

Fit for Life

A History of the Crichton Cobbers' Club

Neil Fox

Crichton Cobbers' Youth Club Inc

75th ANNIVERSARY
A DIAMOND CELEBRATION

1927 - 2002

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CONTENTS

Preface	v
CHAPTER ONE	1
The Great War 1914-1918	1
Talbot House	2
The Toc H Movement	5
Toc H in New Zealand	5
Rev. Owen Williams	6
Crichton Cobbers' Club	7
Jack Bruorton.....	7
Percy Harrison.....	8
The Name 'Crichton'	8
CHAPTER TWO	11
The Early Years	11
Fostering Citizenship.....	13
Tuam Street.....	15
Library and Hobbies	16
Kilmore Street.....	17
Autonomous Management	18
Peterborough Street.....	20
Sir John McKenzie.....	20
A Permanent Base.....	21
The War Years.....	24
Peterborough Street Extension.....	25
25 th Anniversary	25
CHAPTER THREE	27
Club Activities	27
Athletics.....	28
Boxing.....	28
Annat Holiday Camp.....	29
Judo and Jujitsu	33
Wrestling.....	36
Gymnastics.....	38
Other Activities	39
CHAPTER FOUR.....	41
Incorporation.....	41
Jack Bruorton M.B.E.....	42
Plans for Larger Premises	42
Bruorton House.....	49
CHAPTER FIVE	57
An International Perspective	57
The Campaign for a Paid Instructor	58

Old Boys' Evening.....	67
Activities and Sporting Successes	68
Maintaining Low Fees	78
Club Colours.....	80
The Rise and Fall of Membership	81
50th Anniversary	83
CHAPTER SIX	87
Female Members.....	87
Falling Membership	88
An End to Club Gymnastics	88
Charlie Stewart	90
Joe Nathan	90
60 th Anniversary	91
McKenzie Gymnasium Ceiling.....	91
CHAPTER SEVEN	93
Future Planning.....	93
Olympic Weightlifters Arrive	102
Renovations	105
Sports Activities and Coaches.....	106
Vikings Kickboxing	108
Burns Club	109
Lindsay Kelso	109
Peter Oakes.....	110
Billboard	111
Weights Section Upgrade.....	112
Open Day.....	116
CHAPTER EIGHT.....	117
Weights in Trouble	117
David Tua Visits.....	122
Rick Armstrong Room.....	123
Judo Dojo Renovations	126
CHAPTER NINE	127
Moving Ahead	127
The Community Trust	131
Masters of Funding.....	133
Celebrating Success.....	134
PAST PRESIDENTS	137
PRIZE WINNERS	138
RESOURCES AND REFERENCES.....	146
ENDNOTES.....	147

Preface

With an estimated 25,000 members over 75 years, the journey of the Crichton Cobbers' Club has been an eventful one. The story of the journey has been told many times, and everyone associated with the Club has their own version. Here is one. It sits alongside other stories – about the social environment from which the Club originated, about the development of particular sports and activities, the successes of members, and the way in which New Zealand has changed since the 1920s.

This story has been written with the idea of giving you a picture of the overall development of the Club. From small beginnings, the founders set out to ensure local boys of limited financial means were not just physically fit, but socially fit for community life. This story not only deals with the outstanding members, coaches and administrators, but with the people who helped build the Club and without whose foresight and sheer hard work we would not be celebrating the Diamond Anniversary.

A great number of people have helped with this project. For help with photographs: Jane Teal from the Diocese of Christchurch, staff of the Aotearoa New Zealand Centre Christchurch Central Library, and the Canterbury Museum.

For general help, staff of the McMillan Brown Library, Anna Yong, Gene Kumekawa, Phil Wise, Janis Freegard, Ta'i George, Alistair Stewart, Jennifer Fox, and Colin McGeorge. Special thanks to Club Secretary Philip Capil for scanning many photos and articles, and compiling the lists of trophy winners.

Thanks to everyone who kept me enthusiastic, especially Vasilisa.

Neil Fox.
October 2002.



Neil Fox grew up in Dunedin. He joined the Crichton Cobbers' Club in 1995. Neil is an arts and commerce graduate of the University of Canterbury, and a public policy graduate of Victoria University of Wellington. He lives in Wellington. *Fit for Life* is his first book.



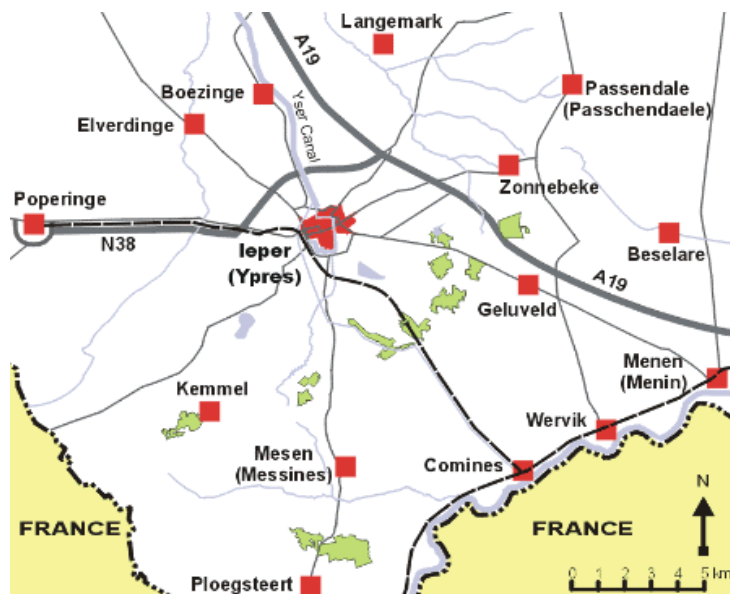
Gymnastics in the McKenzie Gymnasium.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

CHAPTER ONE

The Great War 1914-1918

The story of Crichton Cobbers' Club begins with a worldwide movement called Toc H, which in turn had its origins in the battlefields of the First World War. When the Allied Forces dug in against the advancing Imperial German Army in Belgium and France during 1914-1918, the resulting battlefields were collectively known as the Western Front. The battlefields were located along a line that runs for approximately 450 miles from the Belgian coast, through northern France to the Swiss border.

Of the 1,150,000 men who died on the side of the British Empire in the Great War, nearly a quarter fell in an area of the Western Front called the Ypres Salient. Between October 1914 and November 1918 three major battles took place to the north, east and south of the ancient town of Ypres in western Belgium. Although German forces never captured the mediaeval city, it was heavily shelled by German artillery from the spring of 1915, and by the end of the war in 1918, ceaseless bombardments had virtually demolished it.



Ieper (formerly known as Ypres) in Belgium and the surrounding Ypres Salient battlefields (1914-1918).
<http://www.greatwar.co.uk>

In April 1915, amidst all the destruction and carnage, the battlefields near Ypres were engulfed by a new development, the use of poisonous gas. In mud, slush and squalor the soldiers from every part of the Empire fought to extend or defend the Salient, as the name Ypres became a symbol of unyielding resistance. As part of the struggle many



Troops on the killing fields of Passchendaele.
<http://www.greatwar.co.uk>

New Zealanders lost their lives on Flanders Fields (where the poppies grow) at Passchendaele. This was the environment that created the Toc H movement, later described as “the largest Poppy of Remembrance.”¹

Talbot House

*Just behind the Salient was the little village of Poperinghe, situated in a funnel through which men passed ceaselessly, in their thousands, to and from the front. It was the nearest place to the lines where a soldier could hold his head in the air without risk of losing it.*²

Poperinghe was the assembly point for tens of thousands of mainly British, Canadian, Australian and Indian troops on their way to and from the bloody Ypres Salient. Refugees fleeing Ypres and surrounding villages swelled the huge transient military population, and the town's railway station became one of the busiest on the Western Front. In the small square, troops, lorries and mules converged in perpetual confusion. At number 43 Gasthuisstraat, one of the streets leading from the main square in Poperinghe town centre, stood a large house owned by a wealthy brewer, Monsieur Coevoet Camerlynck. In the early summer of 1915 some German shrapnel shells had landed in the garden and damaged the rear of the house. Having removed his family and all his belongings, Monsieur Camerlynck was pleased to offer the empty house for rent to the British Army for 150 francs a month.

The Rev. Neville Talbot, senior chaplain of the British 6th Division, wanted a house that he could turn into a church club, and so in November 1915, three padres, Neville Talbot, Harold Bates and Philip Clayton, leased the tall white house in Poperinghe from the Belgian owner. Initially it was proposed that the house be named Church House. According to Padre Neville Talbot, “the staff of our Division saw a scarecrow in the name.”³ The house was named in memory of Lieutenant Gilbert Talbot, aged 23, who was the brother of Padre Neville Talbot. Gilbert was serving with 7th Battalion Rifle Brigade when he was killed at Hooze in the Ypres Salient on 30 July 1915. His death came during a British counter-attack following the German Army's first use of liquid fire on the Western Front. Gilbert was the youngest son of the Lord Bishop Talbot of Winchester and left a career of brilliant promise unfulfilled. He is buried in Sanctuary Wood British Military Cemetery, Zillebeke, near Ieper.⁴

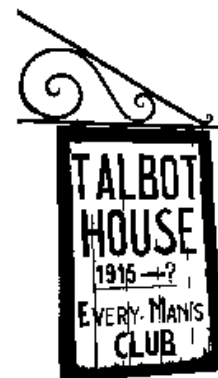


Talbot House from a soldier's sketch.
<http://www.go.to/toch>

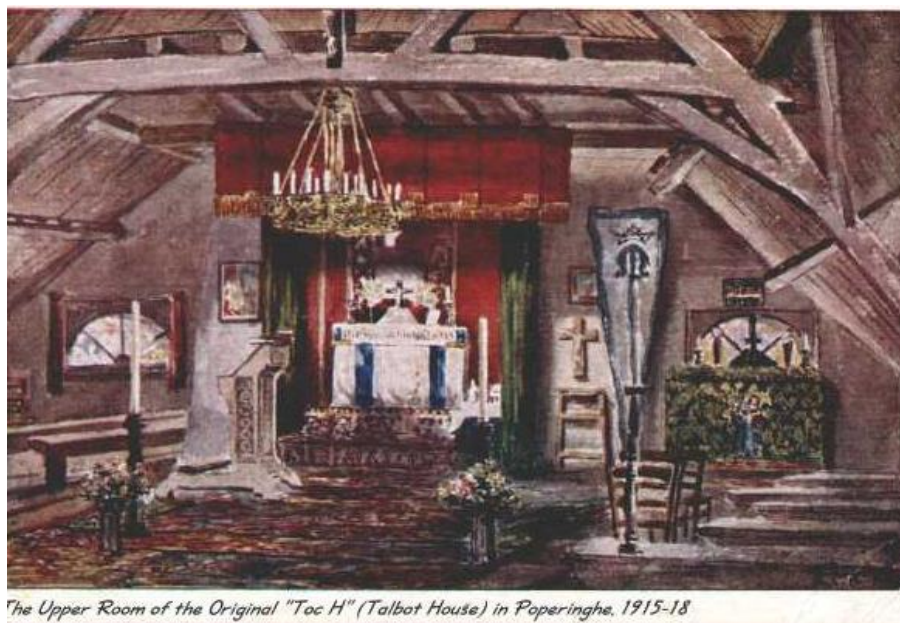
The house opened in December 1915 as a soldiers' club named Talbot House. Talbot House was not to close its doors until its enforced evacuation in May of 1918.

The name Talbot House was shortened by the troops to its initials, TH, which they pronounced according to the army signaller's convention as Toc H.⁵

Talbot House was run by Army Chaplain the Reverend Philip Clayton (or Tubby as he became known). Tubby Clayton had the official title of 'Garrison Chaplain of Poperinghe', but was often referred to as 'The Innkeeper'. He created a hostel or inn-like environment in Talbot House that made the many visitors "forget they were soldiers, under machine-like discipline in a strange land."⁶ Early Toc H publications describe the house as a fun-loving pub without booze. Amid the destruction of the battlefields, Toc H offered the comforts of home, and provided absolute sanctuary from horrifying shifts in the trenches. The house had a garden complete with a notice that read "Come into the garden and forget about the war". Talbot House was as "unmilitary as anything could be in the army. It was a place of fellowship and refreshment. The widest possible welcome was given by its signboard."⁷ As the legend 'Every Man's Club' indicates, Talbot House was revolutionary for the British Army, which had historically placed so much emphasis on military rank. Signs over the doorways of the Chaplain's room and of a writing room read "All Rank Abandon, Ye Who Enter Here". The ground floor housed amusements, magazines, a canteen, and means for writing home. A library was provided on the next floor and above that were bedrooms. The loft, which was previously used for drying hops, was known as the 'Upper Room'. It was converted into a chapel of special significance. On the initiative of the soldiers, the upper room chapel was furnished with wooden benches made or acquired from damaged churches. The altar cloth was donated and candlesticks for the altar were made from bedposts. A portable organ known as a 'groan-box' was used for musical accompaniment.



The Talbot House signboard.



The Upper Room of the Original "Toc H" (Talbot House) in Poperinghe, 1915-18

An early postcard depicting the 'Upper Room' chapel in the attic of Talbot House. Crichton Cobbers' Club.



One of the many
lighthearted signs in
Talbot House.
<http://www.go.to/toch>

The altar slab was the top of a carpenter's bench found in the grounds of the house before it was opened to troops. "As a symbol of the Divine Carpenter, continually at work upon the wills of men, one has written, it has always held a central place in Toc H."⁸ Many visitors to the place never reached the Upper Room. But it is estimated that some 25,000 men made their communion there, and went forth strengthened and renewed to meet the fury of the trenches - often to meet immediate death.⁹

According to the sketchy records kept by the house, no fewer than five men who later won the Victoria Cross took Communion there. For many men, a simple service in the attic of Toc H became their way of making peace with whatever God they had perhaps long abandoned. After all, for most, the next appointment was with the hell of the Ypres Salient where the life expectancy of an officer was a mere ten weeks. In such circumstances rank mattered little.

Another house known as Little Talbot House was founded in Ypres itself in late 1917. It served to expand the work of Toc H, offering a haven to cheer and brighten visitors until the end of the war the following year.

Although the war ended with the signing of the Armistice in 1918, the effects did not disappear overnight. Disappointment was widespread as the much hoped for 'Brave New World' remained a shell-shocked world. People of all nationalities lamented the loss of loved ones and supported those struggling to cope after exposure to four years of horrific violence.



Not far from Talbot House is
Tyne Cot Cemetery, the resting-
place of nearly 12,000 soldiers
of the Commonwealth Forces.

The Toc H Movement

During the Great War, hundreds of men committed themselves, were they to survive, to ordination. In 1919 the Rev. Tubby Clayton helped establish an Ordination Test School in Cheshire, where these men were prepared for Theological College after the war. During this time he began planning for the rebirth of Toc H. This was not to be an ex-service organisation, but an attempt to preserve and to hand on to succeeding generations the special atmosphere that had characterised Talbot House in Poperinghe. The following year, Tubby Clayton accepted a position at All Hallows-by-the-Tower. From this base, he and the Toc H organisers began to form a movement in London to foster the comradeship that war had engendered in men from all parts and of all degrees whom it joined in a common danger. Toc H was designed so that men in post-war time could still come together, helping and thinking of each other as family. The organisers devised four objectives at the heart of Toc H, later to be expressed as the four points on the Toc H compass. 'To Think Fairly' (fair-mindedness), 'To Love Widely' (fellowship), 'To Witness Humbly' (the kingdom of God), and 'To Build Bravely' (service).¹⁰ From these four principles the torch that burned at Poperinghe was reborn, and a Royal Charter was granted in 1922. The charter explained the existence of Toc H:

*to preserve amongst men and to transmit to future generations the traditions of fellowship and service manifested by all ranks during the Great War, thereby encouraging its members, through the common Christian life of the Association, to seek God, and helping to find His will and to do it.*¹¹

Toc H proposed to become a service movement supporting good causes, with religion quietly in the background. "The name bore fresh significance, 'To Conquer Hate.'¹² Early descriptions included 'A Club for the Promotion of True Hilarity' and 'A Christian fellowship among the greatest possible diversity of men.' Membership was open to all men aged over 16 years of age, and by 1930 there were nearly 1000 branches around the world.¹³

Toc H in New Zealand

In 1925 the founder of Toc H, Rev. Tubby Clayton and the Rev. M. P. G. (Pat) Leonard travelled from England to tour New Zealand, holding public meetings and visiting schools to promote the movement. When Rev. Pat Leonard returned to New Zealand two years later, there were already Toc H branches established in Auckland and Wellington, with further groups developing in both



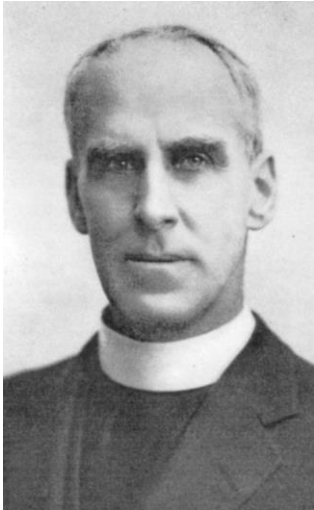
All Hallows-by-the-Tower
<http://www.toch.org.uk>



Sketch of Rev. Tubby Clayton.

these cities as well as in Wanganui and Christchurch. His 1927 visit also motivated the formation of a Dunedin branch. By 1929, Christchurch had attained Toc H Branch status. Two years later, the 1931 Dominion Conference was held in Christchurch at Easter, where for the next three years the Dominion Executive (Domex) had its home.¹⁴

Rev. Owen Williams



Rev. Owen Wallis Williams.
College! – A history of Christ's
College.

As assistant to the Christ's College Chaplain Rev. E. C. Crosse, Rev. Owen Williams arranged a speaking engagement for Rev. Tubby Clayton and Rev. Pat Leonard in 1925. Rev. Williams was inspired by Tubby Clayton's Trinity Sunday address to those gathered in Christ's College Chapel.¹⁵ Within a matter of months he had organised a Christchurch branch of Toc H. Rev. Williams had been appointed Assistant Chaplain at Christ's College in 1923 where the boys nicknamed him 'Krim' from a facial resemblance to the Moroccan rebel leader Abdal-Karim.

He was born at Wanganui, the fourth of seven sons of the Rev. W. J. Williams, a Methodist Minister. He was educated at Prince Albert College, Auckland and graduated M.A. from Auckland University in 1907. He taught at several schools before going to Nelson College and then Wellington College. Leaving New Zealand as a Captain in the N.Z. Rifle Brigade in 1915, he served in France for three years reaching the rank of Major and being awarded the Military Cross for his gallantry. After returning to New Zealand he went from Wellington College to be principal of Hikurangi College in the Wairarapa and during his two years studied for his entry into holy orders.¹⁶

Rev. Williams had been severely wounded in the war, and as a result he had been fitted with a steel jaw. Sometimes this locked during a Christ's College school sermon and there would be an agonizing wait before, with several clicks, it unlocked again. David Williams was acutely embarrassed when his father preached because the boys counted the number of times he said 'holy' and got up to forty.¹⁷ For a number of years Rev. Williams was Commanding Officer of the School Cadets, and he was a regular member of the Masters' team that played cricket against the College XI. He loved camping and tramping, and often explored the greater parts of Banks Peninsula on foot. In 1925 when the whole school was given a holiday to celebrate its success in University Examinations, a special train took the school to Arthur's Pass. On arrival, in ordinary walking shoes, he led a party of boys to the top of Mount Rolleston. Rev. Williams placed a strong emphasis on community service and encouraged the boys of Christ's College to become involved with the local Toc H branch, of which he became Padre. By 1934, Christ's College followed the example of many English

Public Schools and established their own branch of Toc H under the guidance of Rev. Williams. It became a very active group, hosting lectures on the movement, meetings with members from other schools, visits to the sick and disabled and collections of books and clothes for missions. Help was given to Sunday School teaching. Concerts and plays were put on at the Mental Hospital, the Rannerdale Home and, on several occasions, for the inmates of Paparua Prison.

Rev. Owen Williams died at his home in Taradale near Napier in August 1970. He was 88. He had a strong influence on the early development of the club where staff and boys knew him as 'Padre'. Earlier in the year he had visited the Club with his son, Gareth, and expressed his delight with the progress made through the years.¹⁸

Crichton Cobbers' Club

As Padre of the Christchurch branch of Toc H, Rev. Williams called a meeting in 1926 of men from the Christchurch Branch of Toc H on the proposal that they organise a club for the poorer boys in the community. Exhaustive inquiries were made as to the need of such a club, because Toc H existed primarily to back up existing organisations and not to compete with them - in short to supply manpower and act as a power house for social service to the community.¹⁹ They agreed the community would benefit if there were a nondenominational club to "take the boys off the street corners"²⁰ and provide physical training to develop the body and strengthen the mind. Some months later, in early 1927, Rev. Williams and fellow Toc H members Percy Harrison, Reg. Davie, and John (Jack) Bruorton established the boys' club. Jack Bruorton immediately offered his services as leader.

Jack Bruorton

Mr Bruorton was born at Upton-on-Severn, Worcestershire, and took part in the usual schoolboy sports of boxing, running and wrestling. He entered in many boxing tournaments after leaving school, and while working for an English motorcar firm was a regular competitor in reliability trials, including a 2000 mile international race. In 1910 he was given the chance to bring a car out to New Zealand, and decided to stay here.²¹

Jack Bruorton was no stranger to boys' clubs having been formerly involved with the Birmingham Boys Brigade, and after settling in New Zealand was appointed Chief Scoutmaster in Christchurch in 1912. For a time he was an engineer at the D.I.C and later joined the City Council



Jack Bruorton
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

for whom he worked 25 years until his retirement in 1946. Jack Bruorton was Assistant Traffic Inspector for 10 years, and Chief Traffic Inspector for another 10 years, a position he held at the time of his retirement.

*He was a leading boxing judge and referee, and at one time was president of the Canterbury Boxing Trainers' Association. He was also interested in band music and for two years was president of the Provincial Brass Bands' Association. A keen churchman, Mr. Bruorton was a sidesman at the Christchurch Cathedral for nearly 40 years, and at the time of his death was chief sidesman. He was also a past member of the Rotary Club, which supported his youth work.*²²

Percy Harrison



Percy Harrison
The Press.

Founding member Percy Harrison was also a keen sportsman. An active wrestler during his younger years, he helped introduce the sport to Canterbury. He was very well known in many country districts in the colourful days of rural boxing and wrestling displays and contests. As one of the original instructors, he devoted much of his life to the work of the Club and was made the first life-member. When Percy Harrison passed away in 1963, The Press noted:

*Percy Harrison gave 37 years as an instructor, served on the instructors' committee and the management committee of the club, and acted as a referee in numerous wrestling contests. Mr. Harrison performed some sterling work when the club was inaugurated, renovating and cleaning out premises for clubrooms. Since then the club has had many shifts and Mr. Harrison had been connected with all of them. At the time of his death, Mr. Harrison was a house manager of the club, a position he had held for the last four years.*²³

The Name 'Crichton'

*The Club name is a symbol – a symbol of the men who fought and gave their lives for their country.*²⁴

When discussing a suitable name for the Club, the name of Wilfred Crichton came to the attention of the committee. Crichton was killed in 1917 with the First Canterbury Regiment in the fighting following Passchendaele in the Ypres Salient. He was aged 31. Crichton did a great deal for boys in Christchurch before his death at the front, and "his life exemplified all that the Club stood for".²⁵

Crichton was born in 1886, of a well-known Avonside family. At Christ's College he was in the cricket eleven. He became an accountant. He keenly supported the

*Holy Trinity Bible Class and Boys' Club, camping and tramping with them in summer holidays. They sometimes went to Quail Island to entertain the lepers who were then there. He and his team were a happy useful crowd. His relatives turned to a movement after his own heart - Toc H - and entrusted the keeping up of his memory and example in part to them. The Christchurch Branch with fifteen others in Canterbury, and the Crichton Cobbers' Club are the living memorials of a Christchurch boy whose life was admirable.*²⁶

The second part of the name referred to a common habit among returned soldiers of calling their friends 'cobber'. The committee adopted it as a fitting tribute to the family-like atmosphere Crichton had fostered in his youth work. Subsequently, Rev. Williams and his committee settled on the name, Crichton Cobbers' Club, and the Club began later that same year "with about 8 to 10 husky boys ranging in age from nine to thirteen."²⁷ The Club shared the Worcester Street Toc H clubrooms on the top floor of a three storey building at the back of Cathedral Square. The enthusiastic Bruorton soon secured other capable staff. These helpers were fellow Toc H men, who gained membership under the simple requirements that they be 16 years or older, and had proved themselves within a given period. The Toc H service work with the Cobbers' Club was referred to as 'sheep-dogging', or helping the youngsters, rather than the alternative 'stretcher bearing,' the term used to describe care of the unfortunate.²⁸



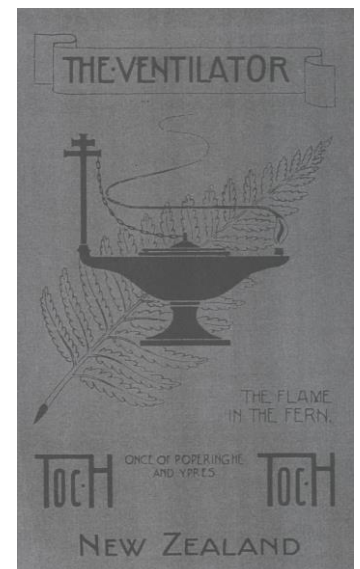
James Wilfred Crichton
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

CHAPTER TWO

The Early Years

The Club stayed only a few weeks at the Toc H clubrooms in Worcester Street. The boys' exuberant activities were incompatible with the requirements of another tenant who was endeavoring to conduct a language school in the rooms below. Eventually, pressure from the landlord coupled with a general lack of space assured this accommodation was short-lived.²⁹ After considerable renovations, Bradley's old glassworks at 70 Chester Street became the new home of the Christchurch branch of Toc H and the Crichton Cobbers' Club. The top floor of the Chester Street building became a gymnasium, while downstairs was organised into a social room. An early history thanks Rev. Williams, Reg Davie, and others who donated their time and stayed up until 12 and 1am fixing up the old glassworks.³⁰ The Christchurch branch of the YMCA kindly provided surplus equipment, and a little later practically all the necessary gymnasium gear was obtained from Hornibrook's old physical training school. The boys met once a week in the evening for two hours. Fees were paid nightly at 2d for juniors and 3d for seniors (which included the cup of tea and biscuits)³¹ or there was no charge at all if parents were unable to pay. This notion of free entry later became a hard and fast Club principle. With no other tenants in the building the boys could make as much noise as they liked, and the larger premises allowed for expansion, which the Club quickly did. It was not long before the Club was running two nights a week and eventually three nights.³² Rev. Williams began a national publication called *The Ventilator* in October 1930. It was a monthly magazine designed to keep the various Toc H groups around the Dominion informed and inspired. He remained editor until a number of regional typescript magazines began around 1934. In his first issue, Rev. Williams figuratively describes the new Clubrooms:

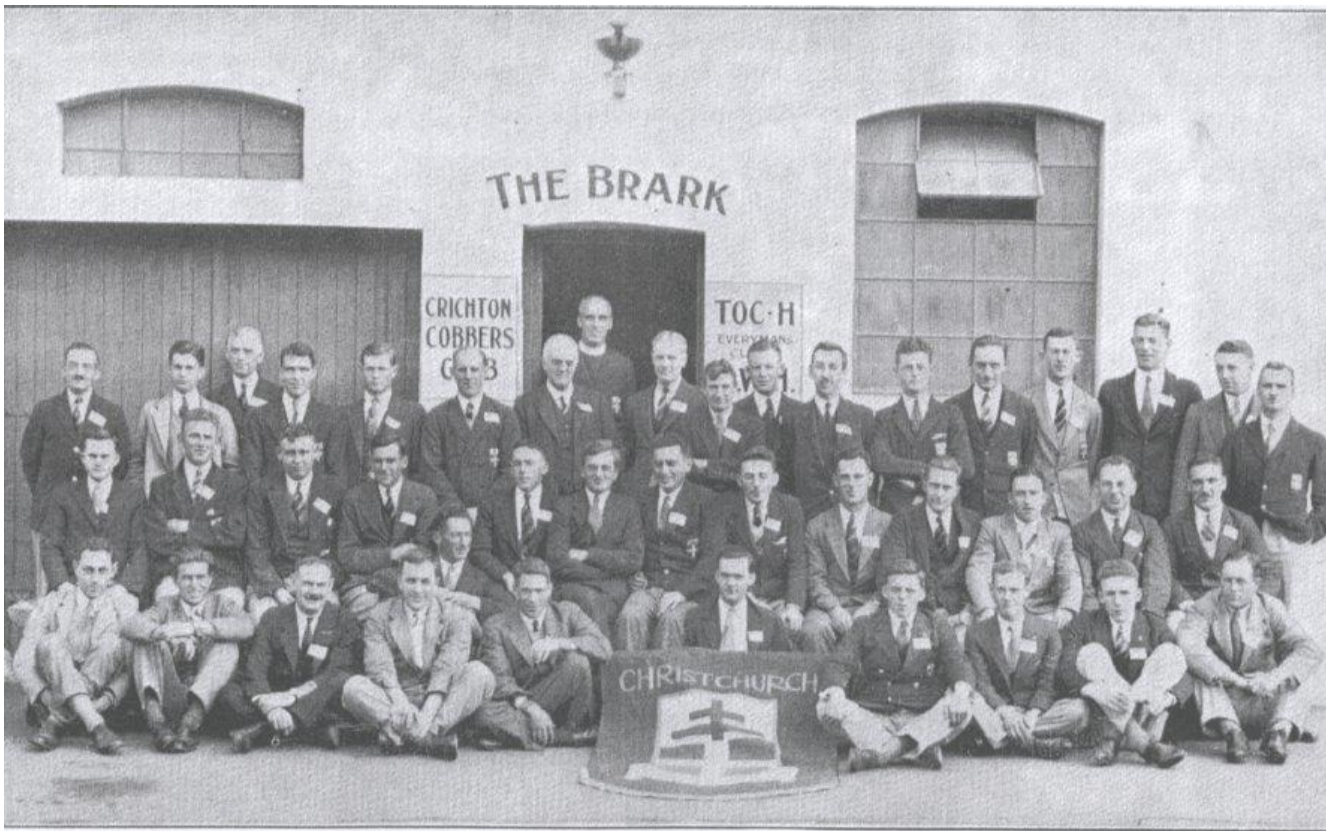
a ground-floor hall with acres of notices on your left, followed by home made stairs, and then a kitchen, and offices. Again on the left Padre's room, narrow as its occupant, but high overhead: a dining room of curious hue, but comfortably stoned in: and a wide hall (to become a workshop). Now up the personally painted stairs to a vastitude, seventy feet by thirty, heavily rafted, and occupied by the stark forms of gym apparatus. Turning ever counter-clockwise - fitting approach to a place of Remembrance - come, at last, down two steps into a haven. It is a chamber over the gate, where modern Davids keep watch for Absalloms not returning. On the walls, pictures of the Old House seems to be glorified presentments of this very room in which they hang - its rafted roof, its dominating cross emerging from the wall; its carpenter's bench altar. Here behind 'iron doors', the wind below foot; the sky



The cover of an early edition of *The Ventilator*.
Aotearoa New Zealand Centre.

*overhead, with the fire of a neighbouring furnace always burning below and behind the cross. Then there is the Crichton Cobbers' Club, made possible by the magnificent meeting room in the Brark, which is meant for boys not reached by Scouts or the Y.M.C.A. Club - and gets them.*³³

The 1931 Toc H Dominion Conference was held at Easter in this building.³⁴ The group wore the Toc H uniform consisting of gray trousers and dark blue blazer bearing a pocket badge of the Arms of the city of Ypres.³⁵ Some members also wore the distinctive diagonally striped Toc H tie, in amber, silver and black. The symbol of Toc H, an oil lamp called the 'Lamp of Maintenance' was attached to the outside of the Clubrooms. A lamp was presented to a unit when it "proved its worthiness to hold status as a branch."³⁶



DOMINION CONFERENCE, EASTER, 1931

The Toc H 'Every Man's Club' sign is on the right of the doorway, and the Crichton Cobbers' Club sign on the left. Toc H Explained.

