



ARARAT BOWLING CLUB
1884—1984

A HISTORY

A HISTORY OF THE
ARARAT
BOWLING CLUB
1884—1984

Compiled for the
COMMITTEE OF THE
ARARAT BOWLING CLUB
by
Alan S. Bonsack

FOREWORD

When asked to write a foreword for this historic publication, my immediate thoughts of Ararat Bowling Club materialised into a clubhouse and two bowling greens, but that image soon disappeared. In its place the faces and names of members who enjoyed those facilities with me in the mid sixties began to emerge. After all, bowling clubs are not buildings and greens but people. The strength of any club is not in those facilities or even the champions it produces, but the thousands of members who have partaken of the friendship and relaxation – a real feature of our great game. Ararat Bowling Club is surely proud of its achievements and joins a select group of clubs throughout Australia, which has given service to the local community for one hundred years.

Looking back, I find a very special place in my heart for Ararat Club as it was there that I realised my initial bowls ambition – winning the 1964/65 Club Singles Championship opened so many doors for me. This early achievement started me along a path leading to such places as Canada, United States, New Zealand and the United Kingdom with some success and a great deal of pride and satisfaction. Strangely enough the things that come to mind about the club are not so much my successes but incidents like being chastised by one Charlie Carra, when I accidentally dropped a bowl on the green at my first competition experience. Also, as rather a novice, being taken in hand and guided by one of the club's later identities in Fred Mair.

Perhaps one shouldn't speak of events that took place during three short years in a history spanning a century, but such incidents are typical of thoughts cherished by so many bowlers who have graced the greens of Ararat Bowling Club during the last hundred years. That period has seen many changes in our game without spoiling the original spirit of competition, friendship and fun, which will go on forever.

JOHN SNELL

Whether you may win gracefully or lose honourably, bowls is a game that creates friendship.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The advent of a club's one hundred years of existence should not be allowed to pass unrecorded and it is with this belief and a faith that assistance would be readily extended that I have endeavoured to compile this history.

All kinds of assistance was, of course, readily available and to those who provided not only the facts but also the stories between, I say 'thank you'. Some have helped by answering a casual question and may not have been aware of its purpose, thank you for your kindness. Others have helped and may have despaired at my persistence, thank you for your patience. I especially record my gratitude to the following people for lending me their experience and support.

The staff members of the Ararat Municipal Library.

Mr. R. A. Blachford and members of the Ararat and District Historical Society.

The secretaries of Toorak and Williamstown Bowling Clubs.

The secretary and others of the Royal Victorian Bowls Association.

Mr. F. Dempsey for his photographic skills.

Mr. Fred Mair who answered every question with detail, humour and feeling.

Mr. Hugh Carruthers for his special brand of kindness and eagerness that helps to get a job done.

Cr. Eric James who supplied research material and gave me the confidence to begin.

My thanks is extended to Mr. John Snell, whom I have never met, on or off a bowling green but who conceded to my requests with sincerity and trust.

ALAN S. BONSAK

INTRODUCTION

It is inevitable that in a story such as this some events and some people who contributed to those events may have been overlooked. I ask the reader to bear with my frustration in compiling this history from only 28 years of recorded committee meeting minutes and just six years of outwards and inwards correspondence. That so much historic material has been mislaid is unfortunate.

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THE LEADER

He who lays the foundation

At the time the 'Ararat and Pleasant Creek Advertiser' was priced at 4d. per copy. Advertisements in its April 11th edition stated that a J. T. Blease would cut a gentleman's hair for 6d., also that J. Little would pay £2.10.0 for each ton of clean bones delivered to his mill site in Port Fairy Road.

News of this day included a request to Mr. Gillies, Minister for Railways, to insert into a Bill before Parliament a rail line proposal from the southern seaports to Ararat as well as a loop-line to Avoca.

The year was 1884 and Ararat was a well established town mid-way between Ballarat and Horsham on the road link between Melbourne and Adelaide. Ballarat, at the time, managed a larger population than Melbourne. Gold mining was still active although Ararat had experienced its rush.

By 1884 the Borough of Ararat was quickly becoming the trading centre of the vast surrounding pastoral area. Banks, shops, hotels, churches and a State school were well established. It had had a telegraph link with Melbourne for 26 years, a turf club and cricket club were formed in the previous year, a football club and tennis club were both past their formation years.

On May 2nd 1884 the Advertiser informed its readers that Sandy's Scott's Hotel is to be the venue for 'a meeting of residents desirous of forming a bowling club in Ararat — at half-past eight on Tuesday next 6th inst.'. The notice was inserted by James MacLean, the then secretary of the Shire of Ararat.

The 'Advertiser' reported upon the meeting in its next publication, the paper wrote 'In accordance with an announcement a meeting of residents desirous of forming a bowling club in Ararat was held at Sandy's Scott's Hotel on Tuesday evening last (6th May). Present — Messrs. W.H. Laby, W.L.C. Harricks, W.H. Dawson, D. Morris, J.W. Banfield, J. MacLean, J.D. Smith, W. Calder, R. Kilborn, W. Sandy and Dr. Palmer.

Mr. W.H. Laby was voted to the chair and Mr. MacLean was appointed secretary. Mr. MacLean had placed himself in communication with members of the bowling clubs at Hamilton and Portland and had correspondence in reply on the extent of ground required for a club, the preparation of the ground, and the proposed cost. After discussion on these matters and the reading of a list of probable members it was resolved on the motion of Mr. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Sandy "that a bowling club be formed in Ararat". Mr. Banfield proposed and Mr. Calder seconded "that the subscriptions entitling membership be — Entrance fee £1-1-0, Annual subscription £1-1-0",

this was carried.' The report continued — 'Mr. Banfield moved and Mr. Morris seconded "that a deputation consisting of Messrs. Laby, Morris, Dawson and Dr. Palmer wait on the Borough Council and ask for a portion of the Botanical Gardens Reserve to be set apart as a bowling green and that prison labour be allowed to assist in preparing the green". This motion, the paper reported, was carried.

