

**THE HISTORY OF J R (RON) HILL OVAL TORONTO**



**THE HISTORY FROM 1973 TO 31 DECEMBER 2016**

**BY ROBERT HOLLAND AND GLEN COULTON**

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The authors of this story were Robert Holland (0458 505488 email [dutchylives@bigpond.com](mailto:dutchylives@bigpond.com)) while Glen Coulton wrote the Toronto Croquet Club Story. Sadly Glen passed away on 8 August 2016 before the book was completed and printed.

The photo on the front page was taken on 18 September 2016 at a trial match between the Newcastle Representative Cricket Team and Western Suburbs District Cricket Club (Sydney). The former Australian Test Cricket Captain Michael Clarke played in the match but unfortunately it was washed out after about an hour's play and Michael did not bat. The photo shows the new roof constructed by Lake Macquarie City Council in June 2016.

## CHAPTER 1

### IN THE BEGINNING

#### **Keith Barry Ovals Board (KBOB).**

Keith Barry Ovals Board was formed in 1964 to provide and improve playing fields for the youth of Toronto. The original committee members were Keith Barry, Ron Hill, Digger Gardner (father of Southern Lakes high scoring 1<sup>st</sup> grade batsman John Gardner) and John Maslin. KBOB originally had some involvement with developing Leagues Park (small disused football field immediately west of the Toronto Cemetery) but I haven't been able to establish the extent of their involvement. Later they constructed Keith Barry Oval. They did not have the benefit of any large grants to do the work and all the work was undertaken on a shoe-string budget involving beg, borrow and steal.

KBOB used to fund raise by running Housie nights and also arranging bus trips to the football in Sydney. Toronto Bus Service (owned by Bob Hertogs) used to donate a bus once a year and also Mrs Aileen Maslin used to organise the housie and card nights. The housie nights were very popular and well attended. The funds raised were spent on developing the sporting ovals.

In May 2010 I interviewed John Maslin (aged 78) who had been a member of the original Keith Barry Ovals Board and he gave me an insight into the workings of the Keith Barry Ovals Board.

John Maslin said that Keith Barry (a local plasterer) was a terrific person who would drop his plastering jobs to do work at Keith Barry Oval. He was the chair of KBOB. Also Digger Gardner was an Electrician at Awaba Mine and he was able to obtain electrical materials. The Board was able to obtain materials some from Wangi Power Station, Awaba Mine, Newstan Mine and also some other private donations.

Ron Hill was a maintenance supervisor at Wangi Power Station and could arrange machinery and materials. Ron borrowed a rubber tyred dozer from Wangi Power Station and he drove it at Keith Barry Oval when the oval was being constructed. On one occasion he got a machine well and truly bogged at the oval.

John Maslin spoke of a number of prominent people from Toronto who were interested in and involved in Junior Rugby League. He mentioned Trevor Fullerton school teacher at Toronto West Public School who left the school in 1969, interested in junior football. Jack Hinchey was an older teacher, from the Bradman era, (he once bowled Bradman in a school match but not before Bradman had scored 137) and the Headmaster at Toronto West Public School (Now Biriban Public School) Alan Flack. Trevor Fullerton and Jack Hinchey wanted better sports grounds in the vicinity of Toronto West Public School.

John Maslin said that he thought that Trevor Fullerton and Jack Hinchey wanted a closer oval (than Leagues Park) for TWPS sports and Ron Hill got involved at that time. They didn't want the kids from TWPS walking all the way to Leagues Park.

Letter on file (LMCC) dated 26 May 1965 from Toronto District Schoolboys Rugby League Club asking for land, 6.5 acres (about 3 ha), at Bridge Street Toronto to be

made available for playing fields. The following people will be Trustees Keith Barry, J Terry, John Maslin and Ron Hill.

Letter (LMCC) dated 10 June 1965 to Keith Barry, President, Toronto Junior Rugby League Club saying that Council will not agree with the 6.5 acres of land being placed under the control of the committee but rather it being given to the control of the Toronto Urban Area (Urban Committees were mini Councils that managed some affairs of Council).

Letter (LMCC) dated 30 May 1966 from Ron Hill, Secretary setting out the names of the Trustees for two ovals in Toronto West subject to Council approval. The names were President Keith Barry, Secretary Ron Hill, Councillor Keith Smith, R Archard, The President of Toronto Urban Committee Bob Hume, Digger Gardner and John Maslin.

The ground on the western side of the cemetery and to the south of the Awaba Road would be known as Leagues Park and the other ground bounded by the Awaba Road, Sunderland street and Bridge Street is to be known as Keith Barry Park.

Report to Council on 11 July 1966 agreeing to those named being on the committee. The committee was given Care, Control and Management of the Public Reserve known as Keith Barry Park.

John Maslin spoke about Leagues Park being used for sport. At that time Keith Barry Oval was a swamp area. Keith Smith Councillor (who owned a truck) was involved and Merv Hunter who was President of the Shire and later State Member of Parliament was also involved.

The Council said they wanted to swap Leagues Park for Keith Barry Oval because Leagues Park had sewer mains under it and it was too far out of town.

Newstan Colliery provided the fill for Keith Barry Oval and Lyall (Dudie) Peacock was involved. Lyall worked at Newstan Colliery and arranged for chitter to be hauled to Keith Barry Oval and Keith Smith used to assist in hauling the material at no cost but the KBOB paid for his fuel. The teachers used to bring grass to school and get kids to plant it in Keith Barry Oval. Originally the area was very wet and swampy.

Toronto Urban Committee (contributed some money through Chairman Bob Hertogs. Bob Hume, a later Chairman of Toronto Urban Committee was also involved. Vin Henry had a timber yard and he used to provide timber to KBOB.

At various times KBOB had some problems dealing with the Council. While constructing Keith Barry Oval KBOB dug sand and materials from Stoney Creek and they got into trouble from Council.

Also they did all the work of grassing Keith Barry Oval once the earthworks were completed. They dug grass from Leagues Park and were fined by the council.

Another big area of disagreement with Council was concerning money. Council had provided small grants from time to time and when Ron Hill requested some of the money the Council would say there is none left. Ron accused the Council of stealing the money. The small amounts of money he used to request were mainly for fuel for the various machinery and trucks that donated their time.

Later when KBOB disbanded the Council took over the bank account, Ron was never happy with that.

The President of the RSL Darky Johnson was also hard to deal with. The board would ask for money and Darky would say no but as they left the RSL he would give them a cheque for 600 pounds.

In 1973-74 the KBOB constructed J R (Ron) Hill Oval however the KBOB was very close to disbanding at that time. In reality there was only Ron Hill himself left of the original KBOB members when the work commenced and Ron arranged all of the construction work himself.

Ron Hill Oval is built on property Lot 316 DP 246215, 61 Bridge Street, Toronto and the land is zoned for Public Reserve. There was some consolidation of the land carried out by Council because the original land, where Ron Hill Oval is located, was Department of Housing Land. Apparently there was a land swap with the department in about 1973 whereby Council gave the Department vacant land immediately south east of the Booragul roundabout in return for the land at Ron Hill Oval. The land in question at Booragul is still vacant today.

The oval was named J R Hill Oval as part of an arrangement with the original KBOB. The arrangement was that the first field named would be Keith Barry Oval and the next oval would be named J R Hill Oval.

The above information was confirmed with me in a phone conversation with Ron Hill's daughter Kathryn (at the time Kathryn Kelly) on 20 May 2010. RH

Letter (LMCC) 29 July 1977 Council indicated it was building a new amenities building at Ron Hill Oval and should be completed by September 1977. The original building was only two change rooms, two showers and a rear gear shed. There was a narrow verandah area which is the current walkway into the building.

Letter (LMCC) dated 3 August 1978 to Ron Hill, Secretary Keith Barry Oval Management Committee asking for an Annual Report for 1975-76 and also 1978. Ron Hill apparently resigned from the committee in October 1979 following a thought that he was criticised by Council officers for his handling of the activities of Keith Barry Oval.

Council then held a meeting and called applications for new members and a new committee comprising John Wilson, Geoff Carey, R Newton, Norm Forrester and L Field was appointed in January 1980.

Letter from Council 15 March 1983 to Stephen Woodbridge Secretary Southern Lakes District Cricket Club indicating the Toronto West Ovals Board no longer exists and asking Southern Lakes District Cricket Club if it wanted to take over the care and control of Ron Hill Oval.

Letter to Council dated 28 March 1983 with the history of the Toronto West Ovals. The history in 1966 a local committee was granted Care Control and Management of Leagues Park and Keith Barry Oval. In 1973 Ron Hill Oval was added to the land under the control of that Committee.

In 1974 Council records indicate that there was a proposal to form a Toronto and District Ovals Committee to look after all ovals from Bolton Point and Wangi. Council did not proceed with this proposal.

In 1979 Keith Barry Ovals namely Keith Barry Oval, Ron Hill Oval and Little Leagues were under the control of the Keith Barry Trust. In 1982 the Toronto West Ovals Committee became defunct.

Southern Lakes District Cricket (SLDCC) had applied to Council for care control and management of Ron Hill Oval.

Letter from Stephen Woodbridge Secretary SLDCC dated April 1983 indicating that the cricket club is interested in taking over care of the oval. Stephen indicated that the cricket club has 60 members and the future needs for the development of the oval are a watering system for the ground, security lighting, and additions to the clubhouse.

Report to Council 22 April 1985 headed Toronto West Ovals where SLDCC was given Care Control and Management of Ron Hill Oval.

The Mayor of LMCC Councillor John Kilpatrick opened the building extension on 4 February 1996 at a cricket match between the Mayor's X1 and a SLDCC X1.



**Photo of John Kilpatrick Mayor LMCC, Robbie Potter Captain of the Mayor's X1, Ken Clifford President NDCA, Ron Hill and Robert Holland Captain of SLDCC X1 at Ron Hill Oval This is the only photo of Ron Hill that I could find.**

Ron (John Ronald) Hill passed away on 8 March 2001 aged 79 years and 11 months.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONSTRUCTION OF THE CRICKET GROUND

In 1973-74 the KBOB constructed J R (Ron) Hill Oval however the KBOB was very close to disbanding at that time. In reality there was only Ron Hill himself left of the original KBOB members when the work commenced and Ron arranged and carried out a lot of the work.

Woodale Street, with bitumen seal and kerb and gutter, ran through the oval and it was dozed and the gravel and K&G were buried in a large hole at the southern end of the centre wicket square.

Levels of Ron Hill Oval- falls from West to East and this causes a lot of drainage issues in that drainage often runs under the covers and wets the wicket.

Ron Hill was a maintenance supervisor at Wangi Power Station and could arrange machinery and materials. Ron was able to borrow a bulldozer from time to time and also a truck and grader. The machinery was used to undertake the earthworks. I cannot recall material being brought in to assist the job but it may have happened when I wasn't there.

A big area of disagreement with Council was concerning money. Council had provided small grants from time to time and when Ron Hill would request some of the money the Council would say there is none left. Ron accused the Council of stealing the money. The small amounts of money he used to request were for mainly for fuel for the various machinery and trucks that donated their time.

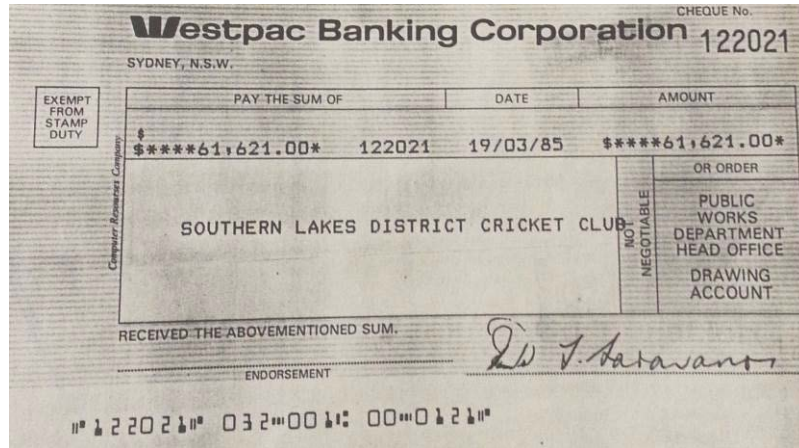
Memo on Council file dated March 1977 from the Municipal Architect about proposed Amenities Building Ron Hill Oval. Please find attached a sketch for the above. The estimated cost of the building is \$17,580 excluding electricity, sewerage and water connections. As the location of the building has not been decided an estimate of these costs cannot be made. An additional cost of \$1000 will be required to landscape and pave around the building.

An internal Council memo dated 1977 from Reg Norris to the Municipal Architect and it indicates attached is a copy of a proposed sight screen and man-proof fence to be constructed by your department at Ron Hill Oval. This construction forms part of the allocation of \$24,500 allocated to the Architectural Department.

The sketch on Council file dated 1983, drawn by me, showing the proposed tea room extension onto the original building. It showed a scorer's bench proposed tea room, a kitchen and a female toilet.

1985-86 - The clubhouse was extended through a Commonwealth Employment Program Grant (rather like a large Work for the Dole program except the workers were paid a wage). The new additions were an afternoon tea room, ladies toilet, kitchen bar, scorer's bench and a storeroom. The building work was nearing completion. The job was planned for 16 weeks with seven workers (5 male, 2 female). Garry Pinches and Geoff Osland supervised the whole project and Garry was the paymaster and had to pay the wages (plus leave loading, workers compensation and payroll tax etc) each week. It was very hard work to supervise the whole project for some months during the winter of 1985. A cheque for \$61,621 was posted to the cricket club and we were a little surprised to receive a cheque for such

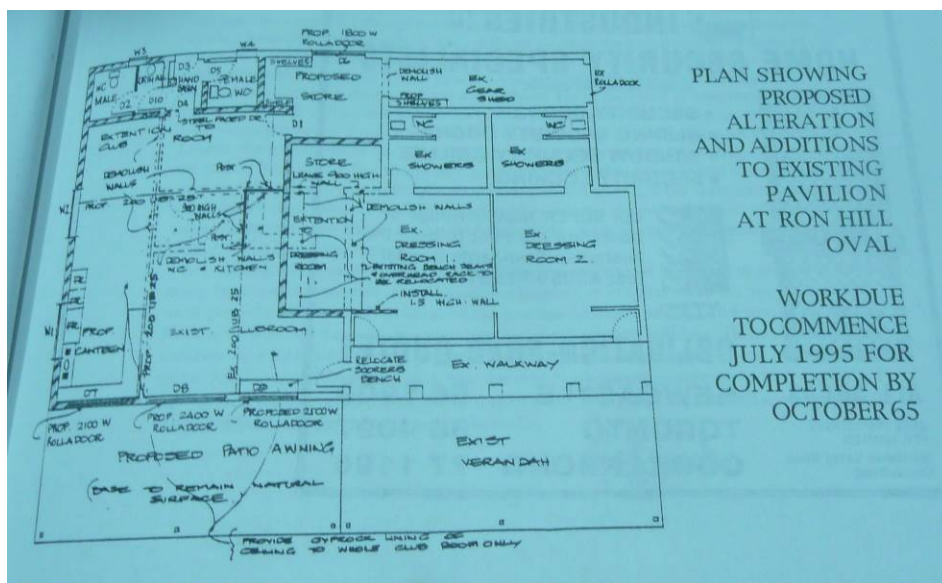
a large amount without any checking mechanism of how it will be spent. It did not even have a covering letter with the cheque. The job was finished ahead of time with a surplus of about \$2700. An additional storeroom was constructed using the surplus time and money.



A copy of the cheque from Department of Public Works for the full cost of the building extension posted to the cricket club without any checks and balances on how it was to be spent

1989-90 Season Lake Macquarie City council provided the verandah, turf practice wickets and sight screens.

1995-96 Season - The building extensions were completed by Freedom Homes (one of our players Greg Tudor had arranged the builder) just before Christmas and it is a very nice facility. We have a new kitchen/bar area and Ned Easton is the barman. The cricket club signed a contract for the extension to the pavillion at a contract price of \$44,000 however the club had to contribute a further 10% to the cost. The work will commence July 1995 and should be completed by October 1995. Note the floor plan below.



Floor plan for proposed extension to the pavillion at Ron Hill Oval






## CHAPTER 3

### THE CRICKET CLUB STORY

This part of the cricket club story is related to the history of Ron Hill Oval and not necessarily a history of the cricket played at the oval. That information is contained in the Annual Reports produced at the end of each season by the cricket club.

The cricket club was officially named Southern Lakes District Cricket Club Inc. and about 2012 we changed our name to Cricket Southern Lakes Inc. however since then we have played under the name of Toronto Workers District Cricket (for sponsorship reasons) as Toronto Workers Club is our major sponsor.

Website	<a href="http://southernlakes.nsw.cricket.com.au">http://southernlakes.nsw.cricket.com.au</a>
Logo	 The logo is circular with a yellow border. Inside the circle, there is a black and white illustration of a cricket player in a batting stance, positioned behind a cricket stumps. The word "CRICKET" is written in a semi-circle at the top, and "SOUTHERN LAKES" is written in a semi-circle at the bottom.
Colours	Gold & Black
Affiliated with	<a href="#">Country Cricket NSW</a> <a href="#">Newcastle C&amp;S Cricket Association</a> <a href="#">Newcastle District Cricket Association Inc.</a> <a href="#">Newcastle Junior Cricket Association</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:cricketsouthernlakes@gmail.com">cricketsouthernlakes@gmail.com</a>
ABN	56644609848
Incorporation Number	Y0541640

Southern Lakes District Cricket Club was formed in 1959-60 (Season 1) when a group of local players decided to form a separate district club based at Toronto. Southern Lakes District Cricket Club has produced many representative players, including two Australian Test Cricketers, Robert "Dutchy" Holland, debuting in the 1984-85 season against the West Indies in Brisbane and Paul "Blocker" Wilson, debuting in the 1997-98 season against India in India.

Robert Holland has the distinction of playing Test cricket while playing grade cricket with Southern Lakes, while Paul Wilson, was playing Sheffield Shield cricket in South Australia.

Paul also became the first cricketer from the Newcastle competition to attend the Australian Cricket Academy in South Australia. The Club has also produced several

New South Wales Country players and numerous Newcastle District Representative Players at both junior and senior levels.

**Most of the following information is taken from the cricket club's Annual Reports and relates to the activities, development and history of Ron Hill Oval.**

**1968-69 Season (Season 10)** Awaba Oval was the home ground of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade while 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades played at Todd Street Oval, Blackalls Park and Toronto No 1 Oval (later named Lyall Peacock Field). The Toronto Urban Committee used to prepare the wickets at both of these grounds.

**1973-74 Season** Ron Hill was the President of the cricket club. The Annual Report indicates that 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades will have a new ground for 1974-75 season near Keith Barry Oval but the oval had not been named.

The oval was named J R Hill Oval or it is commonly called Ron Hill Oval, as part of an arrangement with the original KBOB. The arrangement was that the first field named would be Keith Barry Oval and the next oval would be named Ron Hill Oval.

In 1973-74 the KBOB constructed J R (Ron) Hill Oval however the KBOB was very close to disbanding at that time. In reality there was only Ron Hill himself left of the original KBOB members when the work commenced and Ron arranged all of the work.

**1974-75 Season** Ron Hill was again President of the cricket club. The new ground now named JR Hill Oval was not ready for use and Todd Street Oval was again used for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades.

**1975-76 Season** Ron Hill again President of the cricket club and again Todd Street Oval was used for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades.

**1976-77 Season**

The cricket club operated for the whole season without a President however **Ron Hill Oval was used for the first time.**

The Annual Report for the season says that the cricket club had a grant for the erection of fencing around the ground however the work will need to be undertaken using volunteer labour. I am not sure who the original curators were but probably Wayne Hackett, Greg Singleton and Goonta Schymkiw and Rod Winters was helping.

About 1976 Rod Winters was the curator of the cricket wickets and he rolled the wickets with a water filled hand push roller (about one meter in diameter). There was no fence around the ground at the time. Vandals pushed the roller into the creek at the northern end one Friday afternoon with a game due to start on Saturday. I pulled the roller out of the creek with a piece of rope attached to my Morris 1100 after a lot of wheel spinning on the outfield. The game started on time the next day.

On one occasion players arrived at Ron Hill Oval to inspect the wicket before the start of play only to find a blue biro rolled into the wicket and close to a good length.

### **1977-78 Season**

Cricket practice was held at Ron Hill Oval and we were practicing on concrete practice wickets. There was talk of getting synthetic grass to cover the concrete practice wickets.

The original pavillion was completed and it was only two dressing rooms, showers and toilets.

The curators of the wickets were Wayne Hackett, Goonta Schymkiw and Greg Singleton. It was reported that the wickets needed top dressing to allow 1<sup>st</sup> grade to play there the next season.



The original pavillion, which was only two change rooms, showers and toilets. To stay out of the sun players had to fit under the 1.2 m wide walkway at the front. Note the very wet outfield. The ladies used to prepare afternoon tea but they had to do it in the home dressing room.

### **1978-79 Season.**

The highlight of this season was that we had an overseas professional cricketer named Mark Nicholas. Mark turned 21 during his only season with us. Mark is now famous as a Channell 9 Cricket Commentator.

The club practiced at Ron Hill practice wickets on concrete surfaces. Turf practice wickets were being developed and hopefully they will be ready for use next season.