A two-week camp on the West Coast was organised by Rev. Williams and staff and boys from Christ's College in 1932. Fourteen Christ's College boys, fourteen Christchurch High School boys and twenty-four from the Crichton Cobbers' Club attended. The camp became an annual event, though the moved to a different site and the High School boys did not attend later.³⁷

Fostering Citizenship

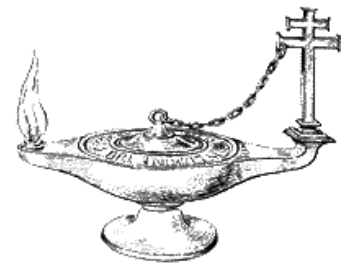
Edith Hart interviewed Rev. Williams and Toc H staff in 1935 as part of her University of Canterbury MA thesis entitled, 'The Organised Activities of Christchurch Children outside of the School.' She notes that the Club was run by the Christchurch branch of the Toc H movement to:

*provide an opportunity for physical exercise of all kinds, games and fellowship for boys who would not be reached by the Y.M.C.A or church clubs, and who must seek amusement at the minimum cost. The club typically had half an hour of drill, then half an hour of gymnasium exercises. Following this, a short talk may be given, and then the members split up to wrestle, box, do advanced gymnastics, or play ping-pong or draughts as their fancy leads them.*³⁸

Physical activities allowed the boys to let off steam in a controlled environment. Jack Bruorton supervised boxing, while Percy Harrison trained the boys in wrestling. The physical nature of the Club provided the boys with the sort of rough and tumble activities they were unable to obtain elsewhere in the community without causing offence to others. An early history recalls the night the local policeman came in to see what all the row was about and finished up playing tow ball with the boys.³⁹ Edith Hart also comments on the significance of the quiet time included at the end of each session.

The Toc H men try, after the manner of their kind, to spread the gospel without preaching it, and attempt in an informal and unobtrusive way to bring the boys to the Toc H ideal by striving - to think fairly, love widely, build bravely, witness humbly.

Edith Hart notes the Club "is not directly attached to Churches but is wider in scope than a sports club." She places them under the heading of altruistic, "since all these clubs are working under adult leadership with ideas, implicit or explicit, of developing the child into a good citizen both of his own community and of the world."⁴⁰ As a conclusion to the evening's strenuous activities, the boys would settle down by listening to a short talk, then draw the curtains and dim the lights. By the flickering light of the Toc H lamp positioned on the altar, the group would recite the Club prayer, well known as the Sportsman's Prayer. The Club prayer had been framed by the Rev. G. Gilligan, a noted Canterbury cricketer.⁴¹



The Toc H lamp featuring the distinctive cross of Ypres.
<http://www.go.to/toch>

The Club Prayer (1927)

Teach me to be obedient to the rules of the game,
'Teach me neither to cry for the moon nor over spilt milk,
Help me to distinguish between sentiment and sentimentality,
clinging to one and despising the other.
Help me neither to proffer nor receive cheap praise.
If I am called upon to suffer, let me be like a well-bred beast
who goes away and suffers in silence.
'Teach me to win when I may. If I cannot win, above all,
I pray, make me a good loser.

Then they would retire to enjoy a chat over a hot cup of tea and a biscuit before heading off home. Early Management Committee minutes feature regular payments to the local Aulsebrook biscuit factory. This relaxing social time was considered an important part of the activities as it allowed the boys to come together as a group. The principle was to create a 'family' type atmosphere along the lines of that established in the Toc H house at Poperinghe. By way of comparison, the Baden Powell movement (Scouts and Guides) also finished the evening with a prayer. A more formal conclusion, the Toc H 'Ceremony of Light,' was conducted on special occasions as detailed below.⁴²



Early postcard showing the Lamp of Maintenance displayed in the Toc H Chapel, All Hallows. Crichton Cobbers' Club.

As soon as all is ready, the Lamp or Rushlight should be placed in a position where it can be seen by all. A pedestal or mantle shelf about 5ft. 6ins. from the ground is a convenient height. Those present will stand facing the Light, and he who takes the Ceremony will be careful that he does not stand between the Light and those present. The leader then gives the signal by saying the word 'Light'. On this signal all the lights of the room are put out, and the leader taking the Ceremony lights the Lamp and, saying the words by heart, proceeds:

*With proud thanksgiving, let us remember our Elder Brethren.
They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.*

*All present answer: "We will remember them."
After one minute of silence, the leader says:
Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works.
And those present answer:
And glorify our Father which is in heaven.*

After a short pause, the leader extinguishes the lamp and the room lights are lit.

Tuam Street

Four years from inception, the membership had grown to around 55 boys, divided into seniors and juniors, and the Chester Street Clubrooms were becoming too cramped.⁴³ Jack Bruorton secured the use of a larger building at the corner of Manchester Street and Tuam Street, best remembered for the way it “rocked when the boys did their physical jerks.”⁴⁴ “The vibration of 60 to 80 boys doing physical exercises would shake the entire building.”⁴⁵ After 18 months the Fire Department decided the building was a fire hazard. The required structural alterations presented a problem and so the Club was again on the move. This was a very difficult period in the life of the Club “owing to the difficulty of securing suitable rooms at a rental the Club could afford.”⁴⁶ Rental had always been something of a problem as the Club was largely dependent on donations as revenue from fees was very small. To raise subscriptions was not compatible with the Club’s aim of providing for the less financially able. Edith Hart suggests the low subscriptions were a key contributor to the continued growth of the Club.

Clubs make a mistake when they levy an annual subscription. Children can manage a penny or two every meeting where parents would not dream of giving them three or four shillings in a lump sum.”⁴⁷ “I think that the Guides have suffered as a movement by having well-to-do women at their head. They do not realise that to some children 2d. is as inaccessible as the moon.”⁴⁸

Bruorton successfully negotiated temporary clubrooms in a Dundas Street billiards room for three months of 1934.⁴⁹ Then the Club moved to an empty factory building across the road, notable for its very rotten floor. One publication recalls the night Ted Logie went right through the rotten floor and Percy Harrison had to rescue him.⁵⁰ Edith Hart mentions the Club was unwittingly caught up in religious controversy. Some clubs in her study had reported being approached by religious propagandists and Crichton Cobbers’ reported a distressing incident.

A man arrived and asked to explain what a ‘Youth for Christ’ campaign was going to be. Part of his talk offended the Roman Catholic members who resigned in a body, evidently thinking the club was proselytising. This worried the Toc H men, for what the man said was really against their principles and they were loath to lose some of their best members.”⁵¹

The 1934 Youth for Christ campaign was run jointly by the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Congregational Churches, the Church of Christ and with some support from the Anglican Church, to build national interest in Sunday schools and Bible classes. Two local

Anglo-Catholic vicars who refused to allow their parishes to join in the campaign may have influenced the Cobbers' members who resigned.⁵²

Library and Hobbies

Edith Hart visited the Club at the Dundas Street premises while collecting her thesis data in 1935. Hart's study canvassed 450 Christchurch school children, and of this number three boys were Crichton Cobbers' junior members. Several children in her sample refer to borrowing books from small libraries in connection with their clubs.⁵³ Rev. Williams was aware that many boys in the wider community came from homes without reading materials. By 1935 a Crichton Cobbers' Club library catered to both juniors and seniors, offering books of interest to boys rather than school texts. But most importantly it provided a quiet opportunity to read rather than the pressure to read imposed by the schools.



Wearing a Toc H blazer, Jack Bruorton, stands in front of the senior's section of the library. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*

In addition to access to books, the club developed a hobbies section designed to promote skills associated with learning a trade. Woodwork instruction was offered after much of the tools and equipment were gifted to the Club, and other equipment was constructed by the staff. With an emphasis on participation and encouragement, the boys were free to work on their own projects under supervision.



Club members, some in school uniform, use woodworking facilities. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*

Kilmore Street

The Crichton Cobbers' had a membership of 55 juniors by late 1934, and two years later membership had doubled to 110, at which time the Club was especially proud to be the only club in New Zealand affiliated to the National Association of Boys Clubs (England).⁵⁴ The Dundas Street building with the rotten floor was sold after the Club had used it for eighteen months, and once again relocation was required. This presented something of a problem, as suitable space was becoming difficult to find. "Each of these shifts was costing about £25 in cash and a tremendous amount of labour by the members of the club."⁵⁵ Just as things began to get desperate, Mr. Blackwell of Blackwell Motors in Kilmore Street offered the upstairs floor of his premises at an affordable rental. The staff and boys quickly set about organising partitions and wrestling and boxing rings, assisted by Mr. Blackwell himself who had an interest in boys' work. Curiously, the upstairs floor of this building was covered with three inches of asphalt. There was a celebration the night Fred Coombes solved the problem of shifting the asphalt off the floors,⁵⁶ and Club members then removed between thirteen and thirty tons of asphalt from the premises.⁵⁷

Autonomous Management

Combined membership rose to over 400 boys within eighteen months of moving to Kilmore Street. Membership reflected a diverse cross-section of Christchurch youth and the Toc H staff realised the vision of Rev. Williams and Jack Bruorton had come to fruition. Although there had always been a need for a club of this kind, demand had exceeded their expectations. Rather than limiting numbers, the staff committed themselves to teaching the virtues of a healthy mind and body to as many boys as possible. Mr. Blackwell experienced an upturn in the motor vehicle business as the economic depression lifted, and he required more space. Once again the Club was on the move. In 1937, Mr. Blackwell paid the total cost of shifting the Club to new accommodation on the top floor of a three storey building in Manchester Street (later the Embassy Hotel).⁵⁸ Although the rooms were not entirely suitable for a gymnasium, the Club stayed because better accommodation could not be found. Resources continued to be donated, including two pianos which staff experienced some difficulty in carrying up the three flights of stairs.⁵⁹ It was in this new building that the inaugural meeting of the Management Committee of the Crichton Cobbers' Club took place in July 1937.⁶⁰ The Cobbers' Club had grown to such an extent that it could no longer be adequately managed within the structure of the local Toc H group, so administration was delegated to a Management Committee. The first meeting was chaired by Jack Bruorton, and comprised a discussion on how boys' clubs were run in England, and some preparation to draft rules and finances at the next meeting. Aims and objectives were printed that reflect upon this early period and illustrate the intentions of the Club founders.

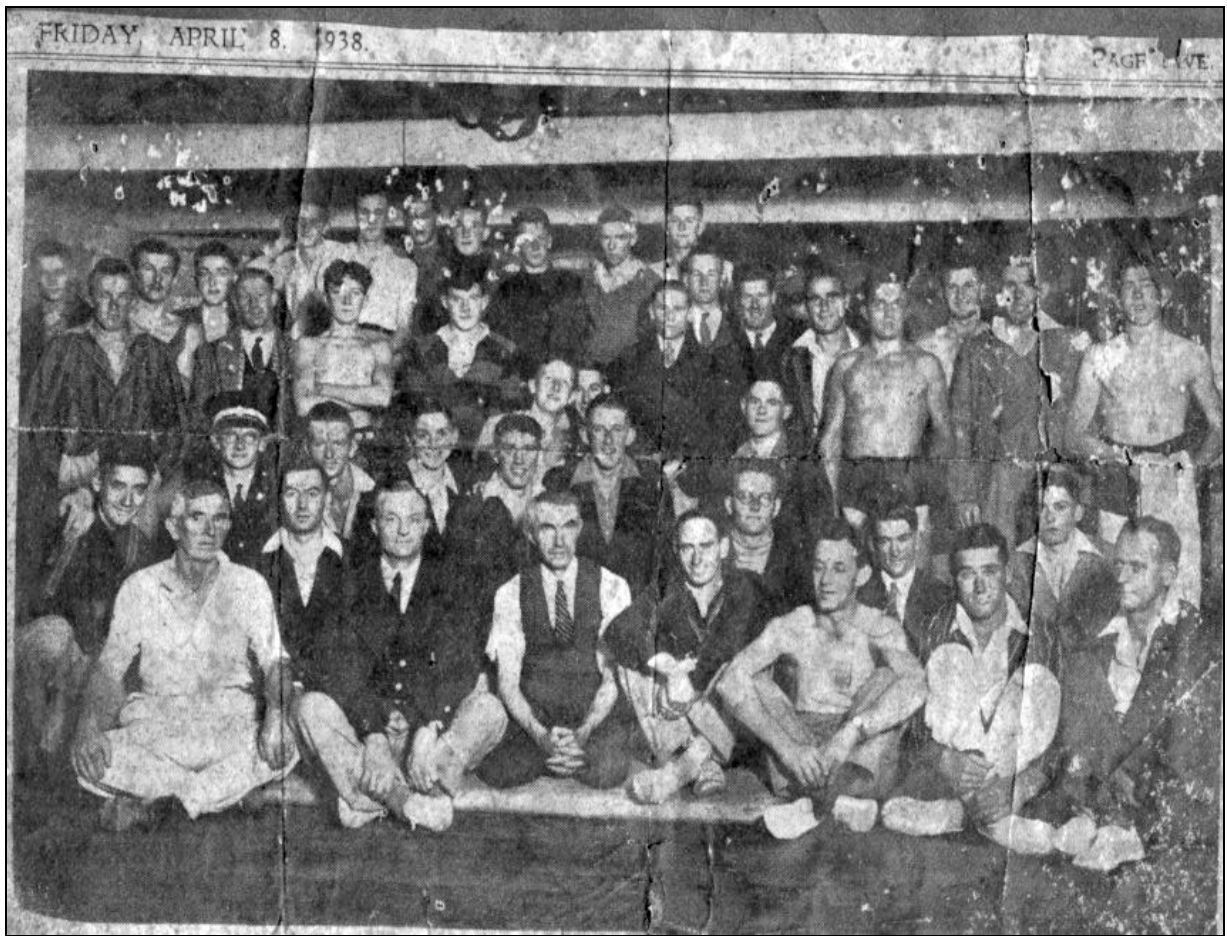
We believe that the highest form of service that can be rendered to the Nation is to give the rising generation the opportunity of partaking in clean sport under good healthy conditions in an atmosphere which is impregnated with friendliness and unselfishness, which is the foundation of the real 'Team Spirit', thus enabling us to live up to the Club's motto of 'The Game for the Game's Sake'.⁶¹

The Club is to provide healthy physical development by means of gymnastics and sports; to inspire the boys with a sense of loyalty to their fellows and their leaders; to instill high principles of personal and civic conduct; to train them for their immediate jobs so far as that might be possible; to develop a liking for hobbies and for wider knowledge of all kinds through books and otherwise; and to crown all, to teach them Christian religion by seeing it in action. The tone of the club is one of "clean speech, fair play and enthusiastic effort. Members are required to sign a card promising to attend regularly, respect club property and generally uphold the honour of the club whose objects were outlined on the card; "Look ever to the light with sure anchorage and in the spirit of unwavering comradeship." Those were the words of Lord Bledisloe, former governor general of New Zealand, who was patron of Toc H. On

the card was also a verse of Fight the Good Fight and the club prayer, well known as the Sportsman's Prayer. It was a favourite of the late King George V.⁶²

The Club faced continued problems accommodating the growing number of boys. In one case 90 juniors turned up for a Wednesday night class.⁶³ The new Management Committee were soon forced to consider a proposal for concession cards. This consisted of twenty nights for 2s for juniors, and twenty nights for 3s for seniors. The cards were used instead of weekly subscriptions. In January 1938, the Committee introduced an annual membership of 10s for seniors and 7s for juniors, allowing the member to admission on two nights per week.⁶⁴

After two years the Manchester Street building was sold and the club received notice to move out. This caused something of a crisis as no new accommodation could be found. Jack Bruorton was reduced to unsuccessfully driving around likely streets looking for an empty building. It seemed as though the Club was about to come to an end.

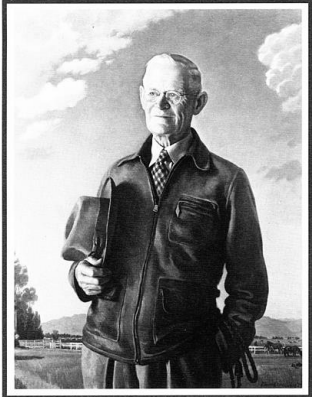


Staff and members appear in the local newspaper, 8 April 1938. Jack Bruorton sits at front, second from left. *Crichton Cobbers' Club*.

Peterborough Street

The Club was based in temporary premises in Latimer Square⁶⁵ when the Christchurch Rotary Club heard of the difficulty in finding new premises. Their Boys' Club Committee immediately appointed four of their members to investigate possibilities. In an incredibly short time the four members, R. McPherson, A. K. Hadfield, A. M. Satterthwaite, and E. Hammond, had guaranteed a bank overdraft of £966 for a new property at 201 Peterborough Street.⁶⁶ When the Cobbers Club Management Committee met at the new Peterborough Street premises for the first time in December 1938,⁶⁷ among the first matters discussed was repaying the debt owed to the Rotary Club. Staff then assisted the Rotary Club to erect huts for a boys' camp at Wainui, and Jack Bruorton personally canvassed the business community to raise funds to pay off the bank. Jack Bruorton released the guarantors within 18 months with help from substantial donations from Mrs Guy Pascoe and the J. R. McKenzie Youth Education Trust.

Sir John McKenzie



Sir John McKenzie
<http://www.jrmckenzie.org.nz>

Sir John McKenzie established the J. R. McKenzie Youth Education Trust with the sum of £10,000 in 1938. He was a staunch Rotarian, and preferring not to be directly involved in the operation of the trust, left it to be administered by the Christchurch and Wellington Rotary Clubs for the under-privileged boys in those cities. Later the fund was increased to £30,000 and made available to the clubs in Auckland and Dunedin. In 1955, when more than £50,000 had already been distributed, he increased the fund by £1,000,000.⁶⁸ Sir John McKenzie was the epitome of the self-made man - honest, hardworking and generous. He established a retail chain that became a household name, was a leading owner and breeder of trotters and pacers, and became a leading philanthropist. Befriended by Jack Bruorton, he began to take a personal interest in the Crichton Cobbers' Club. In 1952, Club Secretary Miss S. Lilly, was instructed to write and thank Sir John McKenzie for accepting the newly created office of President of the Crichton Cobbers' Club:

*and to stress the fact that the Management Committee felt that in view of Sir John's great assistance to the Club, there was no one more worthy of the office of President.*⁶⁹



A Permanent Base

After extensive work, much of it involving the removal of tons of earth to lay floors in the building, and largely from voluntary labour and donated materials, the new premises were transformed from a joinery factory with an earth floor to the first permanent base of the Crichton Cobbers' Club. Over 3000 hours of work went into the renovation of the building.⁷⁰ A pamphlet printed to commemorate the opening of the new Clubrooms recalls the night Pop Fraser mistook the kerosene bottle for his water bottle! The Minister of Internal Affairs was asked to open the facilities, although it was in fact the Mayor, R. M. MacFarlane, who conducted the opening in July 1939.⁷¹ As the new rooms were opened, there was sad news; German bombers had damaged Talbot House at Poperinghe as the Second World War began.

Club Director Jack Bruorton, Club President Sir John McKenzie and Club Secretary Miss S. Lilly sit at the head of the table.

The same red velvet tablecloth still covers the boardroom table in 2002.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

Other Cobbers' Clubs

*In these days of urgent need for National fitness there could be few more important National Institutions than clubs which carry on a wholesome training, year in and year out. The growing success of the Crichton Cobbers' Club has led to the starting of a chain of Cobbers' Clubs not only throughout Canterbury - at Lyttleton, Methven, etc. - but throughout New Zealand, as far away as New Plymouth and Auckland. The distinctive note of these clubs lies in the name "Cobbers". They are backed by a staff of Toc H'ers who do the work for the love of the game and the boys appreciate the generous lead given by people making a sacrifice to help them.*⁷²

Club Patron Sir Clinton Roper prepared a brief history of the Club in 1989, in which he suggests that apart from the above statement, there is no evidence that there has ever been a Crichton Cobbers' Club outside of Christchurch. He claims older members of the Club certainly have no recollection of them.

There is however, evidence of other Cobbers' Clubs around the Christchurch area. The Canterbury Museum Pictorial Gallery includes 1944 photos from a Phillipstown Cobbers' Club, and 1947 Management Committee minutes agree to "giving any help to a Sydenham branch of the Cobbers' Club providing they could provide their own staff."⁷³ The Christchurch Star-Sun records the opening of a Toc H Linwood Boys' Club, in 1956. "The Club aims at the moral, physical, and spiritual development of the boys", said Mr. A. S. Geddes, chairman of the Toc H Trust Board. The Linwood Club provided activities including boxing and wrestling four nights a week and when the club was wound up in 1983 the assets were transferred to the Crichton Cobbers'.⁷⁴ A Lyttleton group of Toc H started a Cobbers' Club around 1934. It was named 'The Stan Brown Cobbers' Club, "in memory of a boy who died as a result of injuries received while helping at the Crichton Cobbers' Club."⁷⁵ Stan Brown was a 24-year old instructor when he died following injuries received at the Chester Street Clubrooms. The booklet produced to commemorate the official opening of the Peterborough Street Clubrooms contains a brief note in memory of Brown:

*The story of the Crichton Cobbers' Club would not be complete without mentioning the name of, STAN BROWN, The First Elder Brother of the Club. They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old.*⁷⁶

In the Toc H vocabulary, the 'Elder Brethren' were men of "brighter gifts and promise whose lives were cut short by the war,"⁷⁷ and this term later included those who died in Toc H service. Details of the death appeared in the local newspaper in 1932:

Young Man's Death, Injured in gymnasium

The inquest into the death of Stanley Brown, aged 24, a son of the licensee of the Canterbury Hotel at Lyttleton, who died at the Christchurch Public Hospital on March 26th, 1932 from bronchial pneumonia, was concluded yesterday before Mr H. P. Lawry. S.M. Brown fractured his spine while jumping over the horse in the Toc H Gymnasium on September 22nd last year. The remaining evidence to be heard was that of John Bruorton, a City traffic inspector, who stated that on September 22nd, in the evening, he was in the Toc H rooms in Chester Street. Brown stripped off for gymnasium practice. At the time of the accident he was doing the dive over the horse. He struck the spring board rather awkwardly. Instead of gliding over, he went straight up. His hands were stretched out wide, instead of being held together in front of him. Witness saw that something was wrong and endeavoured to get under Brown to break his fall, but Brown fell or hit his head on the matting. The floor was protected by two mats, one on top of the other. The dive which Brown attempted was the usual one in gymnasium practice. Brown had been on the staff of the gymnasium, being an assistant instructor. Mr Lawry returned a verdict that Brown died from bronchial pneumonia following a fracture of the spine accidentally received while he was practising at the Toc H Gymnasium.⁷⁸



Stan Brown was injured in a spring board dive similar to this display.

A member of the senior boys' gymnastics section, known as the Flying Squad, demonstrates his skills at Parents' Evening. Crichton Cobbers' Club.

The boys pictured at the Phillipstown Cobbers' Club wear a variety of clothing. The boy standing at left uses a handkerchief tied around his waist as a belt. Edith Hart comments that unlike other similarly popular groups as the Scouts, Guides, Girl Citizens, Boys Brigades, Life Saving Guards and the St John Cadets, the Crichton Cobbers' Club did not

have a uniform. This could be explained by the nature of the Club, started for the poorer boys in the community, and the Toc H men's awareness that the cost of a uniform presented a barrier to participation.



Use of the rings at
Phillipstown Cobbers'
Club, October 1944.
Canterbury Museum.

The War Years

Many of the Crichton Cobbers' Club volunteers and senior members joined the forces and this left only a small number of staff and seniors to carry on the work. Members, many of whom had been with the Club since they were 10 years old and were now in their teens, came forward to act as instructors. They did a remarkable job in helping the younger members. Ted Jones and his team instructed during this period. Toc H staff were unable to provide camps for the boys after 1940 because of a lack of petrol. It gave Jack Bruorton great pleasure, after the war, to welcome back former members and especially Noel McCracken, Junior Supervisor. Some did not return, and they were not forgotten.

Peterborough Street Extension

Building improvements continued up to 1944 when record enrolments and increased social activities again demanded larger premises. When it was decided to extend the existing premises, the Rotary Club raised £1,000 for the purchase of four Air Force buildings. The buildings were erected by Club members and a team of men from the Army Headquarters under the command of Capt. E. W. Boyle.⁷⁹ An example of the voluntary work that epitomised the Club, the buildings were erected on Saturday mornings, and at night under floodlights loaned and installed by the Municipal Electricity Department. The Mayor opened the renovated premises on Thursday evening, 23 October 1947. On the opening night, Mr. A. Geddes spoke as Toc H chairman while Jack Bruorton spoke on behalf of the Club. Speakers from the Rotary Club and the Trust Board also welcomed the extensions.⁸⁰

However, growing membership continued to present problems. The junior enrolments (from aged 10 years) increased while the Club had only one instructor, so the junior class was merged with the intermediate class, which had twelve instructors. It was hoped that raising the minimum age would help control the numbers. In 1949 a minimum age for juniors was set after Jack Bruorton contacted one of the professors at Canterbury University College, reporting that “the opinion there seemed to be that most good could be done for boys when they were admitted from the age of 12 years.”⁸¹ The Management Committee resolved that “no dances were to be held on Club premises” after discovering that attempts to register the premises as a public hall for hire purposes may have fallen foul of the Trust Board. Committee members feared that dances would eventually prove detrimental to the good name of the Club.⁸² Gymnasium classes for businessmen started in 1952 as part of a general move to extend the facilities of the Club to the wider community.

25th Anniversary

The Club celebrated its 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee on 1 December 1952.⁸³ A special evening was held at the Clubrooms, with exhibitions of the Club’s activities. There had earlier been a visit from the founder of Toc H, Tubby Clayton,⁸⁴ and a visit from Wilfred Crichton’s sister, Mrs. Miller. The Club Patron, Justice Erima Northcroft passed away in October 1953, and after some discussion Justice Adams was appointed to the position.



Toc H founder Rev. Tubby Clayton visited the Club in 1952. <http://www.toch.org.uk>

CHAPTER THREE

Club Activities

On several occasions, the Club sent a party to a small town where a program of gymnastics, wrestling, and boxing was given for charity.⁸⁵ One trip to Cheviot raised £40 towards a local Dental Clinic.⁸⁶ Boys in demonstration teams also attended church fairs, market days and other public gatherings in the city to provide entertainment, and sometimes a small donation was made to the Club by the organisers. Outings like this one also served to help recruit new club members. Note the slogan along the side of the truck, “a healthy body and clean mind makes a good citizen.”



The Crichton Cobbers' Club takes a display out of town.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

Athletics

An athletics section began in 1943. Girls were allowed to compete under the Crichton Cobbers' Club name although they were not admitted as members. The athletics section was well represented at provincial and national competitions. Valdimar Bredis was appointed athletics coach in April 1953. He soon suggested an athletics event be held on Labour Day at Lancaster Park. The event was duly organised with Yvette Williams running as a guest of Sir John and Lady McKenzie. United Nations flags were carried in the opening and The Ladies' Pipe Band, The Caledonian Society Pipe Band and The 3rd Armoured Regiment Band entertained the crowd, along with six marching teams.⁸⁷ The sports meeting made a small loss, but this was offset by the experience and the publicity gained. The following year the Committee received a letter from James Clark advising that,

*at a special general meeting of the members of the Crichton Cobbers' Amateur Athletic Club held on Thursday the 11th of March 1954, it was unanimously resolved that members sever all connection with the Crichton Cobbers' Club and form a self contained unit of their own.*⁸⁸



Icons from the Papanui
Toc H Athletics Club.

The Management Committee was of the view that although the athletics section was very good, it was, unfortunately, a mixed section. As the Club catered for males only and as this section contained women, it was in the best interests of both parties if athletics was to form a separate club. This would enable them to compete in all events. At the next meeting another letter was received from James Clark asking if the funds earmarked for the athletics section of the club could be transferred to the new Toc H (Kiwī) Athletic Club, "as we feel they rightfully belong to the new club."⁸⁹ After this formality was completed Crichton Cobbers' ceased to have an active role in competitive athletics. The Toc H (Kiwī) Athletic Club exists today as the Papanui Toc H Athletic Club Inc. Valdimar Bredis went on to coach a number of well-known athletes to international competition.

Boxing

One of the early boxing instructors was Dan Nelligan, a Canterbury bantamweight champion. A star performer in boxing and one of Dan's first pupils was Cecil Winder, who won 29 of his 34 bouts, all his defeats being at the hands of champions. Cecil Winder was well known for winning the Boxing Championship at the Caledonian Hall in spite of a broken hand. Dan Nelligan was assisted by C. Hotz. Alex Thompson succeeded Dan Nelligan as trainer, and instilled in the boys an enthusiasm for the sport of boxing. Alex Thompson provided many

years of service to the Club, with Roy Lester taking over around 1955 and training the boys to great success in tournaments.



Annat Holiday Camp

In 1944 the club acquired a holiday camp at Annat, the six acres of land being donated by Dr. and Mrs. Elmslie. The camp catered for Club members and boys from other organisations, some of whom would not normally have had a holiday. By 1946 the accommodation at the camp comprised a cookhouse, dining room and bunkhouses and could provide for 80 boys in camp for at least a fortnight. The Management Committee hastily arranged fire cover for the remaining camp buildings in 1948, after the cookhouse, Redpath Hut, was completely destroyed by fire. Among the items lost was a newly installed icebox.⁹⁰ Unfortunately the camp had to be temporarily abandoned. Thanks to Allan Wagner and the Canterbury Builders' Association, the five old army huts at the holiday camp were demolished and replaced with old tram cars raised on sleepers and fitted with bunks in 1954. A new cookhouse and recreation hall was built on the site in 1955 ready for a Christmas camp. The Annat camp offered hikes, swimming, and sports and visits to farmhouses. It catered for upwards of 90 boys at its peak and was leased to Rover Scouts, Seventh Day Adventists and any other

Boxing instruction
watched by Jack
Bruorton (centre).
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

interested groups. By 1958 interest in the camp had waned and that year only fourteen boys attended. Under the terms of the deed the camp was handed over to the Presbyterian Church for youth activities in 1960.⁹¹ At one time the annual camp was eagerly awaited by both the members and the people of Annat, whose children were invited to enjoy what the camp could provide in the way of sports and treks through the hills organised by Mr. T. Robins, a well known mountaineer. The club continued to use the camp on occasion, but it remained under the control of the Presbyterian Church until the Girl Guides signed a three-year contract to use the camp in 1975.⁹²

Club Band

In 1943 the Christchurch Boys' Band amalgamated with the Crichton Cobbers' Club drum and fife band to form a brass band.⁹³ Fred J. Turner instructed the junior band, although at its inception only two members could read music. Under his guidance they quickly brought themselves to the fore of the band world by placing second in their first contest at Rangiora. Following this they were second in their first Dominion contest and won their grade the following year at Dunedin. Success followed success and the band travelled widely, attending competitions in Dunedin, Temuka, Ashburton and a Dominion Championship Contest at Auckland.⁹⁴ The band became very successful in Dominion and provincial championships with 10 first placings, 11 seconds and four thirds. A major success was the B grade quickstep title. In order to maintain a winning standard in the now older and experienced players, there was limited time for training new juniors.

Fred Turner, Jack
Bruorton, and the Club
band in full dress.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



The band practised four nights a week, and received payment for playing at venues around Christchurch including the Edmonds band rotunda. The Management Committee often debated whether the band was meeting the objective of providing a band for younger boys, and regular travel caused conflict over expenses. The Committee complained on several occasions that the band was making no financial return to the Club or toward meeting its own expenses. At one such meeting in 1952, band representative Mr. Woodhead pointed out the band was working in conjunction with the Club to further the interests of every section of the Club, and that the band regarded itself as an integral part of the Club.⁹⁵ The senior band ended in September when the older members who wished to attend more competitions joined the Addington Workshops Brass Band. Mervyn Waters, a cornet player, moved to greater honours after the band folded. He joined the Woolston Band and conducted it to many titles. He then led two national bands, which gained high accolades in Europe and the United States.⁹⁶



A junior band was formed under the motion “that the age limit for the Band be eighteen years and under, and that in the meantime the Band is not to be a contesting band at Dominion contests.”⁹⁷ The new band began with an average age under 13 years. Eight members were only 9 years old. Problems arose when the Band organisers sought to maintain membership to the Canterbury Provincial Brass Bands Association in case of entry to the Canterbury Provincial Boy’s Solos Competition.⁹⁸ However, the Management Committee took a firm stance:

The Club band in action.
Crichton Cobbers’ Club.