So at that formation meeting the leaders had played their first shot. Scott's Hotel stood on the site now occupied by the Rex Hotel in Barkly Street and Portland and Hamilton clubs referred to were established in 1881 and 1883 respectively. The prison labour would be supplied by the County Gaol, built in 1861 and now known as 'J. Ward'. The foundation members were representative of various occupations and positions within the district. W.H. Laby with his brother founded a flour mill in the west end of Barkly Street, now the offices of the High School. J. MacLean was the secretary of the Shire and also the session clerk to the Presbyterian Church. W.H. Dawson was Mayor in 1875, the same year that saw the first train from Melbourne enter Ararat. W. Calder was the head teacher of State School 800 in Moore St., and D. Morris had a clothing store in Barkly Street. J.D. Smith operated a newsagency which was known by its former owners name — Cannons, whilst W. Sandy was the licensee of the Family and Commercial Hotel. W. Harricks was a farmer at Kangaroo Point and J.W. Banfield who came to Ararat with W.H. Dawson in 1857 was a co-founder of the 'Mount Ararat Advertiser' later to become 'The Ararat and Pleasant Creek Advertiser' and now continuing to be printed under the heading of 'The Ararat Advertiser'.

The inaugural meeting record certainly gives the impression that these men knew what they wanted and had prepared themselves well even to having selected a possible site for the club.

The newspaper continues the club's developmental story by reporting on the deputation's meeting with the Borough Council in its edition of the 16th May, it states 'standing orders were suspended to receive a deputation (from the Ararat Bowling Club) on the motion of Cr. Martin.' Mr. MacLean, addressing the council, said that the club was desirous that a piece of land should be set aside for a bowling green in the Botanical gardens, the club would open the whole of the ground to people who chose to join, and the ground would be the property of the council. Mr. MacLean continued — a possible site had been selected between the tennis lawn and the caretaker's residence and the club proposed to find the necessary materials such as soil, fences, drainage pipes etc. and merely ask the council to permit the prisoners to do the work necessary to create the green. The bowling club would pay the prison guard's wages. It was pointed out to the council that the property of the ground would rest with the Borough and that every ratepayer would be eligible to play by joining the club and upon payment of the subscriptions.

Not all councillors were impressed with the deputation's submission however, Cr. Hurstfield said he was in favour of having a bowling green but the site for the purpose was in a newly fenced portion of the reserve and further he objected to a private club having a right to the ground as the subscription was of such a price it would mean that mechanics would be excluded. Concluding his remarks Cr. Hurstfield moved the matter be deferred. The record of the meeting shows that the motion's mover was unable to get a seconder and so Cr. Tobin moved that the request be granted. In moving the motion Cr. Tobin said 'the offer was a liberal one as the club was prepared to find the funds and that Council was only asked to permit the prisoners to do the work'. 'There was no doubt that the appearance of the gardens would be enhanced', he continued, 'and a very pleasant amusement would be provided for those who chose to join the club'. After the motion was seconded by Cr. Martin it was carried.

Progress in the formation of the club and the setting of a green was certainly brisk, the club had 49 members by June and in August it was reported 'that good progress is being made with the formation of the bowling green in the Botanical Gardens. The ground is levelled and digging of the drains and laying of drainage materials is now complete. A large quantity of gravel and some forty loads of soil have been delivered to the site.' By October 10th, the local press was able to inform its readers that — the ground has been completed in a most satisfactory manner, seed was sown on Saturday last. Water has been laid to the grounds but the light showers which have fallen this week have prevented the use of the hose being resorted to.

From a formation meeting on May 6th to a seeded green by early October bears its own proof of the eagerness of members to have their first bowl.

The location of this first green has been a matter of discussion and several positions about the city have been described in later years as the original area. The Botanical Garden Reserve, now Alexandra Park, had been gazetted as a public area many years before 1884 although very little progress had been made especially in the area located between the rail line and Collings Street with the exception of the provision of a wooden picket fence to deter goats. Tennis courts existed between the rail line and Collings Street immediately behind the present Croquet Club House. The site of the original tennis courts is now grassed for croquet. The Ararat Tennis Club was formed six years earlier than the bowling club and moved to its Lowe Street site in the 1920's. Westward from the original courts was scrub and trees and nearer to Lambert Street stood a caretaker's cottage. In later years the Borough council used this end of the reserve as a council depot and later still the Pathfinder School would use part of this area that is now a hockey field. These then are the 'caretaker's residence' and the 'tennis lawn' referred to by the deputation before Council in May and between these two locations is the area so desired by the club's founders.

Ararat had become the 27th club formed in Victoria being a year after Hamilton, Port Melbourne and Queenscliff and twenty years later than the first two clubs founded, Melbourne and Ballarat.

Common practice in the formation of a green was to lay the number of rinks that would be best suited to the number of members. Of course finance was a limiting factor and no doubt these two considerations taken together would determine the size of the original green.

It is a matter of much regret that the Ararat Bowling Club's minute books up to 1938 are no longer in existence — consequently all of the foregoing text has been researched from other sources.

In 1927 the Victorian Bowling Association published a Bowling Carnival Souvenir booklet and Ararat had submitted a paragraph pertaining to the club. The article records that the club began with a three rink green in the Botanic Gardens. It mentions too that the cost was considerable due to the natural fall of the land. A few years later a fourth rink was added and later still two more making a total of six. It is certain that Ararat had six rinks by 1927 and most likely did develop from three as did other greens of that time.

The Advertiser of January 28th 1887 carried a public notice under the heading of the Bowling Club and informed its members that a 'meeting of much importance' was to be held in the Ararat Hotel. The paper duly reported on that meeting — the matter being the erection of a pavilion. Mr. Grano presented a prepared plan for such a structure measuring 20 feet by 14 feet complete with verandah and two rows of seats, externally placed, one higher than the other. The proposed plan had provision for a six foot portion of floor space sub-divided for the purpose of a dressing room. The meeting agreed to submit the plan to the Borough Council with a request 'that the money spent in its structure be reckoned as money paid toward the liquidation of the present debt'. The meeting also agreed to the calling of tenders for its construction 'as soon as the subscription lists amount to £20'.

A delegation consisting of James MacLean and George Grano presented themselves to the Borough Council on February 11th 1887 and there informed the council of the club's building plan. MacLean suggested that the council could claim funds under the Parks and Gardens vote for buildings erected for public use in the Botanical Gardens. He also informed council the estimated cost of the building was £35. At the same meeting Cr. Tobin proposed that the request be granted. Once more the club's founders demonstrated their decisiveness, it was just 13 days from the calling of the 'meeting of importance'.

A photograph does exist of this pavilion, it was built facing east somewhere approximating the south end of the present rink six. It is not known how long it remained as the second club house was in position by 1927.

Many people other than those mentioned must have lent their assistance toward the formation of the club in those early years; sadly their names are lost but their legacy most certainly lives on for, from their time onward, another green is laid and another club house is built.



