age. The Club's documents of the time tell of a continuing battle to keep the premises in good repair. For example, in the 1978 annual report, the president, Captain O M 'Ossie' May outlined the improvements to the Club made during the year.

Some of these improvements will be obvious to members such as the redecorating of the Dining Room, the installation of better equipment and fittings in both bars and the completely remodelled bottle department. Not so readily observed will be the measures taken to improve the safety and efficiency of the premises and the comfort of members, namely rewiring and electrical installations, re-modelling of lift machine room and lift maintenance area and overhaul of plumbing throughout the Club resulting in improved hot water service to all Club areas. Considerable work has been carried out to improve kitchen efficiency and service including a new freezer and serving area.

The 'improvements' were, as can be seen, merely maintenance of a large building. Six months later, the mid-year bulletin of the Club, Uniser, returned to the same theme of improvements. It noted that all five suites had been air-conditioned, refurnished, wall-papered and painted; hot water reticulation had been improved; electrical breakdowns were 'now a thing of the past'; fire extinguishers had been fitted; the snack bar had been repainted; the servery bar had also been repainted and the billiard room carpeted. This latter improvement was long overdue; guests in the suites below the billiard room often complained of players banging the end of their cues on the floor between and before shots. 'It was,' complained one guest, 'like living inside a kettle drum.' This period also saw the refurnishing of the reading room, including a memorial to the late Lieutenant Colonel Little.

*The only exception in recent years has been Sir Alan Mansfield whose lack of service background did not diminish his popularity as Governor or as patron of the United Service Club.

Little had died three years earlier; in December 1974, the convenor of the house and finance sub-committee, Flight Lieutenant Jock Tuckfield raised the question of a memorial to Little. Tuckfield felt strongly on this issue; he had joined the Club in 1947 and had been one of the post-war beneficiaries of Little's drive and enthusiasm. Under Tuckfield's guidance, this sub-committee recommended that the Little memorial take the form of a suitable antique bookcase 'to house the [Australian] War memorial collection of books known as the "Lal Little memorial library".' The minutes for the annual general meeting in 1978 comment simply:

A number of members spoke on the matter of a memorial for the late Dr Little. The President spoke on the matter and indicated that the new committee would be considering a suitable memorial to Dr Little and suggested that the matter could safely be left in their hands during the coming year.

There is, however, the suggestion that some members believed that the committee was not moving sufficiently quickly on this issue. The committee, perhaps impressed by the feeling of the members at the 1978 annual general meeting, responded; in the 1979 report, Captain May wrote: 'In accordance with the request of members at the last annual general meeting, an antique bookcase has been purchased and war histories from the War Memorial in Canberra have been installed in memory of the late Lieutenant Colonel L A Little MBE, ED'. It was a fitting memorial to Little, for whom the reading room and library had always been an important part of his Club.

A Decade of Great Changes

The 1980s opened with the United Service Club in reasonably good shape. In the time since the category of civilian membership had been created, the opposition among some older service members had eased and increasing numbers of civilians were being accepted into the Club. For example, the 1980 annual report shows 615 civilian members, a significant increase on the 501 members in 1978 and the 577 in 1979. Certainly the civilian members had helped to boost the overall rolls: 2417 members were on the books at the end of August 1980, compared with 2377 in 1979, and 2304 in 1978. The minutes and other records of the period suggest pressures from some committee members to increase the numbers of this category. Colonel Colin Wilson, in particular, was one who argued for an increase in the proportional size of the civilian membership, then at 40 per cent of members entitled to vote. He was not successful. In this area, the Club moved only slowly.

Despite the boom in computer accounting and stocktaking systems available in the late 1970s - early 1980s, the Club also moved only slowly into the computer age. Indeed, at times it seemed that successive committees might not have been too happy with the advances of modern technology; the Club bought a photocopier only after long and deliberate discussion; the first computer appeared in 1982 after some extensive investigations were carried out by a member and computer expert, Colonel Denis Luttrell.* The April 1982 members' accounts were the first produced on this small computer system. What seems now like a relatively straightforward and simple acquisition for the Club was the subject of long discussions. It is possible to detect in the minutes a certain reluctance on the part of some committee members to embrace the new technology.** Yet the Club needed to improve its internal book-keeping practices.

In mid 1980, the Club suffered from lax book-keeping procedures. Writing in the 1980 annual report, the president, Major General Kelly told members that profit for

*Now a major general and head of the Army Reserve, Denis Luttrell was at the time a senior computer official with SGIO, later Suncorp. His expertise assisted the Club greatly in the acquisition of a computer. Through its history, the Club has been fortunate in being able to draw on members with particular expertise for particular projects.

**That reluctance was not confined to committee members of the United Service Club. In May 1980, journalists around Australia were involved in a five-week strike over their reluctance to use computers in newspaper production.

that year had been reduced by the writing off as a bad debt the unrecovered sum of an amount of \$5573 which represented signed chits from three days' trading in June 1980. The minutes of that annual meeting suggest a certain sanguinity on the part of members to this debt, with no discussion recorded on the issue. In general business certainly, the members seemed more interested in discussing the state of their lavatories and indeed, moving quickly to the end of the meeting and the 'usual drinks' in the Top Bar. But the problem was rather more serious than this cursory attention by members indicates.

A wad of trading chits for three days in June that year had been misplaced. The procedure was that chits were collected from the bars, dining room, and bottle shops, sorted into alphabetical order and then later entered to members' accounts. Once sorted, the chits were kept in a wooden box next to the accounting machine. Today these procedures might seem lax; the chits, although valueless to anyone, represented sales revenue to the Club. Three days trading of more than \$7000, in this case. Once the chits were discovered to be missing, a thorough investigation was launched. The results of this investigation survive in the minutes today; it was inconclusive, despite the assistance of the police. It is possible that the chits were thought to be waste paper and thrown into the rubbish; it is also possible that someone, possibly an employee, with a grudge against the Club removed the chits. At the time, no one could discover where the chits had gone or why they had disappeared. The investigation concluded:

The president has recommended that June accounts sent out in the first week of July are to include all chits together with a letter...that members who had made purchases in the bottle department, servery and top bars on June 6th, 7th and 9th had not been charged as those chits had been mislaid. Accordingly if members found that they had been undercharged for purchases on those days, they are requested to contact the secretary with a view to payment of the undercharged amount.

The president's recommendation was duly followed. However, as the finance subcommittee minutes for July note, albeit somewhat forlornly: 'The secretary advised that to-date only \$1520 had been recovered. It was recommended that a further letter should be despatched with the July accounts pointing out that the overall account had been less than anticipated.' In the event, only an additional \$63 was recovered from members. It was not an episode in which either the Club's management or its membership could take much pride. A similar failure is far less likely to occur today; improvements in accounting and security procedures, including a modern computer system, ensure that members accounts are quickly and accurately entered.

**At the time, the chits were debited to accounts and then forwarded to members at the end of each month, presumably so they might be checked for accuracy. Increases in postage costs meant this practice ended soon afterwards.



The Light Horseman, a statuette by Peter Dornan.

*Brigadier Colin David Francis
Wilson RFD ED. Born 1928.
President 1975–76. Trustee
1989.*

*Captain Osmonde Marshall May OBE
VRD RANR. Born 1923. President
1977–78.*

*Major General The Hon Jack
Lawrence Kelly CBE. Born
1920. President 1979–80.*





Colonel Vernard William Mullins ED. Born 1935. President 1981–82.



Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams. Born 1919. President 1983–84. Life member 1990.



Brigadier Murray James Brown MC ED. Born 1919. President 1985.

Jacarandas and rear view of the Club, a painting by K Wenzell.



The early 1980s also saw the introduction of the credit-card style membership card which persists to the time of writing. This membership card was introduced only after long discussion and consideration by the committee; the advantages over the previous cardboard membership card were obvious. However, the June 1981 issue of the Club bulletin observed: 'For greater efficiency, the accounting system in the bottle shop and the dining room has been changed. This should eliminate losses and mistakes and members have been asked to assist by carrying their Club card when making purchases in the bottle shop or dining room.' The introduction of the new membership card and the improved accounting procedures were attempts by the committee to bring the Club's operations to a more business-like footing. One important consequence of introduction of the new systems was the ability to carry out random checks on any line item; another was to process members' accounts on a daily basis.

Some Club stalwarts retired around this time. The chief steward, Jack Collins, had been with the Club since before World War II, during which he served in both the army, briefly, and the Merchant Navy. A testimonial fund raised more than \$5000 for this loyal and valued Club employee. Mrs Armanasco, the well-liked 'Mrs A', the dining room supervisor for many years, retired at the end of June 1982 because of ill-health. She, too, received a testimonial fund. As Colonel Mullins, then the Club president, noted at the time, she would be greatly missed by all members. In August 1980, too, the Club lost Flight Lieutenant Cash, then a committee member, who died suddenly while in office.

In 1982, Brisbane was host to the Commonwealth Games. Many observers see this event as an important contributing factor to the maturing of Brisbane as a capital city from its days as a large country town. Certainly the 1982 Games and Expo six years later resulted in huge changes to Brisbane, not all to its physical appearance. The Club prepared for the 1982 Games as early as September 1980 when the house sub-committee sought policy directions on the use of accommodation by members of overseas and interstate reciprocal clubs. As the sub-committee noted, 'acceptance of such bookings at this time could jeopardise a country member's opportunity to attend.' The policy direction was subsequently given; members were encouraged to book early and, for the time being, bookings were not to be accepted 'other than from members'. This decision raises a difficult issue about reciprocity; at times of peak demand for any club's facilities, are members of reciprocal clubs to be given any preference or is it, simply, a case of looking after own members' first? Clearly the committee thought that the latter policy applied. Later in the decade, the experiences during the Commonwealth Games proved to be valuable to the committee in making policy for the strong accommodation demand. Both the Commonwealth Games and Expo, in 1988, meant increased trading for the Club, not just in additional demand for accommodation, but also in dining and entertaining by members.

One of the most enthusiastic recruiters of new members was Colin Wilson, who retired from the Army Reserve in 1983 with the rank of Brigadier. Colin Wilson* is chairman of Wilson Timbers, and a very successful and significant businessman in Brisbane. As a committee member, as president and later as a guiding 'elder statesman' of the Club, Wilson was always looking for new members. He was also an early and forceful advocate of civilian membership. In early 1981, while holding the position of assistant commander, 1st Division,** Wilson wrote to every Army Reserve officer in Queensland. The letter is worth reproducing, at least in part, because it is the first recruiting campaign targeted at a specific group - in this case, officers of the Army Reserve - embarked upon by the Club. Other recruiting campaigns, aimed at recent graduates of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, were to follow. In the letter, Colin Wilson's message was clear:

Membership of the Club carries with it privileges not available to people outside...such as reciprocal rights with other Clubs within Australia and overseas. Membership fees are not expensive and I believe that all A(rmy) Res(erve) officers can easily afford the fees out of their non-taxed army pay. Additionally special rates apply for country and remote members. The United Service Club could well do with your membership and support...The numbers of service members are steadily falling and the future of this great Club is really in our hands. How about your support?

After an appropriate discussion, the committee decided that it would meet the cost of posting Brigadier Wilson's letter. A similar letter was sent to the naval officer in charge, Brisbane and to the headquarters, RAAF, Amberley. Membership support by Army Reserve officers had varied over the years but the Club always managed to attract a fair percentage of these officers, particularly those whose business or professional offices were in the city and who could make use of the Club during the day. Regular officers were in a different category when it came to attracting them to join. In seeking members from the ranks of serving regular officers, of any service, the Club always faced difficulties. For a regular officer, the mess I - or should be - the focus of social life, particularly if he or she is young and living-in.*** If the mess is

*With Vernon Mullins and 'Sam' Harrison, Wilson was in an ideal position to recruit members of the Army Reserve to the United Services Club. Indeed, it used to be said - in jest of course - by some Queensland reserve officers that the prerequisites for promotion were service with the Queensland University Regiment and membership of the United Service Club, not necessarily in that order.

**An Army Reserve brigadier's position which no longer exists. Colin Wilson, a veteran of the Korean War in which he served as an infantry subaltern, was a forceful and dedicated officer who had the distinction of commanding both an infantry battalion and an armoured personnel carrier regiment. He was unlucky not to command the Reserve formation based in Brisbane.

***A phenomenon that is less and less common as officers marry younger and seek life outside the army.

well-run, with an active committee and a majority of enthusiastic young - under 30, for example, - members, then the social programme is active and full. Particularly for young officers serving in regimental postings, there is not much time for any competing social program such as the one offered by the United Service Club. The advantages of membership of a club thus are not always apparent to young officers. However, as they become more senior, travel more, serve on a formation headquarters* and begin to look to a life after the army (or the navy, or the air force for that matter), the advantages become more obvious. Later, we will look at the efforts to recruit and to retain the young graduates of institutions such as the Royal Military College, Duntroon.

As assistant commander of the 1st Division, Colin Wilson was also in a singular position to persuade some relatively senior former professional soldiers to join the Club. Among the new members to join at this time were three regular or former regular lieutenant colonels: Jack Innes, David Rankine and John Oxenham. At the time, Innes was assistant commander of the 1st Training Group at Wacol; David Rankine and John Oxenham had recently left the regular army and were serving with the Reserve. Both commanded reserve units, Rankine the 9th Battalion, The Royal Queensland Regiment and Oxenham the 2/ 14th Queensland Mounted Infantry.**

* * *

In June 1981, the Club hosted a reunion for members of 463 and 467 Squadrons of the Royal Australian Air Force. Here, the Club rules not to mention the licensing laws, had to be followed with care; the squadron members who were not Club members were invited as guests. It seemed a curiously convoluted process, but one that was necessary under the strict laws that then applied. The reunion was a splendid occasion and the Club's facilities were favourably commented upon by many members and non-members alike.