Mr. Buckeridge expressed what he considered to be the feelings of the Management Committee regarding Band boys entering Band contests. He felt that the Committee would be very much against the band entering contests - the idea of the band was to train boys and encourage their musical interests.⁹⁹

There was a subsequent change of instructors, with Fred Turner moving to conduct the New Brighton Band, and Mr. D. Smelgrove, formerly of the Masterton Band, appointed as his successor. The band made good progress under Mr. Smelgrove, notably collecting £100 playing Christmas carols in 1956.¹⁰⁰ By 1953, the Crichton Cobbers' Club Band inventory included 24 complete uniforms comprising trousers, tunics and caps. The Christchurch East Battalion of the Home Guard had donated the original uniforms.¹⁰¹



The Club band on the march.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

Interest in the band declined over the next decade and the thirty instruments, valued at £1,200 were eventually gifted to Shirley Boys' High School in 1957. Headmaster of the school, Mr. C. V. Gallagher, had appealed for unused instruments with the announcement that he had twenty boys competent to play, a master qualified to conduct and a whole school keen to have a band – but no instruments. The Crichton Cobbers' Club band had been in recess for the previous six months and the instruments had been lying idle. The original donors gave their

consent, and Club representatives Harold Kay, L. Hughes and J. Buckeridge presented the instruments at the school assembly.¹⁰²

Judo and Jujitsu

Founded in 1944 under the instruction of black belt Frank O'Connell, these sections quickly grew in popularity and the boys were often called upon to provide demonstrations around the city.



Frank O'Connell with judo members at a Peterborough Street Parents' Evening.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

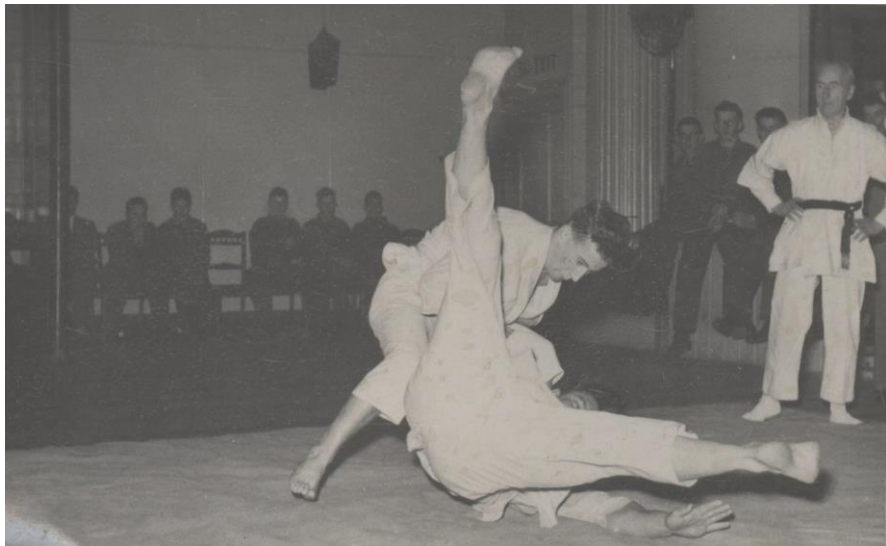


Judoka in action.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

Frank O'Connell in
blindfold.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



E. McAlpine and G.
Cooper watched by
Frank O'Connell.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



Instructor Frank
O'Connell with
jujitsu members.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.





Frank O'Connell throws
W. Kerr.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



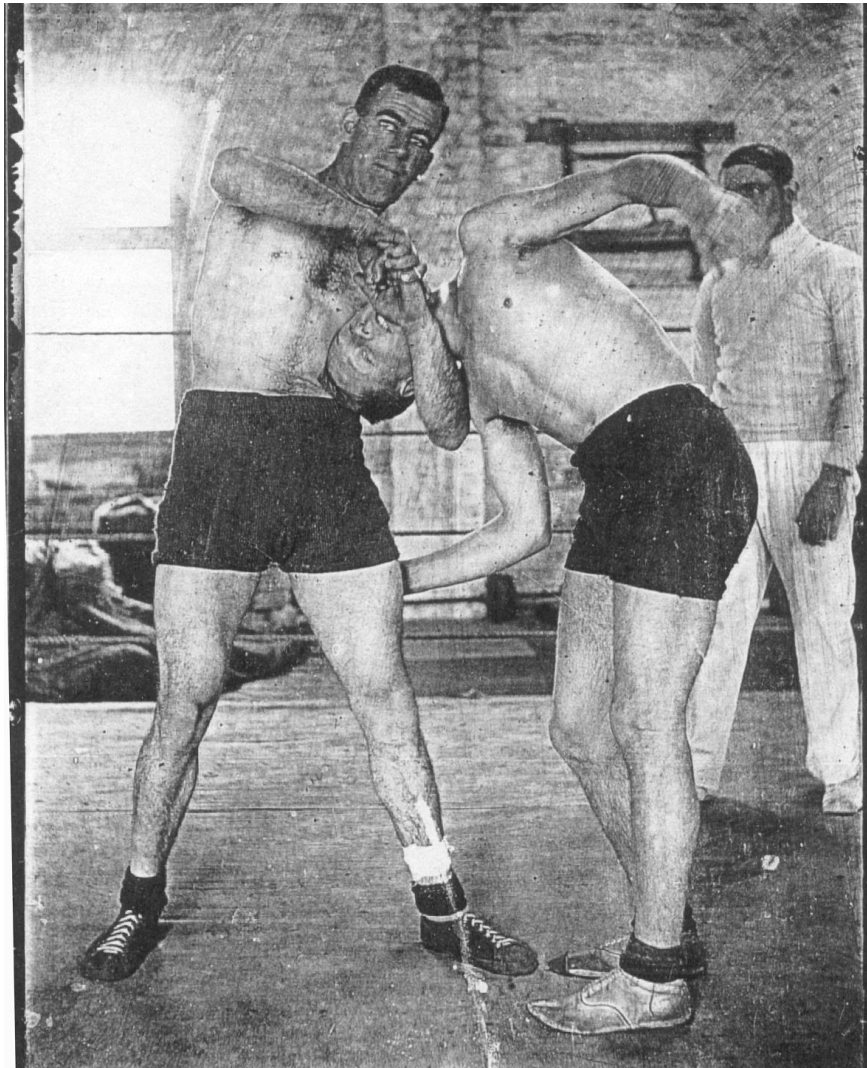
Jujitsu members in
action at the
Peterborough Street
Clubrooms.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



H. Soper and
C. Harrison.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

Wrestling

The imagination of young Christchurch males was captured by the antics of burly professional wrestlers made popular by the local media in the early 1930s. "Professional contests have lately set hundreds of boys learning to wrestle, and the popularity of radio commentaries on wrestling has gained popularity with girls and boys" records Hart in 1936.¹⁰³



Professional wrestlers
pose in Christchurch.
Canterbury Museum.

Christchurch City councillors attended one such professional wrestling contest in 1931. They had been presented with free tickets, but not all were impressed with the show. At the following Christchurch City Council meeting, a motion 'that the Civic Theatre not be let for professional wrestling competitions' narrowly lost by 9 votes to 8.¹⁰⁴ Cr. Archer suggested the display was an abomination, and launched a strong and heated attack on professional wrestling.

He suggested it was “simply brute force, suitable for bullocks or baboons, particularly the latter.” Cr. Archer told the meeting, “the expressions of the spectators during the contest was absolutely unprintable. The contestants were advised by the people to inflict on each other every possible type of injury short of murder.”

*He had seen sport in England and in New Zealand, but in the whole period of his life he had never seen or heard such vulgarity as in the eight or nine minutes of this contest. If they had any regard for their children and their people, they would decline to let the hall to be used for this diabolical business.*¹⁰⁵

However Cr. Armstrong helped swing the vote when he suggested “it looks like pain when you see one man pulling another’s arm and standing on his face. The man gave horrible groans, but I didn’t think it was real pain,” adding he approved of the amateurs and he had not met a better type of man than he had met at some of the big amateur boxing contests. Cr. Williamson also noted the Wrestling Association was made up of good men, and gave much of its time to promoting amateur wrestling. Public debate only increased the interest of enthusiastic Christchurch children, and word quickly spread around the city schools of clubs that encouraged and instructed the sport. As Hart concludes of children’s clubs, “the most common motive for joining was, persuaded by a friend.”¹⁰⁶ Amateur wrestling proved to be a long-term draw card for the Club.



Senior boys wrestling instruction at the Peterborough Street Clubrooms. Crichton Cobbers' Club.

The first official Crichton Cobbers' wrestling trainer was Percy Harrison. V. McEwan, J. Dukes and Harry Wilson succeeded him and coached around 1939. Harry Wilson had earlier won his bout in the Championship Wrestling preliminaries at the Theatre Royal. George

Melrose, who was associated with the Club for many years, coached wrestling around 1950. Apart from wrestling training, the Amateur Wrestling Championships and Schoolboy Championships were held in the Clubrooms each year. Another annual event was the awarding of the Climie Shield, a trophy for the club that secured the most wins during the season.

Gymnastics

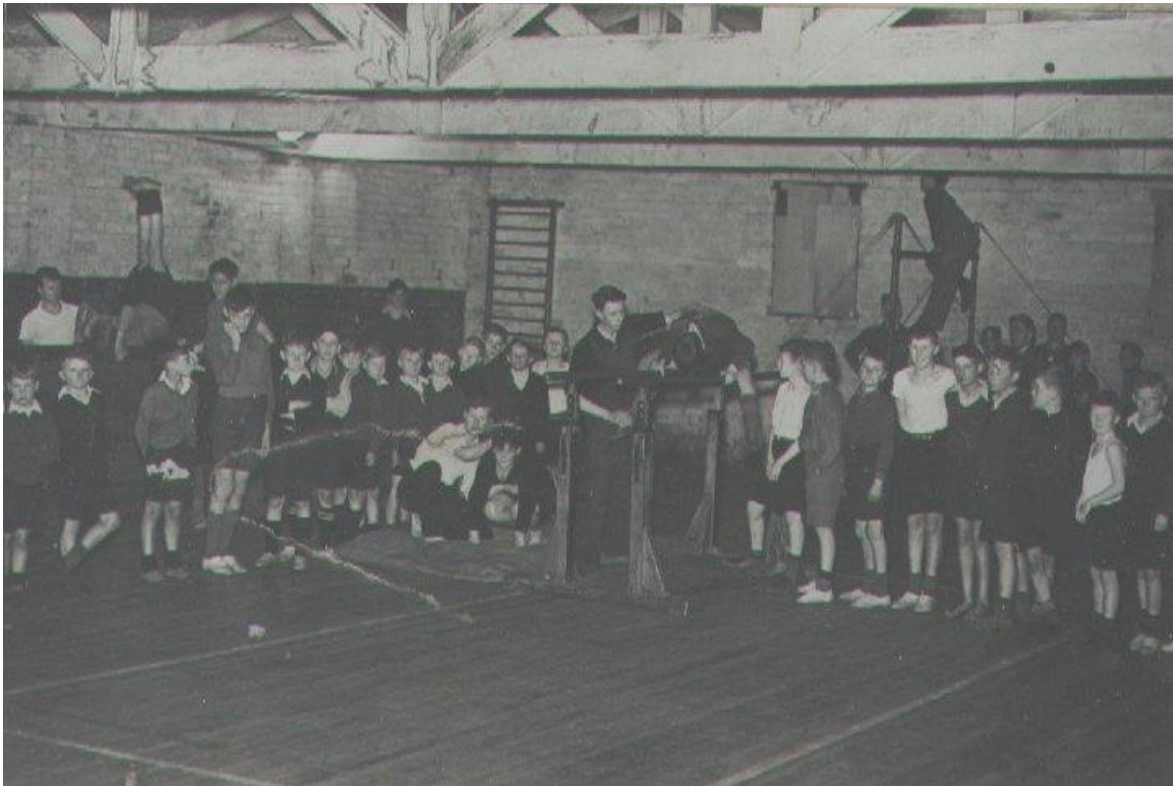
Gymnastics was by far the largest section, and the Club was well equipped with floor mats, a high bar, parallel bars, a springboard and box, and rings. K. Muff, J. Inden, and D. Jones coached gymnastics and physical training around 1939.

Juniors practise high bar gymnastics at Peterborough Street. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*



Edith Hart observes the way practically all church clubs and juvenile lodges of the era seem wedded to gymnastics. In response to her questionnaire, many youth group leaders recorded gymnastics as the most popular activity in their curriculum, and many children listed gymnastics as their favourite part of Club activities. However, she writes:

the Toc H Padre said he wished they could wean the Crichton Cobbers', for he felt it did not lead very far, only to a physical fitness and muscular strength that could quite well be achieved in other directions.¹⁰⁷



Juniors practise on the parallel bars.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

Other Activities

Sports coaching, especially rugby and basketball, was popular, and the Crichton Cobbers' Club v Toc H basketball match was a regular fixture. In addition to regular coaching, there is some indication that the Club fielded a competitive rugby team.

Rugby skills for juniors.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



Senior boys practise
inside.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



CHAPTER FOUR

Incorporation

The suggestion that the Club should include activities for girls had been often debated, but this resolution of the Management Committee clearly indicates the opposition to such a radical move: “That no female be entered on the roll of the Club or take part in any athletic sports in the clubrooms.”¹⁰⁸ The following month the Management Committee investigated incorporating the Club so their own trustees could be appointed. The outside members of the original trust had resigned from Toc H around 10 years earlier.¹⁰⁹ ‘Crichton Cobbers’ Club Incorporated’ became a separate legal entity in July 1954. Soon after, formal recognition of the work of the Club was received from the Child Welfare Department.

*We are frequently called upon to assist and direct boys into worthwhile recreational programmes and the facilities provided by the Crichton Cobbers Club have been beneficial for many lads.*¹¹⁰

In light of this correspondence, the 1954 Commission on Child Delinquency was invited to the Club to see the work being undertaken. The Committee “felt the Club could give an answer to many of the problems faced by the Commission.”¹¹¹

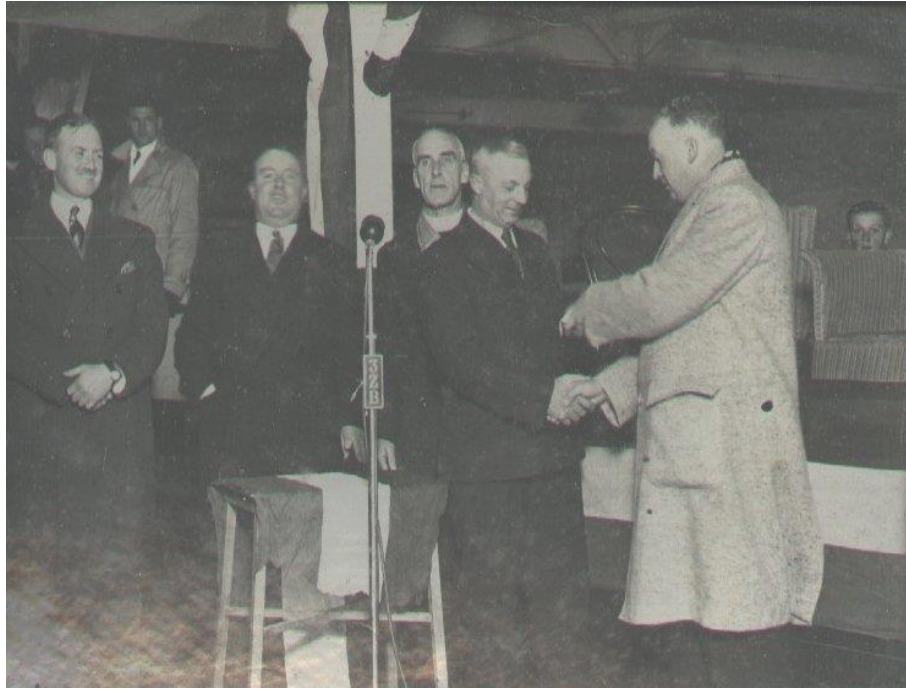


Jack Bruorton sits with
instructors.
Crichton Cobbers’ Club.

Jack Bruorton M.B.E

Following interest from government in the Club, the Management Committee wrote to the Prime Minister requesting that Jack Bruorton's name be considered for a suitable honour in recognition of his tireless work for the youth of the city through the Crichton Cobbers' Club and other organisations. Jack Bruorton was subsequently appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire in 1955.¹¹²

Jack Bruorton receives his award, with Rev. Owen Williams behind. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*



Plans for Larger Premises

Eventually the condition of the Peterborough Street premises began deteriorating rapidly, and they were now considered too small for the Club's activities. The long running problems with the floor still remained. It was unsuited to both indoor bowls and basketball. Occasionally, activities were cancelled when the roof leaked in heavy rain. Space constraints had limited enrolments to 200 in each of the junior and senior sections for a number of years. There were problems accommodating new equipment, of which there seemed no shortage. Equipment that diminished in popularity was sold or donated to purchase other equipment. A billiard table was sold in 1955 for £85 to purchase table tennis equipment. In 1956, two special cycling machines were purchased for the use of blind persons and victims of poliomyelitis. Two people could compete on the cycles using the attached meters.¹¹³

Sections of the club were meeting almost every evening of the week from March till October.¹¹⁴ The judo section had affiliated with the worldwide judo movement at a cost of £2¹¹⁵ and the first members had already graded so numbers were expected to increase again. Club enrolments closed in 1955 with 130 junior members and 180 senior members, and a waiting list of 30 juniors and 30 seniors. The Club was putting on additional programmes to help the Plunket Society and other community organisations.¹¹⁶ As this community role increased, planning space for more activities became a premium. The Management Committee led by Sir John McKenzie considered the demand for membership and the condition of the Peterborough Street buildings, and after some deliberation, Harold B. Kay, a prominent Christchurch builder and Management Committee member, arranged to have plans drawn up for constructing new premises on the same site. The proposed new building would be purpose-built to easily absorb the growing membership.

*Tenders for the building in concrete block and timber of about 13,458 square feet have been called by the club, to close on January 17. Two-storied at the front and single-storied at the back the new building will replace the present one except for a small portion at the back. Its main room will be a gymnasium, 100ft by 65ft, which gives much more space for the activities of the various sections of the club. A higher ceiling than that in the present gymnasium will give better provision for basketball. The double storied front of the building will have, apart from the gymnasium, about 10 main rooms which will cater for such sections of the club as wrestling, boxing, weightlifting, and judo.*¹¹⁷

Although Club funds were mounting through grants from the Government, local trusts, and donations from individuals and business firms, they remained insufficient to meet the cost of the proposed building. Harold Kay then had some luck:

*I discovered the old brewery might be bought for £15,000 - a great buy at £1 per foot. ...It had the space, it was far enough from the heart of the city to be quiet, yet a lad could cycle there in five minutes. 'I'll tell you what I'll do', Sir John McKenzie told me. 'I'll promise you £10,000 towards it.' On the strength of that, I closed the deal and bought the brewery on behalf of the club.*¹¹⁸

The large Wards building at the corner of Chester Street East and Fitzgerald Avenue seemed ideal. Built on an area of 1179 square metres, it was three times the size of the Peterborough Street premises. In August 1955, the Management Committee formally accepted the donation made by Sir John McKenzie via the Rotary Club to the Crichton Cobbers' Club.

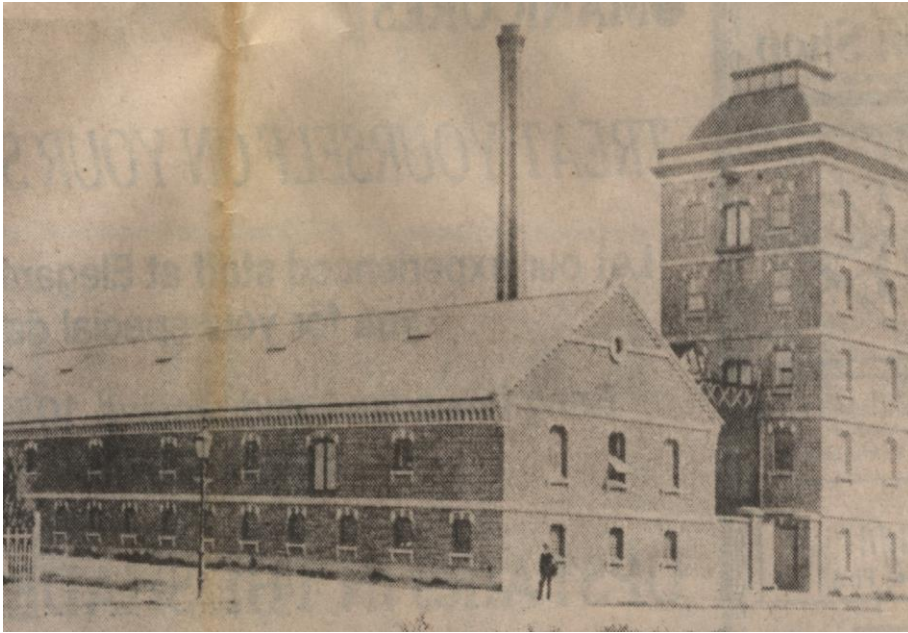
“A real, but welcome, surprise,” is how Mr. J. Bruorton, a director and foundation member of the Crichton Cobbers’ Club, this morning greeted the announcement that the Christchurch philanthropist, Sir John McKenzie, had made a gift of £10,000 through the Christchurch Rotary Club. The present quarters are of a temporary nature, with the front portion constructed of Air Force prefabricated buildings from the Ashburton aerodrome. At the rear, brick walls give a bare and cold appearance. “The roof would soon have required patching also,” said Mr. Bruorton. It was a case that either a lot of money had to be spent on the existing buildings or new ones obtained. While the Club was not financially embarrassed, it could never have contemplated the cost required.”¹¹⁹



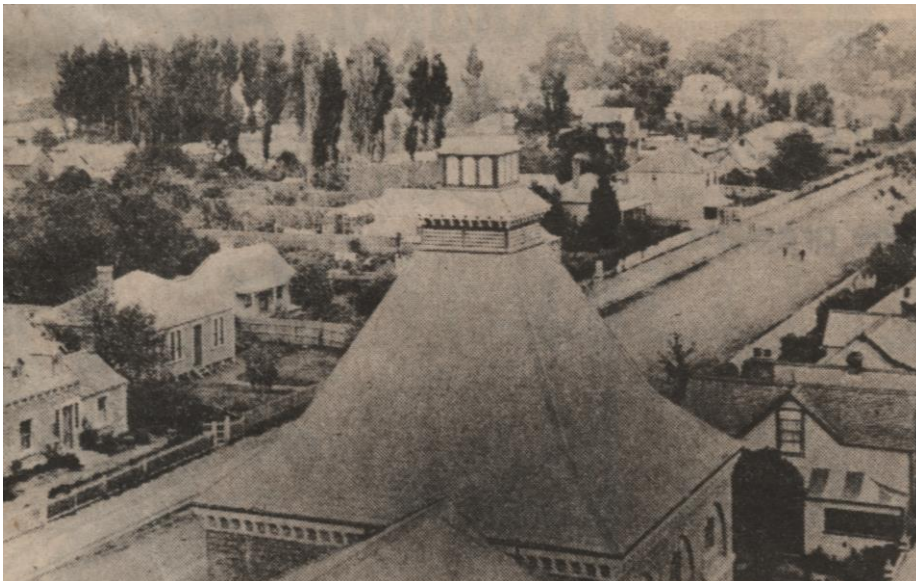
The old brewery building had closed in 1954. Crichton Cobbers’ Club.

On 31 August 1955, a special meeting of the Management Committee was held in the Clubrooms. That night the Management Committee, instructors and members assembled in the gymnasium to pay tribute to Club President Sir John McKenzie who, while on holiday in England with his wife, had fallen ill and died. He was aged 79. On his deathbed in Britain, Sir John had written final instructions to his firm’s General Manager in New Zealand ensuring his wishes regarding the grant would be carried out.¹²⁰ He intended the gift to be in recognition of Jack Bruorton’s service as Club Director for more than 30 years. £12,000 secured the building and the directors of New Zealand Breweries Ltd permitted an outstanding £3,000 interest free for five years.

John Wilson, in 'Lost Christchurch' (Te Waihora Press), describes the old Wards Brewery complex as "the largest and most important group of old industrial buildings in Christchurch." The brewery was established on the site in 1881 and some of its surviving buildings, including the malthouses built of brick with terracotta decorations, date from that year or very soon afterwards.¹²¹



The five storied brewing tower, and the original malthouse. A second storey was added in the 1930s.
The Press.

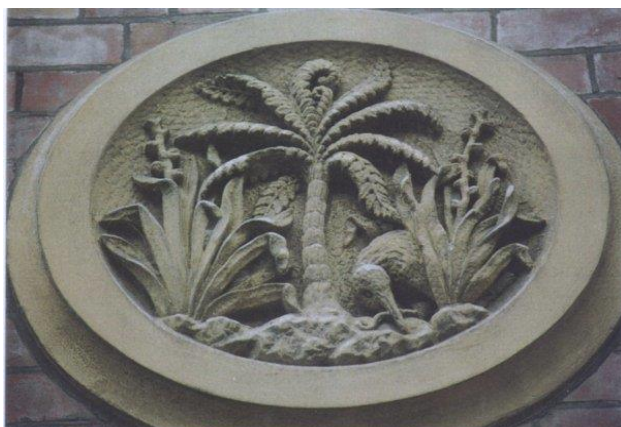


Looking towards Cathedral Square with Chester St East, in the foreground. Taken from the brewery tower, it shows part of the malt kiln with its decorative top.
The Press.



Above: The site included a rear accessway. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*

Below: Exterior designs from the days when the building was a malthouse. *Christchurch City Council.*



*"When we move into the new premises," Mr. Kay said, "we hope to attract more instructors so we can operate every available night of the week and we hope as well to extend our activities. For example, we already provide facilities for girls' basketball practice."*²²

However, before moving into the building, extensive renovations were required. These included the construction of a suitable entranceway, changing rooms and showers, a cafeteria, administration offices, accommodation for a full time caretaker and renovating the second floor to add an extra 2000ft of floor space. A concrete floor was poured and steel structural beams were placed to support the floor of the upstairs gymnasium, which was more than 120 feet long. The gymnasium itself measured 110ft. by 42ft. with a plastic-finished beech floor that could be used as a full sized basketball court. The former kilns, each of 1,000 square feet and with high roofs were adapted to cater for weight lifting, judo and wrestling. The upper floor of one of the square kilns was constructed of close-knit fine steel mesh to let heat come up through the hops. This floor was removed and a new wooden floor was constructed. By the time the building was formally opened just over three years later, £6,000 had been spent on alterations and renovations.¹²³



Extensive structural work included a new concrete floor, block walls and steel beams. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*





Bruorton House

The Mayor of Christchurch, George Manning, officially opened the building as Bruorton House on 2 October 1958.¹²⁴ It was named in memory of Club Director Jack Bruorton M.B.E who had recently passed away. Club Director for 31 years, it was said he never knew the word defeat. The opening of the new premises was largely a result of his energy and enthusiasm.

*Jack Bruorton devoted his life to youth work. He did not live to see the opening of Bruorton House, but in anticipation of it he had prepared an address which was read at the opening. The first sentence was "This is the happiest moment of my life, to look around this spacious and well appointed gymnasium after thirty years of up-hill work."*¹²⁵

At the official opening, the Club was described as "the biggest boys' club of its kind in New Zealand" with "the finest amenities of any sports club in New Zealand."¹²⁶ The Club was valued at £30,000 and The Press described it as "the finest gymnasium in the Southern Hemisphere."¹²⁷ In his opening address, Mayor G. Manning said:

Above: The distinctively shaped slate roof of a former brewery kiln.
Christchurch City Council.

Below: Club Director Jack Bruorton. *Star Sun.*



*"Now there are more than 800 members and the status of the club both in sporting prowess and public esteem qualifies it as one of the foremost boys' clubs in the British Empire." Declaring the new rooms open, the Mayor said the building marked the culminating point of a steady march of progress for the club. "Everyone of us must be proud to be citizens of Christchurch when we are motivated by feelings which produce such wonderful facilities so that our children can grow to healthy manhood and womanhood. I have always been of the opinion that if we want to find intelligent citizens of the future, we must start by trying to get healthy and robust bodies for our children. Like Christchurch airport or Hagley Park, this club is an asset of which our city can be proud."*¹²⁸

Club President Harold Kay, then spoke at length in his opening address.

*"I feel it is wrong for newspapers to publish everything that happens concerning young people. Soon after reports of the game of 'chicken' appeared in New Zealand newspapers, we had youngsters here trying the same thing." Mr. Kay said the Catholic Women's League was to be supported in its aims to limit publicity given to violence and vandalism by youth overseas. "Let us think clearly and act for the best of the youngsters of today", said Mr. Kay. "We have very little trouble with the boys of this club, and anything that does arise can be speedily corrected. After 30 years in the youth movement, I can say I am most surprised that the politicians have not got down to the causes of the problems experienced with youth. In the old days there used to be juvenile sections of lodges, but now they have gone. We as a club are trying to do the same work – to produce men of value to the community".*¹²⁹

Mr. R. A. McKenzie related how his father, the late Sir John McKenzie had first become interested in the work of the Crichton Cobbers' Club when he saw how much its members did for themselves.

*I know he would say that while his gift was a valuable one, the real assets of the club are those members who have helped to bring the club to its current position. Without them, this function this evening would not have occurred. To members of the board of management I say now that you have won these facilities, see the greatest use is made of them, more members sought, and most important, that the spirit engendered over the years is not lost. If you retain the spirit which you now have, then you will remain one of the greatest clubs in New Zealand.*¹³⁰

Mr. E. H. Buckeridge read the speech prepared by the late Jack Bruerton, and the Bishop of Christchurch, Rt. Rev. A. K. Warren offered a prayer of dedication. The building opened debt free, primarily through the generosity of the late Sir John McKenzie now remembered in the McKenzie Gymnasium, a grant for £3,000 from the government for the initial cost and an additional grant of £6,000 for renovations.¹³¹ Additional funds were raised from Christchurch businesses.

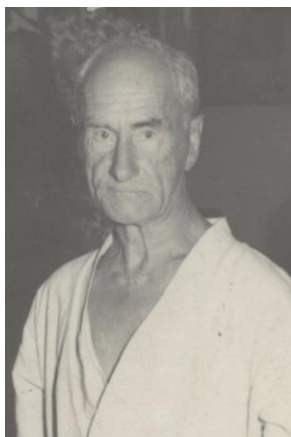


Bruorton House offered outstanding facilities for all the sports in which the Club had been traditionally active - boxing, wrestling, weight lifting, judo and gymnastics. It also allowed the boxing and judo fraternities, which normally went into recess from November to March, to now train throughout the year.¹³² The weight training section, instructed by T. A. Borgfelt, attracted both Airforce and Navy physical training instructors. Several weight training members went on to successfully enlist with the Police Force, and there was keen competition for the two trophies, 'The Most Improved Member for the Year' and 'The Most Promising Physique for the Year'.