First club house, built in 1887. Located approximately south end of present rink six, facing east. The building cost £35 to erect, it was removed prior to 1927.



Gathering photographed to the side of original club house. Note two rows of seats, one placed higher than the other. Photograph taken prior to 1899.

Opening day — October 5th 1898. Some Stawell Club bowlers present.





Ararat Shire v. Ararat Borough Bowling match, 1888. Photographer facing north.

THE SECOND

To stabilize the advantage.

By the late 1920's the area of the Botanical gardens along Collings Street had been much transformed. The croquet club had established itself on the Vincent Street corner. Adjacent were the tennis courts and next came the bowling green, by now a six rink playing area with its second pavilion positioned on the greens west edge approximately where the central path is now. This building was clad with weatherboards and was divided into two areas, the front portion an area for members with wooden lockers also used as seats around its perimeter whilst the back room was used for the preparation of refreshments. This building was to serve the club until the mid 1950's.

The Victorian Bowling Association was formed in 1880 and in 1946 was granted its 'Royal' prefix to make it now known as the Royal Victorian Bowls Association. Ararat is credited as joining the Association in 1909 along with many other country clubs.

Records of pennant play do not exist before 1938 so it is not known to what extent Ararat participated. The Annual Meeting minutes of 1938 record that the club sought admittance to the Wimmera Bowling Association. It appears that the club was unsuccessful in its application that year. Nevertheless, the following year the club despatched two delegates to the annual meeting of the W.B.A. The meeting was held at Warracknabeal on September 2nd 1939 and Ararat delegates, Messrs. Urwin and Haining, were to apply for the admission of an 'A' and 'B' grade team. An 'A' grade team was accepted.

In the following year the newly elected President of the club was to vacate the chair at the Annual meeting and move that the selection committee comprise of the four 'A' grade captains and the secretary. The captains were to be elected by club members in a secret ballot. The President was Vic Marchesi, a member for only one year previous to his election to office. Marchesi was to hold his office for the four years following and in so doing steered the club through the war years. Correspondence was received from the W.B.A. intimating that pennant play would be abandoned because of the world conflict. It appears certain that no pennant was conducted from season 1940-41 until the end of hostilities.

The annual meeting of August 17th 1945 must have been an occasion to lift the heart. T. Haining, the president to succeed Marchesi asked 40 members to stand for the singing of the National Anthem and then read a message from H.M. the King printed in the Argus newspaper.

Despite there not being any pennant during the war years much was attempted by the various committees. There was a reduction of the annual subscription to members living more than ten miles from the club in 1940. This resolution remained until 1944.

At a meeting in December 1940, T. Haining was successful in moving that a special bowling day be set aside each season on behalf of the Ararat Hospital. The first such day was the 15th February the following year and the club has supported the hospital each year since.

How to upgrade the lighting to the green was a question raised in December 1940. The club had four electric lights suspended between two poles and wished to increase the coverage of the lighting over more rinks. By mid 1941 the matter had waned somewhat and it was agreed not to proceed. In October 1943 it was discovered that the poles supporting the lights were not of sound structure. Dismantling was carried out the same month and the fittings stored. The matter was not allowed to rest there, Ozzie Billman suggested at the following annual meeting that funds be raised to re-install the lights and continue with plans for upgrading this facility. Further progress was made in November 1944 when an investigation began to ascertain the most suitable material for poles, a quotation was received for the lamps and poles — the sum £50. Time to consider was forced upon the committee when it was instructed that no outside lighting would be permitted due to the danger of possible air raids but that delay did not restrict planning as a report to a meeting in June 1945 indicates that four train rails had been purchased and a scheme to cover five rinks was already arranged. Peace did come in 1945 and two rows of lights were installed over the five rinks by January 1946. No charge was made to members playing under the lights although several motions were lost in an endeavour to introduce a fee.

The resignation of Vic Marchesi in September 1945 was unexpected. He had been appointed as the club's vice president only a month earlier, this followed his four consecutive years as the club's leader. Marchesi was the manager of the State Savings Bank and had been transferred to Toorak in Melbourne. The president T. Haining expressed the club's regret on losing a person whose ability and enthusiasm as an organizer had changed the direction of not only this club but had influenced other clubs for the better. Marchesi continued his bowling as a member of Toorak club and brought a team to Ararat the following year to play in Ararat's annual tournament. He served on Toorak's committee for three years and won that club championship three times. A further move to Williamstown and a club championship with that club was due to Vic before he retired from the game due to ill health in 1954.

An example of Marchesi's wide thinking can be seen from his last recommendation whilst in Ararat, made on the same evening of his resignation. He proposed that pennant teams consist of six rinks and that three play at home whilst three play away. This would alleviate the necessity of a return match to complete a round.

Pennant in these times would be difficult for modern day players to endure. Ararat played at greens as far afield as Kaniva, Rainbow and Donald. A typical Saturday game away from home would begin when players assembled at the club after their morning work. The trip was made by bus on most occasions and it was fortunate if the game began before 3.00 p.m. It follows without further explanation that the time of return for the team was late after allowing for refreshments and the long haul home.

Efforts were made at various times to increase the size of the green to accommodate more rinks. The green was marked at six rinks and had been so for many years. In November 1943 enquiries were directed to the fire brigade who used a training track along the Collings Street frontage and a side track running north and south to the west of the Pathfinder school. An approach was made to Mrs. Norman-Bail, the Principal of the school which bounded on the west side of the club ground and discussions were held with the croquet club who shared the east boundary.

Stan Bailey, a vice-president of the bowling club, had expressed his wish to donate and construct a gateway for the club and wished to position it at the south-east corner of the green. He had visions of the possible extension being into the croquet area and a new club house being erected on the Collings Street bank overlooking the green. The offer of the gate was accepted and two granite columns supporting an engraved stone beam still stands in that position.

Sadly, nothing was to come of the representations made to the three neighbours to the club. It became evident that the croquet club was unwilling to relinquish any of its ground. The tennis courts had been converted for croquet use and neither the fire brigade nor Mrs. Norman-Bail were in any position to give up their grounds.