But once again, the question of redevelopment began to emerge. In March 1981 a 'future development sub-committee', as it was now entitled, met. This sub-committee included such stalwarts as Vernard Mullins, Richard Cameron and Colin Wilson. Again it is worth looking at this committee's deliberations in some detail, if only for the recurring themes that run through the Club's history.

*Or worse still, a military district headquarters where youthful officers are relatively thin on the ground.

**In Vietnam, David Rankine had won a well-merited Military Cross and was mentioned in despatches as a company commander; 20 years later his soldiers from that time were instrumental in having him selected as Queensland Father of the Year. John Oxenham achieved a measure of fame when serving in Townsville; some infantry subalterns, led by an officer who was later killed fighting with the Rhodesian army, painted his armoured personnel carrier a shade of bright pink. It was known ever after as the 'pink panzer'.

A number of options were perceived to be open to the Club. These included: sell all the property and move to new premises which could either be bought or leased; sell part of the property and develop the remainder; develop all the property together; develop all the property in stages; retain the Club building, but not the Green House and develop the remainder, and decide whether the Club should sell, lease or rent any portion of the developed properties.

Using an approach similar to that of a military appreciation the sub-committee then moved to the next factor to be considered: 'If we develop, then what type of development should be undertaken. Commercial car parking, units or office block?' And then, what was the timetable for the development? In typically forthright fashion, Brigadier Wilson made his views clear; 'whatever the decisions, the Club should in future provide...members with...facilities of a standard and elegance no less than those currently provided: ample parking; accommodation; dining and snack bar facilities; bar and lounge facilities; function rooms; billiard rooms; reading room; administration areas; bottle shop and cellar facilities.'

In considering all these options and requirements, the sub-committee was faced with a number of difficulties. One was the different zonings of the Club's properties: the Club itself and the Green House were zoned commercial A; San Remo and the lower car park zoned residential C; the entrance to the Club from Edward Street commercial B and the exit to Berry Street residential C. Thus any development that covered all the Club's properties would require rezoning of some, if not all, the titles. Rezoning was neither an easy nor a speedy process. Results could not be guaranteed. Councils and government departments could be remarkably fickle. As well, at the time the State Government and the Brisbane City Council were disagreeing over the future use of Spring Hill.* This disagreement was expected to be resolved when the 1983 Town Plan was issued.

Although the maintenance requirements of the Club building were heavy in the early 1980s, the Club was trading well, in a sound financial position and under no apparently urgent financial problems. Committees of this period were busy with the detail of running the Club and solving problems on a day-to-day basis; the forward planning that existed concerned largely the future of the Wickham Terrace site. Replacement with a comparable building, offering comparable facilities, would cost about \$2 million. That could only be achieved, the sub-committee thought, by selling the existing premises and moving. Yet all agreed that the Club had to remain in a central location; the current site was 'excellent'. This is important because this subcommittee consisted of men who, although far from elderly, were no longer young, who used the Club on a regular, even daily basis, and who had no complaints to make

*Which was then in the early stages of the process, since much accelerated, known as 'gentrification', the restoration and refurbishment of older buildings.

about 'climbing the hill'. In the event, this future development sub-committee decided to recommend that nothing be done with the site until after publication of the Spring Hill plan in 1983. The sub-committee also recommended that purchase of the site on the Wickham Terrace side of the Berry Street exit be investigated 'if it becomes available'. There, the recommendations rested, much to the relief of at least one future president who thought that more urgent problems needed to be solved.

In the following year's report, Colonel Mullins, then the president, noted: 'The Future Development Sub-Committee has not yet reported on options for development but is expected to do so in the current year'. However, important improvements were made to the Club during this time. Eleven air-conditioned, modern self-contained suites were available for members and guests; a PABX telephone system had been installed and progressive refurbishment of the premises was continuing.

The early 1980s also saw a resurgence of popularity in the Club Ball. Support by members for this occasion had varied over the years. In the late 1970s, declining numbers meant the Ball was transformed into a formal dinner dance; the problems facing ball organisers outlined in earlier chapters were still apparent in the early 1980s. But it seemed that with an enthusiastic committee, good planning and a suitable venue, support for the Ball in the early 1980s was good. In 1981, the ball subcommittee consisted of a number of younger members, including Captain Richard Palk, then serving with the Queensland University Regiment, but now a regular officer and, at the time of writing, senior army public relations officer at Headquarters, Land Command, in Sydney. With Palk also was Major John Dowsett, also a QUR officer and now a Supreme Court judge. John Dowsett's capacity for painstakingly detailed work and Dick Palk's enthusiasm for social events were contributing factors to the success of the 1981 Ball and indeed, to its re-emergence as a social event. As Colonel Mullins wrote in the June 1982 issue of *Uniser*: 'The annual ball is firmly re-established as one of Brisbane's premier social events and, last year, the ballroom was booked to capacity. The Ball committee is working to ensure another glittering occasion ...' That year, the Ball was indeed a 'glittering occasion'; some members who nominated late had to be placed on a waiting list; more than 260 members and guests enjoyed the night. As Colonel Mullins remarked in the annual report, 'it was pleasing to see two generations of some Club families having a thoroughly enjoyable time at a Club function.'

Social life of the Club settled into a comfortable routine in the 1980s: the Ball, the Patron's Dinner, musical evenings....each managed to attract a good level of support. Music hall evenings, deriving from the old 'sing-a-long' concerts were suspended, however, in favour of a dinner dance at which the Clare Hansson jazz trio entertained members and guests. Ms Hansson and her long-time drummer Bob Watson are superb jazz musicians; their style of jazz is both easy listening and most

Suitable for dancing. This was the beginning of a long, happy association between the Clare Hansson trio and the United Service Club which continues at the time of writing.

Inflation and increased operating costs continued to make life difficult in the 1980s. The Club rules had been changed in 1974 so that entrance fees and subscriptions could be set by the committee, rather than by a meeting of members. Throughout the 1970s, various committees faced the always difficult task of increasing subscriptions; members became used to the fact that such rises were inevitable. In May, 1981, the house and finance sub-committee recommended that fees be increased from 1st September: town service and civilian members would pay \$100 joining fee and \$100 subscription; country members would pay \$50 subscription with associate and remote members each paying \$20. At the time, the sub-committee went to the trouble of obtaining comparable figures from other Brisbane clubs. The Queensland Club had a joining fee of \$500 and a subscription of \$360; the Brisbane Club's joining fee was \$480 with a subscription of \$240 and Tattersalls Club was \$200 to join and \$50 in subscriptions. The Johnsonian,* then a near neighbour of the United Service Club, was \$50 to join and \$150 a year. Sister clubs in Sydney and Melbourne had comparable fees: The Imperial Service Club was \$125 for males to join and \$300 a year for town members, with appropriate reductions for country, interstate and remote members. The Naval and Military Club** in Melbourne was \$100 to join and \$175 for town members. Each club offered discounted joining fees for newly-commissioned officers.

Apart from a minor variation to the fees for country members, the full committee accepted the sub-committee's recommendation and the higher fees were imposed. Little reaction from members was apparent. That year's annual report covered the need to increase fees in some detail:

An increase in subscriptions, which was foreshadowed in last year's annual report, became necessary. Although a careful watch is kept on expenditure this will almost inevitably continue to increase if current economic trends are maintained as appears likely. Every effort must therefore be made to attain a corresponding increase in income and subscriptions are obviously a significant item. In addition there are items of expenditure which have been approved by the committee since the end of the financial year for improvements in Club accommodation and for the introduction of a fire warning system for the protection of members, visitors and staff and of the Club's property. In the circumstances the fact that this is the first increase in three years may be regarded as a matter for some satisfaction.

*Now, alas, departed.

**At the time of writing, the Naval & Military Club has an annual subscription of \$500. A fee at that level is a real disincentive to potential new members and a source of continuing problems for that club.

And so it was by members at that year's annual meeting. The question of increased subscriptions did not arise. Members were concerned about the age of the Club's lift and the possibility of a sinking fund or special reserve for its eventual replacement. In discussion about staff turnover, Major Peter Henderson warned the committee that, on legal grounds, the reasons for dismissals should not be made public. Other members raised questions about the poor trading in the Top Bar on Friday lunchtimes - drink driving laws were blamed - and about the changed entrances and exits to the Club. But the annual meeting that year was over in an hour and 20 minutes and again, members joined the President for the 'usual drinks' in the Top Bar.

Other annual meetings in the early 1980s followed similar patterns. Members had few causes for complaint; the Club was trading profitably, providing popular services to members and guests; socially the level of activities was at what the Club could adequately and profitably support. The Ball was popular but, with a maximum of 260 members, was nothing like the glittering occasion of the immediate post-war years. The wine sub-committee during this year was notable for its enthusiasm, and indeed, occasionally had to be reminded that there were limits to the Club's cellar capacity. But there was also about the Club's activities a certain comfortable sameness, a feeling that one year followed the next with predictable reality. Reading through the minutes and the bulletins for the period reinforces the impression of a Club comfortable in its complacency and imbued with the notion that too rapid change is not necessarily always welcome. This was not the fault - if, indeed, fault is the right word - of the committees of the time. Even until the mid 1980s, the committees were overly occupied with much of the detail of running the Club, while the secretary/manager was perhaps not allowed to fulfil the role of the chief executive of a by-now large, small business. But by the mid 1980s, it was also apparent that several factors were combining to threaten the Club's future.

Certain difficulties for the Club began to emerge in late 1984. In that year's annual report, the president, Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams, reported a 'near parity of income and expenditure'. However this was despite efforts to economise; the president said such a result emphasised the wisdom of a recent decision to increase subscriptions each year. This increase was to take account of inflation. Without that policy, said Adams, the Club would have run into a substantial deficit. A glance at the finance reports for that year reveals the potential seriousness of the problems. Total departmental sales for the year to 31 August were \$1,087,782, a decrease of \$1365. Total department gross profit was \$188,230, or \$25,725 below that of the previous year. Gross revenue or income, excluding subscriptions, was down; expenditure was higher and it was only, as Adams said, an increase in subscriptions that produced a small net surplus of \$427.

All effort was continued [wrote Adams in the annual report] during the year to restrain costs but yet provide that standard of maintenance of the Club's property, facilities and services that Members expect. Members will appreciate from the financial net result that the margin of income to costs is extremely fine.

The careful phrasing of the annual report, however, does not disguise the difficulties faced by the Club at the time. Revenues were declining, simply because fewer members were using the Club's facilities. Certainly the Bottle Shop was facing increased competition from liquor barns. This was a time of great competition in the bottled liquor market and Club loyalty for many members did not extend as far as passing up a bargain in bottled beer or whisky. At the annual meeting that year, Adams blamed the liquor barns and changed drinking habits for the lower result but one member, Squadron Leader Trevor Alley, an astute businessman, disagreed. He told the meeting that a more active marketing campaign would improve Club sales. Alley was right; Adams was being loyal to his committee and to his staff. Brigadier Brown also had a point when he argued that beer sales on a national basis had fallen by nearly 10 percent. But it was also clear that the Club's marketing and catering functions needed improvements.

This was an important meeting on another issue. Rule 13 (j), which dealt with the civilian members, was before the meeting for amendment. In effect, the amendment sought to increase the percentage of civilians from 40 to 50 percent of service members. In financial terms, the time was appropriate for an increase in the percentage of civilian members; the trading result was not very good and it was clear, from previous experience, that civilian members were good Club supporters. There was still some residual opposition to the idea; Flying Officer Harvey and Squadron Leader Alley both spoke against the idea, even going to the extent of using the dreaded phrase, 'thin edge of the wedge'. But Air Commodore Kingwell, a forceful man of definite opinions, spoke for most members when he said the arguments being advanced by both Alley and Harvey were a repeat of similar arguments used when civilians first joined the Club. Kingwell believed that civilians wanted to join the Club, wanted to make a contribution to the Club and they should be encouraged to do so. Service members, however, should continue to control the Club. A brief extract from the minutes should give the flavour of this meeting.

Squadron Leader Alley requested information as to what had been done to encourage regular service and reserve officers to join the Club. Colonel Mullins responded and stated that major efforts were made by previous presidents but the nature of service mess life was such that the Club could not compete. Major (Stephen) Maitland stated that he was in favour of the motion and could not see that an increase in civilian membership would affect the Club. Brigadier Brown stated that he had heard the same story in

Washington and London. It is a universal problem and concerns aging membership. Lieutenant Colless pointed out that civilian expenditure in the Club was in the order of 45 percent of total receipts. The motion was put. The motion was carried by 50 votes in favour, including 20 postal votes, to 12 against.

But this motion still limited civilian membership to 50 percent of the total number of members eligible to vote in Club elections, in other words, the service members. The big expansion of civilian members was yet to come.

The period immediately after the 1984 annual meeting was difficult for the committee and the president. It was clear that trading was below expectations and budgets. A meeting of the house and finance sub-committee on 30 November, chaired by Brigadier Murray Brown, heard of a net operating loss of nearly \$30,000 for October. Only after the application of subscriptions and entrance fees was this deficit reduced to \$5335. The wisdom of applying entrance fees, in particular, to cover operating losses of any magnitude had to be questioned yet the committee was more concerned, it seems, with reducing the size of those losses, admittedly a much more immediate problem.

The house and finance sub-committee was very concerned at the 'very poor', to use the words in the minute, catering return for October. Sales were 10 percent below budget, but the gross profit ratio of sales to cost of sales was also well below the norm. As a result the sub-committee recommended that catering figures be extracted and examined weekly (the ability to do so existed on the computer system) and dining room, snack bar and function prices be increased by 10 percent immediately. At the same meeting, the sub-committee heard of a loss of about \$120 on the Ladies Melbourne Cup luncheon and a shortfall of nearly \$30 in the collection for the Club Calcutta. Small amounts, admittedly, but indicative of some larger problems. These problems were undoubtedly the cause of the resignation of the then Club manager, Wing Commander Whytcross, whose relations with some key members of the committee had become strained. It would be wrong and unfair, however, to attribute all of the responsibility for the Club's position at this time to Wing Commander Whytcross.

