

## The Early History of the Takapuna District Cricket Club

The original Takapuna Cricket club operated from the mid – 1920's until the late 1930's but in the absence of any records relating to its activities during those years, the exact year in which it ceased to function is not known and it is assumed that the club had gone into recess before the commencement of the Second World War. The only available record of its playing history is a photograph of the Club's team in 1927 and this was given to the present Club by the late Mr L J Minogue who was a member of that team and became Vice President of the existing Club at its inaugural meeting in September 1950.

The Takapuna Rugby Football Club commenced its activities in the early 1930's and became a successful contender in all the grade competitions conducted under the jurisdiction of the Auckland Rugby Union, winning the Senior Championship in the 1939 season.

While many of its members served with the armed forces overseas during the 1935-45 war, the Club continued to function throughout the war years and was able to resume full- scale activities after its service members returned to civilian life. Having provided the opportunity and facilities for the young men of Takapuna to play football each winter, the Club's executive members in post-war years were very keen to see the defunct Cricket Club re-established so that members of the Rugby Club could play cricket if they wished during the summer, as an alternative to such sports as tennis, yachting and swimming.

With this idea in mind, Messrs. Arthur Jensen, Alan Gorrie and Bert Entrican who were having a quiet drink on the verandah bar of the old Mon Desir Hotel during April 1950, approached Reg Jones who had been playing senior cricket in the city for Ponsonby-Balmoral Club and suggested to him that with the bacon of the Rugby Club, a new Cricket Club should be formed to commence playing in the Auckland Cricket Association competitions during the 1950/51 season.

While being initially dubious about the idea of giving senior cricket away, Reg undertook to discuss the proposal with some of his local friends and after conferring with Fred Thomas, Haddon Vernon and John Foote together with some cricket enthusiasts during the following fortnight, he contacted Arthur Jensen to advise that the necessary steps to form the Cricket Club would be initiated by that group of people during the winter of 1950.

The background to the formation of the Club at an Inaugural Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1950 and details of the Officers elected for the 1950/51 season, are fully described on the following page of photocopies of reports published in the "North Shore Times" and "Shore Magazine".

The Club's inaugural President was Mr Ken Robertson, a former senior player for the Parnell Club and the Vice Presidents elected at the meeting, included several prominent Takapuna citizens together with the Headmasters of Takapuna Grammar and Primary Schools, Messrs. K J Dellow and E G Preston. They also included the initiators of the

move to form the Club, Messrs. Arthur Jensen and Alan Gorrie and two members of the original Cricket Club, Messrs. G Cooper and L J Minogue.

Reference is made in the photocopies of press reports, to the problems which the new Club faced in obtaining approval from the Takapuna City Council to share the use of the No.1 ground at Taharoto Park with the Takapuna R.S.A. Cricket Club, but happily these problems were amicably resolved by negotiation between the Committees of both Clubs. In accordance with the earlier assurances given by Messrs. Jensen and Gorrie, the Takapuna Rugby Club made its Clubrooms on the opposite side to Taharoto Road, freely available to the Cricket Club for the storage of practice nets and gear and for the use of the changing rooms for visiting and local teams.

Like most other sports ground throughout Auckland, both rugby and cricket were played on the Nos. 1 and 2 grounds at Taharoto Park and at the end of each winter, it took quite a while for the playing surfaces to become fully grassed and reasonably level after the wear and tear of the football season. To their full credit, the parks Department employees of the Takapuna City Council did everything possible to prepare good pitches on both grounds but the uneven surface of the pitch on the No. 1 ground always gave batsmen a lot of headaches and correspondingly provide bowlers with plenty of assistance due to its variable bounce.

Having applied for and been granted affiliation to the Auckland Cricket Association, the Club entered teams in the First Intermediate and First Junior Grades of the Association's 1950/51 competitions and according to its Annual Report for that season, the Takapuna Club teams were placed fourth and third in their respective grades. During that season, results for both teams were regularly published in the "North Shore Times" and photocopies of reports on most matches played between November 1950 and March 1951 are reproduced on the following two pages.

Highlights of the individual performances by players in both the Club's teams were as follows:

- The first century, 120 not out, scored by Haddon Vernon on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1950 while playing for the Junior Team against Birkdale. Also the second century, 100 retired, scored by Bert Baldock on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1951 while playing for the Junior Team against Pt Chevalier. (Incidentally, Haddon had represented Auckland during the preceding rugby season).
- Consistent batting performances for the Intermediate Team by Graham Jensen, Reg Jones, Ralph Little, Des Minogue, Watkin Robinson and Peter Sheehan.
- Excellent medium-fast bowling by Arty Wallis who took over 40 wickets for the Intermediate Team and consistent bowling performances for that team by Ken Robertson (Club President), Ron Ayton and Frank King.
- Apart from the efforts of Haddon Vernon and Bert Baldock, consistent run-getters for the Junior Team included David Cook, Ron Cubitt, Alan Nettleton and Des Waite.
- The top bowling performances for the Junior Team were shared by Stan Forrest, David Cook, Bert Baldock and Gordan MacKay.