Wednesday night
juniors warm up in the
McKenzie Gymnasium.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



The lower weight
training room in 1959.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



Above,
Frank. A. O'Connell,
founder and instructor
of the judo and jujitsu
sections from 1944.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

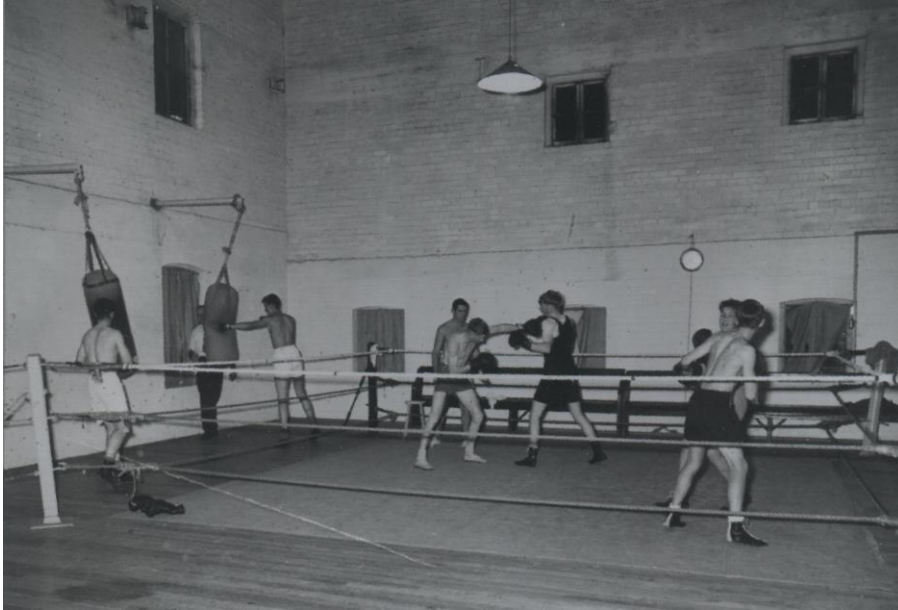
Right: N. Scott sends
F. Bennett to the mat
with a shoulder throw in
1958. *Star Sun.*



Judoka train in the
distinctive Cobberkwai
dojo.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



In addition to the McKenzie Gymnasium, the upstairs area featured a boxing area complete with punching bags, room for spectators and a full-scale boxing ring. The following year, The Canterbury Boxing Association awarded the Trainers Shield to Crichton Cobbers'. The Shield was awarded to the boxing club that excelled in producing the most contestants for open boxing tournaments in Canterbury.

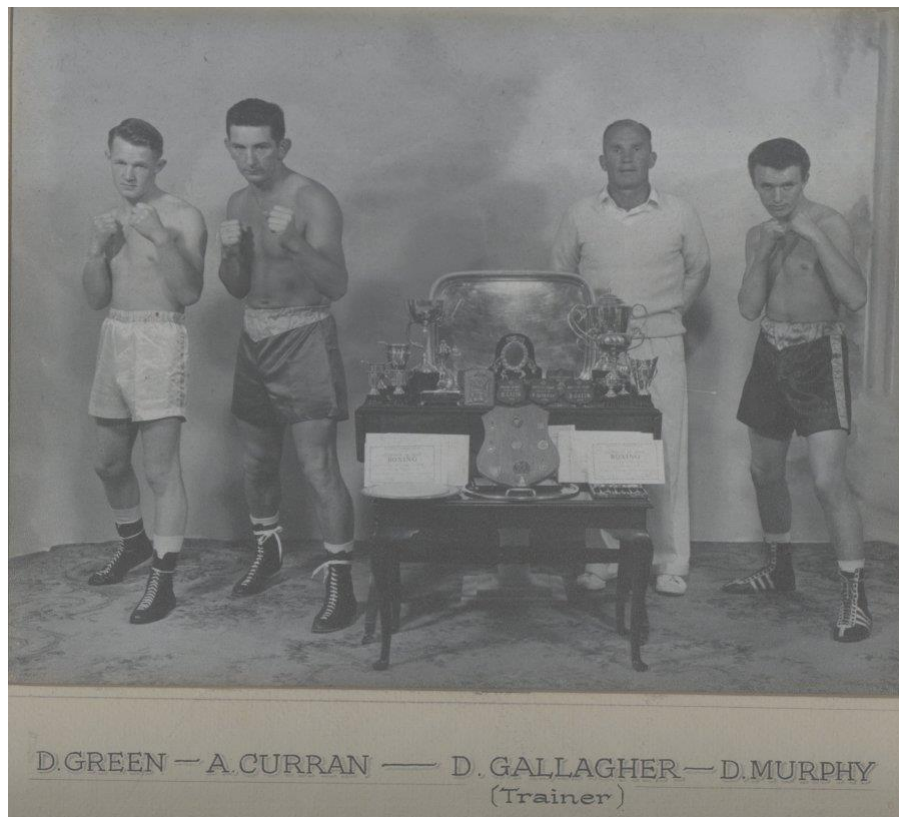


The boxing area featured a full size ring and bags. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*



Boxing trainer D. Gallagher with junior boxers in 1958. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*

Successful Club boxers pose with trophies. D. Green, A. Curran, trainer D. Gallagher, and Dion Murphy. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*



Dion Murphy became a well-known Cobbers' Club and Canterbury boxer. He trained at Crichton Cobbers' from primary school days, winning many Canterbury titles before turning professional in 1960. Murphy immediately won the Golden Gloves title in Sydney, scoring four knockouts in four bouts.

Dion Murphy later trained a squad of juniors at the Richmond Working Men's Club. *The Press.*



Juniors learn fencing skills. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*



A trampoline section started under the instruction of Len Hodge in 1959. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*

In May 1958, the Rotary Club of Christchurch organised a charity ball for the benefit of Crichton Cobbers. Around 400 people attended the buffet dinner and dancing in the newly opened McKenzie Gymnasium. Guests included the American Rotary scholar Norman Peterson and Mrs. Peterson, and Crichton Cobbers' Club President Harold Kay and Mrs. Kay. The Press reported that the transformation of the gymnasium was a tribute to the Rotary Ball Committee.

Glittering stars and hanging baskets of ferns and tropical plants made a fairy-tale décor for the roof and huge bunches of balloons decorated the walls. The lilac coloured pillars through the room were decorated with pots of ferns.¹³⁴



Harold Kay (right) accepts a cheque for £300, on behalf of the Club from the president of the Christchurch Rotary Club C. W. Hamann. *Star Sun.*



Dancing in the McKenzie Gymnasium. *Star Sun.*



Bicycles parked on the ground floor of Bruorton House. Fees were paid at the office window to the right. *Crichton Cobbers' Club*.

CHAPTER FIVE

An International Perspective

When the Christchurch Star reported on Harold Kay's trip abroad in 1960, it signaled the beginning of a comprehensive era of public lobbying by the Club.

*Recently, President Mr. Kay travelled overseas paying particular notice to the administration of boys' clubs in the United States and in Britain. He considered the organisation of these clubs as amazing. Crichton Cobbers, armed with the information that has been collected, now hope to adopt many of the methods used overseas. As the leading club in New Zealand they are striving to form a national association. Already they are acting as an advice bureau for smaller clubs in the Dominion.*¹³⁵

The activities and community role of boys' clubs overseas had impressed Harold Kay, and as a result he devised two new aims for the Club. The first of his new objectives was to involve the Club in consultation on government youth policy. The trip abroad had confirmed his view that the Crichton Cobbers' Club was a powerful influence in shaping Christchurch youth culture. Mr. Robins, a Management Committee member who had visited boys' clubs in Chicago, assisted him in this objective.

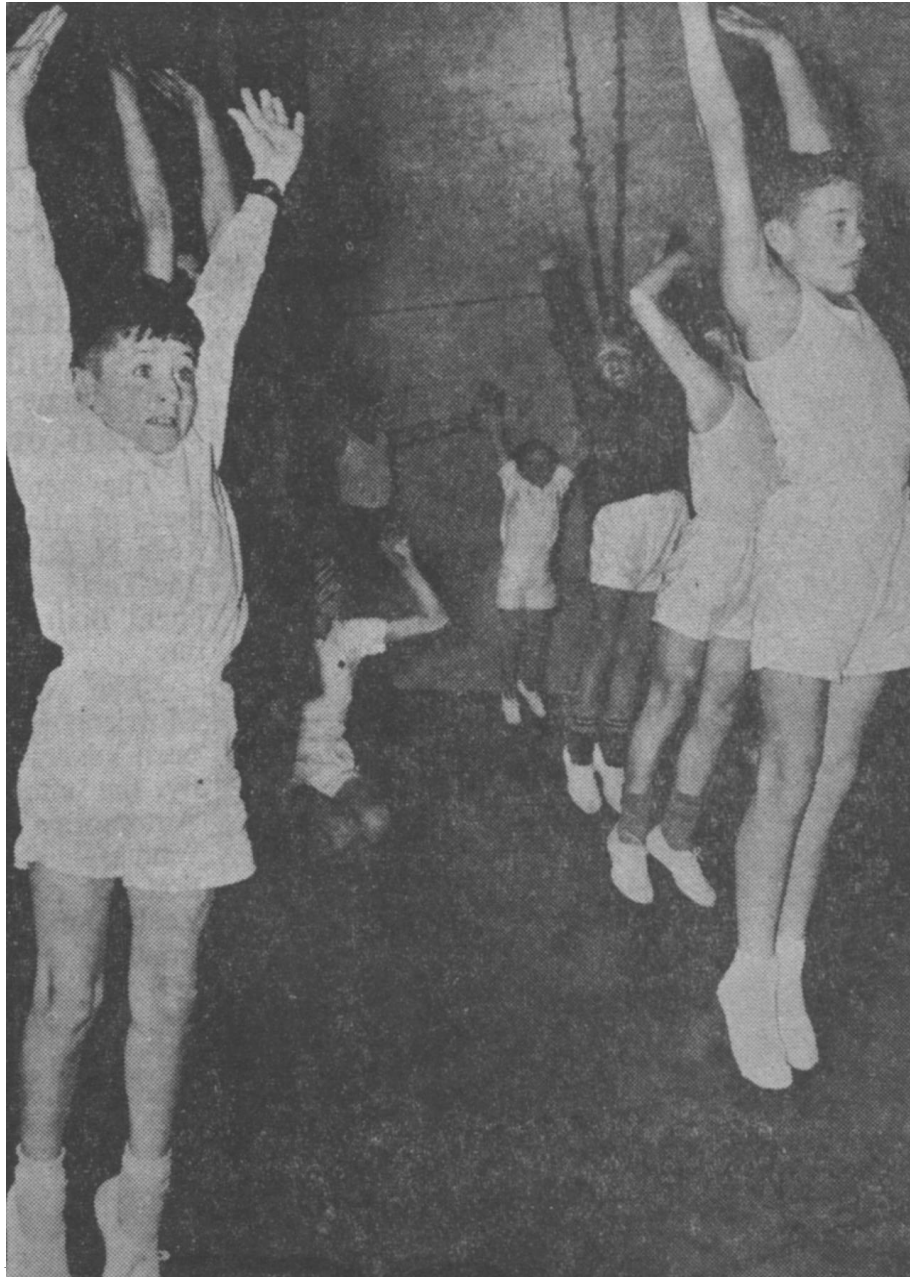
*Mr. Kay expressed the opinion that it would be advisable for the Management Committee and House Committee to discuss views on dealing with vandalism, school leaving age, use of club premises and paid supervision for activities in school holidays. With definite opinions of these and similar topics the Club could make a valuable contribution to any discussions in the city and elsewhere should the occasion arise.*¹³⁶

The second aim was to utilise Club facilities during the day. This required something the Club had never accomplished, the appointment of a paid staff member. The Management Committee devised a strategy to approach government for assistance, new rules for the Crichton Cobbers' Club were registered and following American conventions the name was formally changed to Crichton Cobbers' Boys' Club Inc. The following year, the Club initiated their approach for a full-time instructor by detailing their circumstances in the local newspaper under the headline, 'Crichton Cobbers' Can Serve Age as Well as Youth.'

The Campaign for a Paid Instructor

Harold Kay explained the Club had a diverse and growing membership of 575 current members who paid minimal subscriptions, and “lads in straitened circumstances have their fees paid by ‘Dads for a Year’, some of whom are old boys of the club.”

“These youngsters entering enthusiastically into gymnastics activity are typical of the junior classes which derive so much benefit at the club”
Christchurch Star.



particular, are anxious to make Maori, Samoan, and other coloured lads welcome and to ensure they are accepted on terms of absolute equality by the other boys. Next August two boxers, two gymnasts, and two lads from the judo group are going to

Sydney to compete with members of the police Boys Clubs, who will send a reciprocal party to Christchurch in 1965 and two more this year. This will be made possible by generous sponsorship in the same way as two boys were sent to Outward Bound in 1963 and two more this year. All this surely, is admirable and a convincing answer to any who still wonder what is being done for youth in Christchurch. But Harold Kay and his board want to see the club premises used during the day by adults.

“What we want is that the money invested here is used to the best advantage,” Mr. Kay says. “We don’t want a penny in return, just enough to cover maintenance during that period. There are scores of men who retire from the Railways, The Post Office, the Public Service at large and from private firms in Christchurch every year. Many of them are at a loose end after they have done their chores about the property, and would welcome a place like this where they could come for a little light keep-fit activity under the skilled instructors and to enjoy a friendly yarn. We feel this place is ideal.

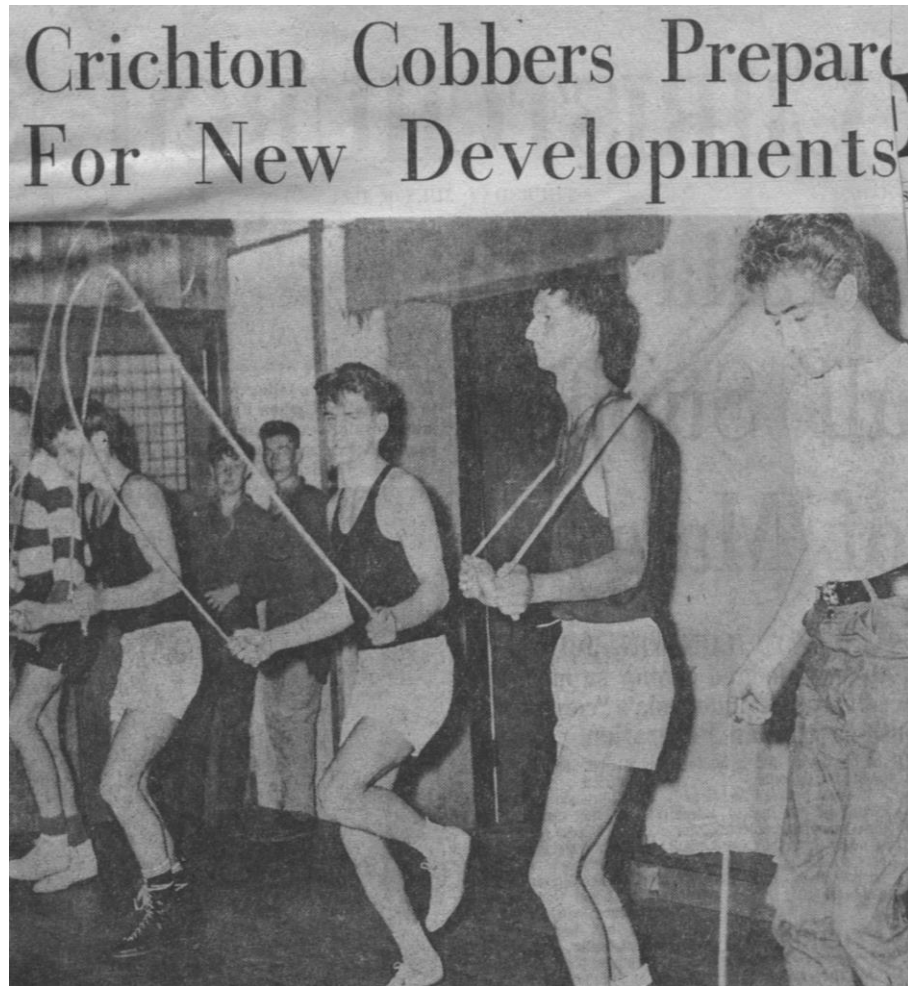
But the problem is that our instructors, being volunteers, are busy earning their living in the daytime. We feel this is something the Government should take over by appointing instructors who would act during the day for the adults. All the facilities are here. There wouldn’t be a penny to spend on equipment, just the staff. Think what a great thing this would be if it were fully used during the week! I’m sure the response would be such that in no time the various classes would be fully booked. We can even give them an indoor bowling green. We could organise this without any trouble. The premises are here, the whole place is here to be used. We have had Mr. N. E. Kirk and Mr. H. L. Pickering here to see the club at work, and we hope to get the Minister of Internal Affairs interested in our idea. We feel that would be the ideal arrangement. We don’t want anything from anybody. We aren’t after money. All we want is to see these new premises fully used during the daytime, and the only practical way we can visualise that being done is by the Department of Internal Affairs making instructors available. This is something we feel the Government should take up on behalf of the older citizens of Christchurch.”

Two months later, Harold Kay was again in the local paper. Under the headline, ‘Crichton Cobbers Prepares For New Development’, Mr. Kay explained the Club was on the brink of imaginative new developments, and soon an approach would be made to the Minister of Internal Affairs for staff to enable first-class equipment to be used day and night.

“There are boys who bake at night; there are Post Office and railway boys on night shift, and lads in other occupations. There is an even bigger group of interest to us here than in the seniors. But we want to help them both of course. All sorts of people are interested in our project; the police for instance. Chief Superintendent Colin Urquhart is particularly keen for the Police Force look to us for recruits; lads who come from us have the character and physique. Boys come from everywhere,” Mr. Kay says. “We have good friends in Lyttleton, and a taxi driver brings the boys over

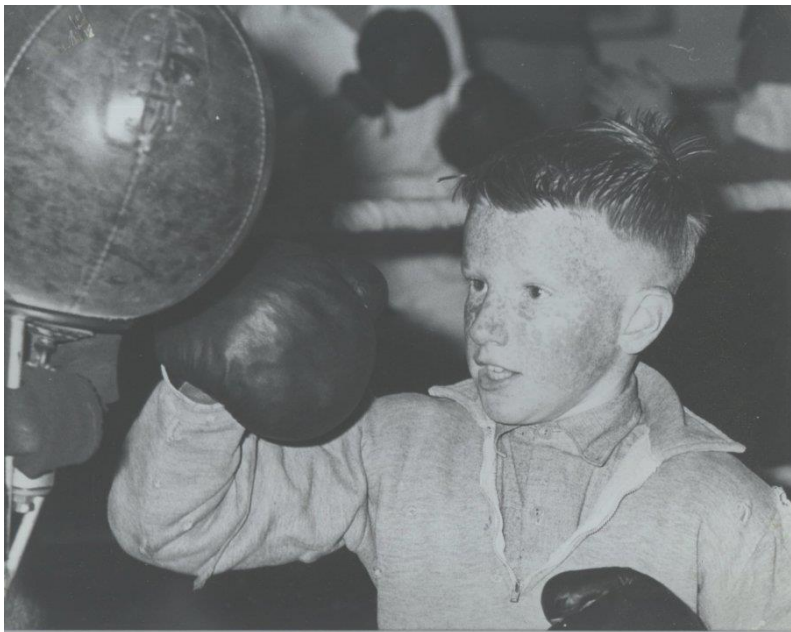
'buckshee' once and sometimes twice a week. But it is obvious that a need exists for a club in the south of the city and we hope eventually to open a branch to serve it.

We are also going to demonstrate something that has been proved in the United States and in Australia; that the graph line for the delinquency rate falls where boys' clubs have been established.¹³⁷



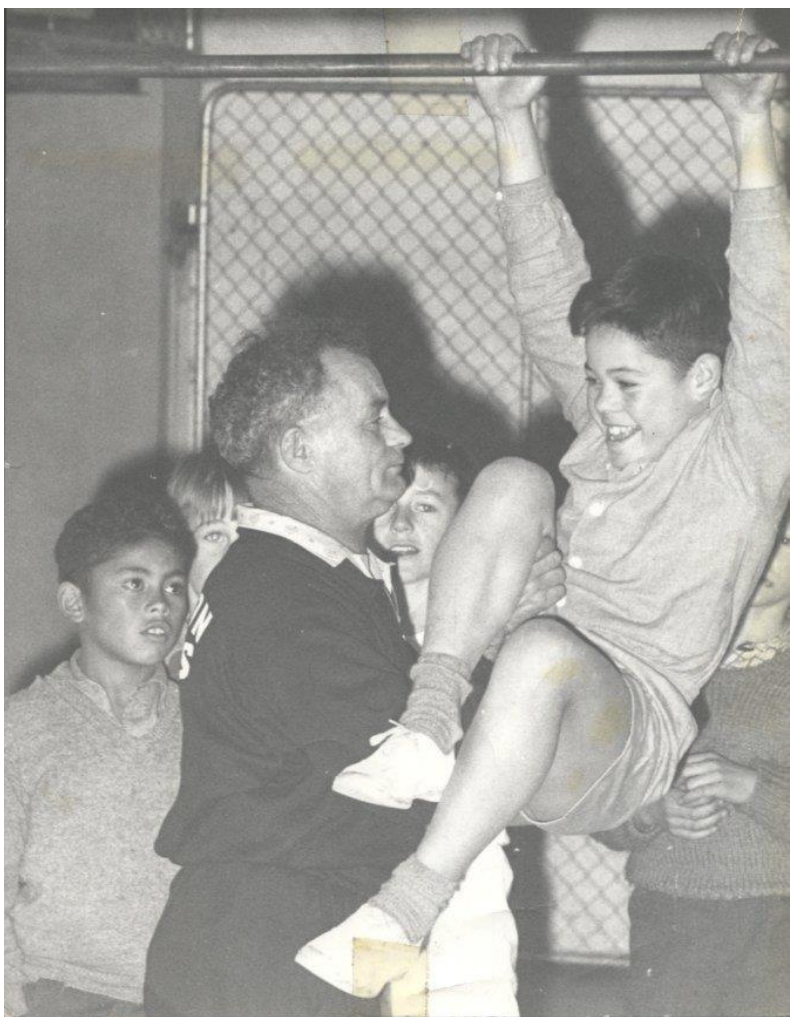
“Senior lads share the gymnasium of Crichton Cobbers’ Club at night. The plan is to cater for similar people, as well as retired folk, during the day.
Christchurch Star.”

Leading up to their visit to the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Management Committee focused on an intensive and positive publicity campaign. A thousand brochures were printed for distribution through the Canterbury Public Relations Office and the local Apprenticeship Committees. Five thousand brochures were printed detailing the Club objectives, and regular features and pictorials appeared in local newspapers.



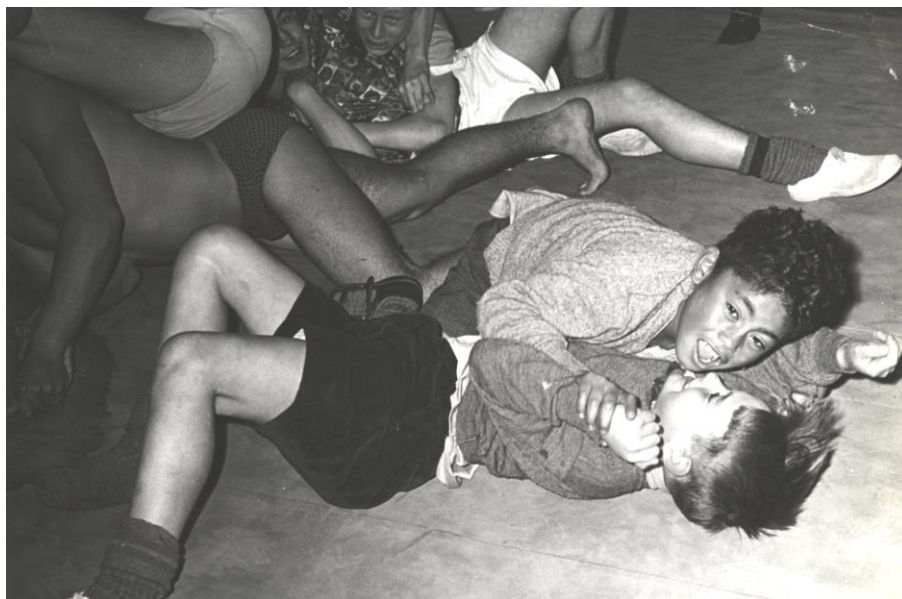
Images from the publicity campaign during the early 1960s.

Paul Soper puts in a lot of effort into the punch-ball.
The Press.



Garry Taie gets a helping hand from instructor Les Day.
The Press.

Russell Gilroy and
Joe Carroll develop
their wrestling
skills. *The Press*.



A young boxer
prepares for the
worst. *The Press*.



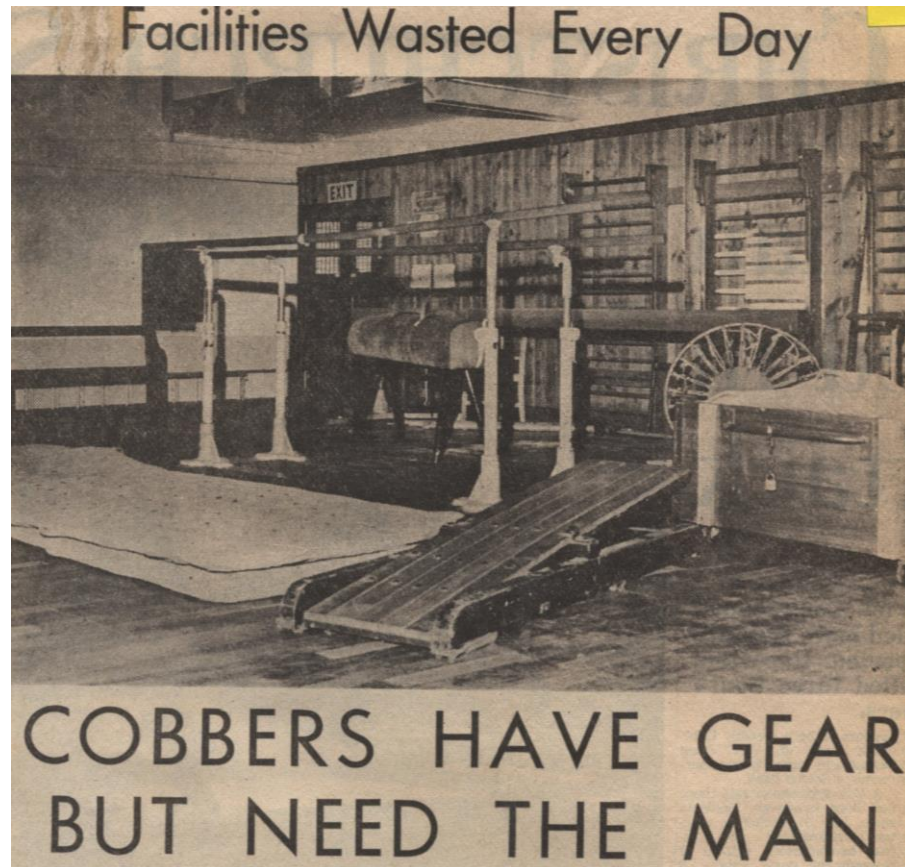


Steve Palmer vaults over gymnastics instructor Frank Blackler. *The Press*.



Junior wrestling was always popular. *The Press*.

Newspaper headlines record the situation in 1964. *Christchurch Star*.



In August, the *Christchurch Star* proclaimed 'Facilities wasted every day, Cobbers have gear, but need the man.'¹³⁸

With almost forty years of vigorous life behind it, Crichton Cobbers' Club has never been in better trim. It has never had so many members, never provided so many facilities. And it was never more forward-looking. There is only one serpent in this Eden of physical fitness. The club facilities continue to lie idle throughout the day because of the lack of a paid instructor. Mr. H. B. Kay, veteran and enthusiastic president, who has been campaigning for Government or quasi-Government assistance, believes the club has an ironclad case. Last November, Mr. Kay set before the Minister of Internal Affairs its overtures for an annual grant of £1500 so that it could appoint a full-time instructor, enabling activities to continue during the day as well as at night.

*In December the Hon. D. C. Seath declared he had no funds at his disposal for the purpose. "I have referred your letter to the Recreation and Youth Activities Distribution Committee of the Golden Kiwi Lottery," Mr. Seath said. "This committee administers all applicants for financial assistance and I have asked it to give close consideration to your application." Wishing the club every success, the Minister added: "I am indeed impressed by the good work you and your instructors are doing."*¹³⁹

In March, Mr. J. Leggat, a member of the lotteries distribution committee, and Mr. L. J. Coughlan, a physical welfare officer of the Department of Internal Affairs, investigated the application. Although both men were impressed, sadly, subsidising salaries was outside the scope of the lottery funds. The fund was primarily available to provide for the purchase of equipment and offered every assistance in this area. Ironically the Club had enough equipment, and Harold Kay was frustrated. He continued to view the matter as one for government to resolve, as he explained to the Christchurch Star:

this is a Consolidated Account affair. It's not for one year only. It's a continuing thing. Where could the Government get a better opportunity to cater for youth? This is putting it on their plate! We can go to the police and we can go to the fire brigade in Christchurch, and among wardens at Paparua Prison, and see our boys, people who came through us as kids, for whom we have done something. We made them physically fit to take up these duties. On top of that, we have recently been told that only 70 percent of the boys examined were physically fit to go into the Army. That must be a worry to the Government, and yet we put this on their plate and they won't do anything about it. When the Minister of Overseas Trade (the Hon. J. R. Marshall) returned from abroad a few months ago, he spoke about the improvement that could be made in the health of men in his age group. We are ready and willing to help just such men; we have all the equipment, all we need is an instructor.¹⁴⁰

The Management Committee remained determined and now focused on getting all the Canterbury members of Parliament along to see the Club in action. Mr. Kay was adamant that the funding of an instructor was less than the cost of “keeping in borstal institutions boys who could be saved from that destination by having their leisure time usefully filled with healthy activities.”¹⁴¹ However, he was eventually forced to admit the New Zealand government was not as enthusiastic or responsive to his ideas as he would have liked.

In view of the many approaches to the Government he had personally made, he was disappointed that the Club had not been invited to discuss youth work with the Government, and he had been amazed to hear that representatives from this country were being sent to America to study youth work there. He advised that on his return from overseas a short time ago he had supplied much literature which would cover such ground.¹⁴²

Harold Kay turned his attention to other matters at the Club and successfully reduced a number of problems, including pilfering, although there remained the odd embarrassing incident or two.

R. J. Hampton's, cnr. Fitzgerald Avenue and Kilmore St, had complained about damage done to their premises at nights, particularly with paint taken from nearby road works. They were of the opinion that Club boys were involved.¹⁴³

Newspaper
headlines in 1969.
Christchurch Star.



"The state should provide the opportunities to train leaders and provide more facilities," he told last night's annual meeting of the Crichton Cobbers' Boys' Club. "Fit people are economically valuable in the production field, in industry. While in Asia recently I noticed middle-aged women exercising, not for personal good health, but so that they could compete better for jobs," said Mr. Connelly, deputising for the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Kirk).

"Our society is moving towards automation with a demand for improved facilities for leisure, and it is organisations like Crichton Cobbers which give us the full benefit of our leisure time. Sport creates better citizens and fosters greater understanding between nations in its contribution to world peace," Mr. Connelly pointed out. Local authorities or the state, or a combination of both could improve and nurture gymnastic and sporting facilities. Mr. Kirk has indicated his willingness to assist with your work, and we both commend you for a good job," added Mr. Connelly.¹⁴⁴

Honorary life member and former Club President Harold Kay objected.

"Applications for help to Government had resulted in nothing. I can't see why Government cannot provide us with an all-day instructor. The Police Department uses our facilities – we do this for the Justice Department. Also we help keep lads from getting into trouble, but what have we got in return?" he asked.¹⁴⁵

Club President Mr. B. J. Schimanski added that the general trend in the Club was for young boys to be very keen, but for older boys, in the 16

to 18 year-old bracket, to become interested in other things. "Night school interferes an awful lot with our programme," he said.¹⁴⁶

Old Boys' Evening

In September 1965, former members were invited to an Old Boys' Evening held at Bruorton House. In addition to radio and television advertising, prominent advertisements were placed in newspapers and 2000 circulars were distributed by instructors. Old boys, their wives, official guests and present members viewed boxing, wrestling, judo, and floor and apparatus gymnastics. Club Patron Justice Adams gave a speech in which he also drew attention to the appeal to government for a full-time paid instructor.