The committee, collectively and some members rather more quickly than others, was coming to realise that the United Service Club required a different style of management. Unusually, although perhaps not so under the circumstances, the house and finance sub-committee met on 3 January to review the accounts; significant improvements were apparent in the catering account, although the Club was still returning net operating loss for November of about \$19,000. This should have been a good trading period for the Club and, although liquor sales were above Budget, the margins in the dining room and other areas of the Club's operations were still disappointing.

For several months in early 1985, the Club was virtually run by the President who

had, fortunately enough, sufficient time available to take on the demands of a busy operation with more than its share of difficulties. A job specification for the secretary and manager's role was drawn up in January and the position advertised. The selection panel, comprising the president, Flight Lieutenant Adams; the vice president, Brigadier Brown and the immediate past president, Colonel Mullins, were determined to find the man who most nearly fitted their specification, and not to be satisfied with the best of an indifferent list of applicants. This took time and a second advertisement, but after nearly three months of trying, they were able, with confidence to offer the position to Lieutenant Colonel G M Bagot. Guy Bagot's background of permanent army service, including Vietnam, experience in business and admirable personal qualities were judged to be adequate for the task. There was also a bonus that his duties as aide-de-camp to the Governor General in 1971, and as Equerry to the Queen in 1982, had made him well versed in protocol and in dealing with people of all ranks. Once settled in the job, he was given the opportunity to make recommendations for the future management of the Club and, six years later, it is reaping the benefit of control systems and management practices superior to anything it had in the past.

Just before the arrival of the new secretary and manager it had become necessary to make appointments in other key positions, notably the assistant manager for catering and the head of the accounts department and their contributions in these areas have been valuable in improving standards of control and efficiency. These changes in 1985 represented a turning point for the Club which set it on a progressive path, leading to financial viability. This has enabled extensive improvements to be made during the past five years. Most notable among these have been the redesign of the rear entrance and the refurbishment of the dining room and function areas.

In the 1985 annual report, the president, Flight Lieutenant Adams described the most important achievement of the year as 'the upgrading of club management by redefining objectives and responsibilities and by bringing in new people, with appropriate skills, to fill key staff positions. The financial results for the year clearly reflect the benefits of effective management and adequate controls in operational areas. This more than justifies the higher cost of professional staff. A foundation has been laid for continuing improvements in efficiency and service which should carry on well into the future'.

After a difficult period in the latter half of 1984, the financial position of the Club improved markedly. However total gross revenue, or income, while about \$30,000 more than the previous year, was more than matched by total expenditure, itself about \$20,000 above that of the year before. The Club returned a net surplus only after applying members' entrance fees and subscriptions.

One of the early tasks to which the committee turned in 1986 was the problem of senior and continuous members. Research by the newly-elected president, Brigadier

Murray Brown, produced for the committee in graph form, showed the potential problems arising from the growth in the numbers of members who were entitled, by virtue of their length of membership and their age, to much reduced subscriptions. This was a recipe for financial problems. The potential problems were appreciated outside the committee as well. At the 1985 annual meeting, Major Peter Henderson, as always an astute observer of trends within the Club, expressed his concern at the growth in the category of full continuous members. Major Henderson's concern was justified: this category had increased from 321 in 1983, to 323 the following year but had risen sharply, to 443 in 1985. By comparison, the number of town members - those members who might be expected to make most use of the Club - had declined, down from 757 in 1983 to 738 in 1984 and to 694 in 1985. Group Captain Smith, a former president, added that he thought the new committee should examine the Club rules closely. He thought they had become out of date. And so they had. Brigadier Brown, then newly in the chair as Club president, promised the annual meeting a thorough review of the rules and a review of the membership list.

At the same time, legislative changes by the Federal Government in the area of sexual discrimination meant that Clubs such as the United Service had to examine closely their rules. A working party on the Club rules, convened by Colonel Mullins was established in December 1985. Submissions were sought and these were to be in the hands of the working party by the following March. In early 1986, another working party was examining the possible establishment of a United Service Club Foundation, with the aim of providing the Club with true liquid reserves. After a careful consideration of the possibilities, this option was discarded. The establishment costs, of about \$400,000, were too great. A far simpler solution was proposed by Brigadier Brown and accepted. The Club capitalised entrance fees wherever possible, beginning in 1987, and segregated them into a trustees' account, thus giving the Club manoeuvre room for hard times.

The notice for the 94th annual general meeting included proposed rule changes. In particular the changes affected town, country and remote members who had been members for not less than 35 years. The proposed change saw these members classed as senior members, whose subscription would be fixed at one-third the annual fee which would otherwise have been paid. Changes to the existing category of continuous member were proposed. Eligibility for this category depended upon both age and period of membership. For example, a member of 65 who had been a member for 35 years paid no subscription, because the total of age and membership was 100 years. A total of age plus membership of 95 years attracted 15 percent subscriptions; age plus membership of 90 years 30 percent and a total of 85 years attracted 50 percent. The minutes of the annual meeting are notably brief on the debate that followed but the result of the vote was clear enough: 79 votes in favour (including postal votes) with 25 against. Even so, the issue had the potential to be divisive within

the Club and, if not rectified, also quite serious in its possible consequences. At the same time, this change of rule safeguarded the rights of those continuous members who were enjoying reduced subscription rates under the previous scheme. These members would retain their rights but would not progress to lower rates. Their subscription fees would be frozen at the current proportion of the full rate, unless they opted to transfer to senior membership when eligible.

The following year saw members discuss the results of the major rules review which had been carried out by teams of working parties chaired by Flying Officer Alex Overett, the vice president, and assisted most notably by the Club's solicitor, Mr William Boyd of Cannan and Peterson. In the report that year, the president, Brigadier Lee Greville, set out the reasoning behind the rule changes. First, the eligibility of membership provisions. The Club had to comply with the provisions of the Federal Sex Discrimination Act of October, 1984. 'This requires that both males and females be eligible to be elected to service or civilian membership in accordance with their appropriate category,' he wrote. Secondly, on the issue of voting rights, as civilian members now comprised almost 30 percent of the membership and were very supportive of the Club, the committee believes they should be entitled to vote at meetings or ballots.

However, in terms of representation, the committee believed that principal management should continue to be vested in service members. Civilian members should be eligible to stand for election for up to two of the eight committee positions. In his report, Brigadier Greville told members that the proposals needed to be seen as a whole. The committee had sought to balance preservation of the Club objects with an inevitable decline in service member numbers over the next 10 years, together with equity for what he described as 'very supportive civilian membership'.

In earlier years, committees might have been tempted to seek approval for rule changes, even significant rule changes such as those proposed here, on the night of the annual general meeting after 21 days warning on the notice of meeting. Such was the importance of these changes, however, that the 1987 committee decided to give members maximum time for discussion, first taking opinions at the annual general meeting and then coming back with the revisions, if any, to the next annual meeting. In effect, members were given a year's notice.

The first change proposed, dealing with eligibility of membership, provoked some useful discussion, but the significant contribution to the debate was made by the Club's solicitor. This change, Bill Boyd told the meeting, was a matter of legislative necessity. The United Service Club was operating in a very different legislative and social climate to that which prevailed at the time of the great expansion in membership soon after World War II.

The annual meeting's consideration of the other proposed rule changes was comprehensive, without being exhaustive. Proposals on voting rights and committee

representation attracted good support from the floor, again an indication of the by now complete acceptance of civilians within the Club. A suggestion that civilian membership of committees be directly proportional to numbers within the Club was put but discarded after discussion on the practical difficulties inherent in such an idea.

After some discussion on the methods of proposing new members, it was clear that the meeting thought the proposals had been debated fully enough. The president thanked the members for their contribution and, just to underline the continuing commitment to the need for new service members, reminded the meeting that he would again soon be addressing the graduating class of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, 'to enlist as many as possible of these young officers immediately after they were commissioned'. This was an initiative taken, not surprisingly by the Duntroon graduate president and Duntroon graduate secretary and manager on a thought by Brigadier Max Simkin, a Duntroon graduate and committee man, and father of another Duntroon graduate and Club member. In the past, there had been some mild feeling - antipathy is certainly too strong a word - to Duntroon graduates among some Club members, a remnant perhaps of the sad old militia-staff corps rivalries of World War II. Lee Greville was not the first Duntroon graduate to become president of the United Service Club. That distinction belongs to Major Douglas Murphy. But Murphy had left the army at the end of World War II, gone to university and established a successful stockbroking firm. Among those members for whom the staff corps-militia rivalry still had importance, Murphy's military origins could be overlooked.

But there was no mistaking the origins or the careers of people such as Lee Greville, 'Digger' James, Max Simkin or Guy Bagot. The growing maturity of the Club, in all sense, was evident in the acceptance of these officers as office bearers and executives of the Club; the initiative to recruit young RMC graduates was welcome and long overdue. Indeed, had such an initiative been taken earlier, particularly given the number of service officers who have retired in south-east Queensland, the number of service members in the Club might have been significantly higher.

Since June 1987, about 50 from each graduating class of between 110 and 120 Duntroon cadets have joined the Club. Of these, 31 percent have retained their membership for two years or more. The Club has also received strong support from various commandants of the Royal Military College including Major General Murray Blake and Brigadier Rod Curtis.* The scheme has been very successful. With a similar scheme used to attract OCTU graduates, the Club now has 350 members under 29 compared with 21 in 1987.

*Major General Blake, AO, MC and Brigadier Curtis AM, MC are both Club members of long-standing and frequent visitors when in Brisbane.

During 1987, the committee commissioned Tim Walsh and Associates, marketing consultants, to carry out an additional survey of the Club. This was designed to provide the committee with an internal audit of the Club facilities and usage, with the main thrust being an investigation of member' attitudes. The first stage, a qualitative survey, covered the attitude of 233 members. The results of this survey were communicated to members during the year through the newsletter. In summary, the report revealed that members found the changes to the Club, particularly the growth of civilian membership, 'regrettable but largely inevitable'. Equally, however, the members doubted the wisdom of trying to recapture what they saw as the 'lost military atmosphere and influence'. Most importantly, according to Tim Walsh, the civilian members who joined the Club were 'on-side' with the military atmosphere and in favour of retaining the military influence. 'It is important for the Club to retain a unique identity,' he said. 'Most members are, generally, satisfied with their Club as it is. Yet they are aware of the need to provide improvements for the future. A significant change from group usage to individual usage [was] discussed. The need for stimulating more group usage is addressed.'

Independent attitudinal surveys, such as the one commissioned at this time, have several important values. Firstly, and most obviously, they give management and boards an independent assessment and audit of their operations; secondly, and equally important, they allow customers - in this case the Club members - a practical say in the operations of their Club of perhaps a different nature to an appearance at the annual general meeting or a comment made in the suggestion book.

Yet equally these surveys can be so general in response and report as to be little real help to committees. Take, for example, a comment about the Club premises: 'A strong affection for the present building exists, but some would have it pulled down or restructured, modernised, etc ... There are variations of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with all facilities and varying levels of satisfaction.' Such general comments are of little use to the committee member who would be well aware of member sentiment about redevelopment.

The survey was useful, however, in assessing how well young civilian members had fitted into a service Club of quite precise and distinct origins. For example, one young businessman was asked about military links. He replied: '...it represents a standard which I admire. I've got no hassle with the dress regulations and requirements of the Club; in fact, I prefer them...if they take away the military background, they'll lose their difference....then, it becomes just another club....' Another respondent put this view on civilian membership: 'The often contentious issue of civilian membership has long ago been successfully resolved by the Club'. However, he went on to put, in admirably succinct terms, some of the major attractions for prospective civilian members. 'I would presume most civilian members have joined because of its proximity to the CBD and its standard of service. I also suspect the

relatively short waiting period has encouraged many to seek membership. I believe the usage of the Club by civilian members would probably be higher than that of service members, particularly luncheons...’

Here is an important attraction of the United Service Club, particularly in Brisbane which has, still, a relatively small business community - relative, that is, to Sydney and Melbourne - and several competing clubs for the businessman. There is no doubt that the short waiting time, the low entry fees - compared, say, to the Brisbane Club or Brisbane's newest addition to club life, the Polo Club - and the proximity to the CBD have attracted civilian members. Equally, however, there is the important qualification; the civilian members who have joined admire, and wish to continue, the military aspects of the Club. They are sympathetic with the Club's origins, aspirations and ideals. No doubt had the nation been unfortunate enough to experience another conflict of the size of World War II (and survived), many would have served in the armed forces in commissioned positions and thus been eligible for service membership.

Many of these civilian members proudly wear the Club tie, and embrace the military ethos with all the enthusiasm of the recent convert. And there is no doubt that civilian members, as has been pointed out before in this narrative, have been an important part of the conservation of the Club in its present form. Of similar importance have been the continuing initiatives in recruiting young regular and reserve officers on commissioning (notably from RMC and OCTU) as well as widening the associate members to include the children of members (male and female) under 30 years. The Club's demographics have been dramatically changed, so that it has now an equal number of members under 29 to those over 70 years. This will be of huge importance in preserving the Club into the second century of its life.

The laborious task of reviewing the Club rules continued through 1988. In August that year, a special meeting was called to discuss the draft of the rules which had been prepared by the Club's solicitors after long hours by various sub-committees. As the president, Brigadier Lee Greville, wrote in the 1988 annual report, the detailed review of the rules followed the previous year's acceptance by the membership of the general direction of changes. The review required a re-write, detailed discussion at sub-committee level, review by the Club solicitor, promulgation to members, further discussion and final drafting. After this process, it is not surprising that the new rules passed at the annual meeting with very little debate. Not for the first time was the committee made aware of the value of full communication to members.

