

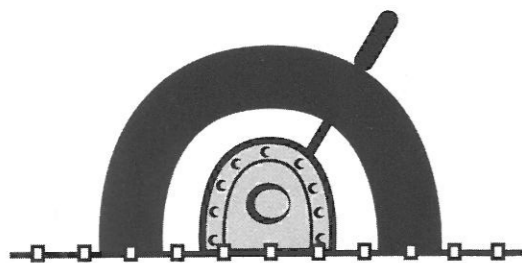
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Interim official meetings confirmed appointments of sponsors, solicitors, bankers, auditors, accountants, trustees for debenture holders, plus registration of an Incorporated Society, debentures, trust deeds etc etc. Permission was given to purchase 14 tables and 84 chairs.

A general meeting in the new premises on Tuesday, November 15, attracted 130 members.

Chairman 'Mick' Langlands announced the appointment of Dick Healey, Henry Tarry and leading fireman George Russell as trustees.

Hamilton Printing Works were authorised to produce members cards and clearance was given to buy a cooling unit from Wright Stephenson and Co Ltd. It was reported a suitable refrigerator and heater were also being considered while Tom Haman's quote of three pounds for the cleaning contract had been accepted.

To maintain interest and for psychological reasons, further special meetings during alterations were held in the club premises. The response and comments encouraged the committee.

Sporting sections soon formed included darts, snooker, fishing, golf, indoor and outdoor bowls and claybird shooting. Cards, dominos and board games were also popular. A Sunday cricket team was also mooted.

The bulk of the alteration work was done by members. On March 13, 1956, the first of the club lockers were allocated in alphabetical order and numbered with the official register copied and placed in the care of the club chairman, club's bank manager and solicitor.

The first annual meeting was held on Tuesday, April 24. Field instructor William J Crowther, builder Leslie Preston Gray and Don McCullum joined the executive of 'Mick' Langlands, Bob and Claude Lovell),

Lawrence Shanaghan, 'Ossie' Purcell, electrician Glen Keyte and Harold Capstick while Messrs George Clow, Tom Haman, Vollemaere, Keyte, George Russell, Wright and Woodhams made up the newly formed house committee. Mr Gray agreed to complete alterations to the premises before official opening and to install the indoor bowling platform purchased from the Waikato club.

The volunteer roster system used to monitor the entrance and lockers started well, but ran into difficulties as overall security was not tight and some members complained their supplies had been tampered with. The house committee decided there was a need for a club steward. On May 7 Les Dunford was appointed at 14 pounds per week to look after the interests of the membership of 400. A regular, sometimes daily, stock take of locker items almost dried up the complaints.

A never - to - be - forgotten highlight came on Saturday, June 9, 1956, the day Waikato beat the Springboks just down the road at Rugby Park. One of founder members of the club, Tommy Haman, and his mate, George Clow, were rostered on as a temporary barmen for the day.

Tommy recalled that really amazing day in a special interview years later - "We started at 8am and thought we were in trouble when the local police arrived just before 9am and caught us having a few before our official opening time. We thought we would all be booked as they had been pretty strict. However, they told our social committee, who were there 'officially' to prepare for sales later in the day, it would be a good idea to open up about 9am if we wanted to stop a riot. They said there were thousands gathering in Victoria St for the Mooloo parade and the two hotels just couldn't handle the crowd. We obviously obeyed



PROUD CLUB MEMBERS OUTSIDE THE HARWOOD STREET CLUB PREMISES IN THE EARLY 1960s. HOW MANY CAN YOU RECOGNISE?

their instructions and early sales were brisk. Soon the place was full. Members arriving for a 'quiet' beer were staggered to find Harwood Street virtually closed off by the police. All car parks had been taken. The word had spread quickly and by 11am there must have been a couple of hundred thirsty rugby patrons, members and non-members, milling around outside. Permission was sought to allow patrons to take supplies out into the car park, but not out on to the street. We were told to wait until the police chiefs decided. When the Mooloo parade finished we were told the queue outside the club stretched around the corner into London Street. To add to the mayhem, the disappointed thousands who had been turned away from Rugby Park as the ground was already full, had by then headed back to town. When they saw the original queue they started another from the Rostrevor Street end. The police, well outnumbered by the fans, warned us of possible trouble, but thankfully the crowd seemed content to wait their turn. Mooloo cut-outs and red, yellow and black colours were all over the place. At the start some of our committee tried to limit the numbers entering the club. They gave up when they eventually received permission to use the car park as a 'temporary' drinking area. That certainly eased the squeeze inside. Luckily, the

crowd was good-humoured. Some tried to be smart and wandered out on to the street, but generally they respected our rules. The club's phone line ran hot as more members were called in to help with security. Thankfully many responded. Amazingly, especially to us stuck inside behind the bar, trucks of all shapes and sizes continued to deliver supplies of extra bottled beer from various sources. Even though the beer was warm, each vehicle was greeted with a loud cheer and the sacks were soon emptied.

Just after midday the police visited again and told us we were doing well. By then, some of the crowd had left to go elsewhere to listen to the match broadcast. However, things only really quietened when the game started on the radio. We put most of the money in the club safe, but made sure we had plenty of change. We could hear the cheers from Rugby Park. When Waikato led at halftime all our thoughts turned to a possible home victory. More supplies were needed. Again, seemingly from out of nowhere, they arrived. Willing hands carried in the sacks and cardboard boxes. Someone, I don't know who, suggested we set up another bar close to the main door. Good idea, we all said. A draw for the cash just appeared from somewhere and we prepared for the rush. Just as well we did because when word came through Waikato had won the place just went

mad. The sudden surge of happy drinkers soon filled the club and the car park. We went flat out. The celebrations went on and on. I remember someone gave me a cold pie, my first food for hours. It tasted like Mum's best roast! Pre-laid plans for a quiet 'members only' evening went out the window as the crowd kept asking for more. Around 10 o'clock we were given the official signal to close up. The police cleared out the Harwood Street area and just

before midnight we 'temporary barmen' found ourselves all alone. Then came the our biggest bonus of the whole 18 hours of activity when a couple of sugar sacks of long-necked bottles suddenly appeared on our hastily made bar and someone, again I don't know, or care, called out: 'Thanks, boys, help yourselves. It's on the club!'

I remember some of the committee guys had great fun as they attempted to count all

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