Photo of the concrete practice wickets used in the early days. Note the puddles on the bowlers run-ups.

The 1<sup>st</sup> grade team played at Awaba Oval while 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades played at Ron Hill Oval. The Secretary at the time said that 1<sup>st</sup> grade should be moved to Ron Hill Oval the next season.

**1979-80 Season** The curators of the wickets were Greg Singleton and Goonta Schymkiw. A second hand barrell mower was purchased for \$170.

**1980-81 Season** The club is still practicing on the concrete practice wickets and hoping that turf practice wickets will be ready next season.

Ron Hill Oval was badly flooded on 7 February 1981. It was probably another East Coast Low Pressure System that caused the heavy flooding rain but there was an unusual circumstance on this occasion.

I have been told that Stoney Creek adjacent to Ron Hill Oval extends to Awaba and far beyond that suburb. There is a large culvert under the railway line at Awaba and at the time of the flooding a lot of logs and debris were caught at the culvert. The flood water was trapped and built up to a great height next to the railway line embankment. Suddenly it all cleared and released a great volume of water which flooded down Stoney Creek to Ron Hill Oval and beyond to Toronto Workers Club.

The whole of the oval and surrounding areas were flooded and water to a depth of **1.20m** flooded through the pavillion, leaving a tide mark on the walls. In those days the building was rather easy to clean because there were no carpets and the building just needed to be hosed out. The original dressing rooms had not been extended so the pavillion was just the two dressing rooms, toilets and showers.



This photo was taken on 7 February 1981 and shows the flooding at Toronto No 2 Oval looking towards the fence at Lyall Peacock Field. You will note the grandstand in the background. Also note the cars driving through the flood waters.

**1981-82 Season**      **The cricket club moved 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade matches to Ron Hill Oval from the start of the season.** The curator of the wickets was Darren Richardson. It was reported that the club is providing a new sight screen and it should be in place for the start of the next season. Also the Council intends top dressing the ground before the start of next season.

The cricket club made a contribution of \$600 to Council to assist with some ground improvements.

Next season we hope to have good turf practice wickets and also synthetic grass on two concrete practice wickets.

Lake Macquarie City Council used to make a grant to cricket clubs of \$400 for wicket preparation and the grant was still happening for this season.

**Graham Jenkinson scored for 1<sup>st</sup> grade for the first full season** and the captain was Ken Shine.

**1982-83 Season**      This season was a very expensive one for the club because several new items were purchased. We purchased sights screens, a second hand roller (\$650 plus new motor \$190 plus \$320 fitting motor), another mower (\$404), an in ground watering system and synthetic grass (\$230).

Darren Richardson was the curator.

We made a \$200 contribution to Council to assist with the watering system for the outfield and wicket area and Council gave us a \$400 grant for wicket preparation.

Letter from Council 15 March 1983 to Stephen Woodbridge Secretary SLDCC indicating the Toronto West Ovals Board no longer exists and asking Southern Lakes District Cricket Club if it wanted to take over the care and control of Ron Hill Oval.

Letter from Stephen Woodbridge Secretary SLDCC dated April 1983 indicating that the cricket club is interested in taking over care of the oval. Stephen indicated that we have 60 members and the future needs for the development of the oval are a watering system for the ground, security lighting, and additions to the clubhouse.

Report to Council 22 April 1985 headed Toronto West Ovals where SLDCC was given Care Control and Management of Ron Hill Oval.

There was a break-in where beer was stolen but Greg Singleton and Stephen Woodbridge tracked down the culprits and reported them to the Police. They were charged and ordered to pay \$55 to the cricket club. The value of the beer they stole was \$23 (see a longer version of this story in Chapter 9.)

**1983-84 Season (Season 25)** The club decided that the centre wicket square needed to be widened by one wicket each side to make a total of five wickets. Darren Richardson was curator and we paid him \$40 for each wicket prepared. Darren's methods were very interesting because he used to bring his girlfriend to the oval and he would sit on the roller with a big umbrella while his girlfriend used to sit on the wicket square watching him.

It was reported that about 60% of the outfield was rough and bumpy.

There was a break-in at the clubhouse and beer was stolen. The thieves were caught by the Police and went to court. The exact details are lost but the value of the stolen beer was say \$90. The court determined that the thieves had to pay back \$150 in five installments. We kept getting cheques for \$30 long after the value was paid back. The cricket club decided it was a good way to raise money. To try to stop break-ins we purchased two deadlocks at a cost of \$56.

Graham Jenkinson again scored in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and he also scored for the Newcastle Representative Team. He was also an assistant scorer at the Sheffield Shield game in Newcastle.

Council advised that additions to the clubhouse were proposed for 1986.

**1984-85 Season** Due to the installation of the two new wickets the ground was not used for the first half of the season. The wickets were very good for batting and bowlers found it hard to get wickets. The curator was again Darren Richardson and it was reported that he did a good job. The two new wickets should be ready for use next season. It was noted that water still pooled in the outfield following heavy rain.

The clubhouse was extended through a Commonwealth Employment Program Grant (rather like a large Work for the Dole program except the workers were paid a wage). The new additions were an afternoon tea room, ladies toilet, kitchen bar, scorers bench and a storeroom. The building work was nearing completion. The job was planned for 16 weeks with seven workers (5 male, 2 female). Garry Pinches and Geoff Osland supervised the whole project and Garry was the paymaster and had to pay the wages (plus leave loading, workers compensation and payroll tax etc) each week. It was very hard work to supervise the whole project for some months during the winter of 1985. A cheque for \$62,000 was posted to the cricket club. The job was finished ahead of time with a surplus of about \$2700. An additional storeroom was constructed using the surplus time and money.

Council stopped subsidising the clubs (usually \$400) for wicket preparation.

Jenko again scored for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade team and he was also a scorer for the Sheffield Shield game in Newcastle.

**1985-86 Season** Letter from Stephen Woodbridge Secretary SLDCC dated April 1983 indicating that the cricket club is interested in taking over care of the oval. Stephen indicated that we have 60 members and the future needs for the development of the oval are a watering system for the ground, security lighting, and additions to the clubhouse.

Report to Council 22 April 1985 headed Toronto West Ovals where SLDCC was given Care Control and Management of Ron Hill Oval.

**1986-87 Season** The cricket club purchased two synthetic grass covers for the concrete practice wickets.

The curators were Mark Jones and his father Mick Jones. The wickets were true but very slow. There was much more grass on the wickets due to Mick Jones watering often. Council top dressed part of the ground south of the centre wickets. The two new wickets were not used and should be right for next season. Greg Jones and his father Mick prepared the wickets for one season and their comment at one point was that a curator "can roll a wicket too much".

At the practice wickets the club hung conveyor belting and painted it white. Also heavy steel reinforced conveyor belting was laid for bowlers run-ups and painted green.

The roller was overhauled at a cost of \$700 and the turf practice wickets, located in front of the clubhouse, were top dressed but not used.

There were a number of break-ins to the building.

Alan Nichols came to the cricket club and broke a finger in his first game.



Photo of Toronto Tigers Junior Baseball that played junior baseball at Ron Hill Oval during the winter of 1986.

I had forgotten that junior baseball was played at Ron Hill Oval for one season only in 1986. Two games were played each Saturday with temporary netting set up in two locations. The first location was just to the High School side of the pavilion and the other location was diagonally opposite. One of the interesting things about this photo is that it shows the pavilion in 1986 looking from the High School side.

**1987-88 Season** The centre wickets were top dressed at the end of the previous season but the work was undertaken too late. As a result the grass was covered with wicket soil and remained buried for the whole of the winter.

A semi final was played at Ron Hill for the first time, but I was not able to establish what grade it was.

The curators were again Mark and Mick Jones and the wickets were a bit slow and holding up.

We had at least 4 break-ins at the clubroom and on one of the occasions the colour TV was smashed, a cash register destroyed (it was open without any money) and the internal walls sprayed with paint.

Council top dressed the oval before the first game but the top dressing was too heavy and made conditions poor until Christmas. There were large bare and sandy areas.

**1988-89 Season** The preparation of the wickets was a combined effort with Robert Holland preparing 1<sup>st</sup> grade wickets and Greg Singleton preparing 2<sup>nd</sup> grade wickets, both with a lot of help from club members Garry Pinches, Phil Brock and others.

During the season we invited the Head Curator at the Sydney Cricket Ground Peter Leroy to make an inspection of the wickets at Ron Hill Oval and provide some advice. Once the advice was implemented the wickets were better grassed and faster.

It was reported that the synthetics on the concrete practice wickets bounced too much and were a little dangerous. We investigated the problem and applied a light top dressing of very fine sand. It was hard to say if this provided improvement.

The club practiced occasionally on the turf practice wickets in front of the pavillion on Friday afternoons. It was noticeable that the practices were better and seemed to be better organised. We had some steel and mesh fences made by club members as the nets. The practices were popular but the run-ups were uneven.

Alan Nichols was elected Secretary of the cricket club for the first time.

Alan Nichols and Tony Peart approached Council for funding for ground and spectator improvements. Council undertook a covered verandah, BBQ table, seating, fencing and tree planting plus a new sight screen.

We hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> grade semi final and the covers leaked following rain. Day 1 was washed out and then further rain washed out day 2.

We hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> grade final and it was reported that the wicket, ground, surrounds and pavillion were in excellent condition.

There was only one break-in during the season.

**1989-90 Season** Jenko was 1<sup>st</sup> grade scorer (he started in 1981-82).

The wickets were very good and of a high standard. Jason Holt was the curator but due to work commitments he resigned at Christmas. Robert Holland (1<sup>st</sup> grade) and Greg Singleton (2<sup>nd</sup> grade) took over (See story in Chapter 9 Funny and Unusual Stories concerning Jason Holt and one of his wickets.). The roller broke down towards the end of the season and the last few wickets were prepared with the hand roller from Awaba.

Ron Hill Oval was built in 1973 and it was opened on 24 September 1990. A special luncheon was held during the trial match against Fairfield. The special guests were Councillor Alan Davis from LMCC and Mr and Mrs Ron Hill. Ron opened the ground and unveiled a plaque.

There were no break-ins for the whole season.

**1990-91 Season** We hosted a cricket match called the Mayor's X1 v SLDCC X1 and the Mayor's X1 won the match. Neil Porter took over as curator.

**1991-92 Season** Practices were good on turf practice wickets. For the first time we appointed a curator for the practice wickets.

Neil Porter was again curator. The covers were in poor condition and leaked every time it rained.

Half the season was a drought then the second half was very wet. Council continued their policy of mowing "high" which was about 40mm and as a result the grass was often long and very slow.

Jason Baker prepared the practice wickets until Christmas then Andy Nicholls took over.

The cricket club submitted a grant application to extend the clubhouse building 3.6m to the east providing a new kitchen, new toilets and a larger clubroom that we see today. A decision is likely about October 1992 and the cricket club has to contribute 10% of the cost.

The telephone was connected to Ron Hill Oval, phone number 4950 4430.

**1992-93 Season** Our grant application was initially refused. We hosted an Under 17 semi final with our team winning. We then hosted the Under 17 final but we lost the game. Council proceeded to remove the existing chain wire in the pipe rail fence and install green plastic coated chain wire. A Council memo on file from me dated 23 December 1993 talking about a Council allocation of \$10,000 in the Ward 3 Parks Improvements Program for fence improvements at Ron Hill Oval. Work was undertaken by contract at a cost of \$7210 leaving a balance of \$2790. The funds were carried forward to 1994 to allow further work to be undertaken. Also Council did work to improve the high fence behind the turf practice area to try to stop hook shots going into the adjacent private properties. Also Council raised one sight screen by 1m.

Neil Porter was again curator. The covers were a problem in that they are too narrow and they leak. Neil started the season preparing the practice wickets and then Greg Singleton took over making good practice wickets.

We hosted a marvellous one day match between Victoria and Queensland in the Australian Country Carnival on 14 January 1993, where over 600 runs were scored off 100 overs on the day.

Photos Taken At J.R.Hill Oval  
During Match Australian Country Cricket Championships  
Victoria v Queensland On 14th January 1993



Two photos taken on 14 January 1993 during Australian Country Match. Note the turf practice wicket area in front of the pavillion basically where the croquet training court is today.

**1993-94 Season** The cricket club was advised in March 1994 it was successful getting a grant of \$44,000 to extend the building. The plans were drawn by me and approved by Council as Building Application 1994/3667 on 8 June 1995.

Our former player Paul Wilson was picked to play Sheffield Shield for South Australia. Paul left us in 1991-92 and went to the Australia Cricket Academy in Adelaide.

Neil Porter was again curator and prepared good flat wickets.

We fitted a new motor to the roller. We were unable to top dress the wickets at the end of the season because of difficulty in getting wicket soil.

Matthew Wagstaff prepared the practice wickets. The extensions to the high fence at the rear of the turf practice area were successful in reducing the number of balls going into the back yards nearby.

Two mowers and a scarifier were purchased from Pacific Power and this scarifier is the current one we still share with the croquet club in 2016.

The club purchased new covers which were 28m by 6m wide.

A new sign indicating "Southern Lakes District Cricket Club" was attached to the side of the building. This sign was removed in May 2016 firstly because of its age and also because of Council's latest policy regarding advertising signs at sports ground. The cricket club had a competition to name the road that leads into the ground from Awaba Road. It had been part of the original Woodale Street but the construction of the oval in 1973 severed the road. The competition was won by Ian Hodge with his entry "Straight Drive".

The club hosted an Under 23 Semi Final on 27 February 1994 v Waratah and we won the game.

**1994-95 Season** Neil Porter again prepared the centre wickets and it is reported that the wickets are very good. The Newcastle District Cricket Association conducted a survey of Newcastle wickets and the wickets at Ron Hill Oval rated 4<sup>th</sup> out of 12 wickets.

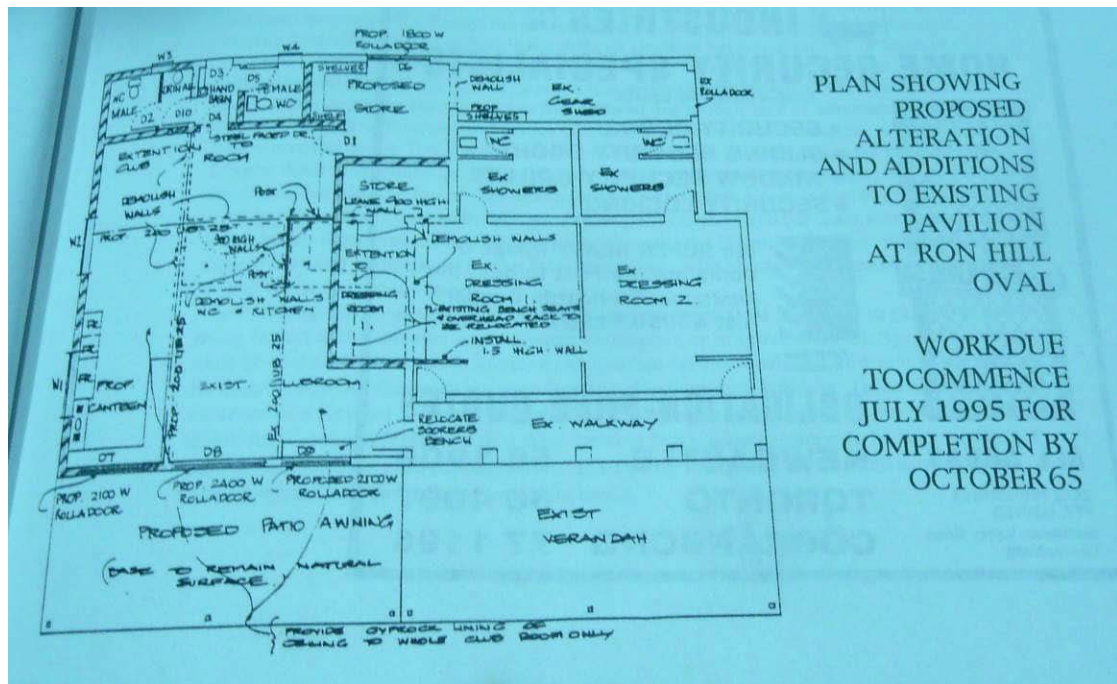


Some parts of the outfield are in poor condition because crickets have turned it to dust.

Alan Easter prepared the practice wickets.

The cricket club signed a contract for the extension to the pavillion at a contract price of \$44,000 however the club had to contribute a further 10% othe cost. The work will

commence July 1995 and should be completed by October 1995. Note the floor plan below.



Floor plan for proposed extension to the pavillion at Ron Hill Oval  
 The new covers purchased in the previous season were stolen off the wickets on 4 February 1995 and never recovered.  
 There were three break-ins to the pavillion during the season.

Matthew Hodges scored a 76 ball century in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.

# Mathew's ton in 76 balls was brilliant but not the quickest

## CRICKET

RUTHERFORD cricketer Mathew Hodges smashed a century off just 76 balls at the weekend but he wasn't even close to scoring the quickest ton in the history of Newcastle district cricket.

Hodges belted five sixes and five fours in his innings for Southern Lakes in a first grade match against Stockton.

And most people would have forgiven him for thinking he'd set a new record.

Cessnock's Tyrone Weekes, now retired for health reasons, holds the record for the quickest hundred in first grade in Newcastle in the modern era.

On February 25, 1989 he posted a ton off just 46 balls for Wallsend against Belmont at Cahill Oval.

His innings included nine sixes and eight fours and no-one has come close to bettering it since.

According to NDCA historian John Hay, Weekes' century is the quickest since the system of timing innings by the amount of balls faced was introduced in the 1970s.

"I know some quick centuries were scored before the new system was introduced and they probably rate alongside some of the modern innings," Hay said.

"But it's impossible to compare them with hundreds scored by Tyrone Weekes and now Mathew Hodges because they went on time spent at the crease rather than balls faced."

Hay, an avid supporter of Newcastle cricket for many years, said Weekes was a player who relied on brute strength and that his record will probably stand for years to come.

But he said Hodges' innings was also full of merit.

"It was a freak innings when Weekes scored 100 of 46 balls and nothing in my time compares to it," Hay said.

"Mathew's innings at the weekend may not be the fastest on record but it was an extremely good dig. I'd definitely rate it as one of the best and quickest centuries I've seen."



■ Mathew Hodges . . . quick-fire century

News-clipping concerning Matthew Hodges 76 ball century.

We hosted an Under 23 semi final v Lambton New-Lambton and won the match.

We hosted the Under 23 Final v Stockton and lost the match.

We hosted an Under 17 Semi final v Belmont and lost the match.

**1995-96 Season** The annual report indicated that we are one of the best cricket clubs in Newcastle. We have good playing strength and our facilities and wickets are excellent.

The building extensions were completed by Freedom Homes (one of our players Greg Tudor had arranged the builder) just before Christmas and it is a very nice facility. We have a new kitchen/bar area and Ned Easton is the barman.

The first private function held at the new extensions was 1<sup>st</sup> grade opener Stephen Mudford's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party.

The pavillion was opened on 4 February 1996 by the Mayor Councillor John Kilpatrick with a luncheon and then a cricket match was played Mayor's X1 v SLDCC Presidents X1. SLDCC Presidents X1 won the match.

### NEW BUILDING EXTENSIONS OPENED

The new building extensions at Ron Hill Oval were opened on Sunday 4 February 1996 by the Mayor of Lake Macquarie City Council, Councillor John Kilpatrick. The opening was preceded by a luncheon attended by about 50 invited guests and players. A cricket match was played later between the Mayor's XI and a Southern Lakes DCC XI with the SLDCC team winning. The following article and photograph were published in the local publication Toronto Talk.

## IMPROVED CRICKET FACILITIES

RON HILL Oval, Toronto, is the home ground of Southern Lakes District Cricket Club, where extensions to the clubhouse were opened recently by the Mayor of Lake Macquarie City Council, Councillor John Kilpatrick.

The opening was followed by a cricket match which was won with four balls to spare by the Southern Lakes Presidents XI over the Mayors XI.

The extensions included a new kitchen and extended clubroom and change rooms and new toilets, and was jointly funded by LMCC and the Department of Sport, Recreation and Racing. The pavillion and all the facilities enjoyed by the club are now the envy of every other cricketer in Newcastle.

Southern Lakes District Cricket Club is now in its 37th season and despite some lean early times is now developing into one of the strongest and well managed clubs in Newcastle.

Last season the club was second in the club championship and this year is running fifth as at the end of round 12, after a slower start early in the season.

With three rounds of the competition to go, the club has three teams with semi-final chances.

The first XI under the astute captaincy of Geoff Smith has not lived up to its potential and languishes in 8th place. Opening batsman Steven Mudford has been the form batsman while new opening bowler Andrew Mullard has been in outstanding form. His new ball attack together with three scores of over 60 earned him a place in the Newcastle Representative team recently.

Greg Singleton's 2nd grade was recently called Dad's Army due to the presence of mature former first graders Robert Holland, Steven Woodbridge, Mick Waugh and Singleton himself. The side boasts outstanding juniors Silas Driscoll, Ben Scott, Paul John, Matthew Hancock and Jeffrey Mills, and has been playing top cricket since Christmas. It is currently fifth with firm intentions of playing in the semi-finals.