On 18 August, 1988 more than 70 members and friends attended the Club's first Vietnam Veterans Day luncheon. The previous year, a hugely-successful march in Sydney - a 'welcome home' long after the event - indicated public acceptance of the Vietnam veterans and acknowledgement that they had been shamefully treated when they returned from that war two decades earlier. It had taken a long time for

such a public reconciliation but it had finally happened and the march was a most emotionally moving experience for many veterans and their families. The Club's luncheon was another way of expressing support for members who had fought in that war—members who included the president, four committee members at that time,* and the secretary and manager. Guest speaker at the luncheon was the then commander of the 1st Division, Major General P M 'Mike' Jeffrey, a Club member since 1981. Jeffrey had won a Military Cross commanding a company in the 8th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment; an extract of his address was included in that year's annual report. In a thoughtful and considered address, Jeffrey remembered the experiences of the ordinary rifleman in a section, both national serviceman and regular, with affection and no little pride. He concluded by asking the question that so many veterans of that war had asked themselves over the previous two decades: Was it all worthwhile?

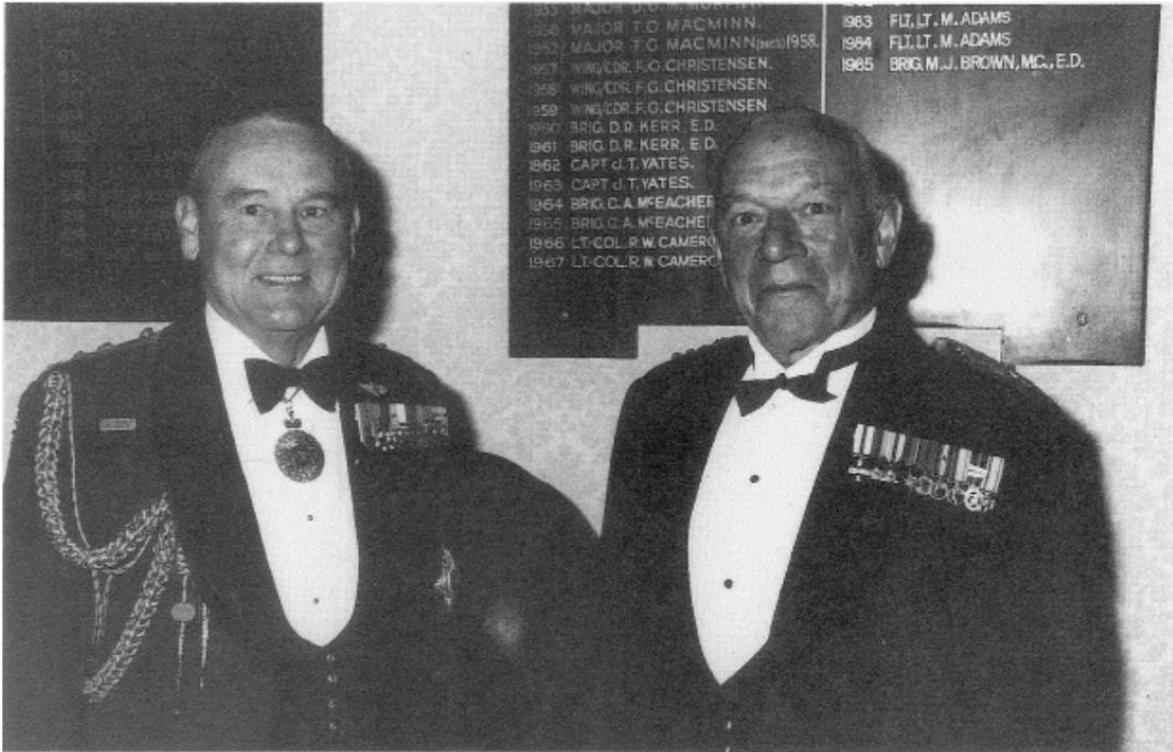
'As a serviceman, I believe we can all hold our heads high for what we tried to achieve *and did achieve* [emphasis in the original] in Vietnam and for doing our duty as directed by the elected government of the day. If our governments have learnt that never again must we fight an unpopular war; that if committed, military and political objectives must be clearly defined and closely aligned, and that once a decision is taken to fight, we go in to win, then our service will not have been in vain..' It was a moving address and impressed all who heard it on that day, and the many more Club members who read the extract in the annual report and who pondered 'Mike' Jeffrey's words. However, at the annual meeting, a Club member, objected to both the holding and conduct of the Vietnam Veterans' Luncheon at the Club. The member, who need not be identified, had long held strong views, both about Vietnam and about officers who were graduates of the Royal Military College. The minutes record simply: 'His views were not supported by any other members who were present. The President on behalf of members and committee disagreed with the spirit and intent of [the member's] remarks.' Even 20 years later, the Vietnam War has not lost its capacity for division and disagreement.

That Vietnam Veterans Day luncheon was the first of what has become an annual, and successful occasion. Subsequent speakers have been distinguished officers who were battalion commanders in that war: Brigadier I R W 'Lou' Brumfield, Brigadier J J Shelton and Brigadier Greville. The invited speaker for 1992 is Brigadier Colin Khan.**

The 1988 annual general meeting was also told the committee had reached a 'heads of agreement' for redevelopment of the Club's property on Wickham Terrace

*Vietnam veterans on the committee include Major General James, Brigadiers Greville, Ewing and Simkin and Major P L 'Blue' Doyle.

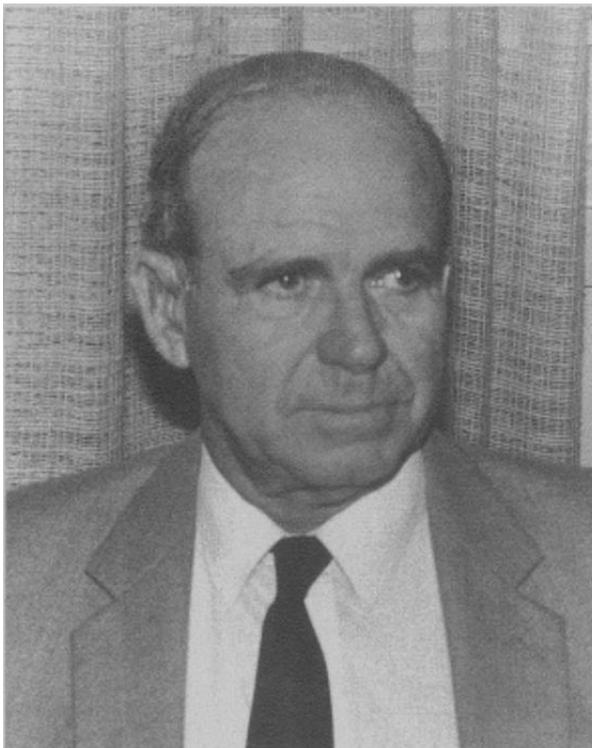
**Brigadier Brumfield CBE DSO commanded 1RAR on its first tour; Brigadier Shelton DSO, MC commanded 3RAR on its first tour and Lee Greville commanded 4RAR. Brigadier Khan, DSO, known inevitably to his soldiers as 'Genghis' commanded 5RAR on that battalion's second tour. The Club hopes that Brigadier Colin Townsend DSO will speak at the 1993 luncheon



Lieutenant General Sir Phillip Bennett AO KBE DSO and Brigadier Murray Brown MC ED on the occasion of the first CDF dinner, 1986.

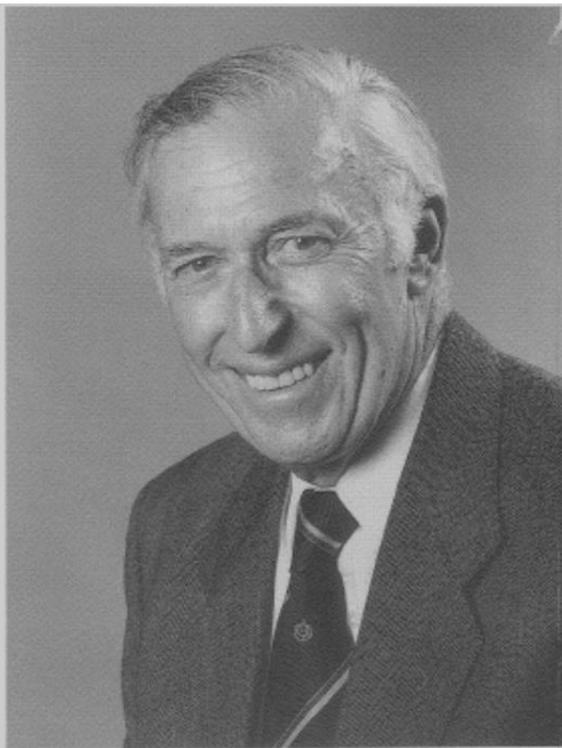
The main Club building and the Green House on Wickham Terrace.





*Brigadier Leon Roderic Greville DSO. Born 1927.
President 1986–87.*

*Major General William Brian James AO MBE MC.
Born 1930. President 1990–91. From a painting
by Joshua Smith.*



*Flying Officer Alexander Overett. Born 1924.
President 1988–89*

The front door.





The dining room.

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Blacket Stephens. Born 1902. A Club member since 1924.

Lieutenant Colonel Guy Montague Ragot I.V.O. Born 1946. Secretary and Manager since 1985.





HRH The Duchess of Kent at the Club, 25 February 1992.

A telegram received from HRH The Prince Philip, The Duke of Edinburgh.

 ROYAL COURT TELEGRAM					
SERIAL NO.	TIME HANDED IN	OFFICE OF ORIGIN AND SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS	WHERE	RECEIVED AT	DATE OF OFFICE STAMP
<hr/> <i>To</i> THE PRESIDENT, UNITED SERVICE CLUB, BRISBANE. <hr/>					
I HOPE ALL MEMBERS OF THE CLUB ATTENDING THE PATRON'S DINNER HAVE A THOROUGHLY ENJOYABLE EVENING.					
I UNDERSTAND THAT THE DINNER MARKS THE START OF THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS. MANY CONGRATULATIONS AND I AM ONLY SORRY THAT I CAN'T BE WITH YOU IN PERSON TONIGHT.					
TUESDAY, 3RD MARCH, 1992					
PHILIP					

with what Brigadier Greville called a ‘well-respected developer whom, for commercial reasons, we have agreed not to name until various formalities have been completed’. In fact, this was the Hospitality Corporation Pty Ltd. Brigadier Greville told the meeting that the proposal sought the construction of what would be a five star hotel in the carpark area. ‘It provides for the complete refurbishment or reconstruction of our present Club, in its present position and on a stand-alone basis, reflecting members’ views expressed in our recent market survey. It provides for underground parking for the same number of cars....for and on behalf of members. It provides for the Club a complete no-risk and no-outlay deal with built in safeguards at every step of the way. It provides a handsome yearly rental of the site with the land and the buildings reverting to the Club after 75 years.’

At the time, the committee was examining the merits of refurbishment as opposed to reconstruction. However, as Brigadier Greville reminded the members, the Club building was more than 80 years old and was not designed as a Club but as a boarding house.

Refurbishment [he said] would ensure the retention of the attractive features - high ceilings, stained glass windows and the like; together they make a well loved ambience which we all appreciate. Refurbishment would limit us in certain directions on the design and layout of the finished product. Rebuilding, on the other hand, would permit us to have the first building ever designed exclusively* for the United Service Club. Provided that we can retain in a new building the highly desired features of the old, many advantages are forthcoming.

For a while, it seemed that the redevelopment proposal would go ahead, or at least reach the stage of being put to members. However, over the next few months, it became clear to the committee members that the developers simply did not have the ability to meet their promises. For example, in February 1989, just a few months after the annual meeting, the house and finance sub-committee reported that it had ‘no confidence in, or enthusiasm for, development of the Club site, and that the committee should therefore now set about an orderly progression of renovations on the basis that the Club sees no likely benefit in a major redevelopment...’ Although the stock market crash occurred in October 1987, it was some months before the effect on business confidence and on equity values began to percolate through. Now, too, under the pressure of a rising current account deficit, the Federal Government began to increase interest rates in an attempt to dampen demand for imports. The impact of the tightening screws and the lower business confidence, combined with the proposed developer’s own problems, meant that the proposal, which looked so

*Here, Brigadier Greville was mistaken as Murray Adams’ early chapters show. The building at 70 George Street was designed and built for the Club in 1914.

promising at the previous annual meeting, now was shelved.

Certainly 1988 had been an excellent year for the Club. Brisbane had hosted World Expo 88, originally feared to be something of a disaster, but actually a huge success. For six months, including the mild Brisbane winter, the city hosted a continuous party on the south bank. It was also a boost for the Club, as Brigadier Greville told members at the annual meeting:

Expo, a marvellous success for Brisbane, has given a great boost to the Club's activity level and to its finances. The accommodation was fully booked throughout the Expo period, and this had a beneficial effect on bar and dining room usage. The net result of this was a first class trading year, with the Club's financial base being further improved. The Investment Fund is now nearly \$50,000 and entrance fees for 1987-88 were again capitalised.

The investment fund was first foreshadowed to members in Brigadier Brown's 1986 report to members. Then, he said the committee was examining the possibility of capitalising entrance fees: 'this is a radical change which cannot be accomplished in one year, because entrance fees have been applied, traditionally, towards covering expenses of the Club, but this change, when fully implemented, will make a significant contribution to the investment fund. The aim of this fund was to provide capital reserves which would complement the Club's considerable fixed assets.' In the 1991 accounts, the investment fund had reached nearly \$180,000.

At the 1988 annual meeting, members were told that a two-man working party, consisting of Flight Lieutenant Adams and Major Peter Charlton, had been convened to begin work on preparation of the Club history. At first, the committee was hesitant about the idea of a history: Did sufficient information exist to enable such a history to be written? Would members be interested in buying the book, once it was written? Murray Adams began the research, rummaging around in what remained of the Club's archives for the early committees, and indeed, many of their successors, were not exactly noted for their sense of history. It was not long before the two-man working party realised that sufficient material did exist and the task was begun.

