

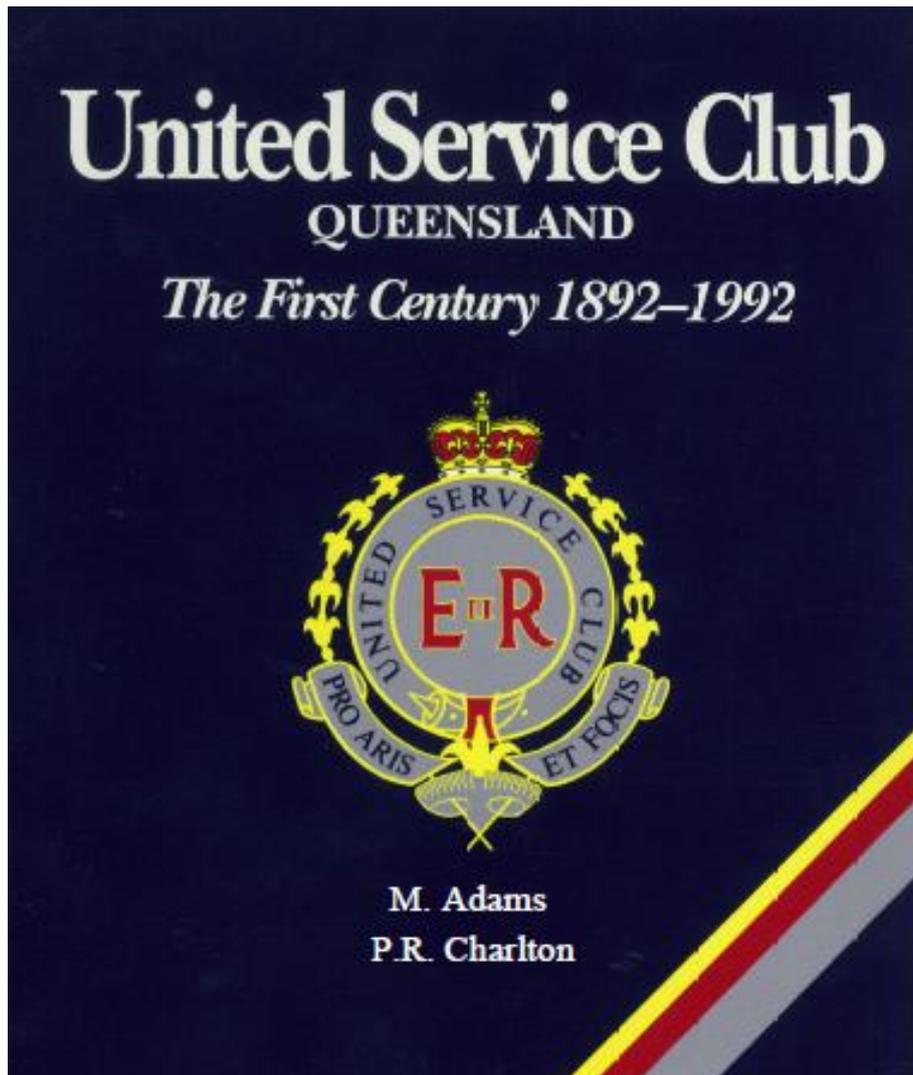


united service club

# 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

Chichele Professor of the History of War, All Souls College, Oxford

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 Foxtan \*\* (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 Foxtan 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.'<sup>\*</sup> 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,<sup>\*\*</sup> 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<sup>\*\*\*</sup> who had commanded the Australian Mounted Corps in Palestine and Major General] K Forsyth<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> who became Quarter Master General of the Australian Military Forces in France. Another was Colonel P R Ricardo,<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> 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,<sup>§</sup> Major General Sir Brudenell White,<sup>§§</sup> Major General Victor

<sup>\*</sup>*The United Service Club, A Short History*, Major H M M Maddock, 1935.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Later, Major General Walter Adams Coxen CB CMG DSO (1870-1949). Commissioned in Queensland Garrison Artillery, 1893.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>Lieutenant General Sir 'Harry' (Henry) (George) Chauvel GCB GCMG (1865-1945).

<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>Major General John Keatly Forsyth CMG (1867-1928). Commissioned Queensland Mounted Infantry, 1891. Permanent Staff, 1897. Served Gallipoli and France.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup>Colonel Percy Ralph Ricardo CB (1855-1907).