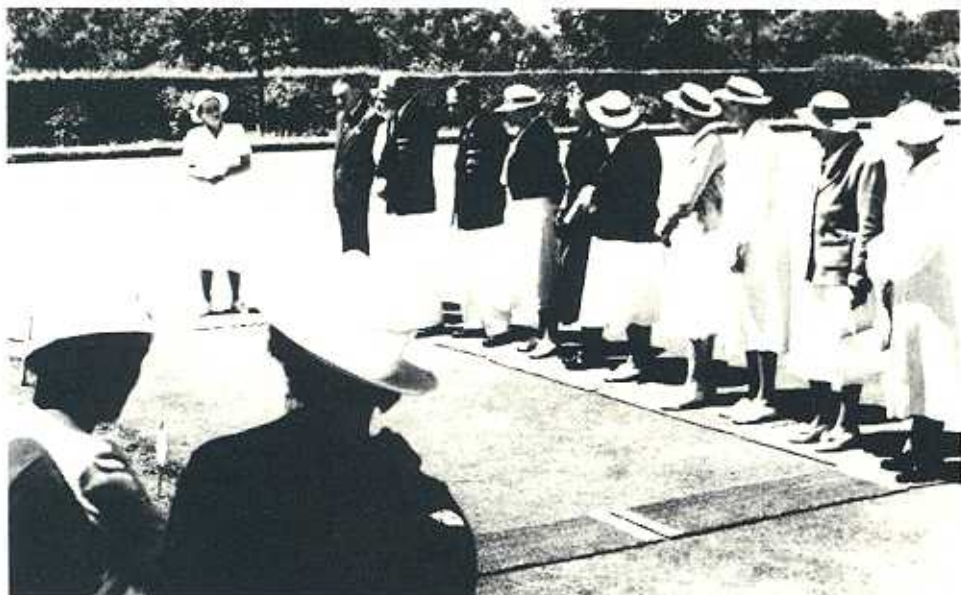
Very careful measurement must have been taken in May 1945 as a plan to extend the green to accommodate nine rinks was deemed possible. By removing the club house to another location and by gaining 15 feet toward the croquet lawn the 63 feet required would be available. A meeting of representatives of the bowling club and croquet club was held at the Town council chambers in late May with no progress being made. The committee spent the following year discussing the likelihood of relocating the club house on the south bank. The engineer to the Town council, when his advice was sought, suggested the relocation to be on the north side between the green and the rail-line. Just as hope of ever being able to extend the green was waning the Australian Bowling Council published new rules for the marking of greens. The new regulation allowed for 15 feet minimum to 20 feet maximum rink width with a 2 feet space along each ditch. This meant that Ararat, with its 120 feet green, could now boast seven rinks with ease without having to turn a sod. The green is still of that size.



Gathering outside first club house, 1915—1920.

Opening Day 1923. President, E.J. Gleeson first person on left. Mayor, Cr. W. Toole. Pyrenees House in background.





Mrs. B.A. Stewart (top left) at Associates first opening day, December 8th, 1954. Note two overhead lighting poles in background.

Club president, Cr. E. James delivering bowl Associates opening day 8.12.1954. Note fire brigade tower and band room in background.



THE THIRD

To defend the advantage.

The 1950's were to bring more problems for the club. The green had been re-marked and ditch edges had been squared. Water restrictions and the nuisance of elm suckers invading the green and its surrounds were ever present. As far back as 1939 the club had made representations to the Town council for water piped from the Alexandra lake. The green-keeper was often called upon to attack the suckers coming from trees located on the school site.

Despite the troublesome beginnings the fifties were to herald many of the facilities present day players enjoy.

The club's annual tournament was a long-standing event. First fixtured on the Labour Day weekend in 1944 and played at that time ever since, the pairs, triples and fours have provided enjoyment for many bowlers from near and far. The club had the use of the green at the Victorian Railway Institute Bowling Club for this tournament when its own had been filled.

Jack Humphreys, secretary of the club for the six years up to 1953 was also tournament manager and in his reports reveals that pairs were played on the Saturday with fours being presented on Monday. A refreshment booth was provided and luncheon was available at both the Turf and Commercial hotels both days.

There was widespread dissatisfaction with the club house facilities in these years and at the annual meeting of 1953 a social committee was formed for the express purpose of raising funds for a new pavilion. Seven members were appointed. Two months later a special meeting was convened to consider the benefits of tendering for the purchase of an army hut advertised for sale and removal. Those attending decided to submit a tender for the building, tender price £405. After the unsuccessful bid for the army hut the matter lay in repose until the annual meeting of August 1954. The incoming president was Eric James, one of the social committee members of the previous year. Another member of this committee was F. Leyonhjelm who moved that 'the club raise a loan of £1000 by debentures for the purchase of materials for the erection of a new club house'.

His motion was seconded by Hugh Carruthers and carried. Once more the principals of the club moved with decisiveness. By October an investigation committee was formed with Fred Carpenter, Deane Runge and William McArthur charged with the responsibility of researching all possibilities towards the construction of a pavilion. Only a month later the general committee was able to view a plan for the proposed building submitted by

the investigation trio. These plans were submitted to the City council for approval on February 1st 1955 and a building committee comprising Eric James club president, Deane Runge club secretary, Tom McArthur to act as building supervisor, and Hugh Carruthers to co-ordinate project finances was formed. In March it was decided to amend the outside walls to brick veneer construction and Saturday May 7th was set aside for a working-bee to prepare the foundations and site. Seventy-one years and one day after the foundation meeting club members were turning the ground for its third pavilion. Numerous hours of labour were to be contributed by members over the following months, by December a total of £2533 had been spent on the project. Members received a report from the building committee in March 1956 that only some painting, light fittings and door glazing were yet to be completed. A special meeting was called for April 7th to arrange the procedure for the club house opening. April 24th was selected, approximately a year since the committee meeting that decided to hold the first working-bee. What a proud day this Tuesday in April must have been. Twenty-one working-bees during the winter months had been arranged with an average attendance of 27 willing helpers and since the bowling season had begun 54 organized occasions of labour had been held.

The Ararat Advertiser records of the event — 'The Mayor, Cr. de Crespigny, duly opened the building in the presence of many distinguished guests'. Mr. E. James, club president, in his remarks paid tribute to Deane Runge who 'by his initiative, foresight and drive had been the force behind the project'. Members of the club at that time would have felt a pride in their efforts, it is unfortunate that all their names are not recorded but the club house stands as a tribute to their unselfish labour. 'The interior of the pavilion was most suitably arranged' reports the Advertiser, 'fifty chairs and six laminated tables were laid out in a most pleasing manner.'

These were a donation by the ladies of the club, and here begins another milestone in the club's progress.