The 3rd grade is captained by Brady Elliott and enjoyed a jump up the points table to third, courtesy of an outright win in round 12 over

Stockton. Matt Jardine scored his maiden century in round 11 and followed that with a hard hitting 60 in 2nd grade in the next game. Big paceman Bryn Mitchell has the opposition batsmen on the back foot, allowing clever medium pacers Michael O'Brien and Andy Craig to reap good rewards. Simon Lunn is a promising wicket keeper to watch for the future.

News-clipping concerning the opening of the building extensions at Ron Hill Oval by the LMCC Mayor John Kilpatrick

Neil Porter was again the curator.

Alan Easter again prepared the turf practice wickets.

Council is still mowing the ground at about 40mm which the cricket club thought was too high. As a result the club purchased a ride on mower and mows the outfield lower at say 25mm.

Crickets were still a problem and Council sprayed the ground allowing the grass to grow back and improve the outfield.

An in ground watering system was installed with six pop up sprinklers provided around the centre wicket square. The system watered the wickets and also about 20m around the infield. At the end of the season Council wrote to the cricket club and advised we were using too much water.

### **1996-97 Season**

SLDCC won the coveted Club Championship flag for the second time in 38 seasons. All players were presented with baggy yellow caps. There were 80 registered players.

The treasurer Col Driscoll introduced Credit Card facilities at the club to allow players to pay fees by credit card.

Neil Porter again prepared the centre wickets while Alan Easter prepared the turf practice wickets. The wickets and practice wickets were very good but the centre wicket had a problem with crumbling. It was reported that the wicket soil we were getting from Flynns at Maitland was not as good as it used to be. In other words the clay content seemed to be less. Alan Easter resigned at the end of the season following an argument over the preparation of practice wickets for the semi finals. The outfield is very rough and bumpy from the effects of crickets, one of the problems is that areas where the grass is missing is starting to grow weeds. LMCC constructed a half basketball court and a tennis wall between the clubhouse and Awaba Road.

A new private swimming pool is under construction on the other side of Awaba Road opposite the end of Straight Drive.

At practice one day Chris Jardine hooked a ball into Mrs Hobbs back yard. The ball travelling at great pace went through the window of a caravan in the back yard and hit a young lady cutting her arm.

### **1997-98 Season**

The cricket club had 89 registrations.

Crickets are a great problem with parts of the outfield denuded of grass. The Council sprayed for crickets and it worked, six weeks after the season ended the grass had returned.

Neil Porter was curator again and the crumbling of the wickets is very noticeable.

Jenko prepared the practice wickets.

The roller at Ron Hill Oval and Awaba Oval were swapped by Nathan Pearson. The roller now at Ron Hill Oval was fitted with a new motor by Martin Wouters.

The weather pattern was El Nino which means hot and dry.

### **1998-99 Season (Season 40)**

The cricket club celebrated it's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a dinner at Toronto Workers Club.

The Annual Report has a comment that SLDCC is the best club in Newcastle. It has developed it's facilities with good wickets, good practice wickets and an excellent clubroom.

Garry Pinches took over curating the wickets. Jenko prepared the practice wickets and while we had a batting cage it was not on wheels and it was not used.



Photo of Garry Pinches rolling the wicket.

There were several break-ins and drinks were stolen. Council installed security grills to the front rolladoors. During a break-in in June 1999 the colour TV was smashed, the microwave, an urn, a lawnmower and a long extension cord were stolen.

Peter Campbell got enough paint from Dulux to paint the whole building next season and we will try to organise painting with a working bee.

The covers were poor and leaked often. We lost several days play because the covers leaked. We mowed the ground with a ride-on mower after Council had mowed at 40mm.

LMCC undertook further improvements by installing a gate at the rear of the clubhouse which can be locked to prevent people driving to the far side of the clubhouse at weekends and after dark. Council also bitumen sealed about 30m of the access road at the rear of the clubhouse. Also Council installed seating and a BBQ table.

**1999-2000 Season** The cricket club donated two trophies to the Newcastle District Cricket Association, the first to be called "Robert Holland Trophy" for the best Under 23 Bowler" and the "Toronto Workers Club Trophy" for the best Under 23 batsman.

Garry Pinches was the curator.

The cricket club had a coaching day on 23 January 2000 for 24 players aged 14 to 19. Our coaches were Garry Pinches and David Westwood. Following an approach from us to Cricket NSW they provided Sheffield Shield player Andrew Sainsbury to coach on the day. The day was a big success.

Test cricketer and current NSW Sheffield Shield coach Steve Rixon was guest speaker at the presentation night.

There was a serious issue on a Friday night at Empire Park, Bar Beach when our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade team was playing Newcastle City. Someone severely dug up the prepared cricket wicket with a maddock making it unplayable. There was certain inuendo about the matter and I think our club was a person of interest. I have never found out who did it but I have heard some rumours !

Col Driscoll became cricket club Secretary after completing the Level 1 Sporting Administration Course.

The club set up it's first website address.

**2000-01 Season** Two wickets were relaid and a new sight screen is being constructed at the northern end. The relaying was undertaken at the end of the season. The new grass was well established before the winter.

Graham Jenkinson took over as the curator of both the centre wickets and the practice wickets. The wickets were always hard and flat but we lost grass at the ends and there were big bare spots.

The club purchased a set of gang mowers from the Muswellbrook Racing Track and while they were old they worked well. Rod Mudford towed the gang mowers around the ground with his ute every Friday afternoon after Council had finished mowing.

The gang mowers cut the grass to about 25mm making the oval very fast.

We had a Work for the Dole crew at the end of season. They undertook underscrubbing at NW corner, demolition of old N sight screen, standing 8 new posts for a proposed sight screen at the N end, repairs to fencing and modifications to the practice wickets.

Nathan Pearson spent many hours painting inside the clubroom in the club's colours. Our roller broke down and Nathan Pearson fixed it and also borrowed a roller from Coates Hire.

**The club was saddened by the passing of Ron Hill on 8 March 2001 at age 79 years and 11 months.**

**2001-02 Season** Kerry O'Keeffe was guest speaker at our Presentation of Trophies night.

Graham Jenkinson enhanced his growing reputation by preparing excellent wickets and practice wickets all season. The outfield was again mowed by Rod Mudford with the gang mowers.

At the end of season parts of three wickets were returned.

The clubhouse was broken into again with a loss of stock from the canteen.

Southern Lakes played Hamilton Wickham at Ron Hill Oval in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and Ham Wicks were favourites for the premiership. They thought they could beat out team outright so they won the toss and sent us in on a good dry hard wicket. Andrew Eastcott was our captain after the appointed captain Stephen Mudford had controversially left us to join Ham Wicks only weeks before the season started. We batted first and batted all day for 8 for 309 with recalled 41 year old Greg Singleton scoring 99 in 278 minutes before being stumped from the bowling of another ex SLDCC player Todd Mitchell. He had century partnerships with Michael Muller (55) and Jeffery Mills (66).

Ham Wicks batted the second week, having abandoned the thought to go for an outright, and lost opening bat Joe Price for a duck early in the innings. From there Stephen Mudford 168 no and Steven Cowen 111 no had a unbeaten partnership of 292 and Ham Wicks won losing only one wicket. Mudford's score is the highest individual score ever and the partnership is the highest ever at Ron Hill Oval.

**2002-03 Season** Graham Jenkinson was again curator of the centre wickets and the practice wickets. The Annual report indicates that Graham did an excellent job. The players enjoyed Kerry O'Keeffe so much last year that we invited him back as guest speaker again this season.

**2003-04 Season** Graham Jenkinson was the curator of the wickets and practice wickets at Ron Hill Oval and from reports the wickets were very good.

Rod Mudford mowed the outfield with the gang mowers and made the ground very fast.

Chris Dickson caused a problem at Empire Park Bar Beach when he hit a very big six that smashed the rear window of Robert Holland's car.

**Toronto Croquet Club moved to Ron Hill Oval early in the season** and constructed two croquet courts in the outfield on the eastern side of the oval. The two clubs will now co-exist on the oval. The two croquet courts are excellent for the cricketers to field on.



The Mayor Councillor John Kilpatrick opened the croquet club's three new courts on Friday 26 March 2004 and John McColl was the spokesperson for the croquet club. Later in the season the Toronto Netball Club moved to use Ron Hill Oval for netball practice. They played on grass courts at the rear of the clubhouse where the present bitumen sealed netball courts are located. A fence is needed between the netball courts and the bitumen sealed driveway to make it safer for the netballers.

The croquet club applied for a Sport and Recreation Grant to construct a gear shed at the eastern side of the clubhouse. The construction work will be carried out by a Work for the Dole crew. The building commenced in August 2004 and took about two months to complete. The work crew also undertook other maintenance works at Ron Hill Oval once they had finished the building work.

LMCC requested the users of Ron Hill Oval to form an Ovals Board. The board of six members (two cricket, two croquet and two netball) was set up in June 2004 with cricket members Matthew Wagstaff Chairperson and Warren Craik Treasurer. John McColl from croquet was Secretary. All user groups will now have to pay substantial fees to the ovals board for the playing and training use of the oval however the funds raised will be spent on management and improvements to the oval.

### **2004-05 Season**

Alan Nichols elected President of the cricket club.

Graham Jenkinson was curator of the wickets and practice wickets and the wickets were described as superb. This was Graham's 5<sup>th</sup> season as curator. At the end of the season the bare spots on the wickets were repaired by walking in washed couch and this method is very successful.

The outfield was again mowed each Friday afternoon by Rod Mudford with the gang mowers.

Our white covers are in poor condition and need to be replaced. The covers trolley was stolen after Christmas and the covers were dragged to the wickets after that making them deteriorate more quickly.

We had a break-in and drinks and beer were stolen.

The cricket club obtained a grant from the Toronto Trade Fair committee for \$9500. A high fence was provided at the rear of the turf practice area, a soil shed was built and the conveyor bowling approaches were removed and replaced. At the same time we were given \$10,000 by Council to install a sight screen at the southern end of the ground.

The high fence at the rear of the turf practice wicket area was constructed in June 2005.

The cricket club had an old container shed at the rear of the turf practice area.

Eventually small holes in the container rusted and became bigger holes which were sharp and dangerous,

We had a push sight screen at the southern end of the ground which was located on the ground in June 2005.

### **2005-06 Season**

Alan Nichols was elected President of the cricket club.

Graham Jenkinson was again the curator of the wickets and he won the important "Curator of the Season" trophy from NDCA. Rod Mudford mowed the outfield every Friday afternoon using the gang mower towed behind his ute.

There was a break-in during the season where \$400 worth of stock stolen.

The cricket club was successful in gaining a number of grants for improvement works;

LMCC	\$10321
Toronto Trade Fair	\$9500
Country Cricket NSW	\$6639
Total	\$26460

The funds were used to undertake;

Construct wicket soil shed	\$4000
Replace bowlers run-ups	\$3050
Construct high fence at turf	\$8164
Sight screen S end	\$11155
Install subsoil drain at wickets	\$2123
Total	\$28492

The cricket club met the difference of \$2023

As a result of all this work we were able to have the old rusty container removed in May 2006. We advertised and sold the old sight screen at the southern end of the ground, to Charlestown Cricket Club.

Our white covers are in very poor shape. Martin Wouters constructed a new covers trolley for us and within three weeks it was stolen.

We paid a contractor to top dress the wicket square with wicket soil and it proved very successful.



The new sight screen at the S end of the ground after it was completed.



The old sight screen at the S end of the ground that was sold.



Photo of the original steel post and chain wire fence.

**2006-07 Season**

Paul Toole experienced Randwick 1<sup>st</sup> grade batsman and Captain is enticed to the club and immediately broke the record for the most runs ever in a 1<sup>st</sup> grade season. Matthew Hancock was 1<sup>st</sup> grade captain. Graham Jenkinson was again the curator of the centre wickets and practice wickets for the seventh season. Once again the wickets were very good. The cricket club changed it's name to "**Toronto Workers Kookaburras**" as part of the sponsorship arrangements with Toronto Workers Club. The club hosted a special cricket match and dinner for Robert Holland's 60th birthday on 23 September 2006.

**Robert Holland 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday Match- McCoskers XI v Hills XI**

Played at Ron Hill Oval 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2006

**Hills XI 1<sup>st</sup> Innings**

G. Geise		b	Holland	50
D. Nichols	st Dyer	b	Chappell	14
C. Beattie	st Smith	b	McCosker	31
P. Toole	c Hancock	b	Holland	25
C. Holland	st Smith	b	Holland	12
W. Hackett	c and b		Holland	1
C. Dickson		b	Soloman	20
G. Matthews	c Holland	b	Dyer	7
M. Hill	c Holland	b	Hertogs	6
H. Goodsir		b	Hertogs	4
D. Gilbert	c Chappell	b	Dyer	14
M. Waugh		not out		6
W. McSweeney	DNB			
Extras				8
Total				11 for 198

### McCoskers XI Bowling

T. Parker	4	1	21	0
M. Hancock	5	0	38	0
T. Chappell	6	3	16	1
R. Holland	8	0	23	4
R. Cheequee	3	0	18	0
R. McCosker	2	0	20	1
G. Solman	4	0	24	1
G. Dyer	3	0	9	2
M. Wagstaff	3	0	18	0
R. Hertogs	2	0	7	2

### McCoskers XI 1<sup>st</sup> Innings

R. McCosker	b	Geise	37
M. Wagstaff	c Hill	b Dickson	26
T. Chappell	c Waugh	b Toole	48
R. Cheequee	c McSweeney	b Matthews	14
G. Smith	c Geise	b Toole	11
M. Hancock	c Dickson	b Goodsir	40
G. Dyer		not out	24
R. Hertogs	b	Goodsir	1
R. Holland	not out		5
G. Solman			
T. Parker			
Extras			4
Total			7 for 210

### Hills XI Bowling

D. Gilbert	4	1	8	0
M. Waugh	2	0	21	0
C. Dickson	4	1	19	1
M. Hill	3	0	15	0
G. Geise	5	0	21	1
W. Hackett	2	0	10	0
G. Matthews	6	0	65	1
P. Toole	3	0	16	2
W. McSweeney	2	0	24	0
H. Goodsir	1	0	7	2

### McCoskers XI won by 3 wickets

We had problems with a loss of turf at the batting creases. We called in an expert turf person who explained that some turf management issues were to blame. We changed some practices and planted 150 square meters of turf. At end of season we had a contractor top dress the centre square. A subsoil drain was installed from the wickets to the creek on the western side of the square.

The roller broke down twice during the season. The first time we replaced the motor which cost \$346 plus \$200 installation. The second problem was the steering and repairs cost \$920.

We purchased new covers at a cost of \$1080 and we made a new trolley with a cut down wheelbarrow fitted with a sheet of marine ply.

Alan Nichols was elected President of the ovals board with Warren Craik Treasurer.

The croquet club will construct a 4<sup>th</sup> green in August 2007.

Council advised it will construct two bitumen sealed netball courts in August 2007. A new fence will be constructed and this will move the driveway closer to the rear of the building.

A big problem is the heavy undergrowth at the NE and NW corners. We had two working bees to reduce the bush.

A Work for the Dole crew commenced on 2 July 2007 and did a variety of work including clearing lantana, building two spectator seats, fixing fences etc.

There was a large storm in June 2007 (an east coast low pressure rain event – this was the Pasha Bulka storm) and the building was flooded badly. The cricket club lost fridges, carpet, bowling machine, two mowers and a lot of caps and shirts. The club had applied to Cricket NSW for a grant. The storm hit on 8 and 9 June 2007 and caused 0.5m of water through the pavillion. Cricket NSW inspected the damage on 8 July 2007 and we estimated the loss at \$6000.

This large storm was also responsible for the loss of 90% of the junior cricket kits. The kits had been stored on the floor of Ron Hill Oval pavillion and were completely flooded. SLJCC approached the Federal Government, the State Government and other clubs and we were able to purchase new kits from Kingsgrove Sports Store for the next season.

During the season one of the rubber bowling mats was badly damaged by Council's mower and Council paid \$920 for a new bowling mat. The WFD crew installed it. There is still a serious issue with hook shots going into the rear yards of adjoining houses. Despite several attempts to fix the problem we have not been successful. During the season the cricket club ran four coaching days for the junior cricketers in Southern Lakes Junior Cricket Club, organised by Paul Toole.

### **2007-08 Season**

Geoff Osland was elected President of the cricket club.

The season was very poor weather wise and as a result the income for the canteen was down. While we were called the Kookaburras some people started calling us the Toronto mudlarks due to wet season. For the first time we made many trips to the local sawmill for sawdust to put on wet spots on run-ups.

Graham Jenkinson was again curator of wickets and practice wickets for the eighth season. The season was wet, wet, wet and Jenko had to hone his wet weather skills.

The roller had some issues in that the steering was hard to turn and we had repairs done at the end of the season. Rod Mudford continued to mow the outfield every Friday afternoon with the gang mower.

The cricket club commenced running a weekly Saturday evening raffle in Toronto Workers Club and initially it was very successful. Provided the club keeps the raffles going on a weekly basis we should get substantial income.

The cricket club arranged it's first cricket academy called "Toronto Academy of Cricket Excellence" or TACE for short. The academy was designed for 14 to 18 year olds under Mark Eveleigh, Mike MacKenzie and Garry Pinches.

The problem of balls being hooked into the rear adjoining yards has not been solved. At the end of the season we extended the overhanging net structure on the high fence about 2m to try to overcome the problem.

Long vegetation at the NE and NW corners is still a big problem. We had two working bees to cut the vegetation.

LMCC constructed two bitumen sealed netball courts and adjusted the driveway and fencing. The work was completed in May 2008.

**2008-09 Season (Season 50)** Club President Geoff Osland started his report with "Season 2008-09 heralded the cricket club's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year and amazingly also recorded the club's most successful season in that 50 year history". We were Club Champions for the second time in 50 years (previous win 1974-74 season).



Toronto Workers Kookaburras representatives at the NDCA Presentation of Trophies Night display all of the trophies won by the club

Those present; Top Row L to R : Robert Hertogs Club Patron, Luke Brooks, Garry Pinches, Geoff Osland, Alan Nichols, Joe Price, Chris Jardine and Craig Holland

Bottom Row L to R ; Paul Toole, Robert Holland, Gary Mott, Greg Singleton, Andrew Eastcott, Mark Eveleigh, Michael Kaminski and Andrew Hollingsworth

v

The cricket club's 50<sup>th</sup> season and celebrations were held. See story below.

The cricket club negotiated a new three year sponsorship deal with Toronto Workers Club starting September 2009.

The 1<sup>st</sup> grade team won their semi final and progressed to the season FINAL against Belmont and Newcastle No1 Sports Ground. Unfortunately we lost the final but this was the first time in 50 seasons our 1<sup>st</sup> grade team had played in a final.

Graham Jenkinson was again the curator of the centre wickets and practice wickets.

Rod Mudford mowed the outfield with the gang mowers each Friday.



Curator Graham Jenkinson Inspects the Wicket at Ron Hill Oval Dec 2008

The weekly raffles in the Workers Club are going very well. There is still a problem with balls being hit into the back yards of adjacent houses. Further work is proposed in the off-season to try to stop this happening. One of the big issues was that we had four break-ins in three weeks where beer and soft drink were stolen. Council installed new rolladoors to the front of the building and upgraded the security grills. Also new locks and keying system was installed. Bob Kyrwood from the croquet club gave us the very old roller that has been stored in the practice nets. We spent money on getting it going and we got to use it a few times.



The pavillion at Ron Hill oval on 3 March 2009.



The sight screens and gates at the southern end. Note the old croquet club roller stored in the practice nets. 3 March 2009

### **50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY DINNER**

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner was held at Toronto Workers Club on 14 February 2009 with 210 people in attendance. The crowd included players and former players from every era of the club's history. A number of people travelled a long way to be present on the night including two who travelled from Queensland and two who travelled from Muswellbrook.

An Organizing Committee of Greg Singleton, Geoff Osland, Matthew Wagstaff and Robert Holland as Secretary had several meetings over a six month period to plan the function and to contact about 350 members and former members.

The planning included the production of a booklet which contained statistics, club history and a very large section called The Yarns. While the plan was to have a booklet with about 130 pages the final document contained an amazing 259 pages of information and stories. The end result was a truly excellent booklet and every male that attended the dinner was given a copy. Every female was given a box of chocolates to recognize that the dinner had been planned and held on Valentine's Day. The club purchased eight dozen bottles of red wine and about half were placed on the tables and the balance was available for sale.

An unusual feature was that the tables were all named after fielding positions i.e. Mid Off or Cover. Colorful menus were placed on each table to allow all those present to see the choice of meals for the dinner.

Matthew Wagstaff produced a CD which contains all club statistics for fifty seasons for 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grades, a PowerPoint display of over 250 photos and news clippings and also interviews with the original 1<sup>st</sup> grade captain John O'Brien and the current 1<sup>st</sup> grade captain Paul Toole. Individual CDs were provided to the eighteen life members and executive members with special engraving on each CD showing the members name and photo.

Paul Turton, ABC Announcer and former player was the MC for the dinner and did an excellent job.

The program for the evening commenced with the reading of apologies and special messages from Les Edwards and Mark Nicholas. Official speeches were made by Club President Geoff Osland, Club Patron Robert Hertogs and a reply from Paul Marjoribanks President of the NDCA. Taped interviews with original 1<sup>st</sup> grade captain John O'Brien and current 1<sup>st</sup> grade captain Paul Toole were then beamed onto a big screen for all to see.