*Appeals had been made to the Government in the hope that a full-time instructor could be provided. This was something the club, which had relied on voluntary instructors who could only serve at night, could not do. It was a pity that the club's gymnastics equipment (worth £2,500) could only be used at night because there was no instructor available during the day.*¹⁴⁷



Signing the Old Boys' Book are, from left, Messrs. Jack McInnes, Bill Mitchell and Cecil Winder during the Old Boys' Reunion at the Clubrooms.

Bill Mitchell held the Canterbury wrestling title from 1925 to 1935 when Jack McInnes took it over until 1952.

Ces Winder gained the Club's first Canterbury boxing title in 1930.
The Press.

Sir Francis Adams congratulated the old boys on their 'magnificent efforts' in providing the money for an 'old boys floor,' which cost £2,250, although £700 was still owed. The new floor overlooked the McKenzie Gymnasium and was to be used for boxing practice. Sir Francis thanked the old boys for their continued interest in the Club and said "Crichton Cobbers' could take pride in the achievements of boys over the years." It was noted at the Old Boys' Evening that the Club had several members who were now instructing their sons, and it was hoped those same members would remain with Crichton Cobbers' to instruct their grandchildren. The Club had 1,000 active members, and an estimated 10,000 boys had passed through the club in the 38 years it had been running. No alcoholic refreshments were provided at the function as the instructors had felt this was against Club principles. The Management Committee later resolved in 1982 that, "the Club did not approve of sponsorship in which the name of the Club is used in conjunction with firms responsible for the sale of liquor."¹⁴⁸

Activities and Sporting Successes

Club members won several significant sporting titles during this period, including eighteen Canterbury Championships, six South Island and one National Championship. The New Zealand Gymnastics Association made a number of awards comprising twenty-eight iron badges, ten bronze, nine silver, three gold and one each of elite and leader awards.¹⁴⁹

The 1963 boxing season went down in Crichton Cobbers' history as one of the best to date. For the second year in succession, G. Bennett reached the finals of the New Zealand championships and subsequently became the second best light welterweight in the Dominion.

Tom Stayman, a 1st dan black belt of high repute had joined the judo section in 1964, having recently arrived from England. Before coming to New Zealand he was runner-up in the middleweight division of a British Isles Judo Championship. Proof of his ability was shown when he was untroubled to win the South Island Individual Judo Championships. Frank Best, who was the 1962-63 champion, was runner-up. The Club now boasted several senior graded members including four black belts and one brown belt. The Crichton Cobbers' Judo Open Team consisting of five of the Club's most experienced members, R. Long, M. Kaa, B. Furey, F. Best and Tom Stayman, won the South Island Championship.

In 1966 Alexander Stokes was elected Club President at a time when wrestling was again especially popular. The section used two rooms under the instructorship of Bryn Roberts, a former Olympic Games representative wrestler and New Zealand wrestling champion.

The following year, Curly Kennedy, the secretary of House Committee, notes the Club was fortunate to gain the services of Jack Monaghan as a Wednesday evening wrestling instructor. Jack Monaghan had been actively interested in wrestling for many years, was one of New Zealand's most outstanding amateur wrestlers in post war years. During his years in the sport he won numerous Southland and Otago provincial titles. He competed at 14 New Zealand Championship events winning 10 national titles and being runner-up on the other four occasions. He represented New Zealand at the 1950 World Championships in Tokyo, also at the British Empire Games in Auckland in 1950. Jack was also nominated for the Olympic Games in Melbourne and the Vancouver Empire Games. Jack Monaghan was also very successful as a trainer in Southland before moving to Christchurch, turning out such good wrestlers as D. Cowie, winner of two New Zealand titles; W. Hubber, winner of two New Zealand titles and J. Stanley, a winner at the 1967 New Zealand Championships.¹⁵⁰



Sir Francis Adams presenting trophies at the 1966 prize giving ceremony.

From left:
 Roger Stanley (gymnastics),
 Michael Hughes (most scientific boxer),
 Barry Hay (wrestling),
 Paul Ragg (Boy of the Year),
 and Chris Moore (Francis Curtis Cup for general ability)
The Press.

The standard of instruction given by wrestling instructor, Mr. Roberts, was demonstrated in the three first placings gained by club wrestlers in the South Island wrestling championships. Wrestling classes averaged 25 boys each night, and Club members were represented in the preliminaries to the Professional Wrestling at the Civic Theatre and the Canterbury Court during the season. Wrestling was also a feature of the 1967 Parents' Evening, which President Stokes described as "an eye-

opener to the large gathering of parents, and many passed on the remark how proud they and their family were to be associated with us.”

15 year-old Graeme Stewart throws 14 year-old Dennis Collins during their wrestling bout during the Parents and Friends' evening in September 1967.
Christchurch Star.



The work of the senior gymnastics boys, known as the Flying Squad, showed they were a force in the gymnasium world and their performance on Parents' Evening was commented on most favourably by all. Three of these boys, Wayne Stanley, Trevor Dacombe, and Keith 'Butch' Sumner were sponsored to Outward Bound during 1967-68.

The McKenzie Gymnasium hosted a display by two visiting Japanese judo experts in August. Watched by a crowd of 800, Mr. Sato, and Mr. Murata, both police officers and 5th dan black belts, gave one of the finest displays of judo ever seen in Canterbury. Frank O'Connell, founder of the judo section was present as a guest of the Club. He presented to the Club a certificate of merit he had received from the Judo Federation of New Zealand marking 50 years service to judo and jujitsu in New Zealand. It was his wish that the certificate be hung in the Crichton Cobbers' Club dojo.

Club President Alexander Stokes made special mention of the life members and regular helpers assisting with administration.

“Harold Kay, although a very busy man, still takes pride and interest in the Club. ‘Buck’ Buckeridge, a great enthusiast, and how could we have a closing night without the wonderful support of Nui Robins?”

Charlie Tindall served for many years in the boxing section, and was made a life member in 1963 in recognition of his services. After retiring from the boxing section, he became equipment officer, a position he held for many years before passing away in 1967.

Noel McCracken retired in 1958 after 25 years’ association with the Club and during much of that time he was supervisor of the juniors. He also passed away in 1967.

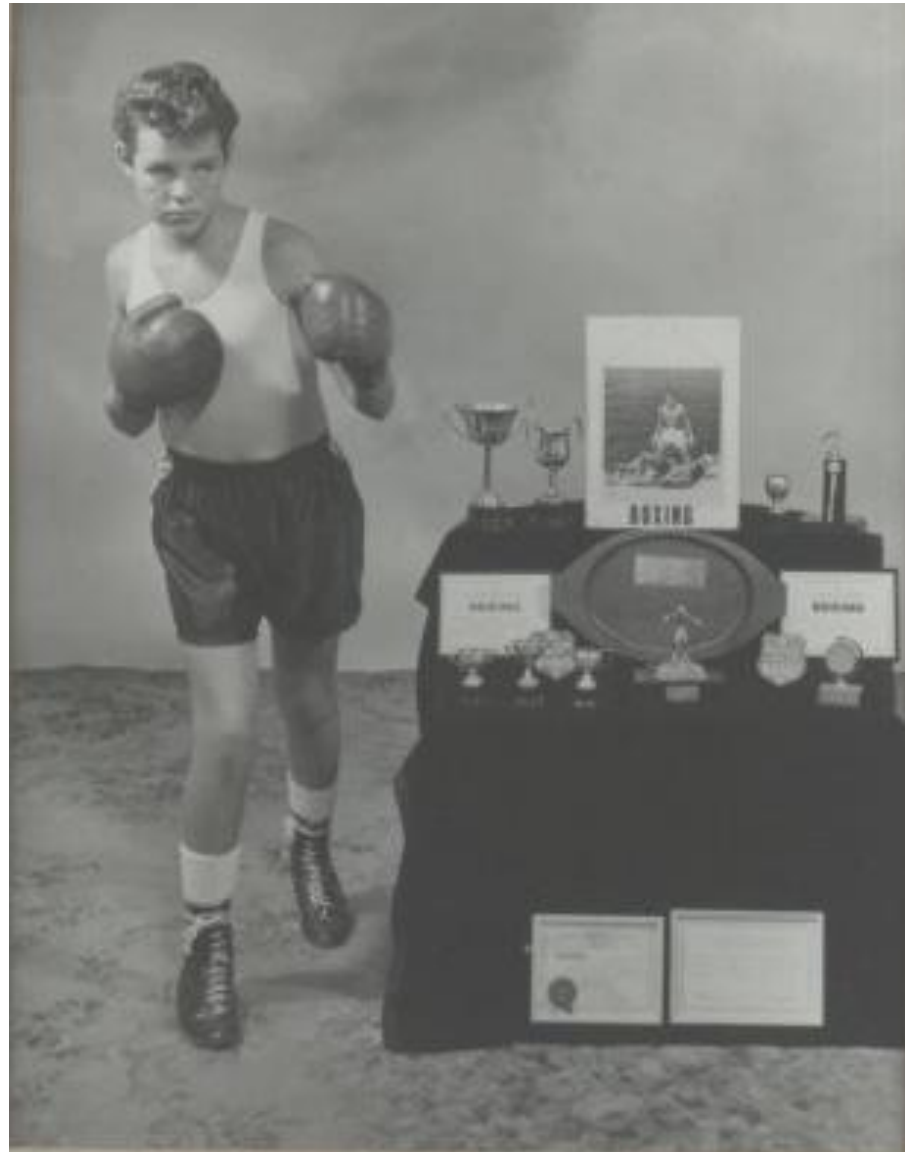
Mr. Stokes pays tribute to the wonderful service given by Mrs. Ragg. “Every Wednesday night saw her in the ticket box and how those boys enjoyed her lovely smile when paying their admission fees.” Club fees were set at \$1 per annum for seniors, with an addition charge of 20 cents per night up to a maximum of 40 cents per week. Junior members also paid \$1 per annum, with a nightly fee of 5 cents up to a maximum of 10 cents per week, and additional mat fees were charged for judo.

Revenue was gained from other groups using the facilities. The McKenzie Gymnastics Club, which catered to females, booked the gymnasium for Saturday mornings. Young divers used the trampoline on Monday nights under the watchful eye of J. de Malmanche, a Canterbury diving champion. The Y.W.C.A Judo Club met on Monday nights in the Club dojo for training with Crichton Cobbers’ instructors until they could find a replacement for their coach. Bookings by cricket, basketball, and rugby clubs were heavy when the seasons were in full swing. Weights coach Dave Brockie commented the section was well populated with swimmers and rugby boys.

Club boxers under trainer D. Gallagher made appearances in tournaments in Ashburton (twice), Timaru (New Zealand Junior Championships), Otematata Sports Club (North Otago championships), Blenheim, Canterbury Court, Papanui Sports Club (Canterbury Championships) and the Woolston Working Men’s Club. Additional engagements included exhibition matches at Riccarton High School and Northcote School. Club boxers Kevin Pyne, a New Zealand Championships representative, and Michael Hughes, a Canterbury Champion, were both consistently selected by the Canterbury Boxing Association.

G. Stanbridge commented that 1967 was most notable for a renewed sense of Club spirit in the judo section. Stanbridge, the 3rd dan judo instructor thanked the efforts of Stuart Owens in revitalizing the section, and building an appreciable feeling of club and club mates.

Judo is an inherently individualistic sport but the feeling of belonging to a group with a similar interest, the members of which you can call friends, is a very necessary and satisfying thing. Without club spirit the drive for success is slowed, any victory hollow, the dojo only a shell and the best equipment needless.¹⁵¹



Club Boxing
Champion M.
Hughes in 1967.
Crichton Cobbers'
Club.

M. HUGHES (C C C)

- 1966 Club Champion (6 stone)
- " Awarded "Most Scientific Boxer" Trophy.
- 1967 Semi-Finalist Nth. Otago Championships
- * Awarded "Hadfield Cup" Trophy.
- * Canterbury Champion (6 stone 11 lb. - 6 st 6 lbs)
- * Awarded "Boxer of the Year" Trophy.
- * Club Champion (7 stone).



Above, 1967 Boy of the Year, Alan Tritt.

Right, Justice Adams presents the Boy of the Year trophy. The award was made for conduct, punctuality, courtesy and endeavour. *The Press*.

Club president Alexander Stokes wrote in his Annual Report for 1967 that “attendance has been well maintained, the senior membership has increased whilst the junior has declined. One wonders if television had been the cause; however the position at present does not give cause for alarm”¹⁵²



Above: 1968 Boy of the Year, Gary Anderson. Aged 16, Gary was a pupil of Linwood High School. *The Press*.

Lady Adams presents the trophy at junior break-up, watched by Club Vice President Peter Hubble. *The Press*.



Alexander Stokes

Club President Alexander Stokes passed away in July 1968. He was aged 60. Stokes was a former New Zealand swimming champion and well known all round sportsman. He won the New Zealand Championship 220, 440, 880 yards and mile events during his swimming career, and also took numerous Canterbury titles. Mr. Stokes was a prominent surfer as well, and was president of the Canterbury Surf association at the end of World War II. He played rugby for the Christchurch Club, and later became a referee. He was president of the Canterbury Rugby Referees' Association and was on the management committee of the Canterbury Rugby Union.¹⁵³

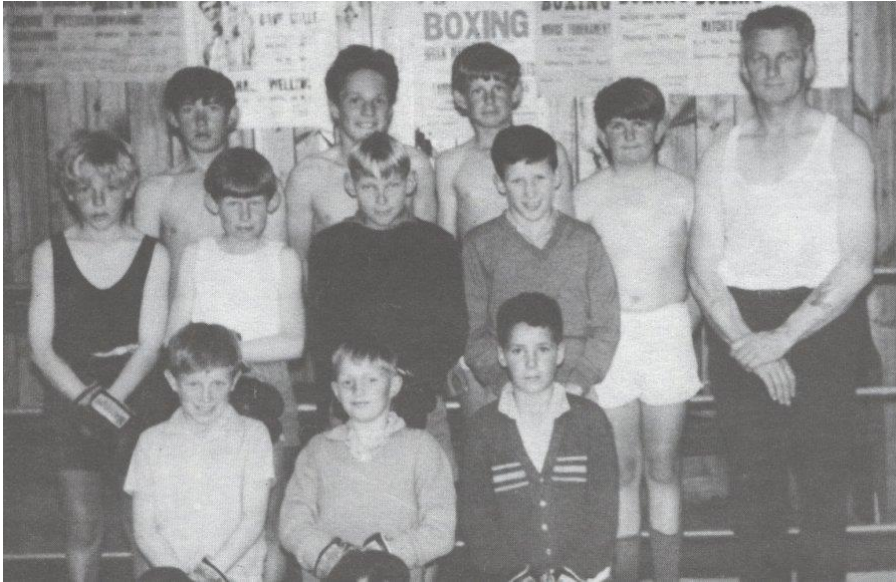
Kevin Dawson and Gerry Kampjes note in the 1969 Club Bulletin that the senior boxing section started the year with about 25 promising boys.

But as the year went on some found the going too tough and a few had night school (which must come first), and we always had the 'drifters' who come in to get fit for three weeks at a time, then have a spell, and then start again to get fit for a couple of weeks. We ended up with about 10 regular boys we could put in tournaments round the countryside. Of these, Perry Hindmarsh was fortunate to be selected to represent Canterbury at the New Zealand Championships.



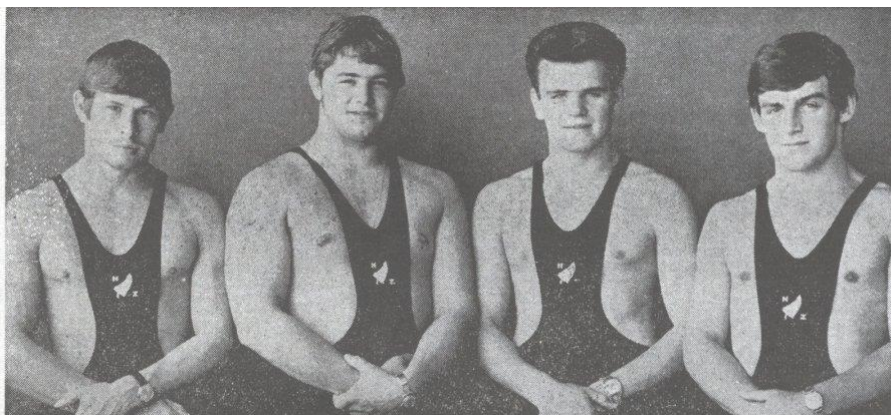
Some of the regular attenders in the Boxing section (l to r) K. Dawson (Instructor), P. Hindmarsh, J. Bowman, M. Garty, C. Dawson, R. Carstairs, G. Kampjes (Instructor); in front L. O'Donnell, B. Hamilton, T. Russell,

The senior boys boxing section in 1969. Instructor Gerry Kampjes was in the New Zealand Boxing Team's corner at the 1974 Commonwealth Games in Christchurch. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*



Instructor H. Lloyd with some of the regular attendees in the Junior Boxing Section 1969. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*

Early in 1969, a team of New Zealand Junior Wrestlers toured the State of Oregon, U.S.A. The seven-week tour also featured a cultural exchange where each member of the team was required to play some form of musical instrument, sing, or speak on some subject related to life in New Zealand. Of the four Canterbury wrestlers in the team, three of them, Paul Ragg, Kevan McLaughlan and Warren Pickering were Club members. The fourth Canterbury member was Ron Williams from the Linwood Toc H Club, although he later joined the Crichton Cobbers' Club. The four wrestled well and Kevan McLaughlan and Paul Ragg finished second and third on the points table respectively. In June a team of 10 Junior Wrestlers from Oregon visited New Zealand on a reciprocal tour and competed against Canterbury on two occasions. Both tournaments were organised by the Canterbury Amateur Wrestling Association and were held at the Club. Canterbury team members from Crichton Cobbers' included Brian Bush, Paul Ragg, Dave Winters, Warren Pickering, Tom Iti, Kevan McLaughlan, Dennis Collins, Graeme Stewart, Trevor Kennedy, Ray Howard, Ivan Tuuta, and Ron Williams.



The wrestling team to tour Oregon in 1969.

Kevan McLaughlan, Paul Ragg, Ron Williams and Warren Pickering. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*

All 16 members of the Canterbury amateur wrestling team to compete at the 1972 national championships belonged to the Crichton Cobbers Club or were coached by Club members. Four seniors and 10 juniors in the team were from Crichton Cobbers, while the other two wrestlers, both juniors trained by Paul Ragg, were from the Rehua Maori Boys' Hostel. The senior team manager, Clem Ragg, the senior trainer, Mr. T. S. Kennedy, the junior trainer, Mr. K. McLaughlin, and the assistant trainer, Mr. E. D. Kennedy, were also members of the club. By 1972 the Kennedy brothers had served as Club instructors for a total of 87 years.¹⁵⁴

The Christchurch School of Gymnastics, one of the many associated groups that used the Club, invited resident official Charlie Stewart, to present Miss. S. Brooks with the rose bowl she won in the New Zealand Gymnastic Association's Girls' Grade Modern Gymnastic Championships. Crichton Cobbers' Club.



The Club end of year break-up grew to a giant affair filling the McKenzie Gymnasium with excited young people. A long table along one side of the gym displayed trophies and prizes and these were presented by Club Patron Sir Francis Adams. Lady Adams and Club Secretary Miss S. Lilly, who was to retire after 18 years of service, also presented their cups. The 1970 break-up provided films for the boys to enjoy and plenty of saveloys, bread rolls and ice cream. The highlight of the evening was the contribution made by the Te Kahurangi Maori Club. At the suggestion of a club member, members of the Maori Club provided entertainment of songs, poi, and other action items, all of which was heartily applauded. Club President Schimanski noted in his annual report for 1970 that during our prize-giving and break-up party:

*I commented to our patron, Sir Francis Adams, that all the lads there seemed to be a very upright and intelligent looking crowd and his reply was, "The result of an active and healthy body." I thought, how lucky we in New Zealand are.*¹⁵⁵



Some of the Tuesday night juniors, from the 1970 Club Bulletin.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



Mr. T. S. Kennedy (left) won the Instructor of the Year award, and Wayne Blackler was named as Boy of the Year in 1970.
The Press.

The McKenzie Gymnastic Club was formed in 1967 by a group of leading Christchurch lady gymnasts to teach young girls gymnastics. The group hired the McKenzie Gymnasium and considered it their base. By 1968 they had 50 members, with an average attendance of 47, and a waiting list of 35.



The honorary instructors of the McKenzie Girls' Gymnasium Club. (left to right) S. Brooks, J. Jasinsky, Lynda Blaikie, P. Blaikie and D. Forbes. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*

Juniors aged under 10 years were admitted to the Crichton Cobbers' Club if a parent or adult was available to collect them at the end of the night. With an average attendance of over 80 boys a night, the Tuesday Juniors had approximately 140 boys on their roll. The older boys enjoyed a basketball run around on Thursday nights.

The same year the Club was asked to submit the names, addresses and ages of 25 members who would be considered for invitations to a garden party for Prince Charles and Princess Anne. Mr. Schimanski consulted the instructors and a list of 29 names was sent to the council. The 'Ways and Means Committee' assisted the boys with suitable attire for the occasion.

Maintaining Low Fees

By 1974 membership subscriptions covered the season commencing in February and ending in late November when the Club closed for the summer break. For full or subscribing members, fees were \$2.00 per year. Active senior members paid \$1.00 membership plus 20 cents

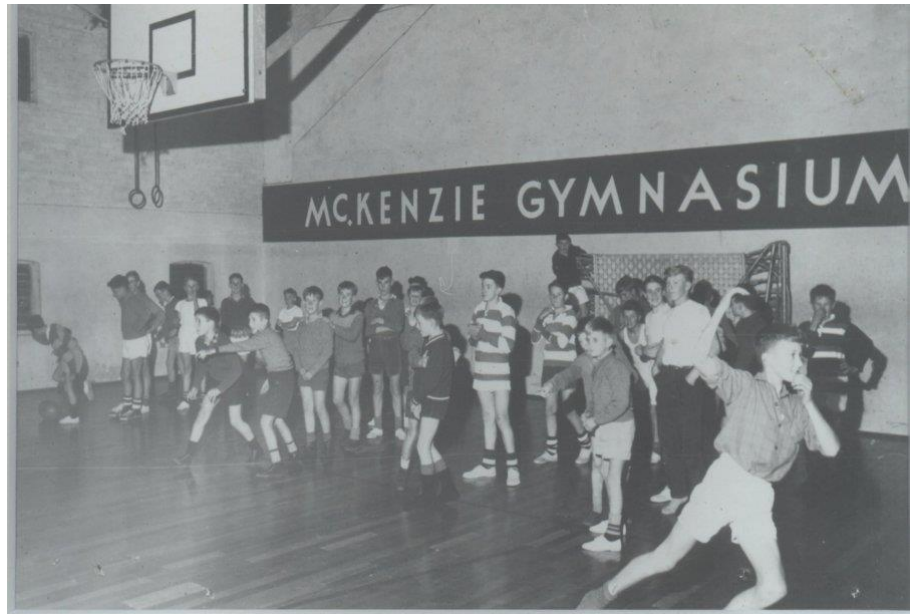
nightly fee, and junior membership was 50 cents plus a 10-cent nightly fee. Memberships fluctuated from year to year, although the Club averaged about 500 juniors and 300 seniors. These boys and young men came from homes representing all walks of life and from all districts of greater Christchurch, as far out as Lyttleton and Belfast. Club Treasurer B. J. Fowler wrote in February 1975 that:

from the time of the Club's formation our policy has been to provide a sports body that any boy could afford to attend. This is still our aim, and so the cost to the active member remains nominal. If the Committee becomes aware of any boy who would like to join our Club, but is genuinely unable to afford to do so, it will arrange for his fees to be met in some way so that he will be able to attend free of charge. Fees from active members, then, will never become our major source of revenue.¹⁵⁶ Non-member groups and individuals who use the premises are charged according to the space and the time they require. The nominal subscriptions are of course not sufficient to sustain the Club and these are supplemented by donations, and grants from many well wishers from various organisations and trusts and from the Christchurch City council. In spite of this generosity by the time the routine overheads and maintenance on the property and equipment have been met, it is a very hand to mouth existence. It is a very basic principle of the Club that the active members' subscriptions and fees be kept at a very nominal level and that no boy is turned away if he cannot meet even these charges.¹⁵⁷



Tuesday night juniors undertake gymnastics. Crichton Cobbers' Club.

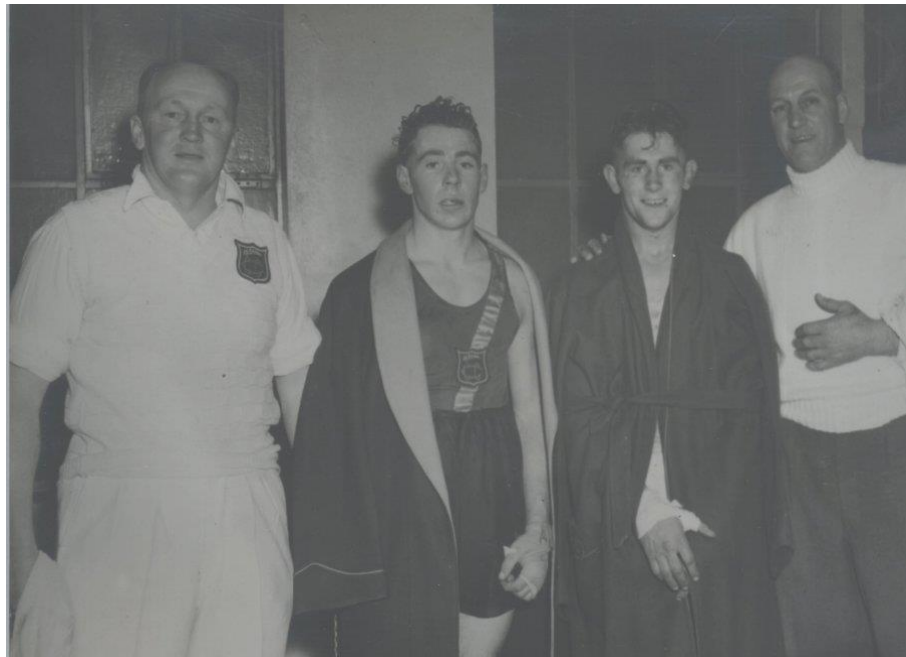
Juniors prepare for the
always-popular game of
bull rush.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



Club Colours

Traditionally, the Club colours were green and yellow. These colours were used for instructors' tracksuits, but as this was not a stock colour, bottle green with a white stripe was sometimes used as an alternative. Instructors had been provided with tracksuits since the 1960s. Crichton Cobbers' boxers generally wore bright blue singlets with gold stripes. Boys participating in gymnastics were encouraged to wear white singlets, white shorts and white sneakers with white socks.

Boxing section
members wear the Club
crest featuring the letter
C and the motto, 'the
game for the game's
sake'.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.





Champion wrestlers,
R. L. Howard (52kg)
1972 & 1974, and
M. D. Allen (74kg)
1974.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

The Rise and Fall of Membership

The Club had 750 members in 1972 and 830 the following year. Club President Jim Morrow noted in the 1974 Annual Report that membership continued favourably.

Once again Club membership showed a large increase over the last year's figures, rising to 911, an increase of 90 over last year. Part of this increase I believe stems from the 1974 Commonwealth Games which reawakened in the people of

Christchurch a desire for further participation in sport. I believe the highlight of the year has been a new outlook adopted by the instructors to further the spirit of comradeship amongst members. Our founders purposely included the word "Cobbers" in our Club name because of the deep friendship which the name inferred, and efforts this year have brought about a renewed awareness of this symbol. This has been achieved mainly by holding several weekend father and son camps. These have been highly successful, and have brought a new dimension into Club life.¹⁵⁸

Membership provided a key source of income, although 1974 became a good year financially for the Club when it was selected to receive the net proceeds of just under \$10,000 from the Garden City Classic Golf Tournament. Additional revenue was gained from an \$800 grant from the Ministry of Recreation and Sport together with a further promise of \$1350. The Lion's Club Auction Sale on the Clubs behalf raised \$1979 and the Canterbury Savings Bank donated \$1000.¹⁵⁹ Club Treasurer, Mr. Fowler, was also pleased to receive in 1975 the healthy sum of \$13,500 raised from a mystery envelope appeal.¹⁶⁰ The Club ran advertisements in the Star Sports section shortly before and immediately after the Olympic Games, welcoming new boys and mentioning that the Club was in a good position regarding instructors. Membership rose again in 1976 helped in part by more positive publicity. Graeme Quinn of the weight training section and Crichton Cobbers' Sportsman of the Year for 1975 had represented New Zealand at the World Canoeing Championships in Germany. Of the six-man Canterbury Canoeing Team, five were Crichton Cobbers' members.

Membership had begun to slow by the late 1970s and the Club made use of advertising on Radio 3ZB and Radio Avon in 1978 in an attempt to gain new members. The Club profile was raised when 30 members who ran in the City to Surf fun run as a team and carried the club banner. A father and son camp held during the year also attracted some good publicity, however the Club was experiencing difficulty attracting new, younger members.

Sign writing over a white background in the 1970s. Crichton Cobbers' Club.



50th Anniversary

Early in 1976 the Management Committee began planning the 50th Anniversary celebrations. The occasion was advertised in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin papers, The Truth, and the Sunday Times.

As this is our 50th Anniversary it was felt that the occasion should be celebrated in a special manner, and accordingly the weekend of October 29th, 30th and 31st was set aside for this purpose. A sub-committee of five House Committee and Management members put in many hours of work arranging the functions which were as follows:

Friday, 29th Oct: Social gathering of past and present members. The showing of Mr. Robins' film on the early days at Annat Camp was appreciated by the older members present and was the highlight of a very happy evening. It was great to see some members from 1926 in attendance.

Saturday, 30th Oct: Open afternoon at Club Rooms and displays by all sections. A very disappointing attendance by parents but very good displays by the boys who were a credit to the dedication of their instructors.

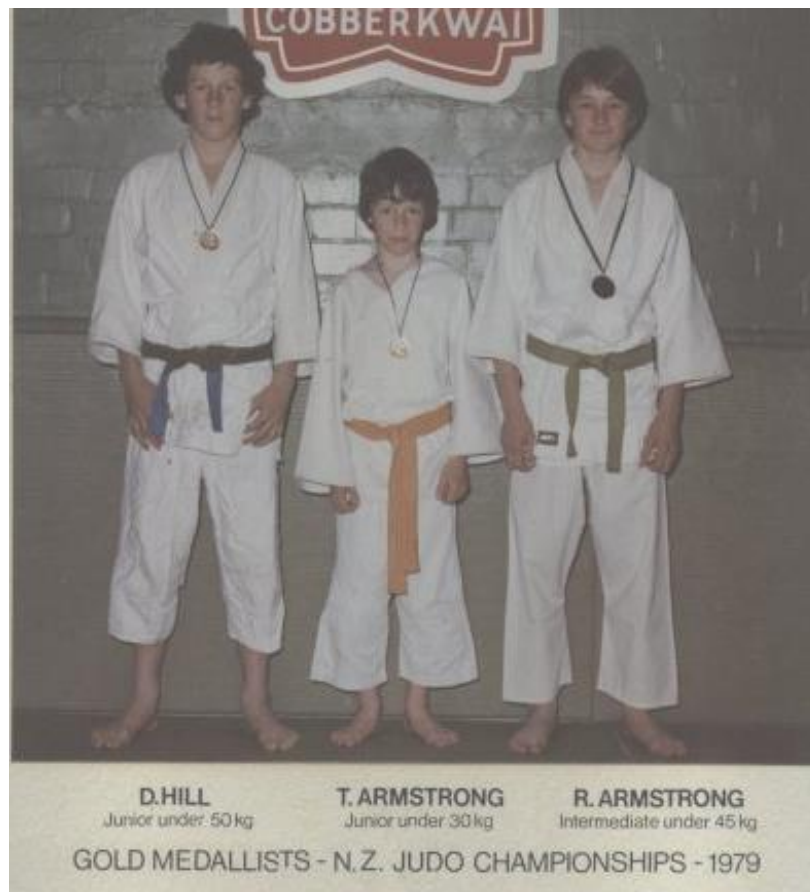
Saturday night – 50th Anniversary Ball at Club Rooms. This was undoubtedly the highlight of the weekend being attended by members and their friends. Good music, refreshments and a great supper. Specifically invited guests were His Worship Mr. H. G. Hay, Mayor of Christchurch, and Mrs. Hay, Mr. W. F. Brown, S. M. our patron and Mrs. Brown, Lady Adams, the widow of the late Sir Francis Adams, who was our patron for many years, and representatives of the Services Clubs of Christchurch, to whom our Club owes a very great debt for their support over many years. Also present were representatives of the Toc H Organisation, with which our Club has been associated since its inception. During the evening a plaque was unveiled by our Mayor to mark the weekend and this is now permanently mounted in the entrance foyer.