The first recorded reference to the possible admittance of Lady Associates to the club is seen in the receiving of correspondence to a committee meeting on October 17th 1952 where a resolution to hold a special meeting 'to discuss the desirability of Associate membership' was carried. Jack Humphreys moved a notice of motion to the effect that associate members be admitted by the general committee by the alteration of Clause 2a of the constitution. At the special meeting Fred Hastings moved that 'this meeting is in favour of admitting lady associates'. A ballot was conducted and resulted in 18 votes for the motion whilst dissent was expressed by 17. Mr. Humphrey's notice of motion to alter the constitution was read and as the three-fourths majority in favour was not reached the motion was lost. This was October 31st 1952. The matter was again raised at a committee meeting on the 23rd April, 1954 when in general business a notice of motion 'to enable ladies to be admitted to the club' was moved by Courtney Watts. At the July meeting this motion was withdrawn in favour of a detailed

notice of motion to be placed before the coming annual meeting. The mover of this new motion was Deane Runge and he suggested many alterations to the constitution, the main items being that a two-thirds majority be required, instead of a three-fourth, to alter the rules of the club and that ladies be admitted to the club and may arrange for the management of their own affairs provided they are not in conflict with the laws of the club.

The annual meeting took place in the State offices on August 18th, 1954. 43 members were present. Eric James succeeded Fred Carpenter to the presidency at this meeting. The proposed changes to the constitution were placed before the meeting one at a time, each was carried. The Associates membership fee was fixed at £3-0-0 after two amendments – and the ladies were part of the club. In case it is thought that this allowed lady bowlers on to the club green for the first time this is not so. The Advertiser of May 17th, 1907 reported on a social function held the Tuesday before where lady members of the club presented Mr. Nesbit with a pipe and case – 'to mark his kindness in not only teaching them the game but also for umpiring for them in competition'.

Mr. Nesbit in response said – 'it is a pleasure and was delighted to report that some (ladies) were every bit as good as the men in the art of bowl delivery' – and next year he hoped 'they may challenge the men who had been an equal time in the club'.

The committee meeting in September 1954 carried a resolution that nominations for admittance as associate members would be received at the next committee meeting. This occasion, on October 15th, received 42 nominations. These were the founding members of the associates to the Ararat Bowling Club and their names are recorded in the appendix of this booklet. That 42 nominations were received leaves no doubt of the interest in the game shown by the ladies.

The associates quickly organized themselves and set their official opening day as December 8th and were to be led by Betty Stewart, president with Dawn Lardner as secretary, and on that day entertained lady members from Beaufort, Stawell and Avoca clubs.

The influx of new bowlers once again focused attention upon the need to extend the number of playing rinks. After transferring into the new club house the disposal of the pavilion which had served the club over past years was decided when it was offered for removal to anyone wishing to pay the sum of £120. A month later the offer had to be re-advertised, by November a purchaser was found and negotiations were deemed acceptable at £60. The consequent removal of the old pavilion opened up that piece of ground adjacent to the Pathfinder school and a move was made in December 1956 to form a pathway from Collings Street into the end of the new club house.

Expansionary ideas that had been forming for some years again gained momentum in April 1957 when H. Carruthers suggested a fund be established to finance the construction of a second green.

At the following annual meeting in June the annual subscription was increased to £5.10.0 with £1.0.0 being reserved for the new green fund. This was the first increase to the fees since 1951 when they were set at £4.10.0. In August another meeting was held with the Croquet club to pursue the possibility of extending eastward. The result of this meeting convinced the committee it must look elsewhere for extension. The annual meeting of June 1958 produced a motion that directed the club to begin construction of a three rink green on the western side of the existing playing area. By February, the Pathfinder school had been relocated in Campbell Street thus opening up ground west of the club, a contract was let to clear the area of trees. The president included in the 1959 annual report that 'a new green is gradually approaching reality. The size of this playing area approximates that of the existing green and when finished will double the number of rinks available'.

Work on the project moved slower than anticipated. Hugh Carruthers in his annual report for the 1961/62 season gave hope that 'a spring sowing of grass would be possible and that the new green may be in use the coming season'. His prediction proved correct, the seeding was carried out on September 19th and the green officially opened by Mr. Bussau, an R.V.B.A. Councillor, on February 25th 1963. Again a great deal of labour was given voluntarily by members, the total cost was £2,050.

The ultimate had been reached. The years of frustration and striving had been rewarded. The club could boast a two green area of fourteen rinks, a new club house and a programme of surrounds beautification which included landscaping and the provision of sun-shelters.

Over the latter part of these years the bowling club had given assistance to other local organizations. The Ararat Chess Club, which was formed in 1949, had sought and been granted the status of a subsidiary of the club in August 1955. Chess was played in the old pavilion and later the new rooms until July 1958. During those years the chess club hosted visits from many other clubs and during Easter 1958 successfully staged the Central Victorian Championships. Their annual tournament trophy, for many years, was a gold cup valued at £100. During the same year the Ararat Civic Choir made use of the new club rooms on many occasions.

The artistic ability of 'Robbie' Robson, a teacher at Ararat High School, is shown on the sand-blasted panels in the entry doors of the new club house. 'Robbie', the prime-mover of the chess club, was responsible for the design of the motif on the etched panels.

The Wimmera Bowling Association had arranged pennant and other special events in which the club had participated for many years. By the early 1960's the burden of long distance travelling was becoming a difficulty. A proposal was circulated to member clubs of the W.B.A. to ascertain the

possibility of sub-dividing that body into either three or four associations. A meeting was held at the Stawell club in April 1962 with the president of the W.B.A. and representatives from Ararat, Ararat V.R.I., Halls Gap, Horsham, Horsham Golf, Lake Bolac, Murtoa, Stawell and Sunnyside clubs. The convenor of the meeting was Hugh Carruthers. The proposal to sub-divide the Association was adopted and became a 'recommendation' to the W.B.A. At the following annual meeting of the W.B.A. no action was taken pending the result of the R.V.B.A.'s deliberations on a proposed division of the State into zones. By September 1967 a revised R.V.B.A. constitution had zoned metropolitan and country areas into eight groups. As each group was able to manage its own affairs, within the control of the R.V.B.A., the proposal to sub-divide the W.B.A. could still be achieved. Delegates were called to attend a District meeting at the Ararat Bowling Club on May 31st 1968 to consider the sub-division. The Ararat club was represented by Eric James and Otto Marx. The meeting was addressed by Hugh Carruthers and agreed to recommend to each club the formation of a new association.