President Geoff then presented framed and signed cricket shirts called "Home Grown Internationals" featuring Paul Wilson and Robert Holland to five sponsors including Rearden Fencing, Ken Edwards Toronto Retravisoin, Alan Easter Toronto Workers Club, Greg Singleton TIN Insurance and Bruce Avery of Avery First National. Alan Easter responded on behalf of the sponsors.

The MC then conducted a series of interviews within the audience.

Greg Singleton unveiled the SLDCC Honour Board which TIN Insurance paid to have produced. The board shows the club executive and TIN Cup winners for fifty seasons and other prominent information. The board, which is a magnificent reminder of fifty seasons of club administration, is to be hung in Ron Hill Oval for all to see.

Robert Holland then named his "Best Team for Fifty Seasons" and called the selected players to the stage. The team in batting order is;

- 1 John Gardner
- 2 Matthew Wagstaff
- 3 Bob Madden
- 4 Paul Toole
- 5 Matthew Hodges
- 6 David Smith
- 7 Geoff Smith (wkt)
- 8 Bruce Urry
- 9 Jack Garaty
- 10 Mathew Hancock
- 11 Les Edwards
- 12 Robert Holland

Andrew Eastcott conducted a Trivia Competition. The winners were the members at table "Mid Off" led by Ian Hodge. The prize money was donated to the Bushfire appeal in Victoria.

Later in the evening there was an auction of memorabilia and the auction raised \$1650.

Greg Singleton obtained the very large Honour Board that is located at the rear of the clubroom and he had it painted with all the information that is on it. The board originally came from the old Newcastle Bowling Club that was demolished. The board was unveiled at the function.

18 March 2009                      We had a formal complaint about part of Ron Hill wicket being wet on the second day of the match against Newcastle City. The wicket in question was the most easterly wicket and it is the lowest wicket on the square. The covers were on and there had been rain. We won the match with Newcastle City being bowled out.

The complaint was made by old Newcastle City player Col Rogers who had driven to Toronto on the Friday evening and called into Ron Hill to see what the wicket was like. He had observed that we had our heavy hose lying on top of the covers to help

hold them down. Col had assumed that the hose was connected to a tap and that the end was under the covers leaking water onto the wicket. Our club was summoned to a Special Meeting of the NDCA to answer questions about the wet wicket. The wicket was damp mainly at the northern and lowest end. I remember one of the Newcastle City players saying we must have wet the wicket because Matt Peterson was turning his off breaks square. Geoff Osland, Graham Jenkinson and I attended the meeting on 18 March 2009 in Newcastle. After Geoff explained that there had been rain, the hose was not connected to a tap and it was not under the covers we were going well. Col Rogers was called and said his bit. We then called our star witness curator Graham Jenkinson who answered all their questions in a very forthright way. One question I remember to Graham was "Does anyone from the club tell you what type of wicket you have to prepare". Graham replied "No-one tells *me* what to do !!". The end result was that we had no case to answer.

**2009-10 Season** President Geoff Osland made the following comments; "Following on from our very successful 2008-09, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season, expectations were high for a 'repeat performance' in 2009-10. Our playing roster saw a few changes but confidences were high that another successful season would unfold." The record books of course now show that 2 teams reached the finals and the coveted Club Championship Pennant again made it's way to the Club for a 2<sup>nd</sup>, history-making, back-to-back time. This prize is of course, for a Club, the Holy Grail as it shows that we were the best and most consistent club across the Grades for the 2009-10 season. During the season Nathan Hudson played one of the best innings and probably the best innings ever at Ron Hill Oval.



**Steady start key to Toronto teen's 292 not out**

BY NEIL GOFFET

19/10/2009 4:00:00 AM

NATHAN Hudson said he started "a little slow" but he certainly made up for it by clobbering 292 not out in yesterday's Denis Broad Cup game against Wallsend at Ron Hill Oval.

The left-hander smashed 12 sixes and 39 fours. Scorers estimated he faced 160 balls.

Though selected in first grade for Toronto's season-opener on Saturday, the 18-year-old was forced to play third grade, which starts later, because of work commitments.

There was no sign of what was to come yesterday.

He opened the batting with Josiah McCredie and dominated their 283-run stand, scoring 188 before McCredie departed for 65.

"I started off pretty slow but I worked myself into it," Hudson told The Herald last night.

"I didn't go out there swinging but I felt pretty good right from the start and it was a good wicket.

"Everything just went from there.

"I just kept playing every ball as it came. It was a pretty fun innings."

Not only was the score a personal best for Hudson but it also was a record for the Denis Broad Cup, which is a competition for lower-graders who have played fewer than five games of first grade.

He scored 170 not out in the same competition last year, but yesterday's effort is believed to be the highest score by a Toronto player in the club's 50-year history.

Toronto scored an imposing 3-425 off their 50 overs and dismissed Wallsend for 130.

"We're not sure if it is a club record but I'd be fairly confident it is," club member Craig Holland said.

"I think there might be someone with a double hundred maybe, but I don't think it would be anywhere near this."

Graham Jenkinson was again the curator at Ron Hill Oval for his 10<sup>th</sup> season.

27 March 2010                      We used a rotomill excavator to excavate across the batting creases at both ends of Ron Hill wicket square because they were very bare and not flat and level. We then fill the excavation with wicket soil from Maitland and turf the excavated area. The new grass was maintained through the winter but it was a problem the next season where the excavated area remained low and we had ridges across the wickets. While these ridges were not on a good length they played on the mind of batsmen who thought the ball would shoot or take off and lift alarmingly.

We played St George in trials and the ridges were very evident. St George captain Liam Zammit told his players not to mention the ridges and get on with the game.

**2010-11 Season** The club welcomed three English imports Andy Laws, Tom Moore and Miles Richardson.

Graham Jenkinson was curator again for his 11<sup>th</sup> season. It appears that the gang mowers were not used this season to mow the outfield. We sold the gang mowers plus Bob Kyrwood's old roller to the scrap merchant.

The club was successful in a grant application to install a picket fence around the ground. It should be installed by October 2011.

The club has applied for a grant from Cricket NSW for a new cricket wicket roller.

### **RON HILL OVAL**

At the end of the previous season the club installed about 150 m<sup>2</sup> of couch turf in the wicket square. The work was seen as innovative in that the bare areas were excavated with a rotomill, old wicket soil removed and placed in the soil shed and the turf was laid. The grass grew very well and all winter it looked like the new areas were too high by about 10mm. Once Curator Graham Jenkinson started to prepare wickets for trial matches it became very obvious that the returfed areas had sunk to a new level about 10mm too low.

This left each wicket with a ridge about 2.5m in front of the batsman and another ridge about 0.5m behind the stumps. Graham top dressed the low areas as often as he could but the low areas and the ridges remained.

Eventually after Round 5 v Belmont, following further complaints about the wicket, the NDCA ruled that Ron Hill Oval was not to be used for 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Having a long break over Christmas the club top dressed the wicket heavily. Even after it returned to play there were still the odd problem especially when 1<sup>st</sup> grade was beaten outright by University.

Graham Jenkinson was again curator and he did a lot of work on the wicket plus a lot of extra work trying to top dress and raise the low areas.

After the season the club purchased **Oberon Wicket Soil** and top dressed the whole square again. It is hoped that there is funding to top dress the whole square again before the start of 2011/2012 season.

The roller got through the season but it is in a worrying condition and needs to be replaced as soon as possible.

Alan Nichols and I are on the Ron Hill Ovals Board and most dealings concern the use of the ground by cricket and croquet. There is a current issue that is not fully resolved concerning Rod Mudford mowing the oval with our gang mowers on Friday morning after the LMCC mower has mowed the oval. Rod mows the grass to a lower level. The issue is that the gang mowers cannot be used while ever there are players on the oval. This matter is currently being discussed with LMCC.

The practice wickets were prepared to a good standard all season, except when there was wet weather. They were top dressed at the end of the season.

Thank you Graham for a job well done.

**2011-12 Season** The club has seen some big upgrades to our facilities this season, such as; a new picket fence at Ron Hill, a brand new roller, upgrading and improvements to the training wickets and a new kitchen.

Graham Jenkinson was again the curator of the wickets and practice wickets for the 12<sup>th</sup> season.

We had another English player Andy Carter.

The season was very wet and we lost 9 days play.

Wicket and Ground update.

Ron Hill Oval centre wickets, half of the practice wicket square, together with Awaba Oval centre wickets were top dressed on 18 August using the very good quality Oberon wicket soil. This should result in improved wickets during the season.

### **Picket Fence Project**

We have funding to install a picket fence around most of Ron Hill Oval. The funding does not extend to the high part of the existing fence at the creek end. The proposal is to have a Work for the Dole Crew undertake the work but to date they have not been able to give us a start date. The latest information is that the work will commence in October and take about 3 months to complete. This means that the work may cause some minor disruption to the boundary fence for about 3 months plus we have to store a lot of the picket fence panels in the pavillion.

With the aid of a grant from the Community Building Partnership Program a white picket fence was constructed around Ron Hill Oval. The work commenced 21 November 2011 and was completed on 14 May 2012 by a Work for the Dole Crew organized by Breakthrou People Solutions and Northnet. The crew was supervised by Troy and he had an average of three workers for the duration of the project. They undertook the work on Mondays and Tuesdays each week.

The grant of \$25,994 was not sufficient to complete the whole project. Lake Macquarie City Council made a contribution of \$8000 to allow us to purchase the fence panels for the final 70 metres of the fence.

The end result has improved the oval and it now looks like one of the best cricket grounds in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie.

Grahame Jenkinson was again the curator of the centre wickets and practice wicket area and he worked long hours during the season to ensure the best possible wickets. It was a difficult task because of the many wet days to deal with. Thank you again Grahame for a job well done.

After last season's problems with the excavations on the wicket square which left ridges we top dressed the centre square on 18 August 2011 with the very good quality Oberon Wicket Soil (picked up by Andrew Murdoch from Collins in Sydney). The work did not completely eliminate the ridges but it improved the end considerably. During the season further top dressing of low parts was undertaken and by the end of the season the ridges were no longer evident.

Four of the six centre wickets were again top dressed in April 2012. At the time of writing this report the centre wicket square looks to be in excellent condition. Further top dressing of two wickets will be undertaken in August prior to the trial matches.

During the season we applied for a Country Cricket NSW grant to purchase a new roller and the application was successful. The grant was 50% of the cost of a new Lockwood roller which was about \$22000. At the time of writing this report we are

waiting for delivery of the new roller and we took the opportunity to order a new covers trolley from the same company. The new roller will be wider and heavier than the existing old roller and should allow even better wickets to be prepared.

### **Turf Practice Square**

The turf practice wicket square was top dressed in August 2011. Two problems came up during the season concerning the practice wickets. The first was that a lot of hook shots were going out of the practice area and landing in Mrs Hobbs property at the rear of the nets. She complained in writing to our club. We investigate the matter and installed further overhead netting to try to stop the hook shots. The work appears to have been reasonably successful.

The second was that the turf practice wickets needed major repairs at the end of the season due to build up of soil at the batting and bowling creases at both ends. The work was undertaken on 21 March using a rotomill to excavate the worst areas then returfing with couch turf. A few days later the excavated wicket soil was used to top dress the whole square.

The following two photos show the work undertaken at the turf practice square including the top dressing of the square.





**2012-13 Season** Season 2012/13 will definitely go down as a year of transition and success for cricket in our community. It was the season that our junior and senior administrations merged to become one powerhouse to move into the next era of cricket. It started with a name change, a new clothing kit for every member and further improvements to our facilities.

It was the season we launched the **Toronto Academy of Cricket Excellence**, a 9 week pre season program for U18's to fine tune their skills for the upcoming season or even introduce youth to cricket for the first time. It was given a lot of time and energy by club coach Mike Mackenzie and administrator David Howe. This program will prove to be a valuable asset in cricket development for the local area for many years to come.

Without doubt our biggest achievement was the conclusion of the merger and I would like to thank all those that stepped up and enthusiastically adopted our new approach it was great to see both juniors and seniors playing under the one banner in common uniforms it shows great potential for the future of our club, and our aim over the next 2 seasons should be to consolidate our progress and move further forward making Cricket Southern Lakes the leading club in Newcastle Cricket.

The cricket club made the decision to cut off the telephone at the ground.

## **MINOR AND MAJOR PREMIERS**



The Under 14 Division 1 Team after winning the Final at Ron Hill Oval on Sunday 17 March 2013. The team;

Back Row L to R                      Craig Holland (Coach), Callum Ansell, Chad Mackey,  
Andrew Somerville, Griffin Lea, Jason Sangha and Thomas Holland.

Front Row L to R            Sam McDonald, Daniel Moore (From Under 13 Team and 12<sup>th</sup>  
man for the final), Peter McCredie, Dan Baker, Ethan Urquhart and Connor Brady.  
Absent; Russell Cable

### **Merger to help keep cricket juniors at Toronto**

BY JOSH LEESON

17 Jul, 2012 04:00 AM

TORONTO Workers president Aaron Gray hopes the planned merger with Southern Lakes juniors will mean more youngsters from western Lake Macquarie play first-grade cricket for the Kookaburras.

The merger between the clubs is expected to be signed next Tuesday at the juniors annual general meeting as they have already agreed in principal to the proposal.

The clubs plan to form an organisation, Cricket Southern Lakes, but the seniors will still be known as Toronto Workers.

A combined committee will be formed and sub-committees will run the seniors and juniors clubs.

Gray said the proposal would streamline sponsorship, expenses and resources between the clubs and provide an identifiable pathway from junior to senior cricket.

“There’s a lot of Southern Lakes juniors playing at other clubs in Newcastle,” Gray said. “I’m not sure if there’s a direct correlation between being a merged entity or not, but this will hopefully give those people who get poached or they find interest in playing for different clubs, a direct pathway to play local and stay local.

“We’re very focused on junior development, instead of picking the eyes out of the competition and luring players over once they’ve already been developed.”

In closing it will be great to see all our teams from U10’s to 1<sup>st</sup> Grade playing and training under the one banner and all wearing the same strip.

We had some major expenditure this year which included the roller (\$ 25,000) and covers (\$ 2,574.00) for Ron Hill. We purchased clothing costing \$ 28,258.10 which included playing and trading shirts, training shorts and caps for every junior and senior player. This clothing should last us three years and we should have enough stock to cover new players for the next two seasons.

### **THE OVALS**

Once again we used Ron Hill Oval for all 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade matches.

Graham Jenkinson was again the curator at Ron Hill Oval and prepared centre wickets and turf practice wickets. All wickets were very well prepared and consistently played very well. There were several reason for the improved standard starting with the Oberon wicket soil that we have been using for the past couple of seasons. This soil has a higher clay content and rolls up to produce very hard and consistent wickets.



Jenko on his prepared wicket on 2 Feb 2013

The next reason was that we purchased a new Lockwood Cricket Wicket Roller and we had it from the start of the season. The roller is wider that the old roller and much

heavier making wicket preparation much easier. It should be pointed out that we had several breakdowns with the new roller in the first two months but eventually the problems were solved and the roller gave us trouble free rolling for the second half of the season.

Also we made an approach to our Local Member Greg Piper MP and asked for assistance to purchase a new barrel mower for the cricket wickets. Mr Piper arranged through the NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell MP for us to receive a grant of \$1575



Alan Nichols and Graham Jenkinson inspect the new Lockwood Roller on the day it was delivered about September 2012



The new roller.



Alan Nichols takes delivery of the new covers trolley.

#### CONSTRUCT PICKET FENCE AT RON HILL OVAL

The Premier, the Hon. Kristina Keneally, MP, recently approved \$25994 under the State Government's 2010 Community Building Partnership Program, Project Number: 5500 subject to the terms and conditions of the grant.





We finally signed off on the project on 22 November 2012 to say the grant funds were completely spent and the work was complete.

Due to poor drainage at Ron Hill Oval pavilion the kitchen area was flooded several times over the past few years. Council advised that they would replace the kitchen and this work was undertaken about January 2013.

The new kitchen is similar in design to the old kitchen but it is very nice to have a new kitchen with all the doors and drawers working.

Ultimately Council cleaned the debris from the gutters around the Ron Hill pavilion and also they located and cleaned the outlet pipes from gutters around the pavilion. There is now a good chance that the pavilion and kitchen won't be subject to flooding in the foreseeable future.

The Ron Hill Ovals Community Operating Committee (COC) called quotes for a new subsoil drain just to the west of the cricket wicket and draining to the creek at the northern end of the ground. This work was undertaken in about August 2012 and seemed to improve the drainage affecting the wicket square.

The COC also had the contractor dig up and relay the old blocked subsoil drain which drains east near croquet green number 1. This work will also improve the ground drainage.

We asked Toronto Diggers for funding towards replacing one of the rubber bowling mats and the club kindly donated \$500. Note the photo of the new bowling mat.



Late in the season we replaced the doors on the soil shed with very good quality galvanized steel doors. Cameron Young assisted with the supply of the new doors.

**2013-14 Season** Greg Chad was elected Treasurer for the first time. Greg had an immediate impact on the club's finances and was awarded the club's award "Club Person of the Season" at the Annual Presentation of Trophies Night.

We finished the season with a healthy profit, this was largely due to the hard work by new Treasurer **Greg Chad** – awarded as our Club Person of the Year in 2013/14. Greg really took the 'bull by the horns' and turned a few corners for us in our quest to be more financially stable and sustainable for the future. Greg's efforts which included a fully functional canteen for all games at Ron Hill Oval, providing afternoon tea for senior matches at Ron Hill and Awaba each week and being successful in achieving our best result of collecting membership fees.



Greg Chad makes another Chaddie Burger.

**Griffin Lea** – Became the youngest player in the clubs history to debut in 1st grade at age 14 years and 274 days. Griffin has also been selected in NSW U17s squad and played in Australian Schoolboys U15s tour of Sri Lanka in May 2014.

Grahame Jenkinson was again the curator at Ron Hill Oval and prepared centre wickets and turf practice wickets. This season was Grahame's 14th season as curator of Ron Hill Oval and the wickets are indeed a credit to his consistent and hard work. All wickets were very well prepared and consistently played very well. The "Oberon" wicket soil is very good and has helped the preparation of the best wickets ever at Ron Hill Oval.



Grahame on board “The Jenko” with the Council mower in the background mowing the oval. The Council mowing took place early Friday mornings from 7am to be earlier than the arrival of the croquet players.

The committee decided to have a plaque prepared and attach to the roller naming the roller “The Jenko”. Thank you Grahame for a job well done.

There has been a problem for a number of years where hook shots from the practice nets would go in the back yards of the adjoining houses or hit the roofs of the houses. We had high overhead netting but it was hard to stop or catch every hook shot with the netting.

We purchased two special netting batting cages that had overhead netting and used these from about December 2013. They worked perfectly and stopped every hook shot. The only problem with them is that it took about 40 minutes for two people to erect the nets each practice day. Greg Chad, Robert Holland with help from players set up the nets each practice from December to the end of the season.



The new batting cages with overhead netting.

There was a problem with the practice wickets where a hump has developed in the location that the batsman stands. The hump has been caused over the years by top dressing or filling the footmarks with too much wicket soil building up the area. The problem has been developing for a couple of seasons but this season several batsmen said they felt like they were batting on a hill.

As a result we moved the practice wickets forward away from the hump. We were able to do this because of the new batting cages we purchased.

When measured, the hump was about 40mm but it gave the impression of being higher. At the end of the season we heavily scarified the hump three times and also placed extra top dressing to try to eliminate the hump. It is still there but it has been reduced.

Last season we purchased new covers and they were still in very good order during 2013-14. We did not lose one days cricket during the season because we had seeped through or under the covers. The covers were very carefully folded and put away each day on the covers trolley and as a result they remained in very good condition.

Due to poor drainage at Ron Hill Oval pavilion the kitchen area was flooded several times over the past few years and this caused LMCC to replace the kitchen in January 2013. Unfortunately the flooding has happened a couple of times during this season, the last time in April 2014. The matter will be taken up with LMCC.

The very large gates to the synthetic practice wickets started to break their hinges and could have been dangerous. Cameron Young and Paul Clarke welded new bigger hinges onto the left gate and repaired it. The right gate still needs to be repaired with new bigger hinges.

# TORONTO WORKERS DISTRICT CRICKET



## **Toronto Academy of Cricket Excellence:**

The 2014 TACE program has come to an end with a T20 match completed on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> September. Academy Director - Mike Mackenzie said "we had 32 members this year which is the largest number we have had in the history of TACE, the feedback we have had from the participants has been pleasing with ALL saying they have learnt a lot about the game of cricket". This year was another successful year and we had an excellent bunch of young cricketers looking to develop their cricket for the season ahead with each participant awarded a personal coaching report and certificate at the completion, with some goals and objectives for each player to work on throughout the season. This program is the perfect tutorial to best prepare a player for their season ahead. Registrations are now open for the 2015 program. Please email [cricketsouthernlakes@gmail.com](mailto:cricketsouthernlakes@gmail.com).