For the committee, 1989 was a year of consolidation. The post-Expo trading period was not as quiet as had been expected, but the proposed development - the five star hotel at the rear of the Club - did not go ahead. As the president, Flying Officer Alex Overett told members at the annual meeting that year, the committee turned its attention to substantial refurbishing.

To that end the Club architect has developed a tentative plan for redevelopment of some areas to more accommodation and for substantial changes to the ground floor and to the rear entry of the Club premises. It is envisaged that these improvements and refurbishing would be carried out over a period of three to five years and will, when completed, be of great benefit to members. Much work remains to be done in getting the 'mix and match' and the costings of such renovations into proper order.

The results of such renovations were soon apparent to members. The dining room, the bottle shop and rear entry areas were all substantially improved while, at the time of writing, work is beginning on the bedrooms overlooking Wickham Terrace. At the same time, the committee is mindful that, probably in the next property boom, a redevelopment proposal will actually be translated into action and the premises which the Club has enjoyed for nearly five decades will be replaced.

Planning for the centenary occupied the committee's mind during 1990 and into 1991. As always in the Club's history wine occupied an important part. After much effort, the wine sub-committee chose a splendid red, a Penfolds Bin 389, Vintage 1986 which was offered to members at \$174 a case. By the time of the 1991 annual report, more than 300 cases of this wine had been sold. The monthly wine tastings, although still popular, were touched by the severe recession which affected Club trading and the membership in 1990 and 1991. The bottleshop, under the supervision of Einar Altmann, in its renovated form was a splendid service for members and attraction for so many who entered the Club from the carpark.

As the Club entered its centenary year, it was experiencing tough trading conditions. At the same time, however, it was clear that financially it was in fine shape. The Club was debt free, the investment fund stood at nearly \$180,000, membership support was strong and the programmed maintenance, so necessary in a building this age, was continuing. In its staff team, the Club had valued employees with some, like Dining Room supervisor, Mrs Margaret Evans, having long experience of the Club and affection for its members. The Club's renovated bottleshop, under Mr Einar Altmann, offers one of the finest ranges of wines and spirits to be found in Brisbane at more than competitive prices. Indeed, the success of the Club in recent years is due, in no small measure, to a staff team whose members had the best interests of the Club at heart. The committee and members could look forward to their Club's centenary year and, indeed, to the next 100 years for a grand old Club on the hill.

THE END

Appendices

Appendix I

PATRONS

1933-46	His Excellency Colonel The Rt Hon Sir Leslie (Orme) Wilson GCSI GCIE CMG DSO
1947-57	His Excellency Lieutenant General Sir John (Dudley) Lavarack KCVO KBE CB CMG DSO
1958-65	His Excellency Colonel Sir Henry Abel Smith KCMG KCVO
1966-71	His Excellency Sir Alan (James) Mansfield KCMG KCVO
1972-76	His Excellency Air Marshal Sir Colin (Thomas) Hannah KCMG KBE CB
1977-84	His Excellency Commodore Sir James (Maxwell) Ramsay KCMG KCVO CBE DSC
1985-	His Excellency Sir Walter (Benjamin) Campbell AC QC

Appendix II

TRUSTEES

1914	Major General R S Browne CB VD, Colonel The Hon J F G Foxton CMG VD, Colonel R A Moore
1915-27	Unknown
1928-38	Colonel F W G Annand DSO VD, Colonel FA Hughes DSO, Lieutenant T J Barry
1939-48	Colonel F W G Annand DSO VD, Colonel FA Hughes DSO, Colonel J Craven DCM
1949-51	Colonel F W G Annand DSO VD, Colonel FA Hughes DSO, Brigadier J Craven DCM
1952-57	Colonel F W G Annand DSO VD, Lieutenant Colonel Byrne Hart MC, Brigadier J Craven DCM
1958-63	Lieutenant Colonel LA Little, Lieutenant Colonel Byrne Hart MC, Brigadier J Craven DCM
1964-67	Lieutenant Colonel LA Little, Lieutenant Colonel Byrne Hart MC, Commander N S Pixley MBE VRD
1968-69	Lieutenant Colonel LA Little MBE, Lieutenant Colonel Byrne Hart CBE MC, Commander N S Pixley MBE VRD
1970-73	Lieutenant Colonel LA Little MBE, Lieutenant Colonel Byrne Hart CBE MC, Commander N S Pixley CMG MBE VRD
1974-83	Lieutenant Colonel LA Little MBE, Lieutenant Colonel Sir Byrne Hart CBE MC, Commander N S Pixley CMG MBE VRD
1984-87	Lieutenant Colonel R W Cameron DSO ED, Lieutenant Colonel Sir Byrne Hart CBE MC, Commander N S Pixley CMG MBE VRD
1988	Lieutenant Colonel R W Cameron DSO ED, Brigadier J L Amies CBE ED, Commander N S Pixley CMG MBE VRD
1989-	Lieutenant Colonel R W Cameron DSO ED, Brigadier J L Amies CBE ED, Brigadier C D F Wilson RFD ED

Appendix III

PRESIDENTS

1892 Major General John Fletcher Owen RA (1839- 1924). Born in Wales, educated Royal Military College, Woolwich. Commissioned Royal Artillery 1857. Commanded a mounted Gatling gun battery with Wood's Column at battle of Ulundi, 1879. Commandant South Australian Defence Force, 1885-88. Commandant Queensland Defence Force, 1891-94. Promoted to Lieutenant General, 1899, invested with CB, 1902; promoted to General, 1904; raised to KCB on his retirement in 1906 and honoured with appointment as Honorary Colonel Commandant, Royal Artillery. His obituary, in *R.A. Regimental News*, August 1924, ended with these words: 'At bottom he was thoroughly kind-hearted, eminently just and a very good friend. He entered into sport with the same zest that he threw into work and was a good shot and a very keen (fly) fisherman.'

1893, 1895, 1897 & 1899 Commander Walton Drake RN (1850-1940). Acting Commandant Queensland Naval Defence Force, 1891-1900. Came to Brisbane, 1885, as 1st Lieutenant, HMS *Wolverine*. Appointed training officer of Naval Brigade. Promoted Captain, 1902. Some time Administrator, Norfolk Island. District Naval Officer, Hobart, 1914-18.

1894 Colonel Robert Edward Drury (1832-96). Born in Brussels and migrated to Australia in 1852. Joined NSW Volunteer Rifles, 1854. Commissioned in Queensland Volunteer Rifle Corps, 1861, and on its disbandment in 1866 transferred to the Queensland Volunteer Artillery. Acting Commandant, Queensland Defence Force in 1883 pending the arrival of Colonel G A French and again in 1894 until the arrival of Colonel H Gunter in 1895. Awarded CMG, 1885. General manager, Queensland National Bank from its inception in 1872 until his death in 1896.

1896 & 1898 Colonel Howel Gunter (1844-1902). Commissioned from the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, into the 73rd Regiment of Foot. Commandant, Queensland Defence Force, 1895-99.

1900 Colonel Harry Finn. Commandant Queensland Defence Force, 1900-01. Late 21st Lancers.

1901 & 1903 Captain William Rooke Cresswell CMG RN (1852-1932). Joined the Royal Navy as a cadet in 1866 and commissioned in 1871. Resigned from the Royal Navy in 1878, migrated to Australia and worked on pastoral properties in Queensland and the Northern Territory until 1885, then rejoined the Royal Navy with appointment to the South Australian Naval Force, becoming Commandant, 1893-95. Commandant, Queensland Naval Force, 1900-04. Director, Commonwealth Naval Forces, 1904-11 and, on formation of the Royal Australian Navy, Chief of the Australian Naval Force, 1911-19, as Vice Admiral Sir William (Rooke) Cresswell KCMG.

1902 & 1904 Colonel T Price CB. Commandant Commonwealth Military Forces, Queensland, 1902-05.

1905 Captain Frederick Tickell CMG CNF (1857-1919). Naval Commandant, Queensland, 1904-07. Also Naval Commandant Victoria 1897-1904 and 1907-10. Later Rear Admiral Frederick Tickell CMG RAN.

1906 & 1908 Colonel John Sanderson Lyster. A subaltern in a Scottish regiment prior to migrating to Australia as a civilian and gaining employment in the Premier's Department, Queensland, and rose to be Secretary of the Department. Simultaneously progressed through the ranks in the Defence Force and became Commandant Commonwealth Military Forces, Queensland, 1906-12.

1907 & 1909 Captain John Tracy Richardson CNF (1860-1941). Commandant, Queensland Naval Force, 1907-11.

1910 Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Sutton. Born 1863. Served in the Australian Army Medical Corps and for some time was Principal Medical Officer, 1st Military District. At the end of World War I was Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Sutton CB CMG VD.

1911 Lieutenant Colonel George Herbert Hopkins. Served in the 8th Infantry Regiment.

1912 & 1916 Brigadier General George Leonard Lee CMG DSO. Born 1860. Commanded 2nd Military District in 1918, as Honorary Major General. Aide de Camp to the Governor General, 1915-20.

1913-14 Lieutenant Colonel Henry Arthur Goddard (1871-1955). Migrated to Australia in 1890 and was commissioned in the Queensland Defence Force in 1899. Commanded the 7th Infantry (Moreton) Regiment in 1913 and, after service in World War I, became Colonel H A Goddard CMG DSO VD. Occupation: Merchant.

1915 Commander George Arthur Hamilton Curtis RAN (1860-1933). District Naval Officer, Brisbane, 1911-22 with the exception of service on HMAS *Psyche* in 1917 and on HMAS *Penguin* in 1918. Came to Queensland, 1893, as navigating officer for the *Gayundah*.

1917-18 Brigadier General Godfrey George Howy Irving (1867-1937). Commandant 1st Military District. Committee of the Naval & Military Club, Melbourne, 1900.05 and 1923-27.

1919 Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Pye. Born 1862. Commissioned in 1906 and served in the Australian Engineers. An architect by profession.

1920 & 1931 Lieutenant Colonel Francis Augustus Hughes DSO VD (1881-1951). At one time Commanding Officer, 2nd Australian Artillery Brigade. For many years company secretary of Castlemaine Perkins, owners of the Milton brewery.

1921 Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Currie CMG DSO (1883-1949). Commanded the Senior Cadet Battalion. Distinguished career in World War I.

1922-24 & 1936 Colonel Daniel Edward Evans DSO VD (1885-1952). Served with the Corps of Australian Engineers, World War I. A founder of the engineering firm of Evans Deakin Ltd.

1925-26 Lieutenant Colonel Raymond Augustus Stanley DSO VD (1883-1930). Served with Corps of Australian Engineers, World War I.

1927-29 Captain Thomas Renney Beamish (1883-1946). Served with 11th Infantry Battalion in World War I and with 2/25th Infantry Battalion in World War II.

1930 Lieutenant Colonel Hubert Reginald Carter VD. Died 1934. Served in South Africa and World War I.

1932-33 Engineer Lieutenant Commander Henry S Platt RNSR. Died 1963. Served in RAN, South West Pacific, World War II. Club committee 1927-50. Proprietor of an electrical engineering business.

1934-35 Colonel John Hill MC (1888-1958). Australian Army Service Corps. Served World War I.

1937-38 Lieutenant Commander Norman Stewart Pixley VD RANR (1898-1989). Joined Royal Australian Naval Reserve as a junior member in its first year, 1911, and was commissioned in 1917. World War II postings included Darwin, NOIC Cairns and NOIC Finschafen. His grandfather, Lieutenant Colonel John McDonnell commanded the Queensland Volunteer Force, 1877-79 and his uncle, Commander Walton Drake RN, was acting Commandant Queensland Naval Force 1891-1900. His father, Lieutenant Arthur Pixley was an early member and his brother, Sir Neville (Drake) Pixley MBE VRD and his son, Sub Lieutenant A S Pixley, are current members of the Club. Later, Commander Norman Stewart Pixley CMG MBE VRD K.tON.

1939 Flying Officer Alan Gordon Grant (1904- 83). Enlisted Royal Australian Air Force, 1928. In 1930 Pilot Officer Grant was piloting a Walrus aircraft from HMAS *Albatross* near Hobart, observing gunnery when he spun into the water. His injuries caused him to be invalided out of the service after which he studied pharmacy and set up a business in Wickham Terrace which dispensed prescriptions, but sold neither patent medicines nor cosmetics. Served as a

Served as a Royal Australian Air Force administration officer in World War II, retiring with the rank of group captain. Then studied medicine and later practised at Australia House, London and in Brisbane.

1939-40 Lieutenant Eric Houlton Voss (1893-1966). Served in both World War I and World War II.

1941-42 Major General James Murdoch Archer Durrant CMG DSO. Born 1885. Brigade Major 12th Brigade Area 1913, Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General, 2nd Division, 1918; Assistant Quarter Master General, 1st Military District, 1920. Commandant Queensland Lines of Communication Area, 1941-42.

1943 Major Bob Thompson Cowlshaw MC (1888-1974). Trained as a Midshipman on HMS *Worcester* and served on Orient Line ships, gaining a master's certificate. He left the sea and settled in Australia, serving with the 5th Light Horse Regiment on Gallipoli and in France. In 1919 was appointed Aide de Camp to His Excellency Major Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams GCMG CB, Governor of Queensland. During World War II he was Officer in Charge of British evacuees in Queensland and was an Honorary Aide de Camp to His Excellency Colonel Sir Leslie Wilson GCSI GCIE CMG DSO.

1944 Captain Donald Augustus Dowling (1895-1979). Served World War I and later in the Australian Army Medical Corps. At some time Medical Officer 1st Military District.

1945-46 Lieutenant Colonel Leonard Alfred Little (1903-74). Graduated in medicine, Melbourne University, 1928, and came to Brisbane as a resident medical officer at the Mater Hospital where he was later senior honorary surgeon, 1938-56. President Queensland Branch, British Medical Association, 1957-58. Chairman, South Brisbane Hospitals Board for many years. Club committee 1939-41, 1943-67. Life member 1947. Trustee 1958-74.

