

LONG-FORGOTTEN CRICKET ASSOCIATION OF BURWOOD

JUST over a century ago the formation of Burwood District Cricket Association (BDCA) provided a summer local recreational activity for the sportsmen of the district. While World War I curtailed many thriving cricketing careers, some participants returned after fighting in Gallipoli and the French battle fields. Created in 1922 by Burwood Cricket Club identities and like-minded souls from the neighbouring regions of Glen Waverley, Mt Waverley, East Burwood, Darling and Camberwell, six teams comprised the inaugural foundation in the BDCA. In the early season, community leaders, men of religion, merchants, farmers and labourers blended in the Saturday teams.

After surviving 46 seasons, the BDCA was dissolved in 1968 having lost clubs to turf and church leagues. The remaining eleven clubs had to find a new destiny.

What is the legacy of the long-lost competition?

Executive leaders of the BDCA served at all levels of government in Australia. The inaugural BDCA President was long-standing Mulgrave Councillor Joseph Jordan. Residential builder Keith Bradbury created his own team from employees, before serving Victoria in the State Parliamentary Upper House. Barrister Ivor Greenwood wielded the willow for Hartwell Church of Christ CC and became a National Senator and Cabinet Minister.

Powerhouse clubs pre-WWII were East Burwood (7 "A Grade" flags), Burwood (3) and Hartwell (3). After the war Burwood Presbyterians, Burwood Methodists and Burwood were dominant. Prominent player batsman-wicketkeeper Gordon Fergie (Burwood) from 1936-1965 added 12,550 runs to his many superb catches and stumpings. Other significant performers were allrounders such as Craig Flint (Burwood Presbyterians), Doug Beasy (Hartwell C of C), Peter Sunderland (Burwood) and Max Goold (Burwood Methodists).

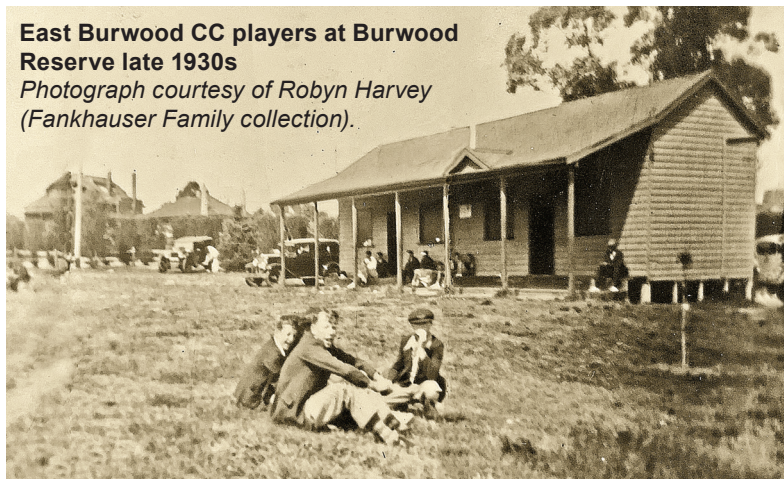
Cricketers to reach the exclusive level of first-class cricket were Harry Bracher (Hartwell CC), Lindsay Kline (St Faiths CC) and Bruce Murray (Soldier's Socials CC), whilst Barry Gibbs (North Burwood CC) achieved the role as Chief Executive at both Queensland Cricket and South Australia Cricket.

During WWII players like Burwood CC's Alf Giblett and Soldiers' Socials CC's Bob Fry lost their lives close to our continent in Papua New Guinea jungles and the Indian Ocean.

The Victorian Football League was well-represented by premiership players Hawthorn's Colin Youren (Hartwell CC) and Melbourne's Clyde Laidlaw (Glen Iris Methodists CC). There were others such as Hawthorn's "Snowy" Finch and Alf Giblett (both Burwood CC), Melbourne's Vince Driver (Burwood Returned Soldiers CC), South Melbourne's Bruce Murray (Soldier's Socials CC), St Kilda's Ken Mace (Burwood CC and Burwood Methodists CC), Carlton's Doug Beasy (Hartwell C of C), goal umpire in five VFL Grand Finals Ron Robinson (Burwood Socials CC) and VFL Executive Alan Schwab (Hartwell CC and Burwood CC).

East Burwood CC players at Burwood Reserve late 1930s

Photograph courtesy of Robyn Harvey (Fankhauser Family collection).



Hartwell CC Premiership side 1926/27. Harry Bracher second last in top right corner.

Photograph courtesy of Bracher family collection.

Over the 1922-1968 duration of the competition, 57 different clubs representing churches of numerous denominations, schools, returned soldiers, work industries and district teams from the municipalities of Camberwell (Boroondara), Mulgrave (Waverley and Monash) and Whitehorse (Box Hill). Of the foundation clubs, four endure until today, namely Burwood CC in Eastern Cricket Association, Mt Waverley CC in Victorian Sub District, East Burwood CC in Box Hill Reporter District CA and Glen Waverley CC (the latter after a change of name and a merger with Dandenong CC in Melbourne Premier Cricket, although the Waverley part is no longer used as a designation).

IAN SCHOLEFIELD

A story of the BDCA competition is being formulated with the intention of publishing a book. Memories, photographs or documents like scorebooks, fixture books or annual reports, would be welcomed from any past players, officials, clubs or their descendants. Contact Ian Scholefield on 0455 555 986 or ian.scholefield@bigpond.com