<sup>§</sup>Lieutenant General Sir John (Dudley) Lavarack KCVO KBE CB CMG DSO (1885-1958) Australian Permanent Forces, 1905. Several important appointments. Governor of Queensland and Patron of the Club 1946-57.

<sup>§§</sup>Major General Sir (Cyril) Brudenell (Bingham) White KCMG KCVO 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.

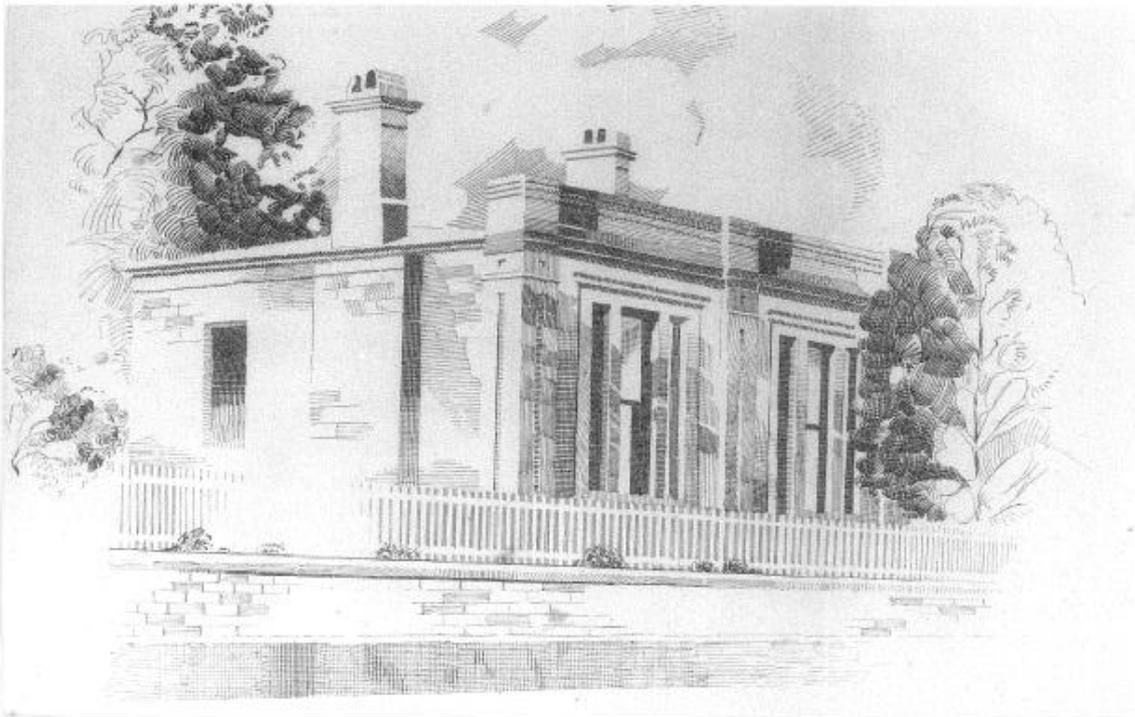


*Commander Walton Drake RN (1850–1940)  
Acting Commandant Queensland Naval Defence  
Force 1891–1900. President 1893, 1895, 1897  
and 1899. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)*



*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.*



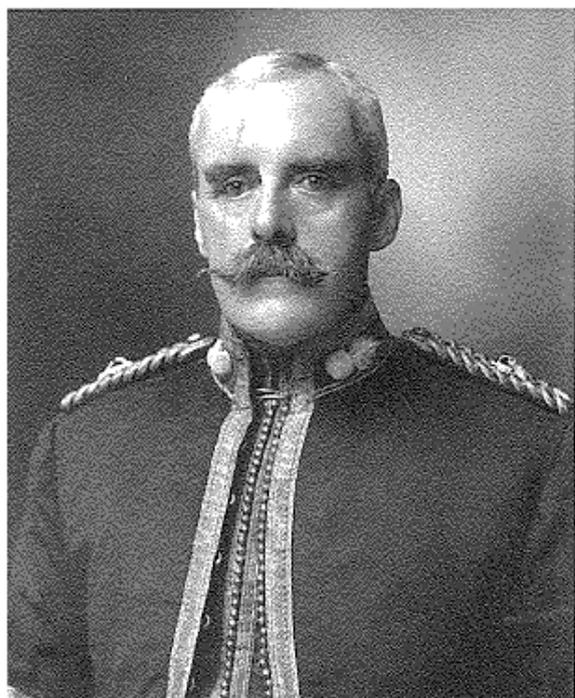


*The Hon Sir James (Robert) Dickson KCMG (1832–1901). (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)*