1947-48 Major George Crowe Reid MC (1894-1972). A veteran of both World War I and World War II. He inaugurated the El Alamein dinner for officers of the three services involved in that battle.

This dinner is still held in the Club each year on the anniversary date of 23 October. Manager of Howard Motors in Adelaide Street for many years.

1949 Lieutenant Colonel Sidney Lewis McIntyre MC (1887-1952). Served in World War I. Commanding Officer, 2nd Queensland Battalion, 1942.

1950-51 Lieutenant Colonel Jack Lowell Amies OBE ED. Born 1913. Joined the Club in 1935. Service World War II with the 2/41st Infantry Battalion, England, Middle East and Papua New Guinea. Chairman, Services Canteen Trust, Queensland, 1953-72. President, United Service Institute, 1961-64. President, Royal Automobile Club of Queensland, 1965-67. Later, Brigadier J L Amies CBE ED, Commander 7th Infantry Brigade, 1954-58. Honorary Aide de Camp to His Excellency Field Marshal Sir William Slim GCB GCMG GCVO GBE DSO MC Governor General, 1954-58. Club Trustee 1988.

1952-53 Wing Commander Allan Francis McSweyn MC AFC. Born 1918. Royal Australian Air Force pilot, World War II. Shot down and captured at Bremen in June 1941, made many escape attempts before reaching Britain in September 1943 and became known as Australia's most persistent escaper. Later Brisbane manager of Trans Australia Airlines.

1954-55 Major Douglas Gordon Murtagh Murphy. Born 1914. A graduate of the Royal Australian Military College, Duntroon. Initially served in the Infantry and later in Signals before appointment to staff positions. Resigned from the Army after World War II, completed a university degree course and became a Brisbane stockbroker.

1956-57 Major Thomas Gibson MacMinn (1905-58). Served in the Royal Australian Engineers, AIF during World War II. Profession: Architect. Died in office as the result of swallowing part of a toothpick in the Club dining room.

1957-59 Wing Commander Frederick George Christensen (1913-62). An eminent dental

surgeon whose appointments included the Chair of Oral Surgery, University of Baghdad, 1960-62. President of the Queensland Branch of the Australian Dental Association, 1956. Consultant oral surgeon to the Royal Australian Air Force.

1960-61 Brigadier Donald Ross Kerr ED (1910-85). Served 2/10th Field Regiment, AIF, World War II. Prisoner of war, Malaya. Later Major General DR Kerr CBE ED and Aide de Camp to Her Majesty The Queen, 1958- 60. Profession: Bank manager.

1962-63 Captain James Thomas Yates. Bom 1914. Served Australian Armoured Corps, World War II and later with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. Engaged in the motor trade.

1964-65 Brigadier Cranston Albury McEachern DSO ED (1905-84). Commissioned Australian Military Forces, 1924. Officer Commanding 2/4th Tank Attack Regiment, 1940. CRA 8th Division, AIF and POW Malaya. President, United Service Institute, 1946-61. Profession: Law.

1966-67 Lieutenant Colonel Richard William Cameron DSO ED. Born 1916. Served pre-war with the 61st Queensland Cameron Highlanders and during World War II with 2/2nd Machine Gun Battalion, 9th Division, AIF. Post-war served with the 9th Battalion, Moreton Regiment. A principal of the old and respected family real estate firm of Cameron Brothers.

1968-69 Captain Kenneth Carlisle Campbell. Born 1912. Served World War II with 61st Infantry Battalion. Chairman of Riverside Coal Transport Company since 1946 and director of other companies.

1970-71 Wing Commander Charles Gordon Chaloner Olive MBE DFC AE. (1916-88). Joined the Royal Australian Air Force as air cadet in 1936 and was serving with the Royal Air Force in England at the outbreak of World War II. Flight Commander, 65 Squadron (Spitfires) during the Battle of Britain and later served in SW Pacific. Aide de Camp to Her Majesty The Queen, 1961- 63. Chairman, Commonwealth Youth Council, Queensland, 1950-72. Chairman, Brisbane Metropolitan Fire Brigade, 1979-88. Promoted to CBE, 1978.

1972 Air Commodore Deryck William Kingwell CBE DSO. Born 1916. Joined the Royal Australian Air Force as air cadet in 1936 and served in SW Pacific during World War II. Air Attache, USA, 1952-54; Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Overseas (London); Senior Air Staff Officer, HQ Operational Command 1961-63; Officer Commanding Amberley 1954-56 and 1967-71. Official Secretary to His Excellency, the Governor of Queensland, 1972-81.

1973-74 Group Captain Percy Raymond Smith. Born 1920. Served as a pilot with the Royal Australian Air Force, SW Pacific, in World War II. MLA Queensland Parliament 1957- 69 and member Law Reform Commission, 1969-76. Deputy Judge Advocate General RAAF, 1964-76. President, United Service Institute 1977-90. Profession: Barrister.

1975-76 Colonel Colin David Francis Wilson ED. Born 1928. Joined 9th Infantry Battalion, Citizen Military Forces in 1948 and was commissioned in 1951. From 1952 to 1955 served in the Australian Regular Army in Korea and in Japan. Rejoined the Citizen Military Forces and in turn commanded Officer Cadet Training Unit (1967); 49th Battalion (The Bushmen's Rifles) (1968- 70); 2/14 Queensland Mounted Infantry (1971-73); Training Wing 1st Training Group (1977-79); 1st Training Group (1980) and finally, as Brigadier, Assistant Commander, 1st Division (1980-83) Honorary Aide de Camp to the Governor General. Principal of Wilson Timbers. Club trustee, 1989.

1977-78 Captain Osmonde Marshall May OBE VRD* RANR. Born 1923. Served in Royal Australian Navy ships in SW Pacific during World War II. Commanding Officer Brisbane Port Division, 1958-73. Aide de Camp to Her Majesty The Queen, 1971-72. Deputy Commonwealth Statistician and Government Statistician for Queensland, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

1979-80 Major General The Honourable Jack Lawrence Kelly. Born 1920. Served Australian Imperial Forces, SW Pacific, World War II. Private Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Federal Treasurer, 1950-52. Commanding Officer 9th Infantry Battalion, Moreton Regiment, 1957-60. Judge,

Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea, 1970-72 and Judge, Supreme Court of Queensland, 1973-90. Judge Advocate General, Australian Army, 1976-82. Awarded CBE, 1982.

1981-82 Colonel Vernard William Mullins ED. Born 1935. Served Royal Australian Artillery. Seconded to United Nations Military Observation Team, Kashmir, 1966-68.

1983-84 Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams. Born 1919. Served as a fighter pilot with the Royal Australian Air Force and the Royal Air Force in the Middle East and Europe, World War II. At various times grazier, beef industry adviser and, from 1966 to 1984, State Director of the National Safety Council of Australia, Queensland. Life Member 1990.

1985 Brigadier Murray James Brown MC ED. Born 1919. Served 2/10th Australian Infantry Battalion, World War II. Commanded Queensland University Regiment, 1953-56; commanded Northern Command Signals Regiment, 1958-60; commanded Northern Command Troops, 1961. Chief of Staff (CMF) Northern Command 1969. Honorary Aide de Camp to the Governor General, 1959-62. Profession: Chartered Accountant.

1986-87 Brigadier Leon Roderic Greville DSO. Born 1927. Graduated Royal Military College, Duntroon, 1946; British Commonwealth Occupation Force, Japan, 1946-50; 3rd Royal Australian Regiment, Korea, 1951-52; Commanding Officer, 4th Royal Australian Regiment, Vietnam, 1968-69. Military and Defence Attache, Tokyo, 1972- 75; Director General Army Development, 1975-78. Executive Director, Queensland Division, Australian Red Cross Society, 1979.

1988-89 Flying Officer Alexander Overett. Born 1924. Royal Australian Air Force pilot World War II. Principal of The Overett Group, auctioneers and valuers.

1990-91 Major General William Brian James AO MBE MC. Born 1930. Graduated Royal Military College, Duntroon, 1951, commissioned in the Royal Australian Infantry. Served with 1st Royal Australian Regiment, Korea, 1952, and wounded in action losing a leg. Graduated in medicine, Sydney University, 1963, and held various posts in the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps. St John Medical Relief Team, Biafra, 1971. Director General, Army Health Services, 1982-85. Now company director.

Appendix IV

CLUB COMMITTEES

Founding Committee 1892

Chairman
Major J Gartside
Major J F G Foxton
Major W K McClintock
Captain R McKie
Captain R Dowse

1908-09

Chairman
Lieutenant Colonel C J Reade CB
Honorary Treasurer
Major R M Stodart
Lieutenant Colonel A Sutton
Major A J Boyd
Captain H Wasteneys (resigned 8.6.09)
Major F H Russel (elected 23.6.09)
Captain P J Thorn
Captain F E Walsh
Captain T Pye
Captain W G Allsop
Captain J A Austin
Lieutenant J A H Beresford
Lieutenant J F Ure
Lieutenant] C Browne (resigned 22.6.09)
Lieutenant H P Phillips (elected 23.6.09)

1909-10

Vice President
Lieutenant Colonel A Sutton
Chairman of Committees
Lieutenant Colonel C J Reade CB
Honorary Treasurer
Major R M Stodart
Lieutenant Colonel G H Hopkins
Major A J Boyd
Major F H Russel
Captain W G Allsop
Captain H R Carter
Captain F J D Darvall
Captain T Pye (on leave 26.4.10)

Lieutenant J H A Beresford
Lieutenant R L Higgins (elected 13.1.10)
Honorary Solicitor
Lieutenant J F Ure
Lieutenant H P Phillips

1927-28

President
Lieutenant T R Beamish
Chairman of Committees
Lieutenant Colonel R A Stanley DSO VD
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith MC
Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt
RNSR
Captain J H Crombie
Captain K A Willis
Lieutenant Colonel] Hill MC
Captain F V Sharpe
Major J V Duhig

1931-32

President
Colonel FA Hughes DSO VD
Vice President
Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt
RNSR
Honorary Treasurer
Captain K A Willis
Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith MC
Major H R Carter VD
Major J H Russell
Major C A McEachern
Honorary Solicitor
Lieutenant G H Mocatta RANR
Lieutenant A L Elliott

1932-33

President
Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt
RNSR Vice President
Captain K A Willis
Honorary Treasurer
Major H R Carter VD
Colonel FA Hughes DSO VD
Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith MC
Major J H Russell
Major C A McEachern
Captain T R Beamish
Honorary Solicitor
Lieutenant G H Mocatta RANR

1933-34

President
Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt
RNSR
Vice President
Lieutenant Colonel] Hill MC
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith MC
Colonel W W Alderman CMG DSO
Lieutenant Colonel] Craven DCM
Captain O C D Gower
Colonel FA Hughes DSO VD
Major C A McEachern
Lieutenant Colonel E C P Plant DSO OBE

1934-35

President
Colonel J Hill MC ED
Vice President
Lieutenant Colonel E C P Plant DSO OBE
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith MC
Captain H B Blackburn
Captain J G Drew
Flying Officer A G Grant
Lieutenant Colonel G H Kirwood
Major C A McEachern
Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt
RNSR

1935-36

President
Colonel J Hill MC ED
Vice President &
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith MC
Captain H B Blackburn
Flying Officer A G Grant

Major N M Gutteridge
Lieutenant Commander N S Pixley RANR
Lieutenant Colonel E C P Plant DSO OBE
Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt
RNSR

1936-37

President
Colonel D E Evans DSO VD
Vice President
Lieutenant Commander N S Pixley VD RANR
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith MC
Captain H B Blackburn
Flying Officer A G Grant
Major N M Gutteridge
Lieutenant Colonel G H Kirwood
Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt
RNSR
Pay Lieutenant F L Strevens

1937-38

President
Lieutenant Commander N S Pixley VD RANR
Vice President
Flying Officer A G Grant
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith MC
Captain H B Blackburn
Lieutenant Colonel G H Kirwood
Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt
RNSR
Commander E C Rhodes RAN
Captain H R Seddon
Pay Lieutenant F L Strevens

1938-39

President
Lieutenant Commander N S Pixley VD RANR
Vice President
Flying Officer A G Grant
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith MC
Captain H B Blackburn
Lieutenant Colonel G H Kirwood
Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt
RNSR
Captain H R Seddon
Major F V Sharpe
Lieutenant E H Voss

1939-40
President
1. Flying Officer A G Grant (resigned
21.12.39)
2. Lieutenant E H Voss (elected
17.1.40)
Vice President &
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith MC
Immediate Past President
Lieutenant Commander N S Pixley VD RANR
Major H B Blackburn
Lieutenant A Boyd
Captain B T Cowlshaw MC
Engineer Lieutenant Commander W K
Kircaldie VD RANR
Major LA Little
Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt
RNSR
Captain H R Seddon
President
Captain E HVoss
Vice President &
Honorary Treasurer

1940-41
Lieutenant Colonel G H G Smith MC
Immediate Past President
Lieutenant Commander N S Pixley VD RANR
Lieutenant A Boyd
Major B T Cowlshaw MC
Captain D A Dowling
Pay Lieutenant R Kennedy RANVR
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt
RNSR
Captain H D Skinner MC

1941-42
President
Major General J M A Durrant CMG DSO
Vice President
Major B T Cowlshaw MC
Immediate Past President
Major E H Voss
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Captain D A Dowling
Lieutenant Commander I de J Pryce:Jones
RANR
Pay Lieutenant R Kennedy RANVR

Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt
RNSR
Captain H D Skinner MC
Commander R B Thomson RANR

1942-43
President
Major General J M A Durrant CMG DSO
Vice President
Major B T Cowlshaw MC
Immediate Past President
Major E H Voss
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Captain D A Dowling
Lieutenant N B Harper
Lieutenant Commander I de J Pryce:Jones VD
RANR
Engineer Lieutenant Commander H S Platt
RNSR
Pay Lieutenant R Kennedy RANVR
Captain H D Skinner MC