As would have been expected in its inaugural year, the Club had plenty of problems in raising the necessary funds for the initial gear purchases for both its teams and for other operating expenses, but thanks to the combined efforts of Officers and team members, the 1959/51 season ended with a cash surplus of 3-1-10 together with 30-0-0 invested with the Auckland Savings Bank.

While it has been possible to relate the events of the club's inaugural year in accurate detail due to the availability of the extracts from the reports and results published in the "North Shore Times", it is not possible to record similar information relating to the 1951/52 and subsequent seasons, due to the absence of official records such as the Minute Book, score books and correspondence files. The Club did however, make steady progress both playing-wise and financially during the subsequent years and a summary of its team's results in the Auckland Cricket Association competitions for the 1951/52 – 1959/60 seasons is contained on pages following.

Early in the 1951/52 season, the Club inaugurated junior boys' cricket on Taharoto Park on Saturday mornings under the jurisdiction of Reg Jones and several parents one of whom was Jim Burton., the Grandfather of Warren who is currently well known in sporting circles as the goal-kicking star of the North Harbour Rugby team. While there were always plenty of boys wanting to play each Saturday, the development of junior cricket was impeded by the lack of proper pitches to play on, a shortage of suitable gear and more particularly, the inadequate number of parents available to assist with the organisation and umpiring of games.

During the 1951/52 and subsequent seasons, the Club gained the services of several former Senior and Senior B players from other Clubs, including Bill Bar-Brown (Middlemore), David Napier (Vasity), Leo Hope-Ede (North Shore), Jim Swift and Jack Shaw (YMCA). Other valuable acquisitions to its playing strength were Malcolm and David Ellis, Sid Leppard and Bruce Beattie whose earlier Club affiliations cannot be recalled and also several promising players from Takapuna Grammar School First Eleven including John Collinson, Greg Watt and David Wood. The only individual performance which can be recalled for the 1951/52 season was that by Reg Jones, Captain of the Intermediate Team, who in successive matches at Victoria Park during January and February 1952, scored 120 retired against Air Force. 143 retired against Epsom and 98 against Grafton.

Thanks to the availability of the Club's cashbook for the 20-year period between 1950 and 197, it has been possible to trace certain significant aspects of its activities during the first ten year and these included the following:

- The accumulation of funds totaling 168-14-10 in the Auckland Savings Bank investment account between 1951 and 1957, of which 28-7-10 represented the residual funds donated by the Takapuna RSA Cricket Club when it went into recess during 1956. These investment funds were applied towards the establishment costs of the Club Pavilion at Taharoto Park during the 1957/58 season.
- The registration of the Club as an Incorporated Society as for 1<sup>st</sup> January 1958.
- The purchase of an old weatherboard house owned by Rendells Limited in Hurstmere Road (on the site of the existing retail shop) in October 1957 and its subsequent removal to Taharoto Park where it provided the Club with a much needed Pavilion.

Apart from its major financial implications, the Pavilion project involved many hours of voluntary work by Club members either in the late afternoons on weekday or on Saturday mornings and a few recollections of the organisation involved in establishing the Pavilion, are as follows:

- The purchase of the house was arranged by the late Colin Jessup who was Club President at that time and also secretary of Rendells Limited which kindly offered to sell it to the Club for the 'give-away' price of 100-0-0, subject to its being removed from the Hurstmere Road site at the Club's expense.
- The house was transported to Taharoto Park in early November 1957 by Winstone Limited for a total cost of 221-14-6, which included the removal of all rubbish from its original site.
- Because of the run-down exterior and dilapidated interior condition of the house, it was necessary to employ carpentry, drainage, plumbing and electrical tradesmen to repair and renovate it at a combined cost of 677-10-6. The efforts of Jim Rogan in undertaking all the carpentry work and co-ordinating the work of the other tradesmen, was a wonderful contribution from the Club's point of view.
- The external and interior painting and paperhanging were undertaken by Club members between November 1957 and February 1958 under the supervision of Bruce Beattie who was a painter and paperhanger by trade.
- The total cost of acquiring, moving and refurbishing the Pavilion was just under 1,000.0.0 for which the main sources of funds were as follows:

Loan from the Auckland Cricket Association	200-0-0
Grant from the Takapuna City Council	500-0-0
The Club's Auckland Savings Bank Investment	168-0-0
Balance raised by special fund-raising projects	132-0-0

Thanks to the collective efforts of tradesmen and Club members, the Pavilion was officially opened during March 1958 by the Hon. Dean Eyre, MP for North Shore, in the presence of the Mayor and members of the Takapuna City Council together with Club Officers and members. To the best of the knowledge of the writer of this early history of the Club. The Pavilion remained on Taharoto Park for almost 20 years before being demolished or moved elsewhere to make way for the modern Clubhouse erected by the Takapuna Soccer Club.

Before concluding this retrospective review of the Club's activities between 1950 and 1960, it would be appropriate to make special mention of the sterling efforts of its Presidents and Secretaries during those years, as follows:

Presidents: Ken Robertson, Harvey Thomson (a well known Master at Takapuna Grammar School) and Colin Jessup.

Secretaries: Reg Jones (1950/52), Haddon Vernon (1953), Ron Gibbons (1954/57) and Mike McDonald (1958/60).