Sunday, 31st Oct. Picnic and Sports Meeting at pleasant Point Domain. After an uncertain start with the weather, the day improved and was most successful. Championship races were run for the boys, the major prizes being 50th Anniversary Medals for 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each class. These medals were made for us by Mr. C. Armstrong, a member of long-standing who is presently an instructor in the gym. section, and who was also on the organising sub-committee.¹⁶¹



Above: The 1979 McKenzie Gymnastics Competition team.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

Right: Gold medallists from the 1979 New Zealand Judo Championships.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



CRICHTON COBBERS YOUTH CLUB.

N.Z. JUDO CHAMPIONSHIP GOLD MEDALLISTS.

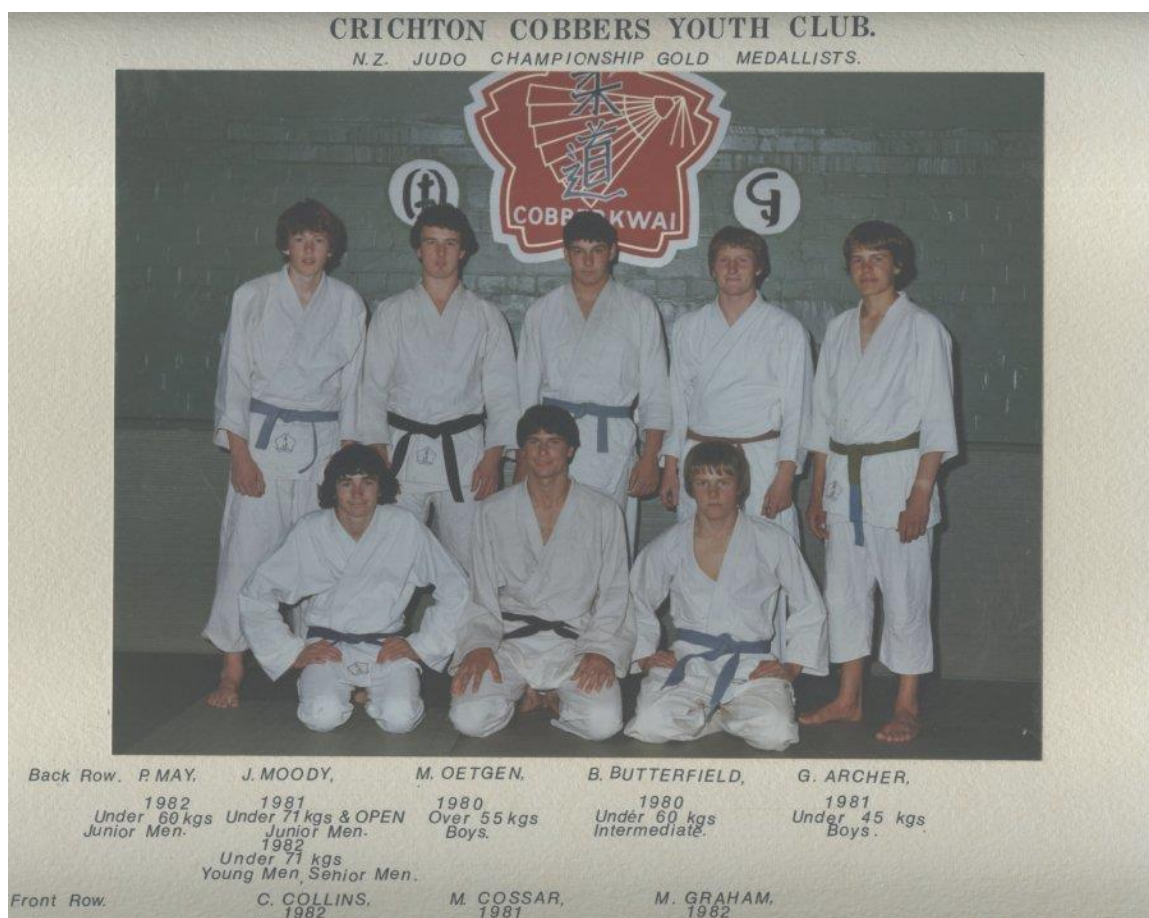


LOUISE HASTIE
1982
52 kgs Women.

ANTONIA WONG.
1982.
Under 50 kgs-Girls.

JULIE ARCHER.
1980
Over 50 kgs- Girls.
1981
OPEN- Young Women.

Gold medallists
from the New
Zealand Judo
Championships.
Crichton Cobbers'
Club.



Gold medallists from the New Zealand Judo Championships. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*

A Crichton Cobbers' Club judo team successfully toured Australia in 1982, winning every team event, and four Club members were included in the New Zealand judo team to visit Noumea in May.

CHAPTER SIX

Female Members

For fifty-three years the Club was strictly a male preserve. However, the final meeting of the Management Committee in 1979 agreed that all members should be notified that the following motion would be presented at the Annual General Meeting, “That the constitution be amended to enable girls to be admitted to the Club.” Club President Mr. Hagarty commented at the A.G.M:

*the Management Committee members feel the Club should cater for the wider community and have the facilities more widely used. Membership has not increased by any great number over the past three years.*¹⁶²

The motion was carried, and a new constitution was registered in March 1980. The new constitution allowed females as members and changed the name of the Club to ‘Crichton Cobbers’ Youth Club Incorporated’. In keeping with the original intent of the Club, the first two of the new aims and objectives for which the Club was established were:

- (a) *To promote the physical welfare and development of the members and to foster the Club spirit; promoting fellowship, loyalty and cheerfulness.*
- (b) *To encourage the mental and moral development of the members by teaching and practicing the four points of the Toc H compass; i.e. Fellowship, Service, Fairmindedness and the Kingdom of God.*

And section 19 detailed the composition of the Club management.

19. The affairs of the Club shall be administered by a Management Committee consisting of:

President

Vice-President

Immediate Past President (for one year only immediately after vacation of office)

Six full members of the Club

Two members of The Rotary Club of Christchurch

Two members of the Christchurch Businessmen’s Club

One member of Christchurch Jaycee (Incorporated)

One member of Toc H New Zealand

One member of Lions International

One member of Round Table of New Zealand

Chairman of the House Committee

One member of each section of the Club recognised by the Management Committee.

Falling Membership

Unfortunately admitting females as members did not provide an immediate solution to the problem of declining membership. Falling membership resulted in reduced revenue, and additional fund raising had always presented a long running struggle for the Club. In the early 1980s the Management Committee focused on resolving a number of internal disputes and balancing the needs of different sections from a diminishing budget. Some sections began to push for more autonomy and applied to organise their own fund raising under the approval of the Management Committee, and in some cases produced their own newsletters and bulletins. In the past, a House Committee had proved a vital link between sections and the Management Committee. However falling attendance at the House Committee meetings presented a further problem. Occasionally the Committee flexed their muscles and presented a dominant image. This was the case when a ballet teacher was found to be instructing gymnastics children at \$1 per lesson although not paying to lease the premises.¹⁶³

An End to Club Gymnastics

Gymnastics, along with wrestling, boxing, judo and weight training, had always been one of the five core activities of the Crichton Cobbers' Club. Historically gymnastics had been the largest section of the Club. However, by 1982 the relationship between the gymnastics section and the Management Committee had begun to break down. Early the following year, Club President Ron Armstrong called a special meeting of the Management Committee to discuss the resignations of coaches in the gymnastics section and the fact that some gymnasts were leaving the Club and going with their coaches. A protracted dispute had evolved when the Management Committee failed to pay a Canterbury Gymnastics Association affiliation fee, thus prohibiting the gymnastics coaches from being registered with the Association, and preventing the gymnasts from entering competitions. The Management Committee had asked the club solicitor to investigate the constitution of the C.G.A. to see if the Club was indeed liable for the full amount of the affiliation fees. It appeared the coaches were being paid, and the Management Committee questioned whether this was acceptable. Just prior to the special meeting on 1 August 1983, former Club President Jim Morrow, released a discussion paper to his fellow Management Committee members on the possible remuneration of instructors. The paper set out the context for his recommendation.

Crichton Cobbers has always been an adaptable sort of an organisation. One can look back over the years and notice that we once had a country camp which was fully utilised when there was a demand for it, then when that demand fell away the camp was handed over to other users who could make better use of it. Again, we had a brass band but when the popularity of this type of pastime died off somewhat, the band was abandoned: and the instruments given to another organisation which wished to make use of them. Again back to more recent times a year or so ago we admitted girls to the club because we saw that there was indeed a demand for this sort of thing. Now we have a situation where our adaptability is being seriously challenged and I think it is up to Management to show that the club can still fit itself around all the types of circumstances which arise from day to day. We must tailor the club to suit the circumstances of the day, and not to allow an inflexible club to restrict current activities.¹⁶⁴

Jim Morrow explained that if the large gymnastics section could not be retained within the club, then the overall numbers of people using the Crichton Cobbers' facilities would dwindle away. He therefore recommended that the coaches be remunerated in some way. Furthermore he pointed out that such a suggestion was not in conflict with the constitution of the Club. Rule 28C provides the Management Committee power:

to engage or appoint and at pleasure remove the Secretary, Treasurer, Caretakers, Equipment Officer, Liaison Officer, Publicity Officer, Instructors and other employees; to define their powers and duties and to fix and determine their salaries and emoluments.

Jim Morrow considered that times had changed to the point where young children were no longer attracted to the Club, and to ensure long-term viability, new members were required. He considered a policy of paying coaches would be a step toward expanding activities to the wider community, especially targeting the needs of a new group, the increasing population of young unemployed.

The situation today is such that children in the younger age groups are being attracted to specialist sports clubs and perhaps the ideals on which Crichton Cobbers' was founded can now best be expressed by giving more consideration to older youth where leisure time brought about by employment limitations is on the increase. In due course we will have to adapt to this challenge.¹⁶⁵

However, the August special meeting resolved that the club would no longer pay gymnastic coaches, and a further motion followed:

that we give the parent's committee of the gymnastics section every assistance in forming a new club and give the new club the use of premises and facilities free of charge for this year (1983) those attending to pay the usual nightly fees to Crichton Cobbers.¹⁶⁶



Jim Morrow

Crichton Cobbers' severed ties with gymnastics and by 1984 the new 'Aim Club' had an average of 40 members and was the cheapest gymnastics club in Christchurch. This club – the name derived from the initial letters of 'Activity', 'Incentive' and 'Motivation', was formed to cater to competitive gymnasts. It was completely autonomous from the Club, other than hiring the McKenzie Gymnasium at an hourly rate.



Charlie Stewart

Charlie Stewart

In 1985 the Club Custodian, handyman, one time secretary of the house committee, and gymnastics coach, Charles Stewart died after 20 years' work at the Club. Charlie Stewart worked at the Club until his death at the age of 82. He was a bottle-drive expert and helped with other fund raising. He often looked after children until their parents showed up, or drove them home. The Committee Room was subsequently dedicated and named the Charles Stewart Room. The Aim Club purchased a cup in memory of Charlie Stewart, which was used in their gymnastics club prize giving.

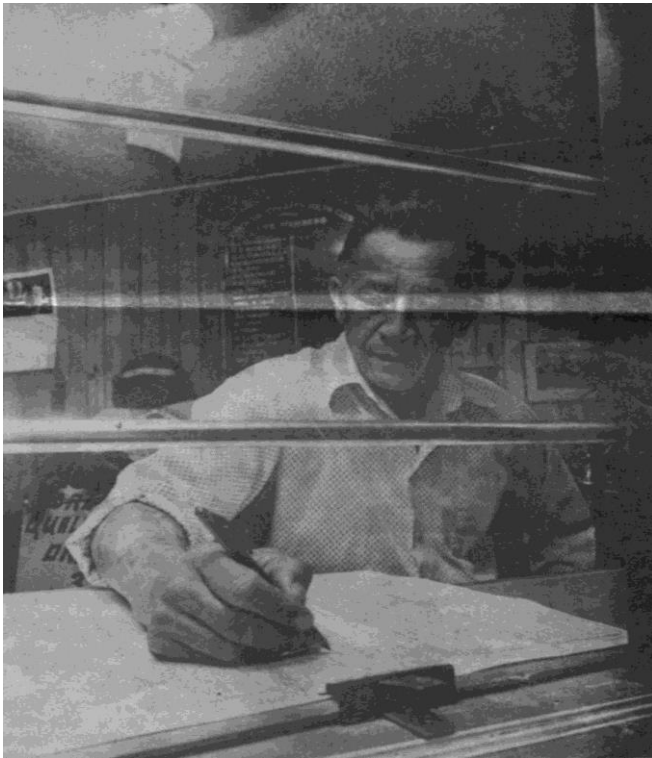
Joe Nathan

Ray Goodwillie moved into the flat and office in November 1985. He was resident custodian until Joe Nathan, who was known to many older members of the club as the weight training instructor, was appointed in September 1989.

Joe Nathan first joined the club in the early 1960s, when he was in the mid 30s. He was a bushman and lumberjack as his father had been. "You need to exercise to sustain the energy for work," he says. He started doing Olympic style weightlifting and was being encouraged by others to keep it up when he had an accident in the bush in 1964. "I was tree felling and a tree didn't fall the way I meant it to," he says. "It was salvage work after a big blow. It was all speed work and had to be done in a hurry." The tree fell on his body, pinning a leg over a dip in the ground "which really stuffed my leg. My knee joint had to be welded." He tried to get back into exercise through the advice of a surgeon (to keep his calf and thigh muscles from withering). The doctor recommended golf, walking and some other form of weight lifting.

Joe Nathan "got pretty good at power lifting and peaked at 46." He loved teaching the technique to others, especially children. During three telethons, he carried weights round to local hotels to raise money through lifting challenges between patrons, after he had demonstrated techniques. He raised \$11,000 that way in one Telethon. His six children – three boys, three girls – were members of Crichton Cobbers'. One boy became prominent in judo, training under long-time coach Stan Taylor. "They knew

*this was my life," he says of his children. "I was here every night of the week. They got started from when they were able to walk, I guess."*¹⁶⁷



Joe Nathan seen through the glass window of the club office.
The Press.

60th Anniversary

The Club held a 60th Anniversary weekend in 1986. The Anniversary celebrations included a wrestling tournament with between 80 and 90 entrants from Southland, Dunedin, Timaru, Rangiora and Christchurch. A boxing tournament boasted an attendance of around 100 people, and the judo and weightlifting sections also held competitions. About 250 Anniversary certificates were printed for the occasion.

McKenzie Gymnasium Ceiling

A major achievement of 1987 was the installation of an insulated metal ceiling, an east wall and new lighting for the McKenzie Gymnasium. The ceiling covered the exposed beams and helped reduce heating costs. As part of an on-going renovation programme a dividing wall and two terraces were also constructed in the McKenzie Gymnasium. The extensive project was completed at a cost of \$25,000. The Stubberfield Trust generously donated \$5,000 toward the cost through the Rotary Club of Christchurch, and Trustbank Canterbury donated \$1,500.



The new insulated ceiling in the McKenzie Gymnasium helped with heating, lighting and acoustics.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Future Planning

Membership continued to decline, and interest in the Management Committee had died off, with a number of positions remaining vacant. Club President Bryce Hadcroft organised a series of sub committees to revitalize the Club. The 1985 Club Bulletin describes the goals of a sub-committee called the Future Planning Committee:

to consider the direction in which the club should be heading so that we can best serve the youth of our city. There is no doubt that there is a great need for a club such as ours, but our resources must be channeled in the most appropriate direction. Consideration has been given to:

- (a) Introducing new activities.*
- (b) Strengthening our existing groups.*
- (c) Obtaining more day-time use of the premises.*
- (d) Catering for 'special population' groups; e.g. the disabled, shift workers, unemployed, etc.*

*The committee will continue its work next year and would appreciate suggestions from members, parents, and others regarding our future role in the community.*¹⁶⁸

A newsletter to members and parents followed in June, and in September, Jim Morrow and Bryce Hadcroft met with a representative from the Department of Internal Affairs about eligibility for an employment subsidy. The Committee still hoped to appoint a staff member to allow the Club to open during the day. Unfortunately a subsidy was not available and the committee's focus turned to monitoring the number of members at the start of each month, the number who had left, and where new members had come from.

Ideas for increasing membership revolved around developing team games like indoor cricket. Wally Stone of the Christchurch East Community Work Scheme proposed to bring groups of young people in to use the facilities. This trial, based on a negotiated yearly group membership agreement and providing their own supervision at 5 to 1, operated for only a couple of months. The Club closed for the school holidays, compounding the problem, and advertisements for new instructors provided no joy. Dennis Collins started a recreational gym class on Tuesday nights, and Kevin Placid was granted permission to hold aerobics classes in the judo room as a business venture. The Management Committee agreed:



Bryce Hadcroft

that in principle we accept aerobics into the Club, subject to receiving a formal offer incorporating financial arrangements satisfactory to the Club and other sections of the Club not being dissatisfied with the terms of the offer.

Unfortunately the aerobics venture did not last, and an open day the following year only resulted in seven new members, three of whom joined the judo section. Sporting successes continued with Stan Taylor travelling to Japan as coach of the New Zealand Judo Team, and John Moodie and Kevin O'Connor were selected to go to the U.S.A with a New Zealand Judo Team. Russell Perrett also travelled to the U.S.A, with a New Zealand cultural exchange wrestling team.



Neville Whyte

Neville Whyte's strategic planning sub-committee included Jim Morrow, also a representative of the Christchurch Businessmen's Club, Charlie Armstrong, and Club President Bryce Hadcroft. Charged with addressing the problem of dwindling membership and resources, their first job was to size the problem, and then to develop a programme to upgrade the Club facilities. They prepared a comprehensive six-year strategic plan outlining the Club's past, present and future directions. This was supported by a financial plan and the group started looking for a primary sponsor. In 1988, Neville Whyte outlined the Club's dilemma in a letter to Gil Simpson, owner of Christchurch based software development company Cardinal Network, widely known for its computer programming language called Jade. Neville Whyte explained an organisational change process was necessary to preserve the future of the Club, and offered permanent naming rights to the Club in exchange for sponsorship,

Unfortunately the kind of selfless characters who first founded the club and then contributed in cash or kind to its maintenance and upkeep over the years, now seem in short supply. Added to this are the pressures created by current conditions which not only mean that the dollar numbers must now be bigger to achieve the same result but that the demands of the community on the scarce resources of the club are so much greater. We decided in this modern world, we must make every effort to withstand the challenge provided for the hearts and minds of the young by every other sort of competitive attraction, and that we could only achieve this by adopting a more professional approach to managing the club's affairs. Obtaining the services of volunteer coaches had been becoming an increasing problem for a long time and as the appointment of a full-time director has long been mooted, it was decided that we should include provision for one and for the payment of coaches in the financial plan. The projected expenditure on building maintenance and equipment upgrades amounts to \$364,662 over the next six years. i.e. an average expenditure of approximately \$60,000 P.A. The all up cost of employing a full-time director and coaching staff is also conservatively estimated at \$60,000 P.A. for the same period. A commitment from Cardinal Network to fund one of these projects over that period would halve the financial problem, would provide the impetus for additional funding by the mere fact

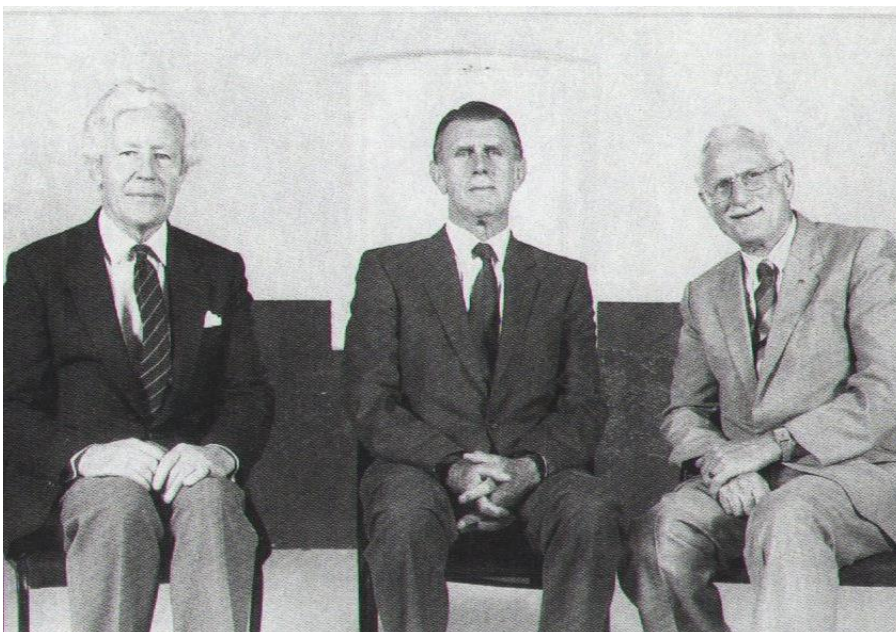
of association with a prestigious enterprise and would be permanently and publicly acknowledged by the proposed change of name to Cardinal Crichton Cobbers.

Sir Clinton Roper, a prominent High Court Judge, accepted the office Club Patron in 1989, left vacant by Judge Brown. He was particularly interested in the work of the Club, and Neville Whyte's plan to upgrade the facilities. Two years earlier, Sir Clinton Roper had headed a government commission to look at the problems of violence in New Zealand. The report of the commission was referred to as the Roper Report. Clinton Roper offered to prepare a history of the Club and he completed this project later in 1989. His account includes the mission statement and text:

As the twig is bent so grows the tree

Society reflects the physical and cultural development of its youth. Crichton Cobbers aims to promote this development and those mental and moral qualities which support high social values. We seek to encourage a balance of individual achievement with an attitude of cheerful cooperation, a sense of service and a spirit of loyalty and fellowship. Our principal mission is to provide the youth of Christchurch with interests and activities which will help and encourage them to become good citizens. Fellowship and fairmindedness is the Club rule.¹⁶⁹

Together with Sir Hamish Hay and Sir Lawrence Govan, Sir Clinton Roper formed a high profile fundraising group known as the 'Poor Knights Committee.' Working with Neville Whyte's strategic planning sub-committee, they negotiated a sponsorship with Gil Simpson's Aoraki Corporation to the value of \$25,000. \$5,000 was paid each year for five years.¹⁷⁰



Crichton Cobbers'
Club 'Poor Knights
Committee'

Sir Hamish Hay,
Sir Clinton Roper J.,
Sir Laurence Govan.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

Gil Simpson presents the Poor Knights Committee with the first installment of \$5,000. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*



Standing: J. Nathan, D. Rees, C. Armstrong, J. Phipps, N. Whyte,(President), V. Busby, Joanne Murray (Aoraki Corp.), B. Hadcroft, J. Morrow, G. Sim, C. Ragg, F. Grey.
Seated: Sir Hamish Hay, Sir Clinton Roper J., G. Simpson Q.S.M. (Aoraki Corp.)
Sir Laurence Govan.

A Promotions Committee started an intensive drive for new members and raise community interest in the Club. Promotional leaflets and copies of the Club Bulletin were sent out to nine Christchurch schools. In April 1990, a full-page article detailing the Club history, activities and future aspirations appeared in The Press.

Fightback by club for high profile

In 1990, the Club featured in a full-page article in The Press.

The well-known Crichton Cobbers Youth Club is 'undernourished,' says Joe Nathan, a former member who is now its resident caretaker. With declining use a nagging problem, the club is doing something about a health diet of management, money and members. A detailed business plan is being used to back up a fundraising drive spearheaded by a 'Poor Knights' group – Sir Clinton Roper (the club's new patron), Sir Hamish Hay, and Sir Lawrence Govan. Neville Whyte, regional secretary of the New Zealand Fire Service and the club president, says the corporate plan is vital in convincing potential donors that the Fitzgerald Avenue/Chester Street East club has a fighting chance.

"We had a peak membership of 700 a few years back but would be lucky to hit 200 now," Whyte says. Auckland's Youthtown Club, which has similar aims, had about 78,000 visits from users last year. "Youthtown has a high public profile," says Neville Whyte. "We want to get Crichton Cobbers to that same level of public acceptance." It took over a year to develop the club's business plan, which calls for a six-year, \$360,000 programme of club improvements, including building renovations and new sports equipment. A full time director and paid coaching are also wanted. "We need a commitment that is no longer there," says Whyte. "people who came back from the war, an older generation who knew what had to be done to keep things up and did it." A full time director would take on part of that commitment by being a 'people person' as well as a businessman.

Clem Ragg, who had been on the management committee for about 25 years, started going to the club when his son used its wrestling facilities. He says local schools are being encouraged to use the club. Crichton Cobbers wants to attract kids spending too much time in the streets, but Ragg says the problem is getting their attention. "There's that much on, isn't there? What with television and drugs ... you want the

whole range of kids. A lot of lads can do some good by getting into these things, for themselves and for the community. We'd be the cheapest club in town."

Dennis Collins, a volunteer gymnastics and recreation coach, lived near the club when he was a boy. Now 37, he started going when he was eight. He was officially made a coach when he was 15. Both his children go on Tuesday nights. "In the old days, there were 100-odd kids there on a Tuesday night," he says. Things are starting to pick up because a recreation class is underway again, he says. He works with three-year-olds to sixth formers. There is no push to get them into competition sports, but they can move on if they become interested. "Ninety percent of the kids are coming in and having a good time," says Collins. "Even the rat bags help the little ones. If they walk out with a bit of sportsmanship in their hearts and a bit of honesty in their minds, that's the thing."

Martine Grafhorst practices on the beam with guidance from Dennis Collins, recreation and gymnastics coach. *The Press.*

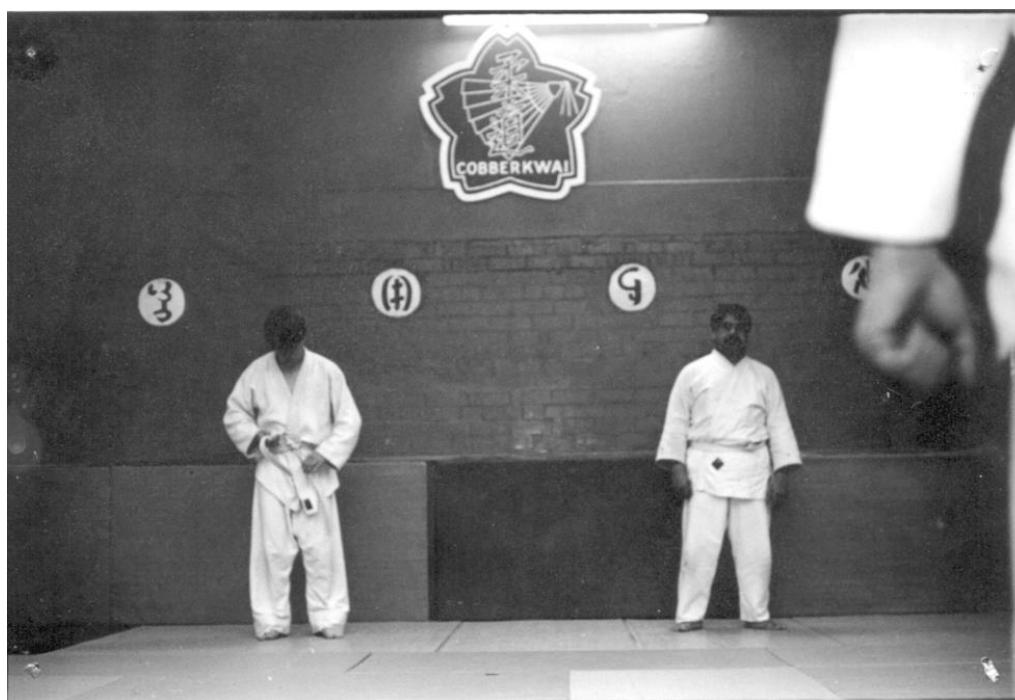


Crichton Cobbers will be trying to compete with the range of activities in other places under its development programme. There will be space for passive recreation, and a games room could provide televisions, video, table tennis, indoor bowls, target bowls, and a tape deck. Neville Whyte looks with admiration at operations of Auckland's Youthtown Police and Citizens' Club, which started life in 1932 as Boystown. That club has a yearly operating budget of about \$400,000, partly funded by hire charges, coin machines and subscriptions. But the major part of its funding comes from individual, company and trust donations. Young people casually use Youthtown activities free of charge (except for squash and weightlifting or during holiday programmes.) Those requiring coaching pay a nominal fee and become club members. Adult participation is restricted in some activities so that the target group of children and adolescents can be catered for, and special emphasis is placed on activities for the less privileged. Youthtown's Nelson Street premises are used as a base for outreach programmes in local districts. Youthtown held seven camps in 1988-89, and its premises were used by Maori Access and general Access programmes. Links are

*made with school sports clubs. The Auckland club has detached youth workers and offers counselling. Its activities start in the afternoons, after school. Because of dependence on volunteer coaches, Crichton Cobbers activities are usually in the evenings.*¹⁷¹



Training in full swing.
The Press.



Judoka
prepare for
action in the
Cobberkwai
dojo.
The Press.

Multicultural greetings
in the foyer.
The Press.



Neville Whyte encouraged the Promotions Committee to work steadily on a 'Light up Christchurch' campaign designed to sell 60,000 light bulbs on a Saturday morning. This involved door knocking in residential streets and sales from a decorated caged trailer on a service station forecourt. Members and supporters wore green and yellow promotional t-shirts and caps printed for the occasion.

A youngster in
promotional cap and
T-shirt stands ready
to sell packs of light
bulbs from a
decorated trailer
amid smiling light
bulb balloons.
*Crichton Cobbers'
Club.*



However, the fund raising efforts ran out of steam as Neville Whyte wrote in his President's report for 1990:

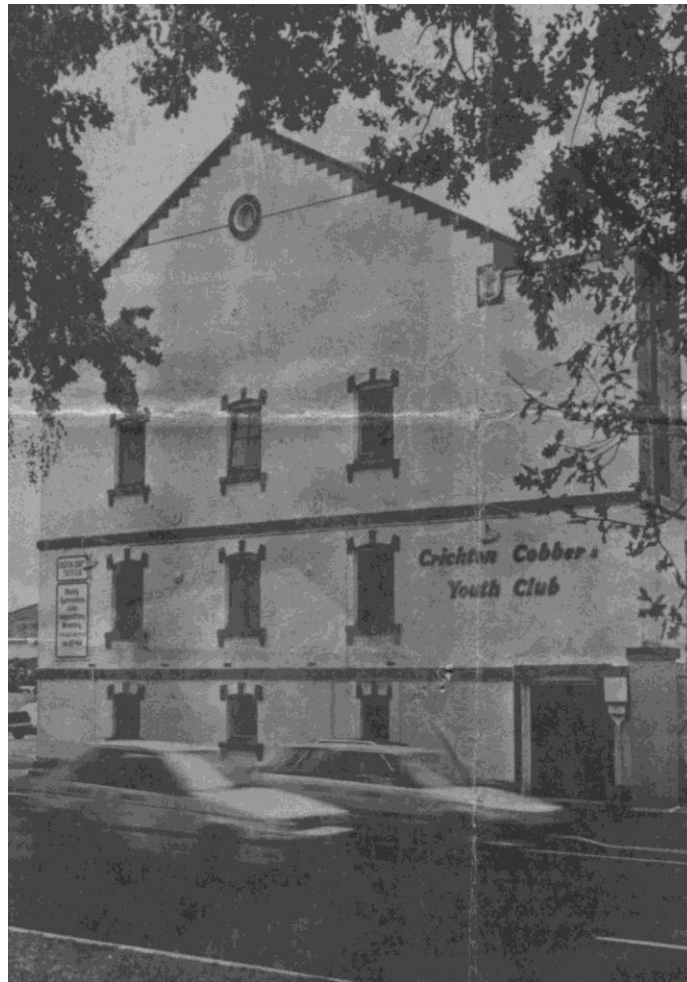
*they say there are tides in the affairs of men which ebb and flow just as inexorably as those governed by the rules of nature. No better evidence could we have of this than in the year gone past. At a time when the life of the club is on the ebb the committee attempted to mount a major fund-raising campaign, to which hours and hours of creative effort had been devoted over the course of almost a year by an enthusiastic few. What happened? The effort foundered on the rocks of Club apathy. The call for club support fell on deaf ears and the campaign was a phizzer. Consequently we are stuck with a heap of stock which will again be left to the efforts of a few to dispose of!*¹⁷²

Neville Whyte resigned from the Management Committee in 1991, and Clem Ragg was appointed to take over until a number of problems could be sorted out. The Committee now had vacancies for a treasurer and a president. When Club Patron Sir Clinton Roper passed away, Sir Gil Simpson from Aoraki Corporation agreed to become patron of Club. After some discussion, it was again agreed that the Club required a full time manager to oversee the general running of the Club, obtain sponsors, and plan for the future. A sub-committee was formed to frame a job description for an 'Executive Director' and funding was sought from the Hillary Commission.