## **Senior teams:**

Our senior teams have commenced trials with matches against Blacktown DCC last weekend. Our 1<sup>st</sup> grade recorded a strong victory in a 50 over match on Saturday, then the tables turned with Blacktown DCC winning the T20 match played on Sunday. Tuesday and Thursday practice is underway. ALL NEW PLAYERS WELCOME, please come along to Ron Hill Oval between 4-6pm on Tuesday or Thursday to make enquires on how to register. CONGRATULATIONS to 1<sup>st</sup> grade captain Joe Price who was named Man of the Match whilst playing for Newcastle V Northern Districts DCC, this match was the State Challenge which is contested by the NSW Country Champions and the Sydney Cricket Association One-Day Champions from the previous season. Newcastle won the match in a low scoring affair, Joe claimed 2for30 opening the bowling and lead the run chase with 45 on their way to a run chase of 5/192. All competitions start on the 11<sup>th</sup> October with the exception of 1<sup>st</sup> grade who starts on the 4<sup>th</sup> October.

For all the latest happenings at Cricket Southern Lakes, keep an eye on our Website: [www.southernlakes.nsw.cricket.com.au](http://www.southernlakes.nsw.cricket.com.au)

**Lakes Mail**

Email: [cricketsouthernlakes@gmail.com](mailto:cricketsouthernlakes@gmail.com)

Follow us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/torontoworkers-cricketclub>



Judith Hall was the scorer for the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade team for the season.



Andrew Nicolai found the wicket at Ron Hill Oval to his liking for the trial against Blacktown Cricket Club on 20 September 2014. At the end of his innings of 49 he hit four consecutive sixes.

Sharon Hart and Fina Somerville organised a Christmas Party at Ron Hill Oval. We had over 100 members came on the day. There were jumping castles and games fairy floss and slushies also. It was very hot and the jumping castle staff splashed plenty of water on all the kids to keep them cool. Santa came and gave away lollies and again everyone said it was a great day.

**JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT:** with the continuing implementation of the TACE pre-season development camp, its continuing popularity with all concerned at the junior level is a credit to the Club since its inception. The interaction of both junior and senior members is excellent to see the growth of cricket within our area, Congratulations.



21 February 2015                      Aggressive Captancy - Ashley Weekes bowling v Hamilton Wickham at Ron Hill. Captain Paul Toole set 5 slips, two gullies, short midwicket, leg slip and short cover.

Ron Hill Oval is Toronto Workers District Cricket's home ground and practice facility. The ground is used for all 1st and 2nd Grade matches plus other special one day games such as Country Cup.

The ground is slowly improving and is now one of the best in Newcastle District Cricket Association. When conditions are dry the outfield is very fast. On Saturday 7 March 2015 the wicket was good, the outfield fast and 480 runs were scored in 90 overs.

Curator Graham Jenkinson was again the curator for his fifteenth season and the wickets were well prepared, flat and true. However Jenko resigned on 4 December 2014 and Robert Holland took over as caretaker curator until he was appointed curator in February 2015.

Ron Hill Oval was aerated by LMCC in September and shortly after they sprayed the oval with an insecticide to kill bugs and beetles and also an herbicide to control broadleaf weeds.

The equipment is all in good order. In December we had some problems with the roller and Cameron Young did a temporary repair. Eventually a new part arrived and we had Richard Best, mechanic, install it. The roller went well for the rest of the season.

We had the blades of the Masport mower sharpened and after that it cut very efficiently. There is still a problem with the depth of cut.  
The practice wickets were very good especially after Christmas.

### **Appreciation - Ron Hill Oval**

Hello Chris,

On behalf of Country Cricket New South Wales (CCNSW) Programs Manager Bruce Whitehouse, the Chairman of the Newcastle Cricket Zone (NCZ) Paul Marjoribanks and the Chairman of the Newcastle Cricket Zone Youth Committee Jason McKendry I extend to you, the Toronto DC Committee and Groundsman the sincere appreciation of all visiting teams, coaches, managers and players for your hospitality and use for two (2) days of J. R. Ron Hill Oval for the 2015 Country Cricket Kookaburra Cup (Under 14 ) competition. (9 and 11 January 2015).  
These competitions cannot be held without co-operation from districts clubs and their allowance to use grounds for these carnivals.

The work of your Treasurer Greg Chad is to also to be commended, working tirelessly in the canteen providing food and drinks for the various parents, officials and players. Please pass onto Greg the appreciation of all for his efforts.

I have this day (Tuesday 6 January 2015) deposited \$500 into the Toronto Workers DC account for pitch preparation over the two (2) days of the carnival.

Regards,  
Royce McCormack

**2015-16 Season** David Somerville was used in a consultative role concerning wicket preparation.

Robert Holland was the curator for the centre wickets and the practice wickets. He experimented with the cutting heights for the wickets. The round 8 2<sup>nd</sup> grade wicket was cut to 4mm and it cracked up badly on the second day. Young leg-spinner Joey Hart took 6 for 40 and 2 for 71 on the second day on a turning track.

Most other wickets were cut at 6mm while one 1<sup>st</sup> grade wicket was cut at 7mm. It was thought that 7mm was too long and that 6mm is about the best height for Newcastle grade wickets. (I heard a comment that the Test wicket in Adelaide this season, the first Day/Nighter and the first to use pink balls was cut at 9mm. I thought this was very long but the curator at Adelaide did that to preserve the pink balls. The pace bowlers loved it. There was a later report that said the Adelaide wicket was cut at 6mm for the Adelaide Test with the pink cricket ball so 9mm was not correct.



The covers were often too heavy for me to pull onto the wickets and I had to get some help from my pup Mac.



In December the roller broke down and we could not move it off the ground to lock away for the night. We covered it with everything we could think of hoping the vandals would not touch it. It was still covered the next morning.



Dave Sommerville advised us to tender for a mower from North Sydney Oval and we were successful in buying the mower. It proved to be an excellent buy.

The cricket club was successful in gaining a Community Building Partnership 2015 Grant for \$15,496 through Local Member Greg Piper towards a 70 m long by 5.2m high chain wire high fence at the Stoney Creek end of the oval. The quote for the work is \$26,400 so we have a shortfall of \$10,904. We then heard of another possible grant through Pat Conroy, Federal Member called Stronger Communities Program and we were advised to apply for a grant of \$8200 still leaving a shortfall of \$2704. The cricket club has the funds to cover this shortfall. At the time of writing the grant through Pat Conroy was not announced. The high fence will extend 1m above the top of the sight screen at the northern end of the ground.

**2016-17 Season** The season commenced badly with some of our very best players leaving the club. Joe Price, after 9 seasons with us, is leaving to join Wests and Greg Hunt, after 3 seasons with us is leaving to join Belmont. We do have one new player former Manly 1<sup>st</sup> grade high order batsman Andrew Jeffery.

Former Club President Aaron Gray advised that he will not be standing for election to the committee for the season.

5 September 2016 The high fence started today with a sizzor lift delivered and two workers. The work finished 13 September 2016.

A number of precautions were taken to protect the croquet courts and these were very successful as there was no damage to the courts.

Robert Holland was again the curator of the centre wickets and the practice wickets. Unfortunately Robert and Carolyn were assaulted at Awaba Oval by a man and a woman on 27 August 2016. Robert had had surgery to repair tendons in his right shoulder and the surgery failed because of the assault where he was kicked in the shoulder. He had to undergo surgery again on 17 December 2016. At this point Anthony Duggan took over as the curator of wickets and practice wickets at Ron Hill Oval.



September 2016 Two photos of the new high fence.

## General comments



Over the years we have had considerable trouble with vandalism. Vandals used to slide on the centre wickets after they were top dressed. This is the type of damage that is often done.



More vandalism 13 Feb 13

We have had several old rollers to prepare the cricket wickets and practice wickets.



One of the rollers used at Ron Hill Oval up to 1997. English player Mark Burton is driving the roller at Awaba Oval about 8 seasons ago.



The old roller which was sold to Hunter Sports High School about September 2013.

Over the years there have been minor problems with the sewer rising main that crosses Ron Hill from the sewer pump station and under Stoney Creek. Hunter Water has undertaken work to the sewer a couple of times.

**Work for the Dole**

WFD1 commenced 27 July 2015. Robert Holland supervised the crew of five workers. A lot of work was undertaken like; Shelves for junior kits, painting changerooms, mowing generally, mowing wickets, rolling wickets, generally tidying the pavillion and oval.

WFD 2 commenced 22 February 2016 however we averaged only one worker each shift. One of the workers from WFD 1, Ted, continued to come to the oval to work and his efforts were greatly appreciated.

WFD 3 started 3 August 2016. We had an average of about two workers each Monday and Friday and Ted was one of them and continued to turn up every day. When Robert Holland stopped being the curator he also could not continue supervising the Work for the Dole and this work was taken over by Alan Nichols and Greg Chad.

### **Michael Clarke at Ron Hill Oval**

18 September 2016 A trial match was organised between the Newcastle Representative Cricket Team and Western Suburbs Cricket Club (Sydney) at Ron Hill Oval. The match was played on the same wicket that was used the day before for the Toronto Workers v Northern Power trial match.

The big news was that Michael Clarke, former Australian Test Captain and batsman played in the match and as a result a lot of people turned up to watch Michael play. Newcastle batted first in very fine drizzle and proceeded to about 0-34 as the rain got a little heavier. Eventually the match was call off at 10.45am due to the steady light rain which made the conditions slippery and dangerous.

The large crowd that had gathered were disappointed that the match was called off.

(10:45am) J. R. Ron Hill Oval, Toronto umpires Terry Collins and Bruce Muddle have suspended play due to rain. Newcastle 0/34 from 11 overs - Aaron Wivell not out 22, Jeff Goninan not out 10.



Photo of Michael Clarke leading his team onto Ron Hill Oval.  
(Who is the young lady with blue top and white slacks in the background, could it be Naomi McKee (Holland)?)

## CHAPTER 4

### THE CROQUET CLUB STORY

Written by Glen Coulton

#### Croquet's Long Journey to Ron Hill Oval



Marion Davies Croquet Club President 2016-17

#### ***Preamble:***

This is not a history of the Toronto Croquet Club. It is merely a chapter in a book about Ron Hill Oval that highlights some of the things that happened at the Oval as a result of the co-tenancy of the Croquet Club. A proper history of Toronto Croquet Club would comprise a much more detailed analysis of all the evidence than is attempted here. It would also be written by a proper historian.

As the impetus for Toronto Croquet Club's decade-plus sharing of Ron Hill Oval with the cricketers is to be found in the reason for its departure from its previous home, this brief account of croquet at Ron Hill will begin with that reason.

For the most part, its account of the early years relies on two sources, the memories of our three life members, Pam and Ben Durie and John McColl and such newsletters and minutes from those years as survive. Because they lend an air of authenticity, snippets from those surviving documents will be used at several places.



Pam and Ben Durie at Ron Hill Oval in May 2016.  
Pam is a Founding Member and both Pam and Ben are Life Members



John McColl, Croquet Club Life Member, at Ron Hill Oval August 2016



Glen Coulton taking a break between games in July 2016. Sadly Glen passed away on 8 August 2016.



Kevin Davies, Vice Captain Golf Croquet in August 2016



Allan Graham, Croquet Club Vice-President in August 2016

### **In the beginning**

The long journey of the Toronto Croquet Club to its present home on Ron Hill Oval started many years ago when founding member Pam Durie's mum, Kate, started playing on a makeshift lawn at what was then the Toronto Presbyterian Church. Pam and husband Ben Durie, who might well have contracted the croquet disease from Pam, have been involved in croquet, one way or another, ever since.

### ***"Home" at Toronto Workers Club***

While Ben and Pam both became foundation members of Newcastle National Park, they continued their search for a stable home for a Toronto Croquet Club, making several advances to Lake Macquarie City Council for assistance. Their hopes of taking over the beautiful lawns of the about-to-close Toronto Bowling Club, near where Coles now stands, were dashed when the cost involved proved quite out of reach. Then, in about 1991, Pam had an encounter with a fellow dog walker who happened to be the President of the Toronto Workers Club. He advised her that the Club had no immediate plans for a large part of the area of land it owned behind its James Street premises and suggested it might be a good site for at least a semi-permanent complex of croquet lawns.

An agreement was eventually reached under which the Toronto Croquet Club acquired the use of the site for ten years.

Despite the inevitable irritations that arise while two organisations work out how best to co-exist — one was the requirement that all croquet players become members of the Workers Club — those ten years proved to be both enjoyable and productive. One highlight was the hosting of the 2001 State Championships by Toronto, played at Toronto and four other Hunter venues, all co-ordinated by Toronto's Ben Durie as overall championship manager. That was so successful that Toronto was asked to be

a host club of the March 2003 Australian Championship, again to be played over several Hunter venues. This required that Toronto Croquet Club seek an extension to the departure date which was graciously granted by the management of the Workers Club.

Recognising that its days at the Workers Club were numbered, the Croquet Club asked John McColl to find it a new home as quickly as possible. As the Workers Club site had recently been extended to embrace four lawns, the new site would need to be at least that accommodating.

### ***Planning for Croquet at Ron Hill Oval***

John quickly made contact with Lake Macquarie Council's Chris Miner and together they inspected several possible sites for croquet lawns.

It was probably Robert Holland who first realised that a Croquet Club in the grounds of cricket's home ground, Ron Hill Oval, would benefit both sports. With cricket being a summer-only game, the Cricket Club had a problem with security during the winter season when its ground and pavilion remained largely unused. A joint tenancy with an organisation that would attract people to the ground during cricket's winter down time was attractive so Robert proposed the vacant area to the east of the cricket oval as a good site for croquet lawns. Chris Miner advised that that area had already been set aside for netball courts and, being aware of the cricketers' wish for a year-round sport to be played within the Ron Hill Oval environs, suggested building croquet lawns within the Oval outfield.

This idea, initially thought to be impractical, was eventually judged to be feasible at a meeting involving Chris Miner, John McColl and Robert Holland in March 2003. Chris warned, though, that gaining Council approval for such ventures could take up to two years. Being aware that the Croquet Club needed a new home within nine months, John pressed for approval to be sought immediately with a request for it to be expedited as much as possible.

Approval was actually gained in May 2003. Three months! A record ?

As the realisation of what they had taken on grew, it is easy to imagine how concerned Robert would have been about the impact that uprooting the cricketing outfield would have on the match program for the new cricket season commencing in September.

It is also easy to imagine how concerned the croquet players must have been about how freshly planted croquet lawns would cope with the assault from the booted feet of healthy young cricketers engaging in strenuous pre-season training from as early as August.

Nevertheless, the die had been cast, and so the hard work began.



Ted Lyng, Grounds Manager, at Ron Hill Oval in August 2016

### ***The move***

Results of regular social games at Toronto Workers Croquet Club were still appearing in local newspapers as late as August of 2003. The record of those results, carefully cut out and pasted into a note book that survives, stop short at August. This could mean that play at the Workers Club stopped permanently in August, and that the re-location to Ron Hill started in that month.

Could lawns that could not have been worked on before May when Council approval was obtained possibly have been read for play by August? And could the club possibly survive the trauma of being moved from its four Workers Club lawns that attracted nothing but praise from visiting players to the outer of an ungroomed cricket field?

The committee seemed to be totally optimistic, as evidenced by this comment in the November 2003 newsletter.

*A committee has been formed to plan an official opening within the first three months of 2004. The proposed plan is to invite representatives from those who own the venue (Lake Macquarie City Council), those clubs who share the facility (cricket and netball) and CNSW and regional; croquet clubs to join us for some fun and games.(November 2003)*

That newsletter also commented:

*When the Netball Club moves in (work starts soon on three courts, two grass and one asphalt), the council will organise a management group to oversee the running of the venue. It will consist of two representatives from each of the three sports (November 2003).*

## **The Lawns**

Much of the hands-on work of getting the new lawns established fell to those who were later awarded Life Membership of the club: John McColl, Ben and Pam Durie and the late Bob Kyrwood. After engaging a contractor (Yarramalong Turf) to supply and lay the turf, their first task was to peg out three lawns. What were to become Lawn 4 and the practice lawn were later additions.

As soon as they were pegged out, the three lawns were treated with weedicide. Two weeks later, the dead growth and the top three inches (75 mm) of soil were removed and two inches (50 mm) of top soil spread. The turf was then laid in large rolls, six feet (1800 mm wide) and about four yards (3600 mm) long.

Various "experts" contributed their sometimes conflicting views on how best to manage the turf to achieve the fastest possible growth. One point at issue was whether it was better to keep the turf flooded or to maintain a dry surface to encourage the roots to penetrate the ground in search of the moist soil below. Because the latter opinion prevailed, it was necessary for the lawns to be watered three times per day (rather than flooded every couple of days) and this made it essential that volunteers be rostered to attend to turning the watering systems on and off.

The need for volunteers to be present daily had another beneficial effect: it discouraged passers-by from liberating patches of turf for their own use.

The total task of creating three croquet lawns on a roughish cricket outfield and re-locating an entire operation to a new site must have seemed daunting. Nevertheless, the January 2004 newsletter has the President reporting:

*It has been an outstanding effort by this club to move, "lock, stock and barrel" from Toronto Workers Club premises to South Lakes District Cricket Club. As you know, we are now "Toronto Croquet Club Inc".*

*New hat bands are available.*

*I am very proud of the way this potentially stressful move has been achieved.*

*Countless hours of negotiation, planning and hard work have resulted in successful relocation.*

*Congratulations to everyone. (January 2004)*

In that same issue, we read:

*In spite of the severe drought conditions we have laid the foundations of three really good lawns. The money from the Workers Club has been essential to our move. The co-operation of the Cricket Club has been invaluable. Again the many hours of planning, organizing and sheer hard labour have given us nice lawns to play on. Congratulations everyone.*

The ongoing financial support of croquet from the Toronto Workers Club was invaluable in helping the new Toronto Croquet Club Inc to establish itself, as was the co-operation that marked the relationship of the two new partner tenants of Ron Hill Oval — croquet and cricket. The Workers Club continued its support with annual

grants for several years until it judged that its former tenant was able to stand on its own feet.

Again, in that January 2004 newsletter, we read in the Games Captain's Report:

*Settling in well at our new venue — lawns still a bit heavy but accuracy improving. Top dressed Xmas Eve. Thanks to Cliff and Marg for their devotion to keeping the lawns marked.*

### **The official opening**

With the transfer to the new site successfully managed and three lawns already at a playable standard, nothing would stop the club realising its confident prediction that it would hold an official opening in the first three months of 2004. And so the front page of the March newsletter joyfully issued the following invitation.



An obviously delighted President reflected on the event as follows:

*What can I say!! The weather was perfect, the event was well attended by invited guests, visiting club members as well as a wonderful roll up of members and their friends. The food was plentiful and well received. WELL DONE TO ALL CLUB MEMBERS (26 March 2004)*



Trying their hand at croquet at the official opening on 26 March 2004 were Jeff Hunter MP Member for Lake Macquarie, LMCC Mayor John Kilpatrick and in the background John McColl and Barry McLean (now deceased).



Cutting the ribbon at the official opening on 26 March 2004 were Mayor John and Mayoress Ellen Kilpatrick plus back row L to R June Webb (now deceased), Ben Durie, Neil Gibson (Newcastle District Cricket Association Treasurer). Front Row L to R Pam Durie and Lorna Bissett.

### ***Development proceeds***

The arrangement under which the croquet players and the cricketers were vying for the same storage space was never going to be satisfactory and, as well as the invitation to the official opening, the March newsletter carried this welcome news: Good News from Jeff Hunter MP.

*We have now heard that our application for a grant to build an equipment shed at Ron Hill Oval has been approved by the Department of Sports and Recreation, in the sum of \$5900!*

*Members will remember that the building of this facility was one of the conditions required by Lake Macquarie City Council before permission was granted to use the Oval. As part of this process, we have already applied for Development Approval and received 3 quotations to carry out the work.*

*Over the next few weeks we will be forming a 'building committee' to plan the further action required. If any member wishes to be involved in this process contact our multi-skilled Hon Sec John (March 2004).*

Not all developments were physical. The May newsletter carried the news that :

*We have been informed of the new arrangements being made by the Council for the control and management of their sports facilities throughout the whole of the City including Ron Hill Oval. The secretary, working under instructions from the committee, is negotiating with the Council, Cricket and Netball Assocs to protect our interests in this matter.(May 2004)*

Under these 'new arrangements' emerged what is still colloquially called the Ron Hill Oval Board. It has become the conduit through which interaction between the Council and the three sporting clubs that use Ron Hill Oval are conveyed. We will hear more of it again under its current title, "Ron Hill Oval Community Operating Committee".

As a further sign that the new Toronto Croquet Club Inc was not about letting moss grow, the May newsletter also carried this report:

**Equipment Shed:** *Negotiations are proceeding with LMCC and H&H Training P/L and the Cricketers to have a building and other works carried out under the work for the dole scheme. Further details will be reported when available. Our shed is progressing nicely and we will shortly have our own storage area which will be very welcome.*

*The 3rd ground is being top dressed and hopefully will be ready for play soon (September 2004).*

No record remains of when the storage shed was finished and pressed into service but it was probably towards the end of 2004. Nor is it known when it acquired the name "Hoop House" but that's what is been always referred to in recent years. One little known fact about the "negotiations" that the September 2004 newsletter calmly described as "proceeding" illustrates well the commitment of some members to the club. Possibly because of having no experience of projects involving the work for the dole scheme, the contractor declined to commence the work unless he had two written guarantees that its all of his fees would be met. Two Life Members members unhesitatingly stepped forward to give the guarantees and the work proceeded.