*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)*



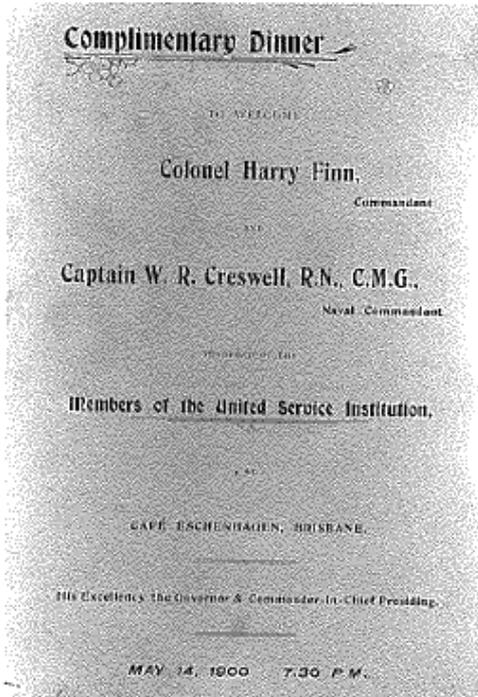
*Lieutenant Arthur Pixley, an early member. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)*





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.



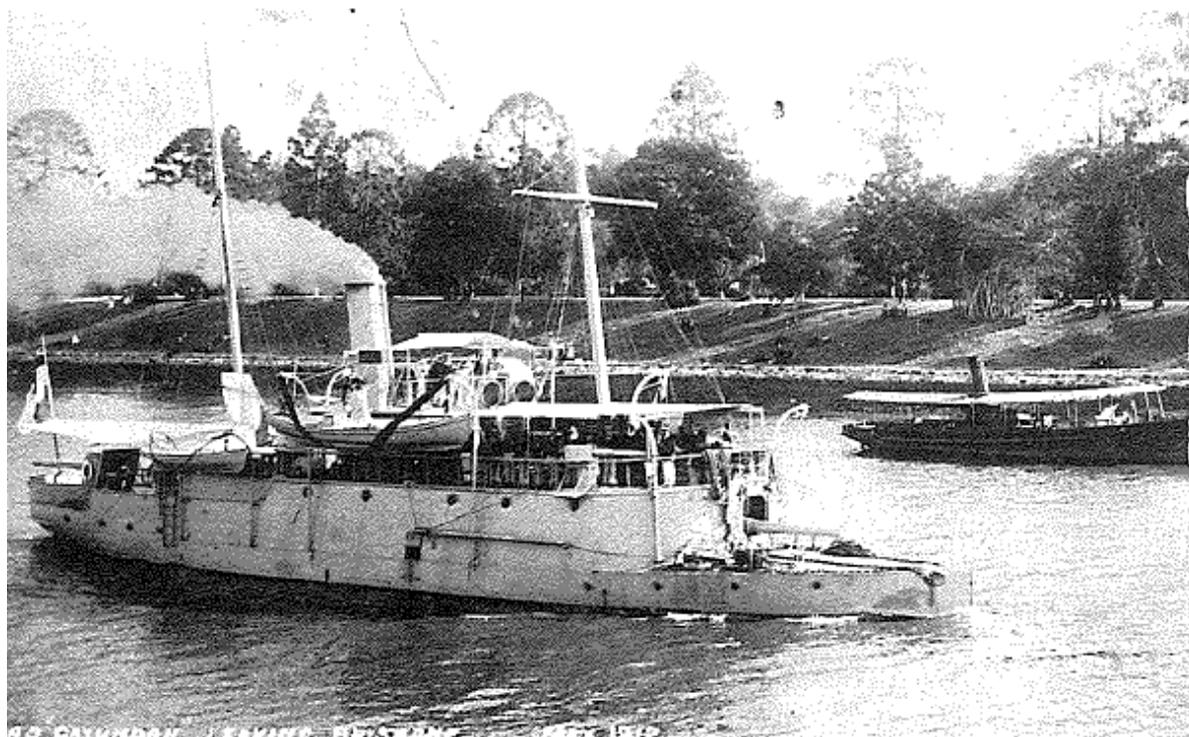


*Captain Frederick Tickell CMG CNF (1857–1919).  
Naval Commander, Queensland 1904–07.  
President 1905. (By courtesy of the John Oxley  
Library)*