Boxers hard at work. *The Press*.

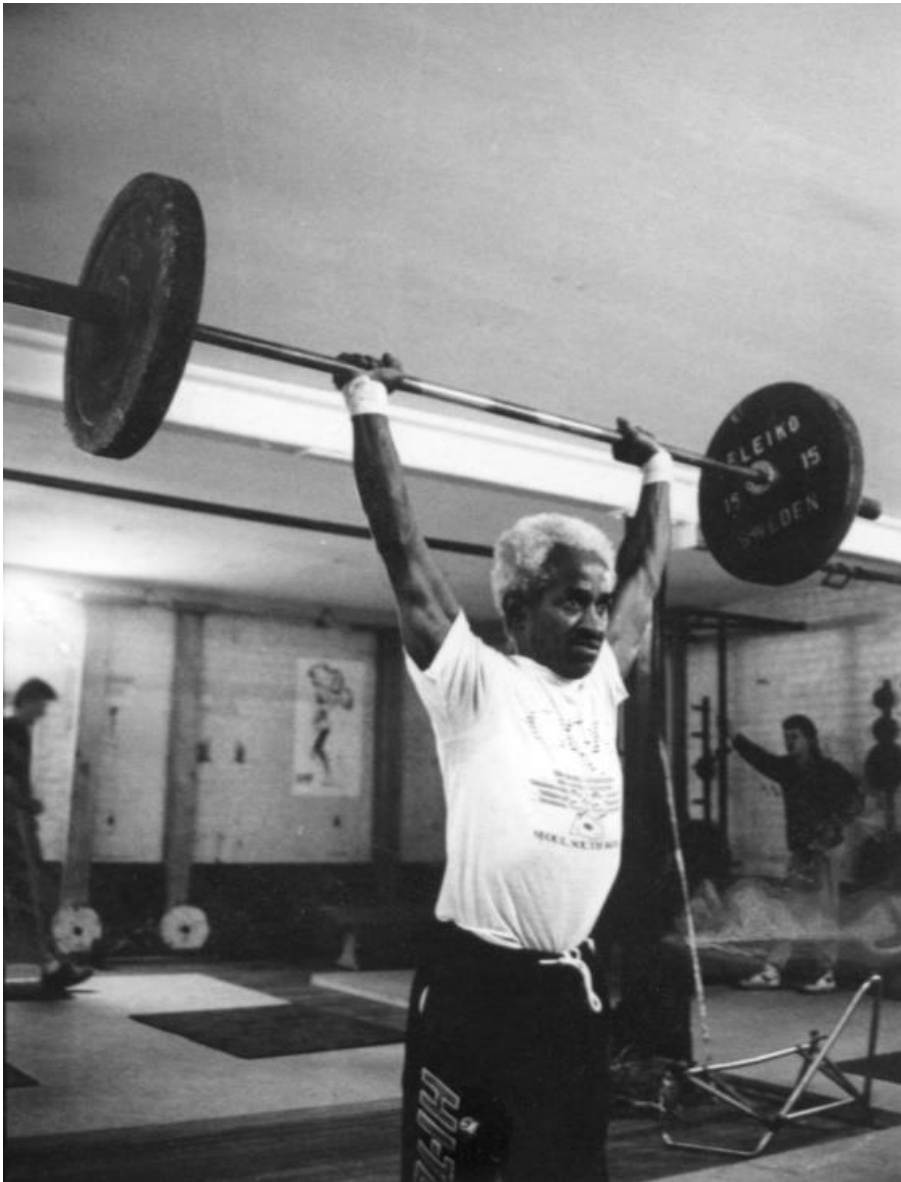
Bruorton House
from the Fitzgerald
Avenue median
strip.
The Press.



Olympic Weightlifters Arrive

In November, weightlifting instructor Colin Robinson introduced Graham May and Paul Dirreen of the Canterbury Amateur Weightlifting Association to the Management Committee. Graham May explained that the Olympic weightlifters had to leave their current training base at the YMCA. An amicable agreement was reached and in return for training space, C.A.W.A. provided their extensive collection of weights equipment for the use of all Club members. The Club gained a number of new coaches including Olympic weightlifter George Newton, who travelled to Germany the following year to represent New Zealand in the Masters Olympics, and Lee Attrill, who later represented New Zealand in weightlifting at the Commonwealth Games. The Olympic weightlifters trained on the second floor of one of the old drying kilns but the Olympic weightlifting training sessions took a heavy toll on the building. When dropped to the floor, the heavy weights shook the building, and wooden struts were hastily installed downstairs to support

the floor joists. Eventually the Olympic weightlifters moved their training downstairs.



George Newton
practices the
snatch.
The Press.

Colin Robinson was especially resourceful in obtaining heavy rubber floor mats and constructing dumbbells and other weightlifting equipment. Unfortunately the portable nature of some of this equipment allowed it to disappear from the premises, so doors were fitted to the Olympic weightlifting room in an attempt to stop the further theft of weights and equipment. A notice was placed on the locked door to inform members that the room was for Olympic lifters only, and stating the times that it was open. Much of the Crichton Cobbers owned equipment was homemade, including an assortment of wooden benches with unique suede leather upholstery. During the height of winter, dedicated athletes would wear woollen hats and gloves in the upstairs weights room as the

windows would not close, and the bare wood floor and concrete walls made the room extremely cold, although never too cold to train.

The bare wooden floor of the upstairs weights room.
The Press.



Pull-ups in the downstairs weights room.
The Press.



Renovations

As part of a programme of alterations to the entranceway, foyer and reception area, the downstairs weight training area was to be painted by three people on an Employment Service work scheme. Although only one person turned up, he made good progress until he too unexpectedly disappeared. Joe Nathan then continued the work. Jim Morrow oversaw the construction of the distinctive canopy fitted over the Chester Street entrance. The imitation shingle canopy, with its green background and yellow lettering was completed in October 1993.



The Chester Street
entrance canopy
added in 1993.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

The judo dojo was renovated with repairs to the ceiling, new paint and 50 new judo mats to replace the tatami mats purchased in 1957. Extensive renovations were made to the Club entrance, foyer, and toilet areas. The renovation programme included installing 8mm thick toughened glass in the front office, spraying the toilets and changing rooms with a Nuplex paint finish, and some tiling work. The aikido section had requested a sauna, which unfortunately proved too expensive.

1996 was also a successful year for building renovations. These included painting the outside of the building, new carpet in the foyer and stairway, and a new matted floor in the aikido room. The work was funded thanks to grants from the Lotteries Board, Trust Bank, the Christchurch Businessmen's Association, and the Hillary Commission.

The office was remodeled in the mid 1990s. New floor coverings included a logo as a feature of the entranceway. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*



Sports Activities and Coaches

The end of year break-up celebration had become a much smaller affair after the demise of the gymnastics section, the Management Committee organised a disco for children and an informal gathering for parents in the social room. The break-up was to end a few years later through the continued decline of the junior membership.

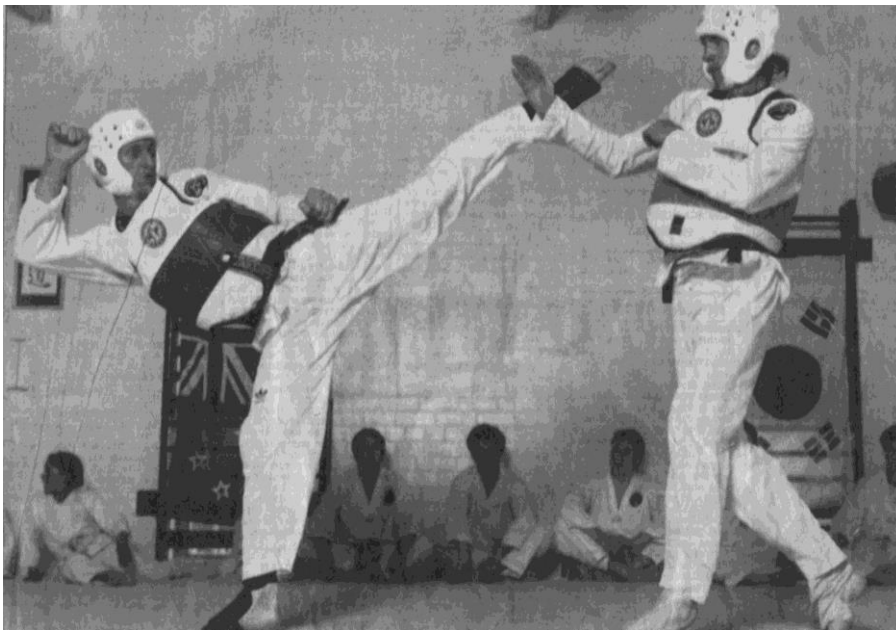
Anthony Grey was selected for a New Zealand Cultural Exchange Wrestling team, which toured the U.S.A. and Canada for five weeks in April 1990. Club wrestlers did well in the South Island Championships with David Collins (Under 12 33kg) placed third, Ivan Tuuta (Senior 68kg) placed first and Stewart Hill (Senior 82kg) placed second.

A taekwondo section began in August under the instruction of Wate Raiwalui, and by 1991 it had an average of 18 members.¹⁷³ Liam O'Donoghue, an aikido instructor, joined the Club with 10 members and started the Otautahi Aikido Club.

In 1992 Mr. T. O'Brien reported he had a class of 20 kickboxing students and hoped to start a class for children. After discussions with the boxing section, which generally disapproved of kickboxing, the kickboxing classes began under probationary guidelines set by the Management Committee:

the kickboxing section is to be advised that no black soled shoes are to be worn on the mat, and blood is to be cleaned up at the end of each session.

Colin Robinson resurrected the practice of having coaches attend House Committee meetings. These provided some excellent ideas and feedback to the Committee. Terry Pearson was power lifting coach, Ray Metcalf and Ivan Tuuta for wrestling, Dave Dickson for jujitsu, and Paul Fitzgibbon and Ron Reulu instructed boxing. There was frequent discussion on the issue of paying Club coaches for their services. At the 1994 A.G.M, Jim Morrow noted the Club had spent 'peanuts' on instructors, and it should spend some money on existing instructors while also seeking new instructors. However, as membership continued to decline, participation fell at both the House and Management Committee meetings. Occasionally the Management Committee failed to achieve a quorum.



Tony Pauwels, left, and Steve Benbow training for the Taekwondo New Zealand Incorporated invitation tournament at the Aranui High School gymnasium in 1994. Pauwels fought in the welterweight division and Benbow in the middleweight. *The Press.*

Later House Committee participants included Roland Batey from boxing, James McArthur from jujitsu, Liam O'Donoghue and Kerry Madden from aikido, Anthony Grey from wrestling, Laicheong Lee from power lifting, Neil Fox from weight training, Lee Attrill from weightlifting, Tony Pauwels from taekwondo, Tim McIlroy and Gary Hilton from jun shin ryu, and Bryce Butterfield from judo.

The judo section sent four competitors to the 1997 New Zealand Championships where they gained nine medals between them. Cobberkwai dojo members gained 9 golds and 5 bronze from 9 athletes in the Canterbury Championships. Instructors John Moody, Bryce Butterfield, and Calvyn Snelgar all attended Coaching Canterbury

seminars. Calvyn Snelgar gained a bronze medal in the Canadian Open, and in 1998 the Canterbury judo heavyweight was named in the New Zealand judo team to contest the Commonwealth tournament in Edinburgh in March. Snelgar, a black belt, gained a bronze medal at the same tournament four years earlier. He had an excellent year on the international circuit in 1997, including third placings in the Canadian Open, and the Pacific Rim tournament, ninth in the US Open, and a top-16 finish at the World Championships. Calvyn Snelgar also attended the Italian and Dutch opens.

Alison Taylor from taekwondo won a bronze medal at the New Zealand Championships in Wellington.

Laicheong Lee placed well in power lifting competitions, while Terry Pierson successfully represented the Club at many of the annual Best of the South Bench Press Competition in Timaru. Although he was placed several weight divisions below heavy weight competitor and organiser Brian Armstrong, Terry would often secure first place with the heaviest lift.

There were positive reports on Roland Batey's work as boxing coach before he resigned through study commitments. Mick Drury, Brian Barry, and Ken Clearwater took up the challenge and with three coaches the boxing section expanded to 52 boxers in training, 38 senior and 14 junior. Boxing training increased to 3 times a week in 1998.

Taekwondo instructor, Tony Pauwels, organised an alarm and an emergency lighting system for the building, followed by a Sports Med facilitated coaching clinic for 20 Club members and instructors. After joining the Management Committee, Tony organised a very successful open day on a Saturday in July. Over 100 spectators were present and a second open day was held in November. Posters and 900 flyers were printed, and the day resulted in a good increase in membership.

An aikido for kids programme signed up 44 participants for a three week course, and 30 secondary school students visited from Oaklands School. The 1998-year ended with 332 senior members and 90 juniors. An estimated 45% of members were unemployed and/or registered as beneficiaries. Including Burns Club members, the Club had around 600 visits each week.

Vikings Kickboxing

The AIM gymnastics group moved out in 1995, however the loss of revenue was quickly off set by an approach from Nick Putt representing a kick boxing club. Viking Martial Arts proposed to hire the McKenzie

Gymnasium for \$9,000 a year. The Club Solicitor prepared a two-year lease, with two additional years available at six months notice. Vikings had use of the McKenzie gym Monday to Friday between 4.30 and 9pm, and the facilities remained available for Club use during the day. The Club hours were from 11.30am to 9.00pm Monday to Friday, except Wednesday which had hours of 4.00pm to 9.00pm, and Saturday hours were 9.00am until 12.00. Vikings direction signs were installed to guide members upstairs and apart from some early problems with loud music the arrangement worked well. Although the rental income was well received, Club Secretary Grace Sim drew attention to falling membership made evident through subscriptions and fees that were much lower than preceding years. She cautioned that it would be necessary to now ensure outgoings did not exceed monies coming in.

Burns Club

Dave McFeron from the Canterbury Burns Club approached the Committee, in June 1996, about leasing space. The Burns Club had a number of clubs under their umbrella, including the Dickens Fellowship, Shakespare Club, Italian Society, Women's Club, Youth Hostel Association, and Environmental Groups. The Burns Club had a membership of 150, with attendance of 25 to 30 members. Subsequently they signed an agreement to use the former social room in return for a monthly rental.

Lindsay Kelso

Following the sad death of Joe Nathan who had been Club Custodian for approximately seven years, Lindsay Kelso was appointed to the position. He greeted members as they returned to the Club after the summer break. Lindsay Kelso quickly started work on building maintenance, arranging for the steam cleaning of carpets at no cost to the Club. No sooner had he settled in than he found himself assisting with boxing coaching. The following year he ran a very successful Forty Plus exercise class. Lindsay also organised a team of members to participate in World Clean-Up day. One particular afternoon Lindsay observed a member leaving with something obviously concealed in his bag. He immediately intervened and the weights concealed in the bag were retrieved and member was asked to resign from the Club. Lindsay developed an enthusiasm for promotions and fundraising. He had business cards printed and approached businesses about sponsorship, along with selling Club logo T shirts from the office and 10kg bags of golden potatoes. Together with Club Secretary Grace Sim, he collected

items for a garage sale raising \$160. Unfortunately Lindsay resigned as Custodian in August 1998 due to ill health.

Peter Oakes



Peter Oakes

Peter Oakes took up the challenge of the Custodian position, tackling the computer system, increasing problems of graffiti, blocked toilets, and the leaky roof. That year \$10,000 was spent on repairs and maintenance. Peter drafted a newsletter aimed at members, schools and sports clubs. His journalism contacts proved invaluable as he wrote a succession of articles for local papers on Club events and sporting successes. The Club reaped the reward of this publicity with enquiries from young people and parents. Peter commented that often the enquiries were as a result of school bullying.

Approaches to start new clubs in karate and capoeira did not come to fruition. However, Peter realised the six-month YMCA programme, Te Whānau Rangatahi, was comparable with the intent of the Cobbers' Club. He negotiated an excellent arrangement with the YMCA hiring the McKenzie Gymnasium two mornings and two afternoons each week. The programme, funded by Skill New Zealand, used a high-energy mix of life skills training, martial arts, and taha Māori to train young Māori referred from Youth Justice. Tutors, Hemi Te Hemi and Rhys Williams, a martial arts instructor, said the challenge for the programme was to instill a sense of self-worth in trainees. This, they said, is what the young people lacked most.

Hemi says his trainees require courses outside the mainstream that are designed to specifically meet their needs. I put the challenge to Skill New Zealand. I went along to the local manager and said, there's a target group out there that I want to pick up. It's small but large enough that it needs its own focus – on lifeskills, things like self-worth, hygiene, identity issues. These kids have got plenty of energy but they are troubled by authority.'

*'We are trying to re-direct their energy in a positive and safe way. We're using the positive aspects of martial arts and weight training to teach physical and mental discipline. We've also built the course around tikanga concepts such as karakia, te reo and whakapapa. We're using Māori as the waka, the prow of the canoe that can drive our learning through.'*¹⁷⁴



Te Whānau Rangatahi learners, with course tutor Hemi Te Hemi (left) and Rhys Williams (right).
Skill New Zealand.

Billboard

At the 1998 A.G.M, Club President Clem Ragg announced his resignation after 30 years of service, and his final President's Report described the Club as being in very good heart. Frank Grey was elected Club President, with Scott Aucutt, a representative of the Businessmen's Association, named Vice President.

The Management Committee began negotiations with Phantom Advertising early in 1998 to erect a billboard on the southeast corner of the building. After much discussion with the Christchurch City Council, the Historic Places Trust and other interested parties, the billboard received consent after a June Heritage Court hearing that attracted 15 opposing submissions from residents. Although the Club benefits financially each month, the use of Bruorton House, listed as a group two heritage building in the Christchurch City Council plan, raised some hackles. Residents' spokesperson Norm Fitt said there was some irony in the board's first poster being from a party that promoted heritage buildings. The chairman of the Civic Trust, Ian Clark, said it was "rather unfortunate" that a mayoral candidate, Cr. Garry Moore, had chosen a billboard on a heritage building. Ian Clark said:

it would be bad enough for any advertisement on that building, but the trust believes councillors should perhaps be a little more discerning in the places they choose to advertise themselves.

Cr. Gary Moore said he had no concerns about the site and would not reconsider the poster's placement. He said billboards were a source of income for heritage buildings, which could help in their retention.

The billboard erected in July 1998. *The Press*.



Weights Section Upgrade

After requests from the weights section for repairs to equipment the Management Committee agreed to a programme of re-covering benches with vinyl and replacing some of the old wooden equipment that had been badly affected by borer. Chain Man, a local steel engineering firm owned by a Club old boy, constructed some new equipment. Welder Brian Fox constructed two heavy-duty dumbbell racks in Dunedin and shipped them north. A member of the weight training section recalls calling at the freight yard to collect the racks:

We lifted a long section of the heavy steel rack, and with one of us at each end, we struggled across the car park. I was amazed to find an enormous guy from the freight warehouse was following behind, carrying one heavy section in each of his huge tattooed hands. 'Which gym are these for?' he asked. 'Crichton Cobbers', we said nervously. He stood motionless, peering down at us through his dark sunglasses. 'You won't see me there,' he said, 'there's some rough fellas at that gym, that's where they all go when they get out of prison.'

A first attempt to import weightlifting equipment from the USA foundered when the retailer was placed in liquidation. A second attempt was successful and a set of Swedish Eliko brand rubber weightlifting plates were imported for A\$2,200.



Grenville Poharama
uses the cable
machine.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



Assorted dumbbells
and bars from the
upstairs weights room.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

Further renovations started when the Club closed for Christmas. A large team of weights members volunteered their time and over the course of an entire weekend they managed to unbolt and carry every item through the narrow doorway and down the stairs. Over many weeks they painted all the equipment, and the walls while contractors sanded and applied polyurethane to the beech floor. By chance, Pro Fitness, a large commercial gym was selling some old equipment and several purchases were made and transported back to the Club balanced

precariously on the back of a very small truck borrowed from Laicheong Lee's father. Before the Club reopened in 1999, all the newly painted equipment was carried back up the stairs, through the narrow doorway, and bolted back together. Although the equipment was again firmly bolted to the now polished floor, there remained a mysteriously large collection of bolts left over.

The upstairs weights room before the 1999 renovation.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



And after.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.





Shane Lewis-Millar,
Tim Marshall and
Crichton Cobbers'
oldest member, Les
Reife, apply the first of
many coats of paint.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

Following the renovations, Simon Weaver was introduced to the Management Committee as a new power lifting coach. Weaver had won his first national title the previous year and represented New Zealand at the Junior World Championships. Shortly after he became the first (and still only) New Zealand Junior to deadlift over 300kg. Simon Weaver introduced Club power lifters to training using heavy chains.



Power lifting coach
Simon Weaver squats
in competition.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

Open Day

Nine sports were displayed at an open day in May 1999. Martial arts featured along with boxing, wrestling, Olympic weightlifting and power lifting. A regular stream of visitors attended, and a tae kwon do tournament in the McKenzie Gymnasium attracted a big crowd and added a frenetic and noisy element to the day. New members joined weights, aikido, and wrestling, which under instructor Anthony Grey had a large class of 18 at their next session.

Tara Winter, left, seven, and a friend, Pali Stone, six are engrossed as Shane Lewis-Millar demonstrates weightlifting at the open day.
The Press.



Left: Olympic weightlifters Terry Hughes (front) and Junior Ofisa working together for Sydney Olympics selection. Right: Aikido instructor Murray Bennett helps some of his young learners with their technique.
Red and Black.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Weights in Trouble

As representatives of the Canterbury Amateur Olympic Weightlifting Association, Lee Attrill and Terry Hughes explained to the Management Committee that their members would be leaving the Club following an offer to base their training at the Christchurch City Council-funded QEII Sports Centre. Unfortunately, they would also be removing the weight training equipment owned by their group. Former weight training instructor Colin Robinson attended the meeting and explained how the position regarding the Olympic Lifting Association had evolved. Neil Fox, newly elected to the Management Committee, distributed a list of the equipment that would be leaving the premises and the few items that would remain. The weight training section was in a tricky situation, although they had a recently refurbished room, it would soon be empty of equipment. As weight training members easily constituted the majority of all Crichton Cobbers' Club members, the problem was compounded. The Club would suffer a dramatic drop in revenue if weight training members left to join other gyms. A sub committee was quickly formed consisting of Neil Fox, Jim Morrow, and Frank Grey, with authority to purchase the bare bones of equipment to the value of \$15,000. As Club President Frank Grey explained in his report at the 2000 AGM:

although this year had been a good period it has not been without its difficulties. The year started with our weight training group getting together and redecorating their upstairs training room. This included the walls, the weights and apparatus. My committee had the floor sanded and polished, and bought the paint for the redecorating. The cost of this was about \$2,500. Some new apparatus was purchased for the weight training and power lifting sections for \$12,000. This was partly funded through the generosity of the Canterbury Community Trust, and J. R. McKenzie Trust. Our own funds made up the balance. The Canterbury Amateur Weightlifting Association which came to our Club many years ago when it needed a home decided in August this year to shift to QEII park. It seems the C.A.W.A. owned all weight gear except for what we had just bought, so although we only lost 6 members we are going to have to reequip the weight rooms. We have had to raid our maintenance fund to buy the bare necessities to keep these sections going, but it will cost up to \$30,000 to reach the standard we require.

New steel weight plates and dumbbells were purchased from local supplier Elite Fitness, and further equipment was ordered from Auckland manufacturer FitnessWorks. The empty Olympic weightlifting room was thoroughly cleaned. For many years the Olympic weightlifters had rested between exercises and read the

inspiring message written with a sweaty finger in the thick black dust that covered a fluorescent light fitting attached to the bare wall. The inscription read, 'somewhere, someone is training harder than you and when you meet, they will beat you.' The holes in the floor were repaired, and new sheets of chipboard layered on the floor to construct a lifting platform. The activity produced clouds of strange dark red mould dust, which covered the floor, and was trailed by foot up the hallway. Contractors sanded the floor and applied a glossy polyurethane finish.

The new Olympic weightlifting platform was constructed from four layers of chipboard. Crichton Cobbers' Club.



Grants from the Christchurch Businessmen's Association, and the J. R. McKenzie Trust helped the situation but more equipment was required and Club funds had dramatically diminished. Frank Grey met with Cr. Carole Evans and was told a loan could be available at possibly 2% interest from the Christchurch City Council. Committee members discussed borrowing \$10,000 from the Council when there was great news. An application to the Community Trust resulted in an \$8,000 grant toward re-equipping the weights section, and a Hillary Commission grant of \$3,800 soon followed. The lower weights room was painted, and the doors to the former Olympic room were removed to create a sense of space. More equipment arrived, including an impressively large and shiny cable crossover machine. Custodian Peter Oakes commented on the changes in his monthly report to the Management Committee:

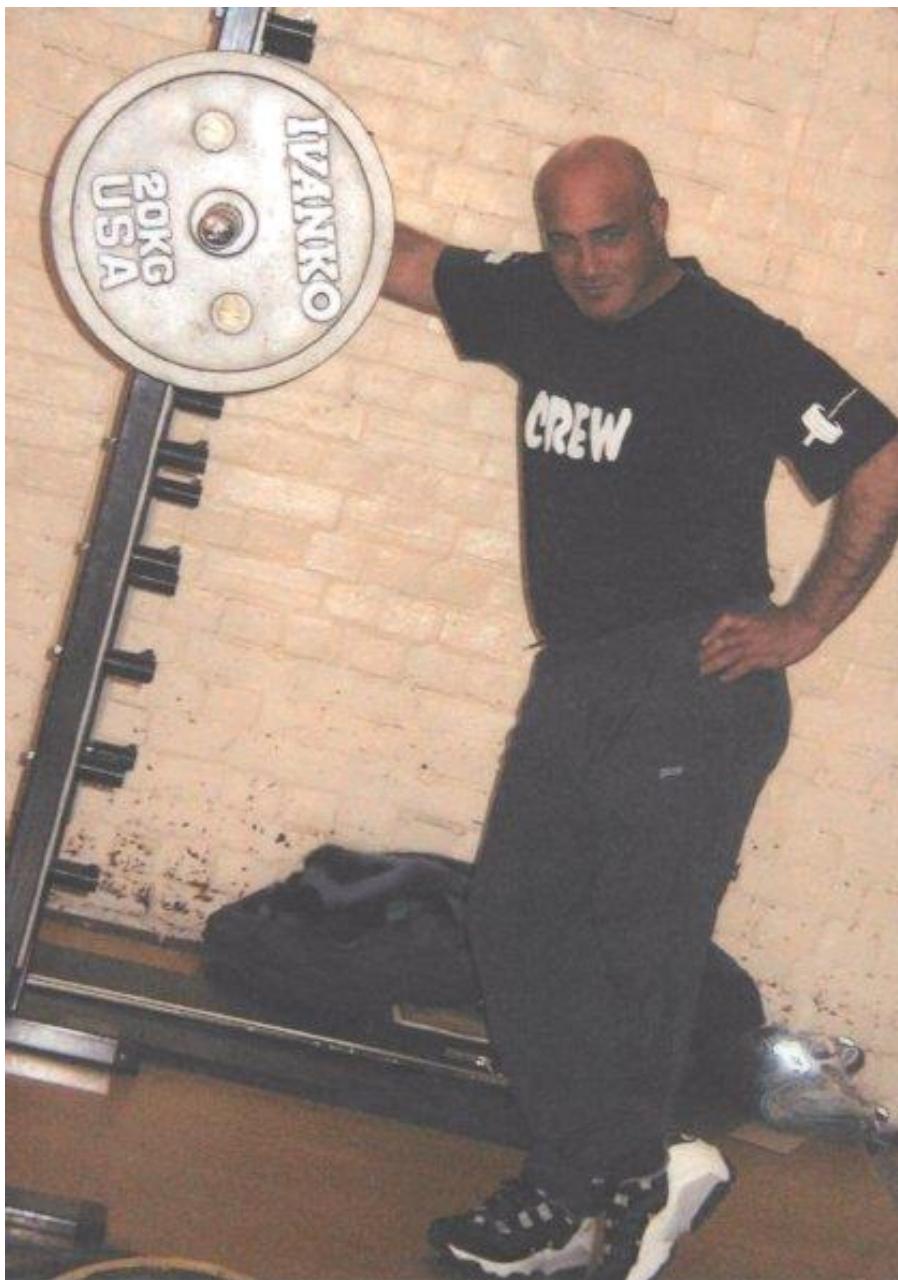
the Olympic floor and new gear has excited some comment. Not least from one of our most critical members (nameless) who rarely has a good thing to say.

Frank Grey arranged an evening visit to the Club by a group of Christchurch City Councillors who were shown around Bruorton House by members of the Management Committee. Committee members impressed upon the Councillors the good work the Club was doing with young people, the pressure for resources following the departure of the weightlifters, and the lack of cash reserves. The Councillors advised that the Club should be looking for funding from the Council, and providing school holiday activities as one such avenue. Cr. Carole Evans suggested that if the Club could demonstrate to the Council that it could run such a programme, assistance would be forthcoming.



Gwenda Willis uses the \$8,000 cable crossover machine watched by Rachel Coomber.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.





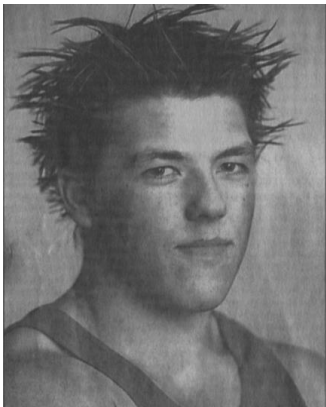
Roland Batey wears his crew T-shirt from the New Zealand Power Lifting Championships. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*

Subsequently, weight training member Mark Neame was recruited to coordinate a school holiday programme designed and run by Bachelor of Sports Coaching students from the Christchurch College of Education. With short notice three children arrived on the first day, and six the next. Activities included badminton, indoor soccer, boxing, and pool. The favourable ratio of participants to supervisors allowed the children to choose their favourite activity, and sponsorship from Meadow Fresh also proved an important factor in their enjoyment of the programme. Other than a pool cue going through the glass door of the pie warmer, the programme was incident free. The programme received a

favourable response from the Christchurch City Council, and Management Committee members set about drafting a formal approach for funding to the Council.

Custodian Peter Oakes was approached by the publican of a local hotel who offered sponsorship if the Club could provide enough staff to act as security people during the Crusaders vs Highlanders rugby game. Tony Pauwels coordinated the arrangement, and the Club provided a large team comprised of members from many sections. The Club gained \$1,200 as a result, and the publican was so pleased that an arrangement was struck for the same rate over the remaining games of the season.