### ***Equipment and those who use it***

At the time of the transfer to Ron Hill Oval, Graham Jenkinson, a local with a keen interest in cricket, prepared the cricket wickets. Graham indicated his preparedness to add mowing the croquet lawns to his list of chores. This marked the beginning of a very successful arrangement in which "Jenko" looked after the cricket wickets and the lawns for several years.

It was also another illustration of the excellent co-operation and teamwork that has always marked the cricket/croquet relationship on Ron Hill Oval.

By 2006 it was obvious that some of the maintenance equipment was at retirement age and action was taken as reported in the August newsletter:

*The Club recently purchased two items of equipment to help in keeping the greens in order, that cost about \$1500.... This was made possible by a donation from Toronto Workers Club of \$1000 and sale of surplus equipment. A big "thank you" to John McColl for arranging the donations. (August 2006)*

One of the items was Maitland Croquet Club's recently superseded mower. A larger and more advanced mower than anything Toronto had, it was the yellow monster that became an almost iconic sight at Ron Hill, being large and powerful enough to pull an elegant "carriage" on which Jenko royally sat, singing as he mowed. Of course, even that eventually had to be replaced and in recent years it made way for the wonderful ride-on greens mower that has made the task of mowing 4½ lawns quicker and more efficient.

### **The fourth lawn**

Throughout this time, the club, which had already grown to need four lawns at the Workers Club, had managed with three at Ron Hill and a move began to add a fourth.

By 2007, the committee had decided it was time to take the plunge, as these newsletter extracts show:

*A sub-committee has been formed to investigate and develop the fourth court. This sub-committee will report to a general meeting of all members early in the new year with the hope of having the fourth court installed during July 2007. (January 2007)*

A Special General Meeting was called to approve the sub-committee's recommendation:

#### **SGM 11th April 2007:**

*The agenda has been circulated for the information of members. Please note that this [Special General Meeting] is an important meeting. The agenda is limited but the obvious thrust of the meeting is to decide on a fourth court. (April 2007)*

And by the next month, we see that:

*The committee has resolved to further advance the process of getting quotations for the fourth court. The committee also has approved of the Sub-committee entering into a contract for the fourth court providing such quotations fall within the criteria previously set by the Executive Committee. (May 2007)*

Details of the construction and financing of the fourth lawn were not found but it is known that it was built by a contractor whereas the practice lawn, which was added later, was entirely the result of members' efforts.

### ***The watering system***

Perhaps the croquet club's biggest capital expenditure at Ron Hill has been the watering system. Watering such a huge area by movable sprays was a difficult and time consuming task and the club approached a Maitland company called Hunter Irrigation and Watering Solutions with considerable experience in designing systems for Hunter vineyards for advice. It presented a quote for \$13,000 for a system adequate for automatic time controlled watering of the existing three lawns.

It was 2008 by the time the committee got firmly to grips with commissioning and paying for the watering system. With the passing of time since the original quote had been obtained, and the need to extend the system to a fourth lawn, the committee estimated it would need about \$22,000 to cover the total project. It succeeded in obtaining half this amount from a government grant and wrote to every local business asking help to find the rest. With the help of financial donations and donations in kind, it managed to fund the completion and installation of the system that is still working so efficiently today.

One of the more substantial donations in kind was the complete survey of the site and mapping of the existing and needed underground networks by Survey Firm Pearson & Associates of Toronto. Providing the club with this service free of charge was the equivalent of making a donation of several thousand dollars.

The installation of the watering system in 2008 virtually drought-proofed the lawns of Toronto Croquet Club for the foreseeable future.

### **The weather**

Of course, being Australia, the club also had to deal with drought's flipside — flood. Well, if not flood, persistent sogginess especially in the winter months when the trees by Stony Creek block the sun for much of the day, the lawns take a long time to recover from heavy rain of which Toronto gets its fair share. Member frustration is not helped on days when the weather is inviting but the lawns remain unplayable, as this extract hints:

*"Keep smiling. The rain is good for something."*

*Last item in the President's report (March 2008)*

One of the disappointments that Toronto Croquet Club has had to learn to deal with has been the need to cancel, or amend, much anticipated events because of the inability of the lawns to recover quickly from heavy rain. And yet, members' love of their lawns never suffered mortal wounds, as this 2009 extract from the Association Croquet vice-captain's report shows:

*We are all enjoying play on Toronto's beautiful lawns at this time of the year.*

*(June 2009)*

### **Vandalism**

Some vandalism is deliberate and intended to distress its victims. Some is probably not maliciously intended, even if equally infuriating.

The croquet club and the cricket club have both had their share of the deliberate kind, though probably no more than many other clubs elsewhere. This newsletter extract illustrates the deliberate kind:

*Unfortunately we suffered another break-in at the club. This time the Hoop House roller door was forced, and although complete access to the shed was prevented, the thieves nevertheless were able to get at the first two trolleys and steal 14 balls. To this end, the committee has decided to buy some new balls and offer the remaining 18 Dawson 2000 balls for sale to members to the club members at \$10 each. (May 2011)*

Other deliberate vandalism has taken the form of graffiti and, sadly, the smashing of gates and other fittings. One of the more belief-reinstating sights is that of Robert Holland, paint tin and brush in hand, painting over graffiti as soon as it appears. Ron Hill Oval is a public space which means that the public cannot be locked out. This has led to more easily understood, probably unintended damage to the lawns, frequently caused by locals using them as what they perceive them to be — nice spaces provided for them for their leisure. Unfortunately for the club, "leisure" often means playing football, practising golf shots or performing wheelies when the lawns are so wet that the members can't play on them.

The club has tried to reach reasoned compromises with the public, taking such measure as marking out and mowing football pitches away from the lawns and encouraging their use as an alternative to the croquet lawns. As is often the case, these initiatives achieve some, but not total success.

**Toronto Croquet Club moved to Ron Hill Oval early in the cricket season 2003-04** and constructed two croquet courts in the outfield on the eastern side of the oval. These two croquet courts are named Blissett 1 and Durie 2. The two clubs will now co-exist on the oval. The two croquet courts are excellent for the cricketers to field on.

Sadly Glen Coulton passed away about 8 August 2016.

## Croquet courts cricket alliance

FROM humble beginnings when a few players used the front lawn of a house as a court, the Toronto Croquet Club has grown to 43 members.

The club hopes that by the end of this summer membership will nudge 60 players.

On Friday, March 26 Lake Mayor John Kilpatrick will open the club's three new courts at Ron Hill Oval, Toronto West.

The club, which

moved from its previous site at the Toronto Workers Club last year, will share the council-owned oval with a cricket club – the new courts being located on the outfield of the cricket ground.

Club spokesman John McColl said the arrangement had worked well in its first season, with the clubs sharing equipment to maintain their playing surfaces.

The Mayor Councillor John Kilpatrick opened the croquet club's three new courts on Friday 26 March 2004 and John McColl was the spokesperson for the croquet club. The croquet club applied for a Sport and Recreation Grant to construct a gear shed at the eastern side of the clubhouse. The construction work will be carried out by a Work for the Dole crew. The building commenced in August 2004 and took about two months to complete. The work crew also undertook other maintenance works at Ron Hill Oval once they had finished the building work.

In recent years Ron Hill Oval has been improved. The Toronto Croquet Club moved to share the oval with the cricket and this brought immediate improvements. Four couch croquet courts were installed in the outfield considerably improving the area and making it one of the best in the district. The croquet club added the "Hoop House" extension in 2004

The croquet club advised during 2005-06 that they intend building a fourth croquet green. It will be located at the north end of the ground to the west of the sight screens.

### **Toronto Croquet Club**

Toronto Croquet Club is located at the Ron Hill Oval in Toronto, NSW, Australia. We have four croquet greens, a half size practice green and a clubhouse shared with the [Toronto Cricket Club](#) and maintained by [Lake Macquarie City Council](#). The club has been going since 1992 with 2013 being our 21st Anniversary.

[www.tinyurl.com/torontocc](http://www.tinyurl.com/torontocc)



We hold regular Golf and Association croquet and these events can be found on [our calendar](#). Visitors are always most welcome. [Click here](#) for any breaking news, ground status etc. People to contact about the ground status are [listed here](#).

[Click here for a printable welcome to Toronto Croquet Club.](#)

It lists contacts, playing times, costs and other essential information.

Also have a browse of the links on the left sidebar of this website.

**Toronto Croquet Club, Ron Hill Oval, Toronto**

[Toronto](#) is a town of over 5000 people, located on beautiful Lake Macquarie. We are 100 kms north of Sydney and 28 kms south of Newcastle.



We are only minutes from the F3 freeway linking those cities. Just take the clearly signposted turnoff to Toronto at the Awaba Interchange.

The nearby suburb of Fassifern is a major railway station with a regular connecting bus service (called 'The Train') into Toronto. We are just over 2 hours travel by train from Central Railway Station.



Besides the activities on Lake Macquarie, we are not that far from beaches or a wide variety of Hunter Valley wineries with tasting venues and accommodation.

This site is also at [www.tinyurl.com/torontocc](http://www.tinyurl.com/torontocc)



Photo of the "Hoop House" as it is today but it was built in two halves the rear section in 2004 and the front half about 2012.

Hoop House New Door Project. The croquet club has started this project which is being funded by a Community Building Partnership grant - gate on this week, header this week, rolladour this week. Job finished in 2015. This relates to the new door into the Hoop House located on the east side of the building at the rear.

Video Surveillance. The croquet club has purchased a video surveillance system with cameras which record continually. Two cameras will be set up inside the hoop house in November 2015 while the other two may be set up inside the clubhouse. The setting up of the system was undertaken by one of the Work for the Dole workers Aaron.

Toronto Croquet Club – Advising of concern about damage to croquet courts during installation of the high fence at the northern end of the ground, which the cricket club has a grant to construct. The meeting decided to ask the cricket club to buy lengths of 100mm drainage pipe to stop croquet balls going into creek. Croquet would like to have representation at the construction meeting between Cricket and Fencing Contractor. Cricket Club and Contractor to be asked to do work in stages and to secure the area to stop vandals getting onto oval during the work.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE NETBALL STORY

Later in the 2003-04 cricket season the Toronto Netball Club moved to use Ron Hill Oval for netball practice. They played on grass courts at the rear of the clubhouse where the present bitumen sealed netball courts are located. A fence was needed between the netball courts and the bitumen sealed driveway to make it safer for the netballers.

Some years later LMCC bitumen sealed the two netball courts and installed some fencing barriers next to the access road.

In 2016 only Bolton Point Netball Club has teams practicing at the netball courts.

## CHAPTER 6

### RON HILL OVAL COMMUNITY OPERATING COMMITTEE (RHOCOC)

**You will notice that RHOCOC is often referred to as the Ovals Board. This is the old terminology which it is difficult to stop using.**

Letter from Stephen Woodbridge, Secretary Southern Lakes District Cricket Club, to LMCC dated April 1983 indicating that the cricket club is interested in taking over care and control of the oval. Stephen indicated that we have 60 members and the future needs for the development of the oval are a watering system for the ground, security lighting, and additions to the clubhouse.

Report to Council 22 April 1985 headed Toronto West Ovals where SLDCC was given Care Control and Management of Ron Hill Oval.

LMCC requested the users of Ron Hill Oval to form an Ovals Board in 2004. The board in the initial years may have been seven members and was set up in June 2004 with cricket members Matthew Wagstaff Chairperson and Warren Craik Treasurer. John McColl from croquet was Secretary. All user groups will now have to pay fees to the ovals board for the playing and training use of the oval however the funds raised will be spent on management and improvements to the oval.

RHOCOC manages the affairs of Ron Hill Oval on behalf of Lake Macquarie City Council. The affairs are wide ranging and include collection of fees, booking of the oval, commenting on improvements to the oval and generally looking after the oval. The funds raised by the fees are spent on the bills received ie electricity, the purchase of necessary items, oval repairs plus development of the oval.

Matthew Wagstaff made one important decision when he was Chairperson. The cricket club obtained a large pile of bright green old office carpet from the LMCC offices. We advised in the Ovals Board meeting the intention to carpet the change rooms. Waggy used his position as Chairperson to say we should not carpet the opposition dressing room because we should not do anything to make the opposition feel welcome. (We also cut off the tails of all the local dogs as well so they could not wag them near the opposition teams to make them feel welcome !).

In recent seasons the cricket club has carpeted the opposition dressing room with carpet tiles.

Each user group has to nominate people for election to the committee, which meets four times each year.

2006-07 Alan Nichols was elected President of the Ovals Board with Warren Craik Treasurer.

2007-08 Alan Nichols, Matthew Wagstaff and Warren Craik were on the ovals board 2007-08. The board was successful in gaining a grant to install a computerised watering system to the oval to allow watering of the croquet courts and centre wickets. The cricket club paid a contribution of \$1300 towards the cost and the work was undertaken by a contractor in July 2008.

The elected committee for 2008-09 elected 15 August 2008 was Alan Nichols, John McColl, Warren Craik, Mrs Lee Todd, Gordon Todd, Ben Durie, Col Lynch and Robert Holland (this was my first election to the ovals board) a total of 8 persons.

In 2008-09 LMCC advised of a proposal to re-key Ron Hill Oval. The arrangement was that Council would carry out the work. The following keys were provided Ovals Board 5 keys (given to clubs) so Croquet Club 6 keys, Cricket Club 7 keys and Netball 2 keys. The ovals board had to pay \$250, cricket \$250, croquet \$200 and Netball \$50. These amounts are all bonds for the keys. If an additional key was required the cost is \$50 for key cutting plus \$50 bond, a total of \$100/key.

The list of keyholders has changed over the years to the following list.

#### **RON HILL OVAL COMMUNITY OPERATING COMMITTEE**

##### **KEY HOLDERS AT RON HILL OVAL ON 25 Feb 2016**

<b><u>SERIES</u></b>	<b><u>KEY NUMBER</u></b>	<b><u>HOLDER</u></b>	<b><u>REPRESENTING</u></b>
CP2.28.1	1 (Master Key)	LMCC	LMCC
CP2.28.1	2 (Master Key)	Chris Dickson	Cricket
CP2.28.2	1	Kevin Davies	Operating
Committee			
CP2.28.2	2	Robert Holland	Cricket
CP2.28.2	3	Greg Chad	Cricket
CP2.28.2	4	Mike MacKenzie	Cricket
CP2.28.2	5	Aaron Gray	Cricket
CP2.28.2	6	Bill Bannon	Cricket
CP2.28.2	7	David Somerville	Cricket
CP2.28.2	8	Corey Brown	Cricket
CP2.28.3	1	Kevin Parkes	Croquet
CP2.28.3	2	Ted Lyng	Croquet
CP2.28.3	3	Pam Wiemers	Croquet
CP2.28.3	4	Glen Coulton	Croquet
CP2.28.3	5	Allan Graham	Croquet
CP2.28.3	6	Bill Newberry	Croquet
CP2.28.4	1	Denise Wiltshire	BPFB Netball Club
CP2.28.4	2	(This key was lost. Key 3 provided later by LMCC)	
CP2.28.4	3	Sharon Nayler	BPFB Netball Club
CP2.28.4	4	Robert Holland	Spare key
CP2.28.5	1 (Hirer Key- only opens rear door)	with R Holland for Operating	
Committee			

Prepared by Robert Holland    phone        0458 505488  
email                    [dutchylives@bigpond.com](mailto:dutchylives@bigpond.com)

July 2011 – New Committee elected as follows: Alan Nichols Chairperson, Julie King Secretary, Robert Holland Treasurer, Mathew Wagstaff, Kurt Beck, Lee Todd and Kevin Parkes.

2010-11 Season – Alan Nichols and I are on the Ron Hill Ovals Board and most dealings concern the use of the ground by cricket and croquet. There is a current issue that is not fully resolved concerning Rod Mudford mowing the oval with our gang mowers on Friday morning after the LMCC mower has mowed the oval. Rod mows the grass to a lower level. The issue is that the gang mowers cannot be used while ever there are players on the oval. This matter is currently being discussed with LMCC.

Hi Folks (Memo from John McColl)

#### Report to Croquet Committee

Today in company with Robert Holland and Alan Nichols we attended a meeting with Chris Miner and the supervisor of the LMCC mowing team in the hope we can reach a better solution to Friday mowing clash with our players.

Our suggestion was to have the council mow the oval lower (FROM ,50MM TO 25MM) and thereby save the cricket people making a second mowing. In this, for a variety of reasons, we were unsuccessful. However, some good things came about.

- 1        LMCC gave firm instruction that the Ovals Board do not allow mowing when the lawns are occupied in any circumstances. If players are on the lawns, then no mowing is to take place.
- 2        LMCC required the cricketers to complete all mowing activity by 8.30am, and required the Croquet players to delay their Friday start time to 8.30am. Robert and Alan accepted on behalf of the Cricket Club and I agreed on behalf of Croquet. To facilitate this the Council will make the mowing of Ron Hill the first port of call each Friday morning.
3. This to take place from next season in September for a trial period.

John McColl

I took over as Treasurer on 15 July 2011 and I took over as Secretary/Booking Officer on 18 July 2014. R Holland



Photo taken August 2012 of a repair to a subsoil drain near Bissett Croquet Court

RHOCOC received a report in July 2011 that Cricket have received a grant to install picket fence and will be approaching Ovals Board for funds to help complete the installation.

John asked if some solution can be found to vandals who attend the oval, particularly following rain, and play football or other games on the croquet courts causing damage to croquet courts and cricket wickets and graffiti to the building and surrounds. John suggests that we try to find a person in the community who may accept a fee (say \$50) to undertake inspections of the oval late each day for three months to deter vandals. We should equip the person with an official shirt and determine when they should attend. The person is not to cause confrontation and in the event of serious problems call the Police. The meeting agreed that John would investigate this further and provide a report to the RHOCOC. Nov 2013

In 2013 the croquet club successfully applied for a Volunteer's Grant for the purchase of a ride-on mower. The arrangement was that both the croquet club and cricket club contributed to the cost. so the mower is in joint ownership.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR USE OF HUSQVARNA RIDE ON MOWER**

Control and responsibility is that of the Croquet Club Groundsman (currently Ted Lyng) in his absence it is delegated to Kevin Davies (Croquet Games Captain) and shall be known as the Authorised Officer.

The Authorised Officer is to instruct and authorise the Club Members of both Clubs to drive the mower.

The Authorised Officer is responsible for all servicing and authorising repair work and shall ensure all checks are carried out to ensure oil levels, tyre pressures etc are correct.

A log book will be maintained and remain in the Hoop House to ensure all servicing etc is carried out.

The Log Book will contain a list of those people authorised to drive the mower, and will be used to record any needs for maintenance etc. and contact details of the Authorised Officer.

The Log book shall be used to record, date, driver's name, starting time, finishing time, hour meter reading before and after, and finally also any comments.

All authorised users shall ensure that they comply with all OH&S requirements, particularly with regard to appropriate covered footwear and safety requirements.

No loose clothing is to be worn whilst using the mower.

Under no circumstances is the mower to be used when there is any person, whether Club member or otherwise in the immediate vicinity of the mower. In particular the mower is not be used if there is any person using the croquet courts or the cricket field facilities.

**Only members of the Toronto Croquet Club and Cricket Club are to utilise the mower.**

**The authorised users are:**

Ted Lyng

Kevin Davies

Warren King

Allan Garrett

Graham Jenkinson

Rod Mudford

Care is to be taken to ensure the mower blade is stopped before the shield is raised so that the mower can be driven into the hoop house where it shall be stored – under no circumstance is it to be stored or left in any other location. Care is to be taken when driving the mower into the hoop house to ensure the blade or disk is not damaged or any other damage caused.

Authorised users from the Croquet Club are not to use the mower except in the area bounded by the areas 2 metres outside of court 1 to and including Court 4, and the boundary fence adjoining that area.

The mower is not to be driven on the croquet courts without the explicit approval of the Croquet Club Groundsman.



### **The HUSQVARNA RIDE ON MOWER**

Alan indicated in July 2014 that Chris Miner of LMCC had indicated in an email that the composition of the Ron Hill Oval Community Operating Committee should be 2 from Croquet, 2 from Cricket, 1 from Toronto Netball Club, 1 from Bolton Point Netball Club and 1 Community Representative, a total of seven members.

Alan Nichols indicated that Tracey Ray had expressed an interest in being Secretary. Alan called another meeting for Friday afternoon 1 August 2014 to hold a ballot between Tracey Ray and Robert Holland for the position of Secretary. Tracey withdrew her nomination for Secretary and the meeting did not go ahead. This left Robert Holland as Secretary for 2014/15.

Croquet Club advised in November 2014 that it will be seeking a grant to widen the door at rear of hoop house to get machinery in more easily and they are seeking a letter of support from RHOCOC. Alan to write a letter of support.

May 2015. The Hoop House job to provide a new door and internal wall. A grant has been received by Croquet Club and job has LMCC approval. It will go ahead in next few weeks with LMCC involved in supervision.

29 April 2016 – Toronto Croquet Club – Advising of concern about damage to croquet courts during installation of the high fence at the northern end of the ground, which the cricket club has a grant to construct. The meeting decided to ask the cricket club to buy lengths of

100mm drainage pipe to stop croquet balls going into creek. Croquet would like to have representation at the construction meeting between Cricket and Fencing Contractor. Cricket Club and Contractor to be asked to do work in stages and to secure the area to stop vandals getting onto oval during the work.