*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 courtesy 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

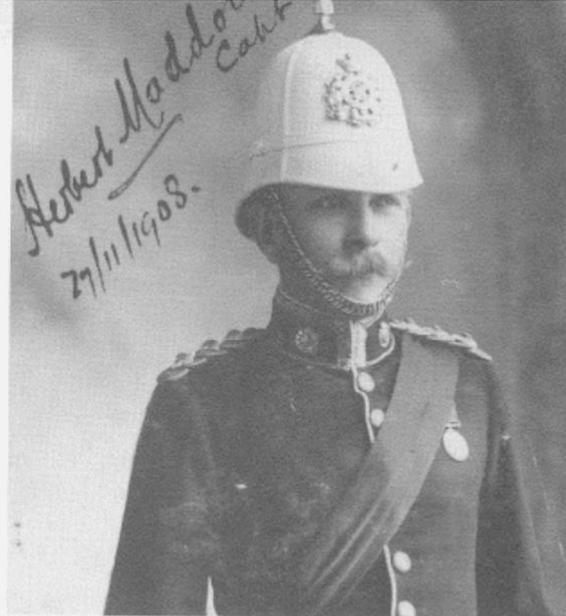
\*Squadron Leader Herbert John Louis Hinkler AFC DSM (1892-1933). Holder of numerous records in light aircraft.

\*\*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.

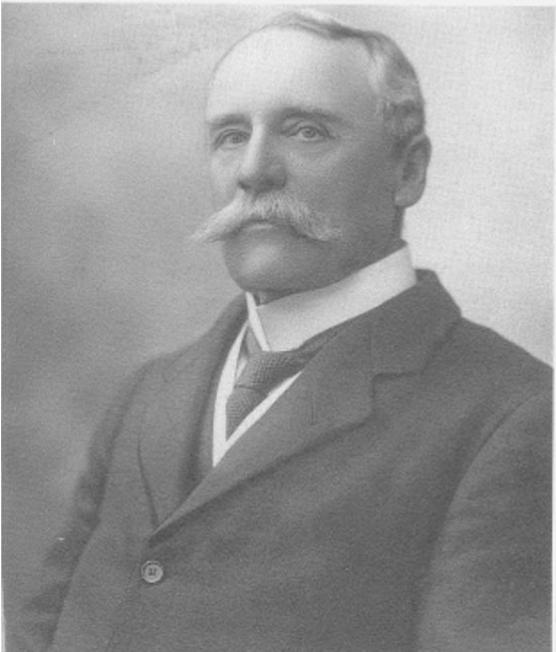


*Major General, The Hon Sir (Thomas) William Glasgow KCB CMG DSO VD (1876–1955). Member 1920–1955. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)*

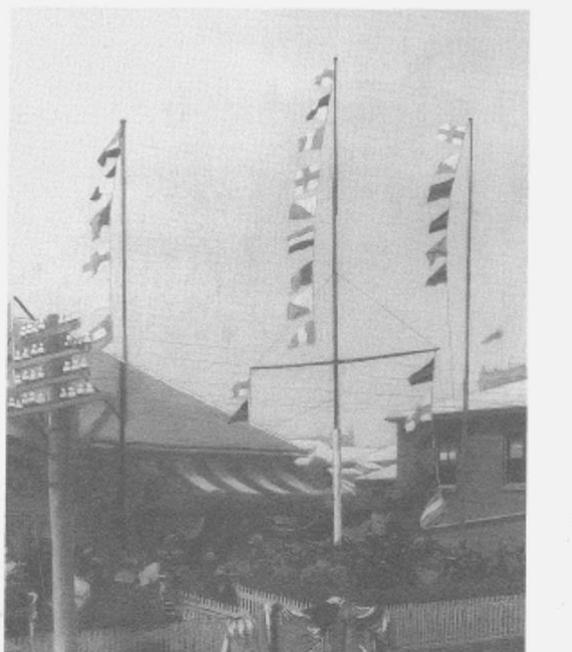


*Major Herbert Mark Meadows Maddock VD (1870–1945). Hon secretary 1909. Club historian 1935. Life member. (By courtesy of the John Oxley Library)*

*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 wowsers, 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<br>Captain, 10 wardroom officers,<br>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.