A provisional committee was formed and a formation meeting date was set for July 12th. That meeting was attended by delegates of seven clubs wishing to form themselves into a separate association. The Grampians Bowls Association was formed by representatives from Ararat V.R.I., Chalambar, Lake Bolac, Stawell, Willaura and Ararat with Stawell Golf being defined as a prospective member.

The election of office bearers at that meeting resulted in Eric James becoming the foundation president with Hugh Carruthers the secretary/treasurer. The minutes of the first executive committee meeting record that affiliation as an Association was granted by the R.V.B.A. An opening day for the G.B.A. was arranged but due to inclement weather had to be postponed until October 13th when teams from each of the clubs in the newly formed association, a team from the R.V.B.A. and teams from other divisions namely the W.B.A. and Kara-Kara association duly launched the Grampians Bowls Association season.

The Ararat Bowling Club became the headquarters of the G.B.A. and houses its honour board. Eric James is a life member of the Association and also its councillor to the R.V.B.A., a post he has held with dedication since 1969.

The whole of the Ararat grounds were being worked upon. The fire brigade training track was relocated from Collings Street onto the vacant land west of the second green. A building used by the City band was removed from the frontage to the club and a tool and sand shed was erected in the north-west corner of the grounds. One of the willing workers preparing the garden surrounds was Harry Burbury. He was made a life member in 1972 and featured in an article in the R.V.B.A.'s 'Bowls' magazine in 1975 which read - 'Harry Burbury, who is 95 years of age, is still active on the green five days a week. He was a leader in the winning fours team at Ararat's annual tournament'. A wall clock fitted to the west wall of the club house perpetuates his memory.

Two further developments took place around this time. Another row of overhead lights were positioned between those already erected. The cost of this addition was borne by the associates; and Peter McGregor, who was a club member and the electrical engineer to the City council, supervised the installation. This third row of lights was sadly needed as the originals were spaced too far apart to illuminate the area between.

The other occurrence was the establishment of a practise green. Reg Hunt and his family offered to construct a green, for winter practise, at no expense to the club. The green would be a memorial to his wife Nell who during her year as associate president was also the winner of their championship. The committee accepted this offer and pledged the members to assist with the labour. This was in February 1975. The green was positioned parallel with the rail line and extended from the east side of the club house to the boundary of the croquet club. Some excavation was required and retaining walls to the banks of the playing greens and rail line edge. The work progressed quickly and by May the same year the green was sown. The width of the green was one rink and it was officially opened for use on September 1976. Due to little use over the last two - three years it became over-grassed and is now planted with native bushes that in future years will form a wind break on the north side of the green.

There are many fixtures and items about the grounds that have been donated to the club. The older honour board fixed to the north wall inside the club house was given to the club by J.A. Terdich who was a president of the R.V.B.A. Mr. Terdich had a joinery works in Melbourne and was in the habit of donating such boards to bowling clubs whenever an occasion arose. The board was received in March 1949. A badge case fixed adjacent to the honour board was presented as a memorial to the late Ernie Simpson who had spent many years as a member of the club. The annual report of 1967/68 records the club's thanks to the family of the late Edwin Jones, a super veteran, for the donation of a seat to perpetuate his memory. The seat is placed on the north side of the second green. Another seat located on the club house verandah was presented by the family of the late Augustus Van Every. 'Gus' won the club's 'B' grade championship in season 1966/67 and was instrumental, with Max Curran, in the installation of the hat rack to the left of the club house entry. A wall clock positioned to the right of the entry was donated by the family of the late Jack Forbes in 1969.

Two of the oldest articles the club holds are a wall clock fitted to the north wall in the men's locker room and a set of wooden bowls housed in the glass case in the main room.

The bowls, a set of four, turned and inset with ivory, bear the initials J.W.B. These bowls could have been among the first ever played on Ararat's green back in the 1880's. They belonged to Jabez Walter Banfield, one of the founders of the club. Jabez was born in 1820 and died in 1899. The bowls and a bag were presented to the club by the Banfield family in 1976. It is not known when the clock was donated but the donor was 'Charlie'

Meggs, a most active member of the club who served on the committee at least from 1937 to 1944. He is not recorded as winning a club championship but was runner-up on at least three occasions. Harry Forsyth, a past member, donated the cost of a drinking fountain and the design and installation were carried out by Eric Panther in 1976. Eric also assisted with the sign on the front of the club house. His helper was Max Curran who welded the metal which was donated by Gason Industries. A secretary to the club for three years during the 1960's, Les Pillow, designed and made a weather vane to the shape of a person delivering a bowl. The vane is quite large (approximately 5 feet in height) and was originally sited in the garden surrounds. It is now situated on the top of the light pole at the north end of the green, Les Mason carried out the re-siting.

The new green settled into use and by 1971 a watering system was installed. It included a time switch to enable pre-set opening and closing of the water application. What an improvement this was to setting sprinklers or watering the greens by hand. There was a time when a green-keeper was paid ten shillings a week extra for hand watering during water restrictions. There was also an incident where a green-keeper agreed to a £2.0.0 reduction to his weekly wage because he had the use of a brand new mower.

Between 1973 and 1977 the greens were flooded many times by storm water running down High Street and entering along the Collings Street frontage. Road stones and other debris was spread across the area when the water receded. At the end of the 1977/78 season the second green was stripped and resown. Ken Bowker, a president of the club for two terms and a club champion on three occasions, together with Claude Inglis, the present president, were responsible for the project.

An area of the turf taken up was positioned in front of the Chalambar Club House and no doubt other portions of the green adorn front or back gardens.

For many years a long standing member took the position of Green's Supervisor. That member is Fred Mair. He joined the club back in the 1930's and a report to a committee meeting on August 4th 1980 made mention of Fred's fifty year membership. Over that time he has won every type of club event and was president for two years. Fred is still an active bowler particularly in the mens pairs event which he has organized since 1979. He was made a life member of the club in 1965/66.



Foundation members — Ararat Bowling Club Associates, 8.12.54. Note second club house. Photographer facing east.

Associates on their 21st anniversary, 1975. Note new municipal offices in background.





Present club house nearing completion, 1956. Photographer facing north.

Present club surrounds, 1984. Second green in foreground. Photographer facing north-east.



THE SKIPPER

To gain a satisfactory result.

The R.V.B.A. and Group Bowling Associations arrange competitions that culminate in the presentation of pennants and other awards and Ararat has certainly gained its share during its participation. A wooden shield hangs among other trophies on the club house wall and might easily be overlooked. When the inscription is read it reveals that Ararat won the Wimmera Bowling Association Championship Fours in 1950. The team was comprised of two club presidents and two club champions in Bailey, Hambling, Watts and Humphreys. Another W.B.A. trophy is the 'A' grade pennant won in season 1957/58.