1943-44
President
Major B T Cowlshaw MC
Vice President
Captain D A Dowling
Immediate Past President
Major General J M A Durrant CMG DSO
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Captain H D Skinner MC
Engineer Commander H S Platt RAN
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Major E E Collins
Lieutenant Commander H P Jarrett RAN
Lieutenant F Gillespie RANVR

1944-45
President
Captain D A Dowling
Vice President
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Immediate Past President
Major B T Cowlshaw MC
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant Commander J Abbott RAN
Major E E Collins
Lieutenant Commander HP Jarrett RAN
Engineer Commander H S Platt RAN
Major G A Regan
Captain H D Skinner MC

1945-46
President
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Vice President &
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Immediate Past President
Captain D A Dowling
Engineer Commander H S Platt RAN
Major G A Regan
Major E E Collins
Lieutenant Commander F L Strevens RANVR
Lieutenant Colonel J L Amies OBE
Lieutenant Colonel S L McIntyre MC MM
Captain W A Hawkins

1946-47
President
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Vice President &
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Engineer Commander H S Platt RAN
Major G A Regan
Lieutenant Commander F L Strevens RANVR
Lieutenant Colonel J L Amies OBE
Lieutenant Colonel S L McIntyre MC MM
Captain W A Hawkins
Major O D O'Brien

1947-48
President
Major G C Reid MC
Vice President
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant Colonel, J L Amies OBE
Captain G W Hardcastle
Lieutenant Colonel F Cox
Captain W A Hawkins
Engineer Commander W K Kirkcaldie VRD
RANR
Wing Commander C G C Olive DFC
Lieutenant Colonel H R Love
Engineer Commander H S Platt RAN
Lieutenant Colonel C H Wilson

Lieutenant Colonel S L McIntyre MC MM

1948-49
President
Major G C Reid MC
Vice President
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant Colonel J L Amies OBE
Lieutenant Colonel F Cox
Captain G W Hardcastle
Engineer Commander W K Kirkcaldie VRD
RANR
Lieutenant Colonel S L McIntyre MC MM
Wing Commander C G C Olive DFC
Lieutenant R M Pendlebury RANVR
Engineer Commander H S Platt EM RN (Rtd)
Captain R S Purssey DCM
Lieutenant H K Steele
Lieutenant Colonel C H Wilson

1949-50
President
Lieutenant Colonel S L McIntyre MC MM
Vice Presidents
Lieutenant Colonel J L Amies OBE
Lieutenant Colonel C H Wilson
Immediate Past President
Major G C Reid MC
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Major J H Butler
Captain G W Hardcastle
Engineer Commander W K Kirkcaldie VRD
RANR
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Wing Commander A F McSweyn MC AFC
Wing Commander C G C Olive DFC
Lieutenant R M Pendlebury RANVR
Engineer Commander H S Platt EM RN (Rtd)
Captain C R Richards
Lieutenant H K Steele
Lieutenant] T Yates

1950-51
President
Lieutenant Colonel J L Amies OBE ED
Vice Presidents
Colonel C H Wilson ED

Wing Commander A F McSweyn MC AFC
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Major G C Reid MC
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Engineer Commander W K Kirkcaldie VRD
RANR
Wing Commander C G C Olive DFC
Lieutenant R M Pendlebury RANVR
Captain C R Richard
Lieutenant J T Yates
Captain G W Hardcastle
Captain W R Provan
Major D G M Murphy
Major T G MacMinn

1951-52

President
Lieutenant Colonel J L Amies OBE ED
Vice Presidents
Colonel C H Wilson ED
Wing Commander A F McSweyn MC AFC
Immediate Past President
Major G C Reid MC
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant E W Croke RANVR
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Flying Officer D M Locke
Flight Lieutenant F Martin
Major D G M Murphy
Major T G MacMinn
Wing Commander C G C Olive DFC
Engineer Commander W K Kirkcaldie VRD
RANR
Lieutenant R M Pendlebury RANVR
Captain W R Provan
Captain J T Yates

1952-53

President
Wing Commander A F McSweyn MC AFC
Vice Presidents
Brigadier C H Wilson ED
Major D G M Murphy
Immediate Past President
Lieutenant Colonel J L Amies OBE ED
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant E W Croke RANVR
Lieutenant Colonel L A Little

Flying Officer F Martin
Major T G MacMinn
Lieutenant R M Pendlebury RANVR
Captain W R Provan
Captain J T Yates-
Captain C R Richards
Captain E R Johnson
Lieutenant J A McLeish

1953--54

President
Wing Commander A F McSweyn MC AFC
Vice Presidents
Brigadier C H Wilson ED
Major D G M Murphy
Immediate Past President
Brigadier J L Amies OBE ED
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Flying Officer D M Locke
Flying Officer F Martin
Major T G MacMinn
Lieutenant R M Pendlebury RANVR
Captain E R Johnson
Lieutenant J A McLeish
Captain J T Yates
Captain C R Richards
Lieutenant G K J Slater
Major V C Thomas MC

1954-55

President
Major D G M Murphy
Vice Presidents
Brigadier C H Wilson ED
Major T G MacMinn
Immediate Past President
Wing Commander A F McSweyn MC AFC
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant Colonel L A Little
Captain J T Yates
Lieutenant J A McLeish
Major V C Thomas MC
Brigadier J L Amies OBE ED
Lieutenant R M Pendlebury RANVR
Flying Officer D M Locke
Lieutenant Colonel D R Kerr ED
Captain C R Richards
Lieutenant G K J Slater
Flight Lieutenant F Martin

1955-56

President
Major D G M Murphy
Vice Presidents
Major T G MacMinn
Lieutenant R M Pendlebury RANVR
Immediate Past President
Wing Commander A F McSweyn MC AFC
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant A Boyd
Brigadier J L Amies OBE ED
Wing Commander F G Christensen
Brigadier D R Kerr ED
Lieutenant Colonel L A Little
Lieutenant J A McLeish
Captain C R Richards
Lieutenant G KJ Slater
Lieutenant Colonel J E Staley MC ED
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Brigadier C H Wilson ED
Captain J T Yates

1956-57

President
Major T G MacMinn
Vice Presidents
Wing Commander F G Christensen
Brigadier D R Kerr ED
Immediate Past President
Major D G M Murphy
Honorary Treasurer
Brigadier J L Amies OBE ED
Lieutenant A Boyd
Brigadier C H Kappe OBE
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Lieutenant G KJ Slater
Major General A B Steele CBE
Lieutenant Colonel J E Staley MC ED
Major V C Thomas MC
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Colonel W J Wain DSO ED
Brigadier C H Wilson ED
Captain J T Yates

1957-58

President
Wing Commander F G Christensen

Vice Presidents

Brigadier D R Kerr ED
Brigadier C H Kappe OBE
Immediate Past President
Major D G M Murphy
Honorary Treasurer
Brigadier J L Amies CBE ED
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Lieutenant G KJ Slater
Lieutenant Colonel J E Staley MC ED
Major General A B Steele CBE
Major V C Thomas MC
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Colonel W J Wain DSO ED
Brigadier C H Wilson ED
Captain J T Yates
Squadron Leader R A Yeowart

1958-59

President
Wing Commander F G Christensen
Vice Presidents
Brigadier D R Kerr ED
Captain J T Yates
Immediate Past President
Major D G M Murphy
Honorary Treasurer
Squadron Leader R A Yeowart
Brigadier J L Amies CBE ED
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Captain D J Normoyle
Captain AFT Noyes
Major D M Russell
Lieutenant G J K Slater
Major V C Thomas MC
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Brigadier C H Wilson ED

1959-60

President
Wing Commander F G Christensen
Vice Presidents
Brigadier D R Kerr ED
Captain J T Yates
Immediate Past President
Major D G M Murphy
Honorary Treasurer
Squadron Leader R A Yeowart
Brigadier C H Wilson ED

Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD
RANR
Major V C Thomas MC
Captain D J Normoyle
Major D M Russell
Captain AFT Noyes
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant G K J Slater

1960-61

President
Brigadier D R Kerr ED
Vice Presidents
Captain J T Yates
Brigadier C A McEachern DSO ED
Immediate Past President
Major D G M Murphy
Honorary Treasurer
Squadron Leader R A Yeowart
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant G J K Slater
Brigadier C H Kappe OBE
Major V C Thomas MC
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR
Lieutenant Colonel R W Cameron DSO
Lieutenant Colonel T P McManus
Captain D J Normoyle
Lieutenant Colonel J L Kelly

1961-62

President
Brigadier D R Kerr ED
Vice Presidents
Captain J T Yates
Brigadier C A McEachern DSO ED
Immediate Past President
Major D G M Murphy
Honorary Treasurer
Squadron Leader R A Yeowart
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant G K J Slater
Brigadier C H Kappe OBE
Major V C Thomas MC
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield

Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VDR RANR
Lieutenant Colonel R W Cameron DSO
Lieutenant Colonel TP McManus
Captain D J Normoyle
Lieutenant Colonel] L Kelly
President
Captain J T Yates
Vice President

1962-63

Brigadier C A McEachern
Immediate Past President
Major General D R Kerr CBE ED
Honorary Treasurer
Squadron Leader R A Yeowart
Major D G M Murphy
Lieutenant Colonel R W Cameron DSO
Major V C Thomas MC
Captain D J Normoyle
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant Colonel T P McManus
Lieutenant Colonel L A Little
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Wing Commander F G Christensen
Lieutenant Colonel J L Kelly

1963-64

President
Captain J T Yates
Vice President
Brigadier C A McEachern DSO ED
Immediate Past President
Major General D R Kerr CBE ED
Honorary Treasurer
Squadron Leader R A Yeowart
Major D G M Murphy
Lieutenant Colonel R W Cameron DSO ED
Major V C Thomas MC
Captain D J Normoyle
Lieutenant A Boyd
Lieutenant Colonel T P McManus
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Captain K C Campbell
Lieutenant Colonel J L Kelly

1964-65

President
Brigadier C A McEachern DSO ED
Vice President
Lieutenant Colonel R W Cameron DSO ED
Immediate Past President
Captain J T Yates
Honorary Treasurer
Flight Lieutenant A D Izatt
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Lieutenant Colonel J L Kelly
Lieutenant Colonel T P McManus
Lieutenant Colonel A J P Walker
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR
Major D G M Murphy
Major V C Thomas MC
Captain D J Normoyle
Captain K C Campbell
Captain R B Gardiner
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield

1965-66

President
Brigadier C A McEachern DSO ED
Vice President
Lieutenant Colonel R W Cameron DSO ED
Immediate Past President
Captain J T Yates
Honorary Treasurer
Flight Lieutenant A D Izatt
Major D G M Murphy
Major V C Thomas MC
Captain D J Normoyle
Lieutenant Colonel AJ P Walker
Lieutenant Colonel T P McManus
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR
Captain R B Gardiner
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Captain K C Campbell
Lieutenant Colonel J L Kelly

1966-67

President
Lieutenant Colonel R W Cameron DSO ED
Vice President
Captain K C Campbell
Immediate Past President
Brigadier C A McEachern DSO ED

Lieutenant Colonel T P McManus
Lieutenant Colonel LA Little ED
Lieutenant Colonel J L Kelly
Lieutenant Colonel AJ P Walker
Lieutenant Colonel R G Fay
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR
Lieutenant Colonel R I Harrison MBE
Captain R B Gardiner
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Flight Lieutenant G L Cole
Lieutenant Commander H Campey VRD
RANVR
Group Captain F G Christensen

1967-68

President
Lieutenant Colonel R W Cameron DSO ED
Vice President
Captain K C Campbell
Immediate Past President
Brigadier C A McEachern DSO ED
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel R I Harrison MBE ED
Captain J K Kempthorne MBE
Lieutenant Colonel J L Kelly
Lieutenant Colonel T P McManus
Lieutenant Colonel A J P Walker
Lieutenant Colonel R G Fay ED
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR
Captain R B Gardiner
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Flight Lieutenant G L Cole
Commander H Campey VRD RANVR
Group Captain F G Christensen

1968-69

President
Captain K C Campbell
Vice President
Colonel J L Kelly
Immediate Past President
Lieutenant Colonel R W Cameron DSO ED
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel R I Harrison MBE ED
Captain J K Kempthorne MBE
Lieutenant Colonel T P McManus
Lieutenant Colonel AJ P Walker
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR

Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Group Captain F G Christensen
Flight Lieutenant G L Cole
Lieutenant Colonel R G Fay ED
Captain V E Coventry
Captain W Kidston
Flight Lieutenant M Adams

1969-70

President
Captain K C Campbell
Vice President &
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel R I Harrison MBE ED
Immediate Past President
Lieutenant Colonel R W Cameron DSO ED
Captain J K Kempthorne MBE
Lieutenant Colonel A J P Walker
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Lieutenant Colonel C D F Wilson ED
Group Captain P R Smith
Flight Lieutenant G L Cole
Lieutenant Colonel R G Fay ED
Captain V E Coventry
Captain W Kidston
Flight Lieutenant M Adams
Flight Lieutenant D J Dyer

1970-71

President
Wing Commander C G C Olive MBE DFC
Vice President
Air Commodore D W Kingwell CBE DSO
Immediate P President
Captain K C Campbell
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel A J P Walker
Captain J K Kempthorne MBE
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Flight Lieutenant G L Cole
Captain W Kidston
Lieutenant Colonel C D F Wilson ED
Squadron Leader D J Dyer
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR
Lieutenant Colonel R G Fay ED
Flight Lieutenant M Adams
Group Captain P R Smith
Lieutenant Colonel V W Mullins