29 April 2016 LMCC Memo and Email – Concerning the Sports Facility Advertising Policy. Only one information sign is permitted to face the roads Awaba Road and Straight Drive. Two action items are required. The first, to make arrangements to remove all signs that don't comply. Robert to take up with owners. The second is to have a new sign made and installed to front Awaba Road and the content of the new sign needs to be agreed to by LMCC before it is made. The suggestion for the new sign is;

***“J R (Ron) Hill Oval***

***Cricket, Croquet and Netball played here***

***Inquiries phone 49210333”***

29 April 2016 Update Roof Replacement – Council has advised a proposed start date of 17 May 2016. The meeting decided to ask Council for an early meeting to discuss the work and arrangements concerning temporary toilets and gear shed.

29 April 2016 Maintenance to Watering system. The meeting agreed to have Hunter Irrigation and Watering Systems maintain the existing watering system. Robert to arrange. (Council later advised that Council will do the maintenance).

29 April 2016 Alan Nichols advised that after being on the RHOCOC for 10 years he will not seek re-election at the AGM.



Photo of Alan Nichols, at right, with cricket club selector Bob Hall.

At the time of writing the officers of the RHOCOC are;

Chairperson	Chris Kuszelyk	Representing cricket
Secretary/Booking Officer	Robert Holland	Representing cricket
Treasurer	Allan Graham	Representing Croquet
Safety Officer	Kevin Davies	Representing Croquet.
Committee Member	Denise Wiltshire	Representing Netball

## Grade 2 - Sports Ground

This information is taken from LMCC's Facility Manager Website.



- [Home](#)
- [Administration](#)
- [Fees and Charges](#)
- Grade 2 - Sports Ground

[Print this page](#)

**Applies to the following facilities:** Miller Field Belmont; Blacksmiths Oval; Cardiff Oval No.1; Charlestown Oval; **Ron Hill Oval Toronto**; Keith Barry Oval Toronto; Tulkaba Park No.1 Teralba; Feighan Oval No.1 Warners Bay; Jack Neave Field (top) Cardiff South; Windsor Park Gateshead; William Bower Oval Glendale, John Street Fields Warners Bay; Speers Point; Kahibah Oval, Rathmines Oval, Chapman Oval, Swansea; Croudace Bay Complex (Rugby League and Football); Allen Davis and Ernie Calland Fields Gateshead (Cricket)

### Grade 2 - Sports Grounds – Fees and Charges 2016-17

#### **Including Ron Hill Oval, TORONTO**

***Teams from outside the City are to pay the casual rate for ground hire and lighting, not the seasonal rate. Fees to be used by management body to operate and manage fields and facilities.***

Description	Approved Fee
<b>Commercial hire</b> – per hour per field	\$56.00
<b>Commercial hire</b> – per month per field (up to 10 hours per week)	\$361.00
<b>Commercial hire</b> – per month per field (up to 20 hours per week)	\$563.00
<b>Casual hire</b> – per hour per field	\$36.00
<b>Casual hire</b> – half day per field	\$112.00
<b>Casual hire</b> – full day per field	\$183.00
<b>Seasonal Fee – Cricket / Football / Baseball / Croquet</b> – (Aged 18 & over) (Playing) per registered player	\$34.00
<b>Seasonal Fee – Cricket / Football/ Baseball / Croquet</b> – (Aged 18 & over) (Training) per registered player including lighting*	\$22.00
<b>Seasonal Fee – Cricket / Football/ Baseball / Croquet</b> – (Under 18) (Playing) per registered player	\$22.00

Description	Approved Fee
<b>Seasonal Fee – Cricket / Football/ Baseball / Croquet</b> – (Under 18) (Training) per registered player including lighting*	\$13.00
<b>Charlestown Oval</b> – Hire of stage for a function/community event – per day (including power) – approval conditions apply	\$220.00
<b>Charlestown Oval</b> – Hire of stage for a commercial event – per day (including power) – approval conditions apply	\$430.00
*Where the team/club training at the ground is not the primary user, the lighting is not included and the team/club is to pay the lighting fee as well as the training fee	
<b>Lighting per hour</b>	\$33.00
<b>Spectator Charge</b> – The user sports club may charge a spectator fee to cover its commitments to a sporting association.	
<b>Meeting room per hour</b> (where available)	\$19.00
<b>Additional key</b>	\$60.00
<b>Key deposit/bond</b> – (refunded with return of key and receipt)	\$60.00

### ***Standard Hours of Operation***

Facility with lighting available 7.00am – 10.30pm

Facility without lighting 7.00am – 7.00pm Extension of hours will require Council Approval.

**Page Last Updated:** 28 Jun 2016.

4 July 2016                      A delegation from Toronto Bridge Club arrived at Ron Hill Oval and spoke to Robert Holland about the possibility of setting up a Bridge Room or facility at Ron Hill Oval. The delegation was Noel DeLosa, Henry Welsmore and John McColl and the discussion was around extending the existing pavilion to the east towards the high school to establish a Bridge room about 10m by 15m. Robert later provided a plan of the existing pavilion to Henry for Noel to sketch a concept plan. John McColl rang Robert later to advise of a meeting with Council to discuss this matter on 13 July 2016.

It is believed that LMCC did not support the proposal because the Bridge Club play on Saturdays and they often have about 30 cars at their venues. The car parking would be a big issue at Ron Hill Oval where there is a big crowd at the cricket.

**CHAPTER 7**  
**DEVELOPMENT OF RON HILL OVAL**



**1977-78 Season**                    The original pavillion was completed and it was only two dressing rooms, showers, toilets and rear storage shed.



A photo taken about 1978 looking to the south towards the practice wickets.



The front of the pavillion after the 1983 extention.



The photo was taken about 1983 and shows a sight screen, the conveyor belting bowlers run-ups painted green and the practice wickets with synthetic covering.

# Skippers give their opinions on which are the city's best wickets

WHICH are the best wickets in Newcastle? Which are the worst? And why? These and other crucial questions were on my lips when I approached three respected first grade captains this week.

They all had lots to say. Cahill Oval was the best (surprise, surprise). Passmore was the worst. They said that wickets prepared by curators associated with the home club were better. Those prepared by council staff were worse.

I asked the three skippers to place in order of quality all the first grade tracks being used in the Newcastle District Cricket Association premier-ship this year. This included No1 Sports Ground but not University No1, which was rendered unplayable at the start of the season after a weed-spraying mishap.

After adding all their ratings, the results were as follows: Cahill Oval (1st), Cardiff No1 (2nd), Kahibah Oval (3rd), Ron Hill Oval (4th), Wallsend No1 (5th), Lynn Oval (6th), Learmonth Park (7th), No1 Sports Ground (8th), Townson Oval (9th), Waratah Oval (10th), Harker Oval (11th) and Passmore Oval (12th).



**CRICKET ON WEDNESDAY**

MICHAEL PARRIS

In 1988 we used to practice on a turf practice area located in front of the pavilion using steel frames and mesh as nets. It was too dangerous because balls used to go over the makeshift nets and hit the front of the building. It was very dangerous for anyone walking in or out of the building.

In 1996 the local service clubs constructed a footbridge over the tributary of Stoney Creek, adjacent to the western boundary of Toronto High School, for the use of students at the high school to get to school. The bridge was built by a local carpenter Peter Brill. The bridge also leads to a rough bush track that allows people to walk past the northern boundary of the high school and all the way to Toronto Workers Club.

There was a proposal about 2000 to construct a basketball stadium in the Toronto area and I know the Council thought about constructing it at Ron Hill Oval. The area available was too small.

Comment by Club President Robert Holland in the club's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet; The club has developed its facilities over the years as well and we now boast one of the best clubrooms in Newcastle at Ron Hill Oval. The wickets at Ron Hill Oval are of a high standard and the practice facilities, including the large turf practice square, excellent.

The building and ground were flooded in 1985 where water was approximatel 1meter deep through the building. This is the biggest flood ever experienced at the ground.

Letter on file dated 20 April 1996, "Proposed Hard Court" Facility Toronto from Jan Moore, Secretary Toronto High School to the Landscape Architect at Lake Macquarie City Council requesting Council construct a facility. Council later constructed a tennis wall, a half basketball court and two shelters with picnic tables between the pavilion and Awaba Road. I am not sure when these improvements were constructed but they have been well used over the years. One problem with the tennis wall is that it is often graffitied but we attempt to paint out any graffiti within a couple of days of it happening.



One of two picnic tables.



The tennis wall.

Graffiti has been a major problem particularly around the pavilion and while it still happens we attempt to paint it out within 2 days of it happening. Also LMCC now has a faster response crew for removal of any graffiti.

In 2004-05 the netball club were not at the ground as much as previous seasons, and we had been advised that Council intends bitumen sealing one netball court. Appropriate fencing will be installed to prevent the netball court being used as a carpark.

About ten years ago there was a proposal for another footbridge to be constructed over the main body of Stoney Creek to the north of the oval. The idea was to connect up the existing footbridge with a new footbridge and extend a footpath through the Waterboard Oval and on to Adam Street and the Greenway cyclepath. This is a great idea and would allow walkers and cyclists to have a circular track to follow. The problem with the proposal is that Stoney Creek at the northern end of the oval is very wide, possibly 40 m, and any footbridge would be very costly. We have heard that this proposal is still listed on the Council's list of works but maybe it is in the too costly basket.

The building and oval were again flooded in 2007 with water that reached about 600mm high inside the building flooding fridges, carpets and about 9 Southern Lakes Junior Cricket Club kits stored on the floor of the building. SLJCC got a Federal Government grant to replace the kits also a grant from Toronto Workers Club.

The cricket club had a telephone installed at Ron Hill Oval and the phone number was 4950 4430. About 2012 the club decided to cancel the phone because too many non cricket calls were being made and also most people by that time had a mobile phone.

August 2011            The cricket club purchased very good quality cricket wicket soil and top dressed the centre wickets and practice wickets square. The wicket soil comes from Oberon and it is sold by Collins Construction Materials at a cost of \$360/cubic meter in 2015. The reasons for using Oberon Wicket Soil were firstly that following some work on the centre wicket about 2013 we were left with ridges that urgently needed to be eliminated. Also the wicket soil we were getting from Maitland was deteriorating and was poor quality.



A new rubberised bowling approach installed in 2012 with a grant from Toronto RSL.



Photo of the sight screens at the southern end of the ground on 3 June 2016. Note the second gate has dropped and the cricket club has new bigger hinges to install to lift the gate.



The wicket soil shed, photo taken 26 September 2016. The steel mesh gates were provided by cricketer Cameron Young and the cricket club paid for the installation.



Photo of turf practice wicket square on 3 June 2016



The centre wicket square in great condition 3 June 2016.



Photo of sight screens at the northern end of the oval taken 7 June 2016 after they were repaired and painted.

Hi Bob,

This email confirms outcomes from our meeting at Ron Hill Oval on Wednesday 22 September 2014.

**In August-September and March-April Council will:**

Core entire playing surface and apply the applicable pre-emergent, the field should be down for 2 weeks but this may lessen if Croquet have lawns playable earlier.

**Playing field soil amendment works as outlined in Soil Analysis report provided by Council:**

It was agreed that the Operating Committee will accept the field renovation works in accordance with the soil analysis completed by Globe Australia, the analysis outlines applications from October 2014 until June 2015 of which Council will supply staff and machinery to apply. The Operating Committee will set up an account at Globe to purchase fertilizers and amendments.

Council will fund the first application of the amendment program which includes aeration of the entire playing surface and supply and application of fertilizer, lime and trace elements on or around December 15<sup>th</sup> – 18th 2014.

There will be an aeration, fertilize and gypsum application in March 2015, a final fertilizer application will occur in June 2015. This will complete the program.

Council Green keeping staff will liaise with the committee in regards to the timing of all works.

Regards

**Chris Miner** | Sports Facilities Management Officer

From: alan.nichols@bigpond.com  
To: grajae@ymail.com; cricketsouthernlakes@gmail.com; gramp2@bigpond.com  
CC: dutchylives@bigpond.com; dfsomerville4@gmail.com  
Subject: Upgrades to Ron Hill  
Date: Tue, 21 Oct 2014 22:08:04 +1100

Gents

Following an earlier meeting I had with Chris Minor LMCC to get something happening on the outfield of Ron Hill Oval, Robert & I met today with the LMCC staff & Croquet at Ron Hill Oval re improvements to the playing surface (outfield). It was agreed that the council who have put together a soil analysis and action plan for improvements over the next 12 months would implement this plan which includes:

1. LMCC providing qualified labour to complete the work of aerating 2 – 3 times a year
2. LMCC staff will purchase all materials on behalf of the RHOC

3. LMCC staff will apply fertilizer and chemical weeding 4 times per year
4. The implementation period is immediate
5. The cost of the materials (Fertilizer, soil conditioner etc.) is approximately \$4000 of which the council we pay for the first installment beginning this month \$1000 to kick it off.
6. The ovals board will pay for the remainder of the materials for this financial year
7. LMCC will also treat the Croquet courts at the same time as the rest of the ground
8. It will be the responsibility of CSL to maintain adequate water to the outfield (excluding the croquet lawns) during this period, we will be able to use the mobile sprinkler recently repaired by Steve Wratten, and this should be implemented by the ground staff with the possible help of some local volunteers
9. The length of the project is open ended and should run for at least the next 5 years if LMCC & RHOC can manage the funding

For future years we may need to top up the working capital but this would be on a shared cost with croquet.

Then aim of the project is to get a ground that has a couch outfield where high quality cricket could be played or to have a complete outfield in similar condition to the croquet lawns – given some time and effort by all parties. Croquet are fully supportive of this work being completed as it eases their work load.

I am not sure if I missed anything, my memory is not as good as it was, if I have I am sure that Robert could provide more information.

This is a fantastic outcome and the news should be circulated to all members of the club including our sponsors showing them that we are working hard for the community.

My aim is to have Ron Hill as the premier ground in Lake Macquarie perhaps even Newcastle we can make this work.

Maybe a topic for our first newsletter in the near future.

Regards

***Alan Nichols***

2013 Lake Macquarie City Council commissioned an **"Irrigation Efficiency Assessment for Ron Hill Oval in February 2013."** The full report is 12 pages in length and a scientific analysis of the soil types and irrigation of the oval. The full report is available in my records for anyone who may wish to view it.

**Roof Leak** Over the period from about 2010 to 2016 the roof of the pavilion has leaked badly allowing water to get into the clubroom area. The water damaged the kitchen and wet the carpet tiles. The RHOCOC advised LMCC several times about the water getting into the building. Council did a couple of minor repairs but the water damage kept happening every time there was heavy rain. The small size and gradients of the box gutters were the problems.

Eventually about 2012 Council removed the old damaged kitchen and installed a new kitchen. The new kitchen was great but the water still got in during heavy rain. In 2015 Council advised that money had been allocated for the complete replacement of the roof and that the work would be undertaken during the fourth quarter of Financial Year 2015-16

April 2015 Paul Clarke and Cameron Young replaced the metal roof on the soil shed because the original one leaked.

17 May 2016 Meeting at Ron Hill Oval with LMCCs Scott Hamilton and the RHOCOC to discuss the roof replacement job. Council's offer with regard to container, toilets, access and power was better than we expected.

20 May Council had a container shed delivered for the use of the Croquet Club during the roof reconstruction job. It was left on the roadway because it was dangerous to try to take it under the electrical wires into the pavilion.

Saturday 21 May Working bee by cricket club using a scissor lift to remove old disused high net at turf practice wickets also to reposition the sight screens and paint the N end sight screens.

26 May Tree lopping contractors on site cutting tree limbs that overhang the pavilion in preparation for the new roof.

June 2016 LMCC plumber installed a back flow device to the large water service near the last house in Woodale Street.



Tree loppers start the work for the roof replacement by removing limbs overhanging the pavilion on 26 May 2016

17 June 2016            The LMCC carpenters have been working inside the pavilion for the past two weeks getting it ready for the new roof. They have lined ceilings in the changerooms and the showers. Also today contractors starting putting up scaffolding for the roof work.



Photo showing the scaffolding being erected on 17 June 2016.



Part of the ceiling in the home changeroom showing the plywood lining.

24 June 2016            There have been four problems that have delayed the roof replacement work over the past three weeks. Council had advised that they propose to have the whole roof replacement job completed by the end of June 2016 but that is looking unlikely on Friday 24 June. The four holdups were; Council found more asbestos in the building than they anticipated and the removal of asbestos took a few days.

There was heavy rain on two occasions in the past two weeks that delayed the carpenters removing the old roof.

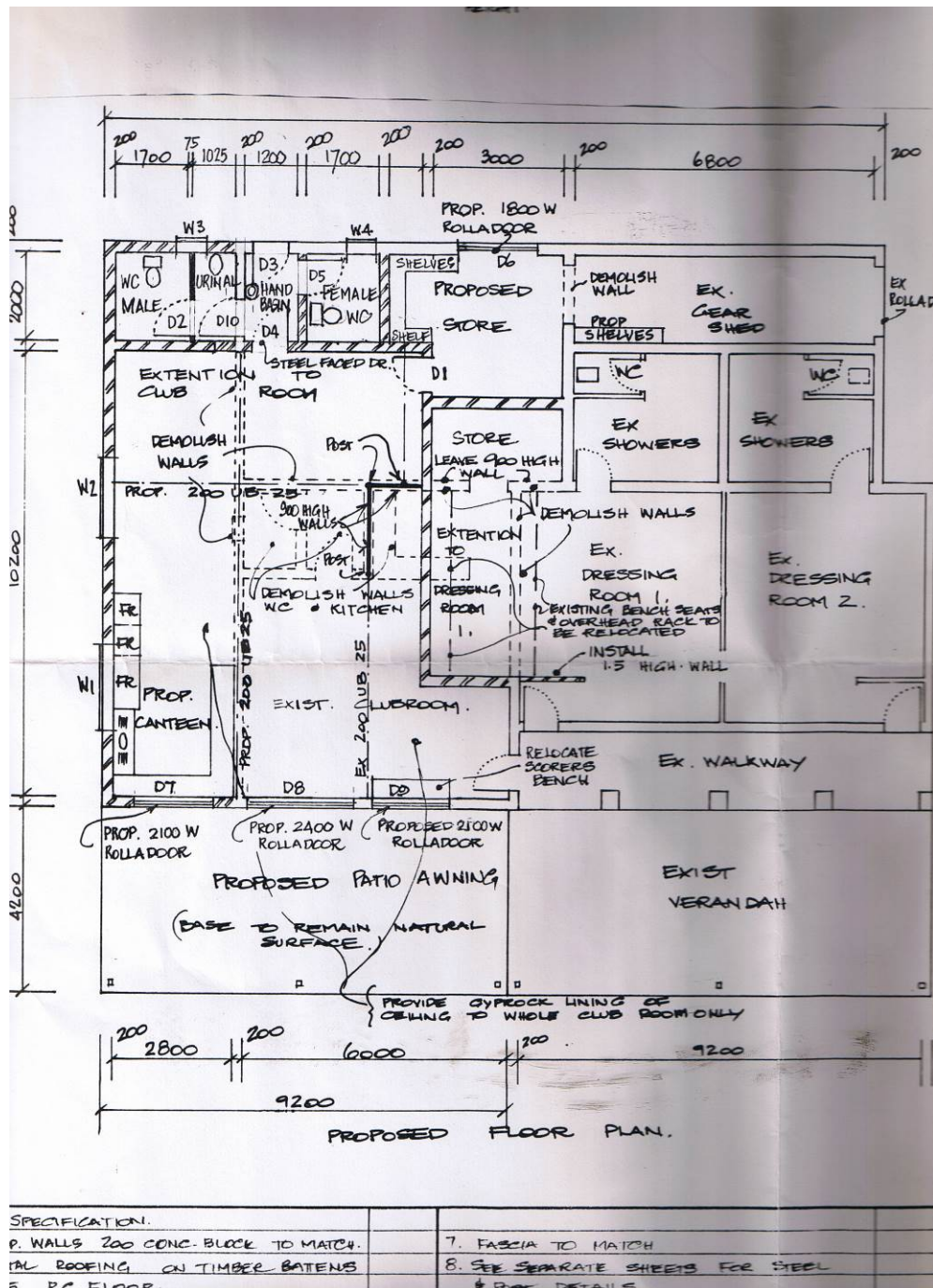
While the carpenters were removing the parapet or fascia around the building they discovered that part of the rear wall was not stable because it had not been core filled with concrete. A structural engineer advised to install some steel rods into the blocks and fill with concrete. Also while removing the parapet part of the roof over about one third of the verandah fell down and it will need to be reconstructed.

While removing the fascia at the front of the building about one third of the verandah roof fell to the floor and had to be reconstructed by the carpenters.

The roof should be removed next week possibly 28 June, which is very close to the end of June, but that didn't happen.

5 July 2016    The old metal roof was removed a few days ago and the carpenters have been busy finishing off and putting up battens for the new roof. The roof is covered by tarpaulins. The new metal roof sheets have been ordered and will be installed about 7 July, but we have some rain again today.

We have a very nice survey plan of Ron Hill Oval and I plotted on it all of the known services at Ron Hill. The plan is located inside the doorway of the clubhouse.