Pennant wins in the Grampians Bowls Association competition begin with season 1971/72. The following season Ararat won both first and second division pennants and not only repeated this in the next season (1974/75) but won the night pennant competition as well. The night pennant was again won the following season (1975/76) and again in 1979/80.

The 'B' grade team won a pennant for the club in season 1982/83.

The G.B.A. championship Fours of season 1968/69 was won by Joyce, Carra, King and James, and in 1975/76 by Tucker, Bowker, Panther and Mair.

Alan Bellis won the title 'Champion of Champions' in 1977/78 and repeated the distinction the following year 1978/79. The championship pairs was won by Cashin and Bellis in 1980/81 season making three successful years for Alan.

The Lady Associates of the club have also been successful in gaining awards. The Ararat District Ladies Bowling Association arranges competitions between teams from Aradale, Chalambar, Stawell, Stawell Golf, Beaufort, Ararat V.R.I., Willaura, Lake Bolac, Landsborough and Ararat. Pennant wins were gained in 1966/67, 1969/70 and 1975/76. Championship Fours awards have been gained on four occasions:

1960	McKay, Banfield, Habel, Bygrave,
1964	Chapman, Carra, Banfield, Carpenter,
1970	Mair, MacInnes, Dunn, Chapman,
1975	James, Curran, Cooper, Chapman.

Two Country District Association Fours awards have been gained, the first in season 1971/72 by Gray, Cooper, Carra, Carpenter, in 1973/74 by Carpenter, Cooper, Gray and Mair.

Championship pairs events have been won on five occasions. In 1968 and again in 1972 by Chapman and Mair, in 1976 by Gray and Curran and

in 1982 and 1983 by Curran and Hannett. The distinction of becoming Champion of Champions was gained in 1959 and 1968 by Rose Carpenter, in 1961 by Gertrude Dunn and in 1964 by Ruby Habel. District champions were Shirley Gray in 1975 and Glad Chapman in 1977. Glad Chapman was the Country District Association winner in the State Championships in 1966/67, 1967/68 and 1969/70.

Club championships are awarded each year and lists of winners are included in the appendix together with presidents and honorary secretaries.

One bowler who is included as a club champion two years in succession, 1965 and 1966, is John Snell. The club could claim John as its 'most famous son' as from those championships gained at Ararat he has earned himself a most impressive bowling record. Club championship titles have increased to fifteen, he has won the State Masters Singles five times together with many championships at club, district, group and State levels in pairs and fours. John has represented Victoria on 182 occasions and Australia 63 times. He won a Silver medal at the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton, Canada in 1978 and last year won his club championship, the Group singles championship, the Metropolitan Skippers premiership, the Big Bowl Invitation at Lake Cathie and a Bronze medal in England at the Kodak Masters. Surely an impressive accomplishment and Ararat is acknowledged by John as the club that acted as his 'springboard' to success.

The club has participated in competition with other clubs below Association level over the years. A cup provided by Earn Morton (M.L.A.) was to encourage competition between Stawell and Ararat on a yearly basis. The first club to be successful three times would become the keeper of the trophy. This competition commenced in 1947. The cup came to Ararat in 1952, it was gained after Ararat had won for two years then Stawell had two successes. In 1951 the clubs tied and the following year Ararat gained the cup with a score of 238 to 226. In later years when Murray Byrne became a member of State parliament a competition was arranged between six clubs, namely Stawell, Ararat V.R.I., Chalambar, Willaura, Lake Bolac and Ararat, to play for the Byrne trophy.

A one-day competition was held with each club having five teams of triples. The games were played on Chalambar, Ararat V.R.I., and Ararat greens on December 4th 1965, Ararat was victorious. The competition still continues, the perpetual trophy, with a miniature replica for the annual winner, is now provided by the Ararat Permanent Building Society and all G.B.A. clubs participate.

Competition trophies within the club have been donated over the years. Bill Elliott, a member during the 1940's, made available a silver cup to become part of the 21-Up Handicap event. The cup was to become the property of any player who could win the event three times. Harold 'Ike' Richards won the event for the first two years but was unfortunate to be

runner-up in his third attempt in 1944. Many members have donated trophies for similar events on the club's calendar and many have made available prizes for individual events. In 1943 the club is recorded as issuing War Savings Bonds as trophies. Tea spoons, forks, can openers, book marks, glasses, tankards and ash trays have been used over more recent years.

Commercial sponsorship has contributed to the organization of major events. The club's annual tournament, held in March each year, was first sponsored by William Jackson, agents for Pfaff sewing machines in 1979. Homyped, makers of shoes, also shared in that sponsorship. In the following years contributions to the four day tournament competitions have been extended by McMillan Motors, ESANDA Limited, W. & M. Jones Caltex.

Social events listed on the club's calendar have been sponsored by Pat Cashin, Shirley Gray, the Lardner Brothers, the Walker Brothers and the late Fred and Rose Carpenter.

The Ararat Permanent Building Society began its sponsorship of the popular Tuesday mens pair competition in season 1980/81. The Society is continuing with its involvement with the game of bowls not only toward the Ararat club but with the Grampians Association.

The club has always tried to provide competition for all its members be it pennant or social matches with the trophy being the token of friendship between the club and the successful players.

The conclusion of a club's history over a century only marks the beginning of its second 100 years. Many more developments will undoubtedly take place and again its members will be to the forefront.

So many bowlers must have trodden the length of the green over the past ten decades and witnessed the club's property being gradually transformed from a single strip of lawn surrounded by bush land to become the delightful area of playing greens and garden surrounds it is today. To the willing workers who made possible this transformation and to the people outside the club who have assisted over the past 100 years this history is dedicated.

APPENDIX (1)

ARARAT BOWLING CLUB – OFFICE BEARERS & CLUB CHAMPIONS

1884–1936

No records available.