After 21 years of service Grace Sim retired as secretary-treasurer. The Club welcomed Tanya Snelleks to the position. Recruited through the volunteer centre, Tanya brought valuable accounting skills and a wealth of experience to the position. Sadly, Grace, who gave her time freely to many groups, passed away the following year.



Power lifter Theo Danis.
The Press.

The Club was well represented at the 1999 Canterbury Regional Bench Press Championships. Philip Capil and Neil Fox both had personal bests, and Neil Ahmna placed second in his weight class as a novice in his first competition. Also in his first competition, Theo Danis broke the South Island under 18 bench press record. 16 year old Theo Danis was the star performer at the 2000 Canterbury power lifting championships, breaking four Canterbury and South Island records in his under-18 82.5kg class in the bench press, squat, deadlift, and total weight categories. The Shirley Boys High School student bench pressed 97.5kg. He then set new records at the 2000 South Island Power Lifting Championships, with a Canterbury deadlift record at 160kg, the South Island bench press record at 112.5kg and total of 412.5kg.

Rachel Peverill competed for the first time in boxing. She lost in a points decision, but it was a worthy effort against the New Zealand champion, who had fought seven times previously. Soon after, her boxing coach, Bryan Barry, was invited by his brother Kevin Barry Jun. to join the David Tua camp and look after the sparring partners. Both the Barry brothers used to train at Crichton Cobbers.' Gerry Kampjes, a former Club boxing coach once more took up the coaching role.

David Tua Visits

In April 2000, young Crichton Cobbers' boxers got the thrill of their lives when world heavy weight title contender David Tua made an unexpected visit. He popped in with coach Kevin Barry. The youngsters found the punching powerhouse of the ring was a gentle

giant at heart as he gave the boxers some professional tips and answered questions about his career.



The Club received a number of enquiries about new programmes. Although tai chi chuan, hip hop classes, and rhythmic gymnastics did not get off the ground, 28 youngsters from several southeastern schools experienced aikido and judo in September. The sessions were lively with plenty of action and noise in support. Alan Boucher was confirmed as a new taekwondo instructor, and David Taylor initiated the employment of Les Pulham as a part time cleaner.

Boxers with
David Tua.
Crichton Cobbers'
Club.

Rick Armstrong Room

With a generous donation of \$3,000 from Rick Armstrong of Rick Armstrong Motors, the dingy room with the bare concrete floor that accommodated a collection of leg training equipment was transformed into a very pleasant place. A team of Rotary Club members painted the room one Saturday, and Management Committee Ron Armstrong (father of Rick Armstrong) negotiated an excellent deal on some new carpet. Rachel Gastrell, who unfortunately got some glue on her new jeans in the process, constructed two large red notice boards. These displayed exercise posters featuring Club member Chris Mene, a Canterbury decathlete and Samoan Olympian. The room was named the Rick Armstrong Room, and outfitted as a warm-up room for the use and benefit of all members. Equipment featured a brand new rowing machine, heavy-duty scales, two Swiss balls, and a filing cabinet for exercise programmes, donated by Skill New Zealand. Two exercise bikes were purchased from local gym Pro Fitness when they bought out World Gym.

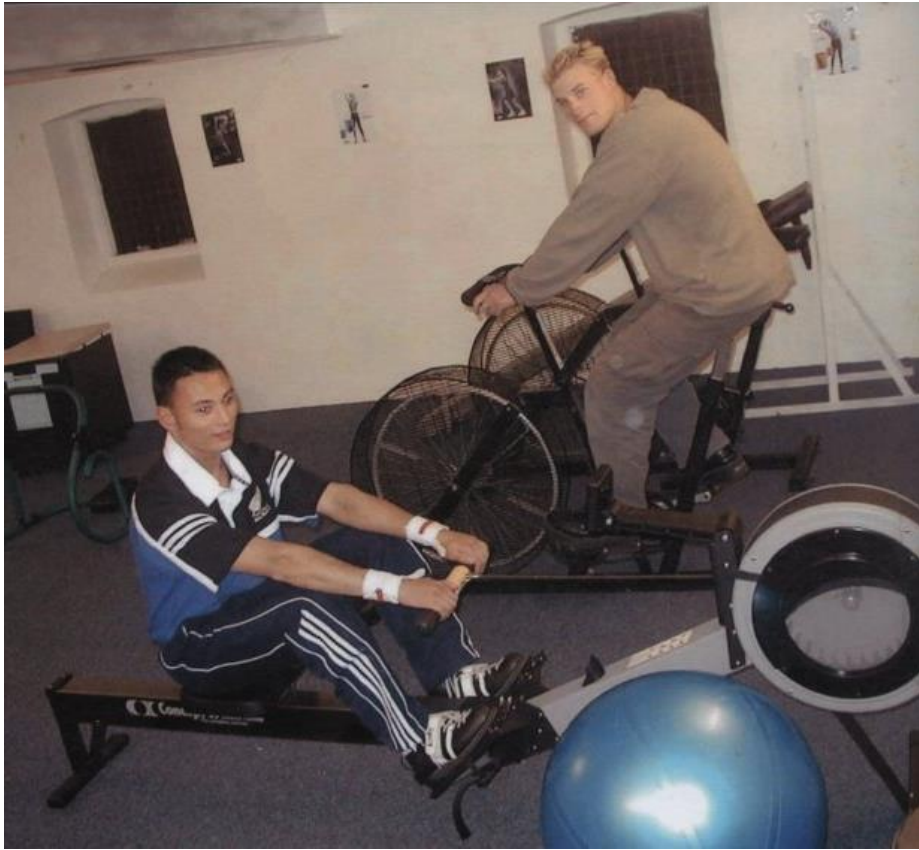


Before renovation

Above: The leg press machines in the old leg room.

Right: The homemade calf raise machine sits on the bare concrete floor. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*





After Renovation

Shane Lewis-Millar and Laicheong Lee use the new cardio equipment in the Rick Armstrong Room. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*



Renovations included carpet, new lighting, and paint. *Crichton Cobbers' Club.*

Notice boards display information on stretching, nutrition, and training options for work in the fitness industry.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



Judo Dojo Renovations

In late 2000, all the judo mats were removed from the dojo, and a new insulated ceiling of the type used in the McKenzie Gymnasium was installed. The new ceiling, lighting, and heat pump were completed at a cost of \$18,000. The installation of the air-conditioning heat pump and external ducting was deemed a successful trial and a second unit of similar size was then installed in the lower weights room. A third unit followed in the reception area.

The first of many air-conditioning heat pumps to be installed in Bruorton House sits flush against the ceiling in the judo dojo.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



CHAPTER NINE

Moving Ahead

The weight training membership had grown steadily and members increasingly requested extended opening hours to make use of the facilities. As the Club had done many times since moving into Bruorton House, a sub-committee was formed to examine how the building and facilities could be utilised during the day. The sub-committee, comprised of Laicheong Lee, Neil Fox, Tanya Snelleksz and Tony Pauwels, agreed the best prospect was an approach to the Christchurch City Council seeking funding for paid staff. Laicheong Lee had used the Club management structure as a case study for his M.B.A, while Neil Fox had constructed some financial models at the University of Canterbury. Through ownership of the building and resources, and a strong historical connection to the community, they concluded that the Club was well placed to achieve dramatic and sustainable membership growth. A mix of extended hours, increased customer service, quality facilities, marketing, and the traditional low membership prices would attract a significant amount of new members. The loose business plan that followed simply duplicated what many large commercial fitness centres were doing successfully throughout New Zealand. It focused on the potential for membership growth through the provision of popular cardio fitness and weights equipment, and the creation of an environment supportive of the Club's untapped female market. Discussions with commercial gyms in Dunedin and Christchurch confirmed that a many members joined solely to use this type of equipment. The same model was also operating successfully at the community based AMI Sports and Fitness Centre in Rangiora. Marketing the Club as a community fitness centre could theoretically generate enough revenue, to not only be well staffed and self sufficient, but to enable the Club to once again take up the challenge of youth development work. It was a tempting idea, but as always, an elusive initial funding injection was required. A trial was arranged in which weights member Mark Neame supervised two female fitness students from Aoraki Polytechnic for a period of work experience. The students made themselves available for daytime fitness consultations and weight training programmes using a diary at the office. The response from members was enthusiastic. In July 2000, Neil Fox prepared a discussion document for a funding approach to the Christchurch City Council. The business plan was titled 'Working with Youth and the Community' and it featured eight key goals for moving the Club ahead.

- Fully utilise Club facilities and increase hours to meet demand
- Move towards increased self-sufficiency while maintaining low fees

- Extend services for 'at risk' youth and low income earners
- Interior upgrade of the building
- Appoint paid reception, management and fitness staff
- Fund staff training for volunteers & improve links to youth groups
- Promote the idea that cost is not a barrier to exercise and fitness
- Computerise our processes

The proposal requested a grant of \$115,000 spread over 24 months. Club President Frank Grey presented the document to Cr. Carole Evans and in October, Frank Grey and Neil Fox met with Peter Walls, Senior Facilities Advisor with the Christchurch City Council. Unfortunately, Peter Walls was very clear that the Christchurch City Council had no money for the Club, however, he freely provided advice and pages of notes were recorded.

Consequently, Neil Fox approached Alison Brown from the High Street branch of the Department of Work and Income. Within a few weeks the Club was granted an employment subsidy called Task Force Green. The subsidy allowed for the full-time employment of a staff member to work on a community project for 13 weeks. It presented an incredible opportunity. In late December 2000, Les Pulham, who was currently employed part-time by the Club as a cleaner was appointed to a 30 hour a week position as a cleaner/receptionist. Instead of closing for 30 days over the summer break as planned, the Club closed for only 11 days thanks to Les. Resident Custodian Peter Oakes returned from his summer break and continued to work his normal hours, while Les Pulham opened the building earlier to allow the Club to extend the daytime opening hours.

A second appointment was confirmed at a Special Meeting of the Management Committee in January. The Department had approved an A.C.E employment subsidy, jointly funded by the Department of Work and Income and the Canterbury Development Corporation. A.C.E or Adult Community Employment was a subsidised employment assistance programme designed specifically for community groups like Crichton Cobbers'. It offered a six-month subsidy for the appointment of anyone registered as long-term unemployed. After considering applications, the Committee appointed Mark Neame, who had worked in membership sales and customer service for Les Mills World of Fitness and the Powerhouse Gym in Christchurch. Mark started working 30 hours a week from early February 2001. Unlike the Club Custodian who had by necessity been bound to the Club office, this new position offered the freedom to show potential members through the building, and to venture out into the community. Mark Neame quickly introduced some of the administration procedures he had used for recruiting new members at Les Mills, and all new members were offered a free daytime fitness consultation and a personalised fitness programme.

After lots of hard work over the summer break, many changes greeted members as they returned to the Club. Frank Grey summed it up when he said 'the year 2000 has been an exciting year for the Club,' in his President's Report in February 2001. Even without a grant from the Christchurch City Council, the Club had already achieved three of the moving ahead goals.

- Opening hours had increased by 40%,
- Two new staff had been appointed, at a cost of \$64.80 each week.
- And computerised membership was underway.

Thanks to a large and timely grant from a gaming machine charity, New Zealand Community Trust, \$6,200 had fully funded the purchase of a laminating machine, a laser printer, a bar code reader and front desk software for the office computer. Staff could now develop a swipe card database of members. The challenge was to now find funding to secure the staff positions, and to renovate the foyer, reception area and accessways.

In March 2001, with their shoes polished and best shirts ironed, Neil Fox, Frank Grey, and Laicheong Lee went to visit Canterbury's largest community funding agency, the Community Trust. The Community Trust had been established in 1988 as a charitable trust, with the purpose of providing charitable, cultural, philanthropic and recreational benefits to the community. The team met with Trust Manager Wayne Ward and presented their business plan to rejuvenate youth development at Crichton Cobbers'. They discussed their proposed application for the youth funding round, and Wayne Ward appeared interested. Mark Neame co-ordinated letters of support from local high school, Linwood College, police DARE programme co-ordinator Constable Chris Mene, the YMCA, and a wide variety of youth groups who utilised the Club. These were bound into a comprehensive application prepared by Neil Fox, and submitted to Community Trust. It was time to wait and hope for a favourable result.



Laicheong Lee

With their fingers crossed, the staff and committee pushed on with their organisational change programme. A footpath sign was purchased, another telephone line arranged and an advertising campaign started in the community newspaper. Weights member Philip Capil arranged internet access, an email address, and constructed a Club web site.

Encouraged by the gaming machine trust grant for the membership database, Philip Capil and Neil Fox arranged to meet a publican who had hosted a recent power lifting competition. They discussed funding of \$2,600 toward heavy rubber mats for the Olympic weightlifting platform and were surprised when he handed them an application form. Ten weeks later the money was in the Club bank account. Not to let an

opportunity go by, they quickly determined the location of every hotel with gaming machines in Canterbury, and systematically set about approaching each in turn. Mark Neame spent many hours driving from pub to pub, introducing himself to pub staff, and collecting application forms. The following month the Management Committee approved eight applications for gaming machine funding, and ten applications the following month. The process was highly successful and the Club quickly gained a glass door chiller, computer equipment, and more large and expensive weight training machines. As not all applications were successful, it was best to allow six months between applying for an item and being in a position to buy it. This technique allowed the Management Committee to strategically plan the resources required to meet estimated membership growth in six months time. Future planning also ensured the Club minimised the expenditure of cash, something that remained a scarce commodity.

Phil Capil (left), Neil Fox (centre) and Mark Neame, recruit new members at the Linwood Multi-Cultural Festival.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.



A Marketing and Membership sub-committee formed to work with Mark Neame, and rapidly developed a 12-month strategy. Membership began to rise steadily. Mike Ryan was approved as an instructor and he started a karate section, and kickboxing developed under coaches Bryan Fowler and Mark Harris.

The Club had good public exposure for hosting the World Supergames Wrestling, and three power lifting competitions. As is often the case, some of the best advertising was free. In one of many newspaper articles he prepared for the benefit of the Club, Custodian Peter Oakes interviewed a visiting American jujitsu master, Professor Gary Jones from Little Rock Arkansas. Prof. Jones took the opportunity to visit local clubs, Can Am Ju and Crichton Cobbers jujitsu. A ninth degree

black belt in the Okazaki style, he praised the local members for the way in which they were practicing their martial art. “These guys had a good grasp of what they were teaching,” he said.

The Community Trust

On 30 May 2001, Management Committee members attended a special meeting to celebrate the success of the funding application to the Community Trust. The Club received a massive grant of \$91,500, before GST. As described in the application, half the grant was earmarked for interior renovations, and half for staff salaries. A building sub-committee was rapidly formed. Jim Morrow, Frank Grey, and Neil Fox commissioned local contract managers, The Design Team, to organise a comprehensive renovation of the foyer, reception area and accessways. The Design Team had supported the funding application with a written quote for this work. The renovations were completed quickly and efficiently, with painting, new carpet, and new lighting throughout much of the building. The old office was completely removed. By chance the Christchurch Central Public Library was also undergoing a refurbishment and a small donation to the Library secured an almost new reception counter. This was duly transported to the Club where it proved to be a perfect fit in its new home.



The office was removed, and a new reception counter provided a sense of space.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

A double set of glass doors on the street frontage completed the project and the building was transformed. The effect was immediate, with the foyer appearing bright, open and inviting.

Double doors
reduced the effect
of the cold winter
wind.
Crichton Cobbers'
Club.



Dion Woodfield



Mark Neame



Phil Capil

After extensive debate, the Management Committee endorsed a very difficult decision to an end a long tradition of a resident Club Custodian. The resident custodian position ended so that the flat located on the ground floor of the building could be developed as a sick bay, a paraplegic toilet and a staff office. Although offered a position, Custodian Peter Oakes felt it was time to move on and follow his passion, which was writing. On the recommendation of the staffing structures sub-committee comprised of Tanya Snelleks and Laicheong Lee, Philip Capil was appointed to a new position of full-time Club Secretary. Phil, a computer science student at the University of Canterbury, had been working voluntarily for several months as an office administrator at the Club. Dion Woodfield joined Mark Neame and Phil Capil, in a part time capacity.

As the rapid membership growth continued, the Management Committee provided a balanced approach to governance and leadership, with an increasing focus on strategic planning. Committee member Neil Fox resigned in late August, moving to a new position in Wellington, and Hemi Te Hemi was welcomed to the Committee. Increasing community awareness of the Club was evident when four new Management Committee members were appointed at the 2002 AGM. Club President Frank Grey commented on the success and the sadness of the year:

from the time of our last annual report we have received 32 grants totaling \$172,000.¹⁷⁵ A year ago our Club was so under-utilised, open only 35 hours a week. It is now open more than 60 hours a week. To accommodate this we have increased our staff numbers from 2 to 4, 2 full-time and 2 part-time. Two of our staff have the expertise and experience to do programmes for members with special

needs in weight training. Membership numbers have climbed dramatically during 2001 and I am sure they will continue to climb. Our staff set a target of 800 members by the end of 2001. I am pleased to report that the target was reached. It is great to see all sections thriving.

In January this year Ron Armstrong, one of our long-serving committee members, had a heart attack from which he did not survive. He was connected to judo for many years, his children being keen members and Ron being a supportive father. Very quickly Ron was elected onto the management committee, on which his input has been valued highly.



A ParaFed Canterbury group exercises in the wrestling room. Crichton Cobbers' Club.

Masters of Funding

Early in 2002, the Management Committee divided into multiple sub committees to better manage the growing demands of the Club. A key focus was monitoring the gap between revenue and expenditure. The work toward self-sustainability was helped once again by a substantial grant from the Community Trust. The sum of \$25,000 was received toward staff costs, and this was followed by a hefty grant of \$42,000 from the Lotteries Community Facilities fund. This was toward a comprehensive upgrade of the ablution block and the installation of a paraplegic toilet. The Lotteries grant was then grouped with the first of three annual grant installments of \$10,000 from the Christchurch City Council. Much to the delight of members, the changing rooms and toilets were upgraded by September.

The staff had become exceptionally proficient in the art of applying for gaming machine funds, and multiple grants enabled the purchase of



table tennis tables, additional weight training machines, martial arts equipment, and a painting and lighting upgrade in both the upstairs weight training room and the wrestling room. Membership continued to climb, and the Club added new sections in kendo, capoeira and daytime aerobics.

Celebrating Success

The Club has achieved a long awaited dream over the last few years. A full time instructor and daytime access to the building and equipment had been an elusive goal for almost fifty years. The Crichton Cobbers' Club has experienced something of a turn around in recent times, helped largely by a seemingly impossible plethora of grants, totalling almost a quarter of a million dollars.

Without a doubt, the Crichton Cobbers' Club 75th Anniversary celebrations will see the Club in fine form.



Aikido member, Blake Bennett, in full attire.
Crichton Cobbers' Club.

PAST PRESIDENTS

1926-1957	J. Bruorton (Club Director)
1950-1955	Sir John R. McKenzie*
1955-1958	H. B. Kay
1959	E. Buckeridge (acting)
1960-1961	H. B. Kay
1962	R. Fleck
1963-1965	H. Kay
1966-1967	A. T. F. Stokes
1968-1969	B. J. Schimanski
1970-1971	P. Hubble
1972-1974	J. R. Morrow
1975-1976	F. Blackler
1977 – 1979	T. Hagarty
1980	C. Armstrong
1981-1982	C. Ragg
1983	R. Armstrong
1984	C. Ragg
1985 – 1988	B. Hadcroft
1989 – 1990	N. Whyte
1991 – 1998	C. Ragg
1998 to present	F. Grey

* Although Jack Bruorton was Club Director, Sir John R. McKenzie was the first Club President.

PRIZE WINNERS

J A Redpath Sportsman Of The Year

1953 – D Rosewarne	1975 – G Tritt
1954 – D Green	1976 – Chris Bras
1955 – I Pitt	1977 – G Kennedy
1956 – I Pitt	1978 – J Pascua
1958 – P Shepperd	1979 – Clive Bishop
1959 – D Nicholls & Micky Hall	1980 – Bryce Butterfield
1960 – R Gearry	1981 – John Moody
1961 – F Tombling & M Huston	1982 – David Mangnall
1962 – J Gibson	1983 – Matthew Chant
1963 – K Summers	1984 – Craig Richardson
1964 – W Pickering	1985 – John Moody
1965 – T Dacombe	1986 – Antonia Wong
1966 – P Ragg	1987 – Kevin O'Connor
1967 – A Tritt	1988 – Tony Armstrong
1968 – Gary Anderson	1989 – Calvyn Snelgar
1969 – Dennis Collins	1990 – Michael Graham
1970 – Wayne Blackler	1991 – Russell Perrett
1971 – W Stenhouse	1992 – John Moody
1972 – J Growcott	1993 – Michael Graham
1973 – Kerry Smith	1994 – Calvyn Snelgar
1974 – Michael Trousellot	

Sadie Lilly Cup

Instructor of the Year	1982 – Stan Taylor
1970 – T S Kennedy	1983 – Grant Armstrong
1971 – R W Stanley	1984 – John Bishop & Nikki Sexstone
1972 – E D Kennedy	1985 – Janet Foley
1973 – Dennis Nolan	1986 – Peter Kemp
1974 – Stan Taylor	1987 – Malcolm Ravenscroft
1975 – J Nathan	1988 – Christine Murray
1976 – Bryce Hadcroft	1989 – Bryce Hadcroft
1977 – J Growcott	1990 – Kevin O'Connor
1978 – S Taylor	1991 – Colin Robinson
1979 – Kevin Dawson	1992 – Tebor Rejnai
1980 – Bernie Pope & Louise Hastie	1993 – Steven Benbow
1981 – Rick Anderson	1994 – Suzanne Johnson

Francis Curtis Cup

For All Round Ability

1970 – C Dawson
1973 – Michael O'Brien
1974 – G Quinn
1976 – Alistair Hay
1979 – David Hill
1980 – Mark Cossar
1981 – Greg Colquhoun
1982 – Craig Collins
1983 – Janet Foley

1984 – John Moody
1985 – Ivan Tuuta
1986 – John Moody
1987 – Russell Perrett
1988 – Bruce West
1989 – Anthony Grey
1991 – Terry Pierson
1992 – Suzzane Johnson
1993 – Jason White
1994 – Tim Forgenon

Denis Empson Cup

For Outstanding Behaviour, Helpfulness, Attendance and Team Spirit

1973 – Mark Brown
1974 – G Tritt
1976 – Adam Mabey
1979 – Alan Joyce
1980 – Grant Armstrong
1981 – Janet Foley & Christine Nesbit
1982 – Grant Armstrong
1983 – Nicola Sexstone

1984 – Carolyn Dymock
1986 – Bridget Reilly
1987 – Josie Schwass
1988 – Lisa Nesbit
1989 – Liam Conyer
1990 – Angela Murray
1991 – Megan McKerman-Brooker

Anderson Trophy

Most Improved Junior Judoka

1969 – M Huddy
1970 – F Noster
1971 – Colin Williamson
1972 – C Williamson
1973 – Richard Cameron
1974 – G Kennedy
1975 – Alan Lindsay
1976 – Morgan Nathan
1977 – P Pascua
1978 – B Butterfield
1979 – Craig Collins
1980 – Kevin O'Connor
1981 – Stephen Voyce

1982 – Michael Graham
1983 – Shane LeCompte
1984 – Craig Muir
1985 – Kerryn McDonald
1986 – Ricky Neal
1987 – Robert Neale
1988 – Ricky Neale
1989 – Carl Anthony
1990 – Bradley Clark
1991 – Shannon Montgomery
1992 – Michael Hood
1993 – J McArthur

Restricted Ku

1973 – Tommy Clayton
1974 – M Oetgen
1976 – Mark Cossar
1979 – Grant Buchanan
1980 – Alistair Cree
1981 – Glen Colquhoun & Dylen Hunt
1982 – Hoani Ngata
1983 – Samuel Grainger
1984 – Bruse West

1985 – Carl Anthony
1986 – Russell Snelgar
1987 – Neville Johns
1988 – James Maxwell
1989 – Jody McArthur
1990 – Shannon Robson
1991 – Tim Nicholson
1992 – Steve Gray

Most Improved Junior Boxer

1964 – R Williams
1965 – W Atkins
1967 – B Pooley
1968 – P Hindmarsh
1969 – M Garty
1970 – D Salter
1971 – K Siave
1972 – S Dawson
1973 – Scott Dawson
1974 – G Haar
1975 – K Anderson

1976 – Peter Cohen & Mark Butler
1978 – C Bishop
1979 – Craig Hamilton
1980 – Darin Chand
1981 – Lance Ash
1982 – Wayne Jones
1983 – Carl Franklin
1984 – Jason Hay
1985 – John Manson
1986 – Gary Coles
1987 – Kelly Andrews

Most Scientific Junior Wrestler

1966 – B Hay
1967 – J Tyler
1968 – Ray Howard
1969 – M Chisholm
1970 – B Dixon
1971 – M Johnston
1972 – C Thyne
1973 – P Crowe
1974 – Kerry Rose
1975 – D McLachlan
1976 – Chris Abraham
1977 – M Ross

1978 – W Tewnion
1979 – D Mangnall
1981 – Craig Richardson
1982 – David Mangnall
1983 – C Richardson
1984 – Mark Saunders
1985 – Paul Gread
1986 – Russell Perrett
1987 – Anthony Grey
1988 – James Haugh
1989 – Anthony Grey

Ivor Cup

Most Scientific Junior Boxer

1953 – D Murphy
1954 – B Barnes & S Beams
1955 – R Hicks
1956 – C Falloon
1958 – M Hall
1959 – G Bennett
1960 – G Grieve
1961 – G Bennett
1962 – J Bolt
1964 – R Hitchcock
1966 – Michael Hughes
1967 – K Pyne
1968 – Gary Rickerby
1969 – B Lloyd
1970 – O Salter
1971 – G Robinson & S Humphrey

1972 – B Chappell
1973 – Michael Bain
1974 – L Gallop
1975 – Kevin Barry
1976 – Robert Gibbs
1978 – W Jones
1979 – Mark Rivers
1980 – Clive Bishop
1981 – Wayne Jones
1982 – Clive Bishop
1983 – Alan Cannon
1984 – Dian Lamb
1985 – Jason Hay
1986 – Jason Hay
1987 – Gary Coles

Ken Holland Memorial Challenge Trophy – Wrestling

For Best All Round Sportmanship

1974 – J Pullen
1975 – G Stewart
1976 – Chris Bras
1977 – R Strong
1978 – M Allen
1979 – Matthew Ross
1980 – Paul Griggs
1981 – Jack Woudberg
1982 – Craig Richardson

1983 – W Tewnion
1984 – David Mangnall
1985 – Russell Perrett
1986 – Craig Richardson
1987 – Craig Richardson
1988 – Anthony Grey
1989 – Russell Perrett
1991 – Anthony Grey

Charles Stewart Memorial Cup – Gymnastics

Persistent Effort and Diligence

1986 – Debby Granger
1987 – Janet Burrows
1988 – Sarah Schimanski

1990 – Kylie Masters
1991 – Angela Murray

Sir Francis Adams Memorial

Greatest Contribution to Amateur Wrestling Within and Beyond the Club

1974 – Ray Howard
1976 – Ivan Tuuta
1980 – M Allan
1981 – Paul Griggs
1982 – Chris Bras
1983 – David Mangnall
1984 – Arie Bras

1985 – Norm Perrett & Lyn Genet
1986 – Ivan Tuuta
1987 – Norm Perrett
1988 – Charmayne Haugh
1989 – Arie Bras
1990 – Russell Perrett

Mitchell Cup

Most Improved Junior Wrestler ‘A’ Section

1980 – David Allan
1981 – David Mangnall
1982 – Terry Wakefield
1983 – M Ross
1984 – Stephen Tahī
1985 – Jan Genet

1986 – Kaylob Gorrie
1987 – Jody Gread
1988 – Stephen Inns
1989 – Carl Acraman
1990 – Mark Driver

Mitchell Cup

Most Improved Junior Wrestler ‘B’ Section

1977 – D Magon
1978 – G Kendall
1979 – W Stiff
1980 – Paul Duder
1981 – Thomas Crosbie
1982 – Paul Gread
1983 – Russell Perrett

1984 – Gareth Winn
1985 – Anthony Grey
1986 – Ramahi Brosnahan
1987 – Jody Marshall
1988 – Dean Austin
1989 – Jeremy Packham
1990 – David Colins

Mitchell Cup

Most Improved Senior Wrestler

1977 – B Smith
1978 – Chris Bras
1979 – Warren Stiff
1983 – B Ellerm
1984 – Terry Wakefield
1985 – Brent Saunders

1986 – Carl Nixon
1987 – Dave Gorrie
1988 – Richardd Grant
1989 – Brendon White
1990 – Richard Grant
1991 – Russell Parrett

Lady Adam's Trophy

Most Improved Weightlifter

1983 – Paul Nunan
1984 – Barry Fair
1985 – Matthew Griffin
1986 – Brent Nicolson
1987 – Michael Gardiner

1988 – Stephen Gardiner
1991 – Andrew Robinson
1992 – Langi Toomalatai
1993 – Laicheong Lee

Keene Trophy

Gymnast of the Year

1978 – P Keene
1979 – Adam Mabey
1980 – Adam Mabey

1981 – Nickolas Allen
1982 – Adam Mabey

Kennedy Trophy

Most Improved Girl Gymnast

1980 – Joanne Cosgrove
1981 – Vicki Murray
1982 – Catherine Silvester
1983 – Janine Day
1984 – Karen Philpott
1985 – Nicole Grigg

1986 – Janette Burrows
1987 – Angie Morgan
1988 – Emma Schimanski
1989 – Fiona Garlands
1990 – Pamela Jones
1991 – Kylie Masters

Willams Trophy

For Best Performed Badge Class Gymnast

1982 – Yvette Saba
1983 – Meagan Brunson
1984 – Debbie Granger
1985 – Kimberley Martin
1986 – Lisa Nesbit

1987 – James Bradbrook
1988 – Rebecca Manawatu
1989 – Kylie masters
1990 – Olivia Barrett

W.F. Brown Cup

For Good Courage

1976 – Robert Warren
1977 – B Smith
1978 – J Nathan
1979 – Daniel Upton
1980 – Matthew Ross
1981 – Darren Chand
1982 – Glen Drake
1983 – John Visser
1984 – Daniel Walker

1986 – Steve Crackel
1987 – S Symonds
1988 – Susan Symonds
1990 – Russell Perrett
1991 – Joseph Nathan
1992 – Dave Best
1993 – Terry Pierson
1994 – Jason White

Taylor Cup

For Best Performed Judoka

1977 – G Kennedy
1978 – J Pascua
1979 – David Hill
1980 – Bryce Butterfield
1981 – John Moody
1982 – John Moody
1983 – Matthew Chant
1984 – Phil McSweeney
1985 – John Moody

1986 – Antonia Wong
1987 – John Moody
1988 – Tony Armstrong
1989 – Calvyn Snelgar
1990 – Calvyn Snelgar
1991 – Calvyn Snelgar
1992 – John Moody
1993 – John Moody
1994 – Calvyn Snelgar

O'Conner Trophy

Best Throw in Competition

1982 – John Moody
1983 – Mark Cossar
1984 – Daniel Taylor
1985 – Anthony Tihore
1986 – Anthony Tihore
1987 – Tony Armstrong

1988 – Craig Hider
1989 – Andrew McKerrow
1990 – Andrew Reid
1991 – Bradley Clark
1992 – Steve Watts

Most Scientific Senior Boxer

1983 – Clive Bishop
1984 – D Allan
1985 – David Allen

1986 – Martin Callaghan
1987 – Raymond Smith

Jenkins Trophy

Most Improved Girl Judoka

1980 – Julie Archer
1981 – Antonia Wong
1982 – Antonia Wong
1983 – Louise Hastie

1984 – Kirsten Taylor & Paula Le
Compte
1985 – Antonia Wong
1986 – Anna Dwyer
1987 – Vanita Andrews

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