1971-72

President
Wing Commander C G C Olive MBE DFC
Vice President
Air Commodore D W Kingwell CBE DSO
Immediate Past President
Captain K C Campbell
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel R I Harrison MBE ED
Captain J K Kempthorne MBE
Lieutenant Colonel A J P Walker
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Captain W Kidston
Flight Lieutenant M Adams
Lieutenant Colonel C D F Wilson ED
Group Captain P R Smith
Squadron Leader D J Dyer
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR
Lieutenant Colonel V W Mullins ED
Flight Lieutenant J C L Henning

1972-73

President
Air Commodore D W Kingwell CBE DSO
Vice President
Group Captain P R Smith
Immediate Past President
Wing Commander C G C Olive MBE DFC
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel R I Harrison MBE ED
Captain J K Kempthorne MBE
Lieutenant Colonel A J P Walker
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Flight Lieutenant M Adams
Lieutenant Colonel C D F Wilson ED
Squadron Leader D J Dyer
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR
Lieutenant Colonel V W Mullins
Flight Lieutenant J C L Henning
Flying Officer D C Harvey
Major K J Hansen

1973-74

President
Group Captain P R Smith
Vice President
Lieutenant Colonel C D F Wilson ED
Immediate Past President
Air Commodore D W Kingwell CBE DSO

Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel R I Harrison MBE ED
Captain J K Kempthorne MBE
Lieutenant Colonel AJ P Walker
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Flight Lieutenant M Adams
Lieutenant Colonel R G Fay ED
Squadron Leader D J Dyer
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD
RANR
Lieutenant Colonel V W Mullins ED
Captain J A Bonenti
Major K J Hansen
Flying Officer D C Harvey

1974-75

President
Group Captain P R Smith
Vice President
Lieutenant Colonel C D F Wilson ED
Immediate Past President
Air Commodore D W Kingwell CBE DSO
Honorary Treasurer
Lieutenant Colonel R I Harrison MBE ED
Captain J K Kempthorne MBE
Lieutenant Colonel AJ P Walker
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Lieutenant Colonel R G Fay ED
Squadron Leader D J Dyer
Captain R S Purssey
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD
RANR
Lieutenant Colonel V W Mullins ED
Captain J A Bonenti
Flying Officer D C Harvey
Major D S Molock MBE MC

1975-76

President
Lieutenant Colonel C D F Wilson ED
Vice President
Captain O M May OBE VRD RANR
Immediate Past President
Group Captain P R Smith
Honorary Treasurer
Squadron Leader D J Dyer
Lieutenant Colonel A J P Walker
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Lieutenant Colonel R G Fay ED (resigned May '76)
Lieutenant R J Palk (appointed June '76)
Major D S Molock MBE MC (died April '76)

Major K H Hansen (appointed June '76)
Captain R S Purssey
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD
RANR
Lieutenant Colonel V W Mullins ED
Flying Officer D C Harvey

1976-77

President
Colonel C D F Wilson ED
Vice President
Captain O M May OBE VRD RANR
Immediate Past President
Group Captain P R Smith
Honorary Treasurer
Squadron Leader R J Dyer AE
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Captain R S Purssey
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD
RANR
Major D R McMaugh (resigned April '77)
Lieutenant Colonel B A Smithurst ED
(appointed May)
Lieutenant Colonel V W Mullins ED
Flying Officer D C Harvey
Squadron Leader J N Parker AFC DFM
Brigadier C T W Dixon

1977-78

President
Captain O M May OBE VRD RANR
Vice President
Flight Lieutenant J W Tuckfield
Immediate Past President
Colonel C D F Wilson ED
Honorary Treasurer
Squadron Leader D J Dyer AE
Lieutenant Colonel V W Mullins ED
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD
RANR
Captain R S Purssey
Lieutenant G M Colless (appointed Dec '77)
Squadron Leader J N Parker AFC DFM
(resigned Jun'78)
Flying Officer D C Harvey (app Jul '78)

1978-79

President
Captain O M May OBE VRD RANR
Vice President
Major General J L Kelly

Immediate Past President
Colonel C D F Wilson ED
Honorary Treasurer
Squadron Leader D J Dyer AE
Lieutenant Colonel V W Mullins ED
Captain R S Purssey
Lieutenant G M Colless
Flying Officer D C Harvey
Flight Lieutenant K Cash

1979-80

President
Major General The Hon J L Kelly
Vice President
Lieutenant Colonel V W Mullins ED
Immediate Past President
Captain O M May OBE VRD RANR
Honorary Treasurer
Squadron Leader D J Dyer AE
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR
Captain R S Purssey
Flying Officer D C Harvey
Major J A Dowsett
Lieutenant G M Colless
Flight Lieutenant K Cash (died Aug '80)

1980-81

President
Major General The Hon J L Kelly
Vice President
Lieutenant Colonel V W Mullins ED
Immediate Past President
Captain O M May OBE VRD RANR
Honorary Treasurer
Squadron Leader D J Dyer AE
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR
Flying Officer D C Harvey
Squadron Leader A G Greig
Major J A Dowsett
Lieutenant G M Colless
Lieutenant S W Cameron

1981-82

President
Lieutenant Colonel V W Mullins ED
Vice President
Flight Lieutenant M Adams
Immediate Past President
Major General The Hon J L Kelly CBE

Wing Commander D J Dyer AE
Brigadier M J Brown MC ED
Wing Commander D D Champion
Lieutenant G M Colless
Squadron Leader A G Greig
Flying Officer D C Harvey
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR

1982-83

President
Colonel V W Mullins ED
Vice President
Flight Lieutenant M Adams
Immediate Past President
Major General The Hon J L Kelly CBE
Honorary Treasurer
Wing Commander D J Dyer AE (part year)
Wing Commander D D Champion (part year)
Brigadier M J Brown MC ED
Group Captain J M Francis AE (part year)
Squadron Leader A G Greig
Flying Officer D C Harvey
Lieutenant Commander R J K Sinclair RD
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR

1983-84

President
Flight Lieutenant M Adams
Vice President
Brigadier M J Brown MC ED
Immediate Past President
Colonel V W Mullins RFD ED
Honorary Treasurer
Wing Commander D D Champion
Lieutenant G M Colless
Lieutenant T H A Cross
Squadron Leader A G Greig
Flying Officer D C Harvey
Pilot Officer I C Selvage
Lieutenant Commander R1 K Sinclair RFD RD
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR

1984-85

President
Flight Lieutenant M Adams
Vice President
Brigadier M J Brown MC ED

Immediate Past President
Colonel V W Mullins RFD ED
Honorary Treasurer
Wing Commander D D Champion
Lieutenant G M Colless
Lieutenant T H A Cross
Squadron Leader A G Greig
Flying Officer D C Harvey
Flying Officer A Overett
Pilot Officer I C Selvage
Brigadier M B Simkin CBE
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR

1985-86

President
Brigadier MJ Brown MC ED
Vice President
Brigadier L R Greville DSO
Immediate Past President
Flight Lieutenant M Adams
Honorary Treasurer
Pilot Officer I C Selvage
Squadron Leader A G Greig
Captain F C B Haly AM
Flying Officer D C Harvey
Major D F Jackson (resigned Dec '85)
Captain W L Owen RAN (appointed Dec '85)
Captain R C Needham
Flying Officer A Overett
Brigadier M B Simkin CBE
Lieutenant Commander N O Vidgen VRD RANR

1986-87

President
Brigadier L R Greville DSO
Vice President
Flying Officer A Overett
Immediate Past President
Flight Lieutenant M Adams
Honorary Treasurer
1. Pilot Officer I C Selvage (died Jun '87)
2. Captain F C B Haly AM (appointed Jul '87)
Brigadier M J Ewing CBE
Squadron Leader A G Greig
Commander J H Burrow RFD RANR
Captain F C B Haly AM (until appointed Treasurer)
Major General W B James AO MBE MC
Captain R C Needham

Brigadier M B Simkin CBE

1987-88

President
Brigadier L R Greville DSO
Vice President
Flying Officer A Overett
Immediate Past President
Flight Lieutenant M Adams
Honorary Treasurer
Captain F C B Haly AM
Captain G L Boyd RFD RD RANR
Commander J H Burrow RFD RANR
Brigadier M J Ewing CBE
Squadron Leader A G Greig
Major General W B James AO MBE MC
Captain R C Needham
Captain W L Owen RAN
Brigadier M B Simkin CBE

1988-89

President
Flying Officer A Overett
Vice President
Major General W B James AO MBE MC
Immediate Past President
Brigadier L R Greville DSO
Honorary Treasurer
Captain F C B Haly AM
Captain G L Boyd RFD RD RANR
Captain S W Cameron
Lieutenant G M Colless
Major M L Doyle
Brigadier M J Ewing CBE
Lieutenant Colonel S J Maitland RFD
Captain R C Needham
Brigadier M B Simkin CBE

1989-90

President
Flying Officer A Overett
Vice President
Major General W B James AO MBE MC
Immediate Past President
Brigadier L R Greville DSO
Honorary Treasurer
Captain F C B Haly AM
Captain G L Boyd RFD RD RANR
Captain S W Cameron
Lieutenant G M Colless

Major M L Doyle
Brigadier M J Ewing CBE
Squadron Leader A G Greig
Lieutenant Colonel S J Maitland RFD
Captain R C Needham

1990-91

President
Major General W B James AO MBE MC
Vice President
Captain F C B Haly AM
Immediate Past President
Flying Officer A Overett
Honorary Treasurer
Captain G L Boyd RFD RD RANR
Lieutenant G M Colless
Major M L Doyle
Brigadier M J Ewing CBE
Squadron Leader A G Greig
Lieutenant Colonel S J Maitland RFD
Captain R C Needham

Major R J Olive
Lieutenant Commander M L Russell RFD RANR

1991-92

President
Major General W B James AO MBE MC
Vice President
Captain R C Needham
Immediate Past President
Flying Officer A Overett
Honorary Treasurer
Captain G L Boyd RFD RD RANR
Lieutenant G M Colless
Captain A H Craig RANEM
Major M L Doyle
Brigadier M J Ewing CBE
Squadron Leader A G Greig
Lieutenant Colonel S J Maitland RFD
Major R J Olive
Lieutenant Commander M L Russell RFD

Appendix V

SECRETARIES

HONORARY SECRETARIES		SECRETARIES	
1892	Captain J W Green	1943	Commander R B Thomson RD RNR
1893-1900	Not known	1944-45	Captain R B Thomson RD RNR
1901	Captain F B T W Koch	1946	Commander E A Feldt OBE RAN
1902-08	Not known	1947-48	Captain L G Hitchcock
1909-10	Captain H M M Maddock	1949-52	Flight Lieutenant J B Riddall
1911-13	Not known	1953-56	Major A W Booth MM
1914	Lieutenant D H Cannan	1957-58	Lieutenant W J E West
1915	Captain H P Phillips	1959	Major General A B Steele CBE
1916-18	Not known	1960-73	Lieutenant Colonel N E Aley ED
1919	Lieutenant Commander W J Weatherill	1974-76	Lieutenant Colonel AD Swift
1920-21	Not known	1977-78	Flight Lieutenant J I Coleman
1922-23	Captain H P Phillips	1979	Squadron Leader J N Parker AFC DFM
1924-26	Lieutenant Colonel W G Allsop CMG DSO VD	1980-84	Wing Commander E H Whytcross
PART-TIME SECRETARIES		SECRETARY AND MANAGER	
1927-28	Lieutenant Colonel W G Allsop CMG DSO VD	1985	Lieutenant Colonel G M Bagot LVO
1929-31	Lieutenant W E Darvall		
1932-34	Lieutenant G R F Burlinson		
1935	Colonel W W Alderman CMG DSO		
1936-42	Lieutenant Colonel R G Groom VD		

Appendix VI

LIFE MEMBERS

Prior to 1928	General Sir John Owen KCB	1936	Lieutenant J F Church
	1928 Lieutenant Colonel W J Boggie	1937	Colonel FA Hughes DSO VD Captain RAN Plant VD
	Lieutenant Colonel J P V Larsen VD	1941	Colonel F W G Annand DSO VD
	Major F L Jones	1944	Engineer Commander H S Platt RNSR
	Lieutenant Colonel J H Adams	1946	Colonel The Rt Hon Sir Leslie Wilson GCSI GCMG GCIE DSO
	Colonel The Hon J F G Foxton CMG VD	1947	Lieutenant Colonel C G Gehrman Lieutenant Colonel LA Little
	Captain C de F Pennefather		Field Marshal The Rt Hon The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein KGGCBDSO
	Colonel E Deshon CMG		Rear Admiral The Earl Mountbatten of Burma KG KCB GCSI KCIE GCVO DSO
	Lieutenant J W Wassell VD	1954	HRH The Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh KG
	Lieutenant H M Chester	1956	Major E T Towner VC MC
	Lieutenant Colonel T Pye	1957	Lieutenant General Sir John Lavarack KCMG KCVO KBE CB
	Lieutenant Colonel F B T W Koch	1961	Colonel Sir Henry Abel Smith KCMG KCVO
	Captain G A H Curtis RAN		
	Lieutenant Colonel R G Groom VD	1977	The Hon Sir Alan Mansfield KCMG KCVO
	Major H M M Maddock VD		Air Marshal Sir Colin Hannah KCMG KCVO KBE CB
	Lieutenant Colonel W G Allsop CMG DSO		Commodore N S Pixley CMG MBE VRD
	VD Lieutenant Colonel F O'Mahoney DSO	1985	Commodore Sir James Ramsay KCMG KCVO CBE DSC
	VD Lieutenant TJ Barry	1990	Flight Lieutenant M Adams
	Colonel D E Evans DSO VD		
	Captain E J T Manchester		
	Lieutenant N McL Bell		
1928	Squadron Leader H J L Hinkler AFC DSM		
	Lieutenant Colonel RA Stanley DSO VD		
1931	Colonel C F Plant VD		
1933	Air Commodore Sir Charles Kingsford Smith		
1934	Colonel R M Stodart VDMC AFC		
	Colonel CDW Rankin VD		
	Major General R S Browne CB VD		

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