	PRESIDENT	HON. SECRETARY	CLUB CHAMPION
1937–38	A. Leslie	W. Graham	Not Recorded
1938–39	A. Leslie	W. McOwan	Not Recorded
1939–40	A. Leslie	T. E. Haining	Not Recorded
1940–41	C. V. Marchesi	T. E. Haining	Not Recorded
1941–42	C. V. Marchesi	T. E. Haining	G. Walker
1942–43	C. V. Marchesi	T. E. Haining	H. P. Richards
1943–44	C. V. Marchesi	T. E. Haining	W. G. Hall
1944–45	T. E. Haining	W. G. Hall	W. G. Hall
1945–46	T. E. Haining	W. G. Hall	E. G. Greeves
1946–47	N. G. Taverner	J. W. Humphreys	E. G. Greeves
1947–48	S. A. Bailey	J. W. Humphreys	H. P. Richards
1948–49	S. A. Bailey	J. W. Humphreys	W. G. Hall
1949–50	S. A. Bailey	J. W. Humphreys	H. P. Richards
1950–51	J. R. Blackman	J. W. Humphreys	C. E. Carra
1951–52	J. R. Blackman	J. W. Humphreys	E. A. Watts
1952–53	F. A. Carpenter	J. W. Humphreys	E. G. Greeves
1953–54	F. A. Carpenter	F. D. Runge	R. J. Hambling
1954–55	E. W. James	F. D. Runge	J. W. Wilcock
1955–56	E. W. James	F. D. Runge	R. J. Hambling
1956–57	O. E. Marx	F. D. Runge	R. Wicks
1957–58	O. E. Marx	F. R. Hagan	E. A. Watts
1958–59	F. E. Leyonhjelm	F. R. Hagan	E. W. James
1959–60	A. J. Woodforde	S. R. Tivey	E. W. James
1960–61	A. J. Woodforde	M. J. Davies	R. Wicks
1961–62	H. J. Carruthers	R. H. Scott	O. M. Yule
1962–63	H. J. Carruthers	R. H. Scott	C. E. Carra
1963–64	O. M. Yule	L. C. Pillow	R. Wicks
1964–65	O. M. Yule	L. C. Pillow	S. J. Snell
1965–66	H. R. Dalkin	L. C. Pillow	S. J. Snell
1966–67	H. R. Dalkin	A. H. Morris	R. W. King
1967–68	E. P. Joyce	F. A. Carpenter	E. W. James
1968–69	E. P. Joyce	F. A. Carpenter	H. R. Dalkin
1969–70	R. W. King	F. A. Carpenter	E. W. James
1970–71	R. W. King	J. A. McAlpine	R. W. King
1971–72	H. F. Ward	J. A. McAlpine	F. C. Mair
1972–73	H. F. Ward	E. W. James	K. W. Bowker
1973–74	F. C. Mair	E. W. James	E. W. James
1974–75	F. C. Mair	E. W. James	E. W. James
1975–76	M. F. Curran	E. W. James	K. W. Bowker
1976–77	R. C. Hunt	E. W. James	R. R. Harman
1977–78	B. L. Thomas	R. W. Penna	A. J. Bellis
1978–79	K. W. Bowker	R. W. Penna	A. J. Bellis
1979–80	K. W. Bowker	N. R. Baker	K. W. Bowker
1980–81	P. Cashin	N. R. Baker	A. Tucker
1981–82	P. Cashin	A. M. Scannell	R. E. Devlin
1982–83	C. W. Inglis	A. M. Scannell	G. F. Robertson
1983–84	C. W. Inglis	A. M. Scannell	

LIFE MEMBERSHIP OF ARARAT BOWLING CLUB

A. McDonald
H. Burbury

F. Mair
R. King

F. Carpenter
E. James

APPENDIX (2)

ARARAT BOWLING CLUB – ASSOCIATE LIFE MEMBERSHIP

S. Gray

R. Carpenter

E. Hamilton

ARARAT BOWLING CLUB – ASSOCIATE OFFICE BEARERS
& CHAMPIONS

	PRESIDENT	HON. SECRETARY	CHAMPION
1954–55	B. Stewart	D. Lardner	—
1955–56	B. Stewart	D. Lardner	A. Carra
1956–57	M. Bygrave	B. de Clercq	J. Dovaston
1957–58	M. Bygrave	B. de Clercq	J. Dovaston
1958–59	R. Carpenter	J. Dovaston	L. Thomas
1959–60	R. Carpenter	J. Dovaston	N. Geddes
1960–61	I. Banfield	R. Habel	G. Dunn
1961–62	I. Banfield	R. Habel	D. Hodge
1962–63	A. Carra	R. Carpenter	G. Chapman
1963–64	A. Carra	R. Carpenter	R. Habel
1964–65	M. McDonald	R. Carpenter	N. Geddes
1965–66	M. McDonald	J. Dovaston	J. Dovaston
1966–67	M. MacInnes	J. Dovaston	J. Dovaston
1967–68	M. MacInnes	S. Gray	R. Carpenter
1968–69	E. Kent	S. Gray	T. Carruthers
1969–70	E. Kent	S. Gray	I. Cooper
1970–71	G. Chapman	S. Gray	G. Dunn
1971–72	G. Chapman	S. Gray	R. Carpenter
1972–73	N. Hunt	S. Gray	N. Hunt
1973–74	N. Hunt	S. Gray	J. Mair
1974–75	E. Hamilton	S. Gray	S. Gray
1975–76	E. Hamilton	S. Gray	I. Cooper
1976–77	M. Stewart	S. Gray	G. Chapman
1977–78	M. Stewart	S. Gray	S. Gray
1978–79	I. Cooper	S. Gray	I. Cooper
1979–80	I. Cooper	S. Gray	S. Gray
1980–81	J. Carpenter	S. Gray	I. Cooper
1981–82	J. Carpenter	S. Gray	G. Chapman
1982–83	A. Scannell	S. Gray	I. Walsh
1983–84	A. Scannell	L. Johnstone	

ARARAT BOWLING CLUB – ASSOCIATE FORMATION MEMBERS

Mesdames:—	J. McKay	L. C. Boatman	M. J. Stewart
	B. Pratt	J. McAdie	I. Murphy
	R. Carpenter	M. Shea	E. D. Yule
	D. Morton	A. Watts	A. Bell
	B. A. Stewart	B. M. de Clercq	L. Houston
	C. A. Kuhl	C. D. Hodge	D. Lardner
	M. A. Shea	A. Harricks	B. J. McCubbin
	I. Banfield	E. McArthur	G. E. Ahpee
	G. Dunn	E. Thomas	E. M. Bishop
	W. West	M. Gordon	I. C. Keating
	T. E. Jordon	E. M. Rossell	A. Carra
	T. Riedell	C. Cain	T. E. Carruthers
	B. Gwynne	M. McArthur	C. Welsh
	R. Habel	M. S. Bygrave	Miss R. A. Geddes

Penna Print, Ararat