

HISTORY OF THE GOULBURN CLUB.

by Stuart H. Belcher (Patron)

FOREWORD.

[The members are very much indebted to Mr. S. H. Belcher for the trouble that he has taken in compiling this history of the Goulburn Club from the time of its foundation in 1877 up to the present day.

The Belcher family has been actively associated with the management of the Club since its inception.

The traditions and high standard of the Club owe much to their enthusiastic interest over the years.

W.M.C.]

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In the early seventies of last century a few friends in Goulburn were in the habit of meeting at one another's homes to play whist. It was thought that a central meeting place would be better and the idea of a club was mooted. On the 1st of February, 1877, a meeting was held at which it was decided to form the Goulburn Club. Those present were: S. Harborne Belcher, Schoolmaster; L. G. Davidson, Medical Practitioner; F. Deacon, Manager of the Bank of N.S.W.; A. G. Finlay, Auctioneer, etc.; J. T. Gannon, Solicitor; J. S. Hayes, Flourmill Proprietor; P. H. Gentle, Medical Practitioner; W. F. Hayley, Medical Practitioner; J. G. King, Commissioner for Crown Lands; A. McKellar, independent; E. Twynam, District Surveyor; Capt. Zouch, Superintendent of Police. These were the foundation members and the first committee. The first president was Mr. A. McKellar; the first treasurer Mr. F. Deacon, and the first secretary Mr. S. Harborne Belcher. Of the names mentioned above two only have remained on the membership list: Twynam and Belcher, the latter name having been associated with the management of the club practically since its inception. Rules were drawn up, amongst them being—all office-bearers to be elected annually, membership fee to be three guineas with an entrance fee of two guineas; the name of any member whose subscription remained unpaid a month after due date to be posted on a notice board in the club room. As numbers increased various alterations and additions were made to the rules, the membership fee was

increased to £4/4/0 for country members and £5/5/0 for town members with an entrance fee of £4/4/0. It was also decided to admit junior members and clerks in Holy Orders at a fee of £2/2/0. Later again the distinction between town and country members was abolished and the membership fee fixed at £5/5/0, at which it still stands. In 1920 it was decided to appoint a Patron and a Vice-President. The first Patron was Mr. E. Twynam, the last surviving foundation member. The first Vice-President was Mr. E. W. Kelso. It was also decided that the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer should hold office for three years without any ban on re-election. The club has always been managed on conservative lines, as evidenced by the long time its chief offices of president and secretary have been held by one person.

There have been but six presidents in its sixty-eight years, two holding office for 10 years each, one for 23 years and the last one for 21 years. One vice-president held office for 17 years, one secretary for 23 years and another for 21. In 1897 Mr. S. Harborne Belcher became president and Mr. A. E. Sendall secretary. The former retired in 1920, the latter was elected in his place and retained office until his death in 1923, having given 26 years consecutive service to the club, he was also a trustee for over 20 years. To the efforts of these two men is largely due the sound foundation of the club and its present position.

The first premises occupied by the club were the rooms rented from the proprietor of the Commercial Hotel (now the Hotel Goulburn). About 1883 the club moved to its present premises leased from Mr. Robert Pember-ton Richardson. He continued the lease until 1901 at £60 p.a., but before that lease terminated the land was sold in 1901 to Samuel Harborne Belcher for a considera-

tion of £1050, and three trustees were appointed to whom the land was transferred, viz.: A. E. Sendall, A. A. Dalglish and Dr. W. A. H. Burkitt. The building was at that time known as the "Medical Hall" the former residence and surgery of Dr. Waugh. It was here that Dr. Waugh manufactured his famous baking powder.

This building provided quarters for a resident steward, the first being William Stewart. The ground floor was let to the Government Savings Bank; the present bar-lounge was then the billiard room. The reading room was as it is at present only then larger and the bar was part of the upstairs vestibule. Having bought the premises, the front was remodelled in 1903. In 1906 further internal alterations were made, when it became necessary to comply with the new liquor act and provide residential quarters. On the 5th January of that year a license was issued to Mr. A. E. Sendall. Further extensions were undertaken in 1908 when two bedrooms, a bathroom, a dining room on the ground floor and a billiard room upstairs were built. This covered the whole of the frontage to Market Street. To allow for this extension a fine mulberry and an apple tree had to be removed. A photo of the latter in full bloom hangs in the club. There being no access to the back premises, stables, etc., it was necessary to use a lane on the northern side which was a quagmire in winter weather. In 1909 a grant of a right of way over the present lane was made by the Protestant Hall Company, then owners of the adjacent land and laneway. This was for 25 years at an annual rental of £8/0/0.

In 1920 the Protestant Hall Co. went into liquidation and the property now occupied by the Soldiers' Club, was purchased by a syndicate who sold to the Goulburn Club Trustees a strip of land 21 by 100 feet on which is now erected the lock-up garage, together with the use in per-

petuity of the laneway, for £200. In 1932 the syndicate transferred to the trustees of the Goulburn Club all their rights, title and interest in the said lane together with the right to erect a building over it up to the wall of the present Soldiers' Club at a height of not less than 14 feet. In 1926 a fire occurred in the present bar lounge destroying the wooden mantelpiece and part of the floor. About this time a suggestion was made that the building be remodelled internally. Plans were submitted by Sir Chas. Rosenthal and Messrs. Manfred and Sons, Architects. The committee recommended to members the acceptance of the latter's plans. At the annual meeting in 1927 it was decided to accept a tender of £1700 for this work. In 1939 further alterations and improvements to the bar were made at a cost of about £220. Since 1924 upwards of £3000 has been expended upon alterations, improvements and re-furnishings, all of which has been paid for out of revenue, the overdraft at the bank also being reduced. To celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the Club at the end of 1936 members entertained their lady friends and guests in the club rooms and with dancing at the Fireside Inn. The evening proved so successful that similar entertainments were given in 1937, 1938 and 1939. In that year war was declared.