Nov 2015 Flood Monitor Report that the Flood Monitor is located in an awkward position in the carpark area and it has nearly been hit a few times by cars. Request for Council to install plastic guide posts around it to help protect it.

5 Sept 2016 Work commenced on the high fence and the work was completed on 14 September 2016. The cricket club applied for grant funding to build a high fence, 70m long to a height of 5.2m which is about 0.5 m above the top of the sight screen, at the northern end of the oval. The quote was \$26,400 and we obtained two grants, the first \$15,496 through Community Building Partnership 2015 through Greg Piper MP's office. We also got \$8200 through Stronger Communities Program

2016 through Pat Conroy MP's office, a total of \$23,696. The cricket club had to fund the balance and some minor works.



Two photos taken 26 September 2016 of the new high fence at the northern end of the oval.

## CHAPTER 8

### GRAHAM JENKINSON (JENKO)

Over a period of many years Graham Jenkinson (known to everyone as Jenko) played a big part in the development and maintenance of Ron Hill Oval. In fact he has been involved at Ron Hill oval for at least 41 cricket seasons as a cricketer, a captain, a scorer, a curator and groundsman.

Ron Hill Oval was first used for cricket in season 1976-77 for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade matches. In 1981-82 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade were played there for the first time. During this period Graham was the cricket club's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade captain and his teams played at Ron Hill Oval as their home ground. Graham was often a controversial captain and all the opposition teams knew him well. Graham did a lot of umpiring (not many official umpires in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade) when his team was batting and the opposition teams had a lot of trouble getting an LBW or caught behind decision from Graham.

Graham and his 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teams were very successful at Ron Hill Oval winning the Minor Premiership in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, back to back, in 1977-78 and 1978-79. Graham retired as a player at the end of 1980-81 cricket season.

**Graham Jenkinson** was captain of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in the 1978-79 and the team had won the first game of the season. They were trying for another successful season following the previous season's Minor Premiership. Game two of the season was against Belmont at Ron Hill Oval and we could only muster 115 when we batted in dry hot conditions on day one. Belmont had advanced to 2 for 90 overnight needing only 25 runs on day two to win. Conditions were hot and dry all week.

Graham rang Robert Holland at 6.30am on the Saturday morning and the conversation went like this;

Jenko, "The games off, the wickets wet".

Robert "Oh Jenko what have you done ? Or what did you get your mates to do ? Why is the game off on a hot dry day ?"

Jenko "Curator Goonta knocked on my door at Kilaben Bay at 6.00am to advise that the watermain in Awaba Road burst last night and water flooded along the road and out to the wicket area. Believe me, the wicket is flooded, I didn't cause it, the games off and we have got a draw out of this game"

After an early inspection Robert rang the Belmont club to advise them of the unfortunate circumstances. Several members of their 3<sup>rd</sup> grade team travelled from Belmont to Ron Hill Oval to have a look for themselves, as they didn't believe us.

Several members of their 1<sup>st</sup> grade team, who were playing at Awaba Oval, also called in to have a look.

Some years later Jenko was having a beer in a pub following cricket and a fellow sat next to him and said "Hello Jenko, do you remember me, I was the Belmont 3<sup>rd</sup> grade wicketkeeper in that washed out match at Ron Hill Oval in 1978-79". He said "Some years have passed and the matter is over now but I would like to know if it was an act of God or how you did it."

There will always be doubt in some people's minds.

Graham was the cricket wicket curator for 15 cricket seasons from 2000-01 to 4 December 2014. During that time he was effectively self-taught and on occasions he had to work with machinery which often broke down. This was an extraordinary effort particularly when you consider Jenko did not have a vehicle and he walked from his home at Blackalls Park and back about four times each week.

As you may know preparing cricket wickets on a hot Friday afternoon is very thirstily work. Jenko used to bring his street clothes with him on Friday mornings, have a shower at Ron Hill Oval and call in at Toronto Workers Club about 2.30pm for a refreshing thirst quencher on the way home. Sometimes he stayed and travelled home on the Booze Bus at 7pm.

**GRAHAM JENKINSON** commenced his 1<sup>st</sup> grade scoring career in season 1981-82, the season after he retired as a player, when Ken Shine was 1<sup>st</sup> grade captain, and soon earned a reputation as a very good scorer.

In the early days he had some unusual habits like drinking (well, he still has that habit) while he scored and he recorded dismissals as “ran out” not “run out”. He also carried a bottle of white-out to correct mistakes and the players would always count the number of “white outs” on the page to see what sort of a day he had. He developed his sloping left handed style as the years went on and often did not need to open the bottle of white-out.

He was invited to score for the Newcastle Representative team a few times over the years and also he was a scorer at a couple of Sheffield Shield matches that were played at Newcastle No 1 Sports Ground.

After a short break in season 2014-15 he returned to score in season 2015-16. Graham is now in his 36<sup>th</sup> season as 1<sup>st</sup> Grade scorer.



A photo of Jenko taken about 25 years ago.

**Andrew Nicolai** A Well Hit Shot Andrew Nicolai gave us a sample of his considerable hitting power in his innings of 62 v Wallsend in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade at Ron Hill Oval in 2012-13. One shot cleared the boundary fence directly in front of the pavilion, landed on the concrete under the verandah and sped through the scorer's open window. The ball was travelling so fast that both scorers, Grahame

Jenkinson and Jack Brown, only had time to blink as the ball bisected them before it cannoned into the block wall at the rear of the clubroom.

A Wallsend supporter, Mick Aaratoon, was sitting on a chair in the rear of the clubroom and the ball must have missed him by less than a metre, going in both directions.

The ball rebounded and lodged itself under the cupboards in the kitchen and it took a few minutes for the ball to be retrieved and for the game to continue.



Photo of Grahame Jenkinson and Jack Brown scoring at Ron Hill Oval on the day of Andrew Nicolai's shot. There is hardly room between them for the ball to pass.

Jenko says that cricket season 2016-17, his 36<sup>th</sup> season, will be his final season of scoring. He hopes to invite all the first grade captains from 1981-82 to present to attend an afternoon tea towards the end of the season. The fifteen 1<sup>st</sup> grade captains to be invited are;

Ken Shine, Robert Holland, Stephen Woodbridge, Gary Olsen, Rod Leggett, Geoff Smith, Tony Parker, Mark McLaughlin, Stephen Mudford, Andrew Eastcott, Greg Singleton, Nathan Pearson, Mathew Hancock, Paul Toole and Joe Price.



Graham Jenkinson, Greg Singleton, Steven Woodbridge and Peter Woodbridge travelled to England for the Lords Test in 2013. They met up with former SLDCC overseas player Gordon Hollins who arranged for Jenko to go out to the centre wicket at Lords during a lunch break in the Test Match



Jenko in London with Peter Woodbridge, Gordon Hollins, Jenko, Steven Woodbridge and Greg Singleton at front, in a bar in London.

Jenko also did a lot of maintenance work for the Croquet Club. For a few seasons Jenko used to mow the croquet courts on a weekly basis. There were several mowers used over the years from an old yellow mower that the operator sat on to a recent very nice green ex-golf club John Deere mower.

The croquet club used to hire a heavy roller from time to time and Jenko used to roll the croquet courts with the roller.



Jenko trying out the John Deere when it was first purchased by the Croquet Club about 3 years ago.

## CHAPTER 8

### FUNNY OR UNUSUAL STORIES

- Over the years there have been many break-ins to the building. We have found that in most break-ins it is either young kids or people are after money or alcohol. On one occasion a full set of cricket wicket covers were stolen. They were on the wicket on a Friday night and gone the next morning. We thought they would have been stolen by another cricket club or possibly a truck driver who may cut them down as a tarpaulin cover for a truck. They were never recovered and the cricket club had to purchase a new set of covers.
- Mick Waugh was a fine 1<sup>st</sup> grade pace bowler who played 60 matches between 1982 and 1997. In a match about 1990 Mick was moving in to bowl a delivery in a 1<sup>st</sup> grade match when there was a terrifying scream from the pavillion. Mick immediately identified the voice of his 4 year old son Cameron so he dropped the ball half way through his runup and ran to the pavillion. Mick's wife Sam just beat him to the home dressing room where the crying was coming from.  
The reason for the loud scream and subsequent crying was that Cameron had just been to the toilet. The toilet seats at the time were made from old fashioned heavy timber and Cameron was just tall enough to stand next to the toilet and use the toilet. The toilet seat had fallen down half way through the performance and squashed his Percy onto the porcelain. Ouch!. Despite some embarrassment and soreness there was no permanent damage.
- In 1982-83 a couple of Toronto thugs who wanted to enjoy to enjoy the benefits of the cricket club planned a daring break, enter and steal at Ron Hill Oval just before 7.30pm on the night of 23 January 1983. Inspector Greg Singleton (Cricket Club Treasurer) somehow sensed that all was not right at the clubhouse so he decided to patrol the premises and found the thieves escaping with a few cartons of beer. Moving quickly to the local phone box, and having found 5 cents in his pocket for the call, he rang his trusty assistant Stephen Woodbridge (Pecker) and then proceeded to interrogate a witness.

Unfortunately one strong lead led to a dead end near the creek where a middle aged lady dressed in a revealing nightdress, parked in a Kingswood, explained she was only in the vicinity to meet a male friend. She popped the boot and confirmed that stolen beer wasn't what she was after.

Further investigations revealed another strong lead and the witness made his way to the rear of a nearby house where two cartons were found. Singleton, favouring strong-arm tactics proceeded to the front door, identified himself, kicked in the door and broke down the suspects resistance by provocative questioning. Loyal Pecker was beside Singleton all the way, ready to strike at the slightest provocation. After satisfying themselves that these were the true crims they handed the case over to the boys in blue to process the paperwork. The case was solved in a little over two hours. The club was repaid \$55 in court fees even though the value of the beer stolen was set at \$23 so a tidy profit was made. (Original story written by Greg Singleton in 1983).

- An Epitaph for a Well Known Cricketer (This has nothing to do with Ron Hill Oval).

Here lies the body of a batsman of renown  
 Slain by a car as he ran across the road  
 His life is over, his bat laid to rest  
 He will be remembered as a poor judge of a run.

- **Golf Shots** Stephen Woodbridge told me that one of our players **Wayne Stewart**, who later became a Professional Golfer, practiced his 8 iron shots one day at Ron Hill Oval. It was before the bitumen sealed netball courts were constructed and Wayne was hitting shots from the grass where the netball courts are now over the pavilion trying to land the shots on the sight screen at the northern end. The 8 iron shots were going a long way in the air and landing close to the sight screen.

**GARRY PINCHES** and **GEOFF OSLAND** had an eighth wicket partnership to win a match against Cardiff Boolaroo at Ron Hill Oval in 1983-84. Cardiff had scored 215 and SLDCC were behind in the run chase and when Garry, batting at 10 went to the wicket to join Geoff. The Cardiff opening bowler was back on and he was a tall left hander quickish bowler bowling from the creek end.

SLDCC were eight out and required 22 off the last over of the day.

Geoff hit the first two balls for twos but on both occasions the umpire called one short. There followed a flurry of two fours and a six by Geoff leaving Garry on strike for the last ball with six runs to win.

Garry dispatched the ball over the mid wicket fence and it almost landed in the yard of the first house beyond the oval on the western side.

- How Did Straight Drive Get it's Name

**Straight Drive** is the short road that leads into Ron Hill Oval almost opposite the Toronto Indoor Swimming Centre. The road was originally part of a circular road named Woodale Street which was cut in half by the construction of the cricket ground in 1974. One half of Woodale Street still exists but the short length leading into the cricket pavilion remained unnamed for some years.

In 1990 our club decided to ask Lake Macquarie City Council if the short part of the road could be renamed. The cricket club held a competition to name the road and there were only two suggestions put forward. The first proposal, "Hooker's Lane", was considered unsuitable while the second name "Straight Drive" was proposed by cricketer, now Golden Oldies Cricketer and former Morisset Primary School Assistant Principal Ian Hodge. This name was agreed to by the cricket club and forwarded to LMCC.

The Council wasn't so sure about the name and asked the cricket club for more information and to justify the name. Council's reasons were that having a cricket term as a road name seemed unrealistic and also a "Drive" was considered to be a longer principal road through a suburb. After further correspondence Council adopted the name and erected a street name sign indicating "Straight Drive".

- **PAUL WILSON** retired from 1<sup>st</sup> class cricket in 2003-04 and tried his hand at coaching the Western Australian Ladies Cricket Team then he joined the Umpiring ranks in the Umpires Fast Track Program. HE was the last Novocastrian to play Test cricket for Australia. Now Paul Wilson hopes to become the first Novocastrian to umpire at the game's highest level.

Club Southern Lakes before embarking on a career that earned him a baggy green cap and 11 appearances in Australia's one-day team, made his debut last week as an interstate umpire.

In tandem with another former Test paceman, Victorian Paul Reiffel, Wilson officiated in the one-day match between Western Australia and Tasmania at the WACA Ground.

It was the 36-year-old's first major step towards his ultimate goal, which is to join the International Cricket Council's panel of full-time professional umpires.



The umpires Paul Reiffel and Paul Wilson leave the field  
Western Australia v Tasmania, Ford Ranger Cup, Perth, October 24, 2008

**JASON HOLT** and “**Four foot too long**”. The season was 1989/90 and the recently appointed Ron Hill Oval curator Jason Holt was quickly establishing himself as the next big thing in wicket preparation. It was early in the season and the 2nd grade captain (Greg Singleton) was keen to ensure that Ron Hill Oval was a spinner's paradise after the recruitment of a Ugandan (living in NZ) 1st class leg spinner Addil Somani for one game only.

After several hours of meticulous preparation of the pitch it was late Friday evening by the time the wicket was ready to be marked for play. The stencil used to mark the pitch was placed on the wrong line, which resulted in the pitch being **MARKED** four foot (1.20 m) too long.

On the first days play Charlestown won the toss and elected to bat, and it wasn't long before some tired and disgruntled fast bowlers realised that there may be a discrepancy in the length of the pitch. The different length pitch also proved quite a challenge for Addil, who didn't quite come to terms with the Australian conditions and had a less than impressive return of 1 for 94. Charlestown scored just over 300 runs which would be a challenging chase on the second week.

The NSW Cricket Association was called upon to make a ruling on what conditions were to be used for the second weeks play. This resulted in the same length pitch being used for Southern Lakes innings, which led to a gallant run chase by the Kookaburras and Alan Nichols hitting a 4 off the last ball to win the match.

Jason was allowed to continue as the curator (under close supervision) but was unsuccessful in his attempts to adopt the nickname of "four foot".

- **Sam McDonald** was playing in an early season trial match at Ron Hill Oval during 2013-14 season. When his team was fielding he was sent out to the square leg boundary on the western side of the oval. After about an over his captain noticed that Sam had wandered away from his fielding position and was now about 20m inside the boundary. Next over Sam was again sent to the boundary and within two deliveries he had wandered again to 20 m inside the boundary. This process happened a few times before the captain called out to him to stay on the boundary. Sam called out "I am being attacked by a Magpie and it is swooping at my head". The captain called for a helmet, got Sam to put it on, and then sent him out to field and stay near the boundary.
- About 1990 we had the opportunity to have one "Work for the Dole" worker at Ron Hill Oval. A fellow turned up and he had many tattoos, many ear rings and dread locks but he was however a keen worker and we quite liked him. He asked if he could bring his 5 year old son with him to work at the oval. The young lad joined his father up a ladder painting and somehow he got an awful lot of paint in his hair. I'm sure his mother would not have been impressed. The paint would have been very hard to remove or wash. Shortly after we read a story in the newspaper about a robbery at the bottle shop at the traffic lights at Fennell Bay. The offender had escaped by running down the hill to Fennell Bay Bridge and jumping into the lake. The offender was described as having many tattoos, many ear rings and dread locks. We thought we knew who he was and he did not return to Ron Hill Oval.
- One of the owners who lives directly behind the turf practice wickets complained that cricket balls were often hit into their back yard and onto their roof. About 2008 we arranged for a roof tiler to replace broken tiles and there were 40 broken tiles on one house. At one point there was a caravan parked in the back yard and a ball went through the window and hit the occupant of the caravan, cutting her arm.
- At practice one day in 1996-97 Chris Jardine hooked a ball into Mrs Hobbs back yard. The ball travelling at great pace went through the window of a caravan in the back yard hitting a young lady in the caravan, cutting her arm.

The cricket club tried many ways of getting a netting roof over the turf practice area but it wasn't until new nets were purchased in 2013 with a roofing section that we stopped the balls going out of the nets. For a period of about 8 years the resident collected the cricket balls that were hit into the yard and she would not give them back to the cricket club. She may still have them.

- A well known very short umpire named Edgar used to control a lot of matches at Ron Hill Oval and became a favourite of the SLDCC teams. The distance he stood back at square leg always seemed to be too far, and he had a habit of marking his spot at square leg with a paddle pot stick. Some of the players used to play tricks on him by moving his paddle pop stick about 500mm towards the square leg fence every over. After 20 or 30 overs the umpire was almost standing on the boundary at square leg. The trick used to work against us because if there was a stumping chance the umpire would stand on his toes to see the crease and he would give the batsman "not out" because he was too far away to get a good view.
- **GREG SINGLETON** was captain of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade in about 1993-94 season when the team needed a scorer. A fellow named John Palmer used to follow the team and he immediately put his hand up to score. John was originally from England and spoke with a distinctive accent. The team wasn't too keen on John scoring because he wasn't accurate and often the books didn't tally but they were stuck with him for some time. One day we noticed a funeral notice in the Newcastle Herald that John Palmer of Cardiff had died and the information in the funeral notice seemed to describe our John Palmer. Greg was really taken aback when his phone rang two nights later and the voice on the phone had the distinctive English accent. The voice said "Greg, just ringing to tell you I can score at Ron Hill Oval on Saturday". Greg replied "Is that you John, I thought you died". Apparently our John Palmer's father was the person who passed away and he lived with our John and had the same name.
- **TROY SAXBY** was a very successful hitter in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and he was at last given a chance to play higher grades in a trial match at Ron Hill Oval. He was asked to bat at No 3 in the trial and he was very keen to impress the club selectors. Following the fall of a wicket Troy arrived at the wicket with his special bat which did not have a traditional grip. The bat was very old and dark in colour with a few broken edges and the handle was wrapped with red electrical tape to act as a grip. He had an almighty swing at the first ball and lost control of the bat which landed about twenty meters away near the square leg umpire. He didn't get many runs and the selectors must not have been impressed because he was picked in 4<sup>th</sup> grade for the season.
- **RON HILL** made a comeback in 4<sup>th</sup> grade in 1963-64 season and took 22 wickets at average 1.82 for the season.
- **MIKE MACKENZIE** moved to Toronto about 10 seasons ago and immediately asked if he could assist with coaching of young players. Mike is Scottish and played many seasons of 1<sup>st</sup> grade with Kirkaldy in Scottish cricket. He was very well known in Scottish cricket circles as an eccentric wicketkeeper/batsman and that may explain the number plates on his car which are "ODDSOX".

We immediately appreciated his outstanding coaching talents and he now runs the practices for the club on Tuesdays and Thursdays and acts as coach to the 1<sup>st</sup> grade team. He also coaches the SLJCC Under 15 team and he is a valued member of our coaching team.

**Gray Creams are OK**

Mike MacKenzie batted in a club game at Kirkaldy in Scotland many years ago against an understrength team that they were expected to easily defeat.

Opening the innings he looked around the field and it appeared the opposition only had 10 players on the field. He counted the fielders carefully and noted that there was no fielder backward of square leg. The opposition team did however have quite a few spectators gathered just over the rope boundary at fine leg and they were setting up chairs to watch the match.

When the opening bowler bowled the third ball, a long hop, Mike picked his spot backward of square leg and hit a high pull shot down to the boundary. He was a little surprised to see one of the spectators, dressed in a white cricket shirt and gray trousers, run onto the field and take the catch. The opposition team started cheering and back slapping but Mike stood his ground. Eventually there was an appeal and the umpire raised his finger.

Mike questioned the umpire who said the fielder was the opposition's 11<sup>th</sup> player and he had just signalled to the fielder that it was ok for him to come onto the field. Mike had to go.

Mike's team did not recover from the setback and lost the match.



Mike MacKenzie at the Sydney Cricket Ground about 2013-14 season when he was coach of the Newcastle Kookaburras Cricket Team (Under 14).

- **CLUB CAP (original).**

The photo below this story is interesting because it shows the original “bumbee” caps which were coloured black with yellow bands. The SLDCC players modelling the caps at Newcastle No 1 Sports Ground are Roly Cluderay and Robert Holland. The batsman is representative opening batsman Wayne (Slogger) Bush who is an uncle to current Merewether batsman Trent Bush.



1<sup>st</sup> Grade v's Hamilton Wickham – 1961/62

- **The Rod Leggett Story** – Rod was batting with Mark Jones in a one-day match v Hamilton Wickham in November 1986 at Ron Hill Oval. The match had been quite spiteful as apparently there was some bad blood lingering from the previous season’s Under 23 final, and some players from both sides had engaged in what only can be described as less than complimentary oral communication.

But at 6 for 193 we were closing in on Hamilton’s 206 when a mix up between batsmen found Leggett short of his ground at the keeper’s end.

Only one person will ever know if Leggett at full flight unavoidably poleaxed the opposition wicket-keeper Hiscox; but Hiscox’s displeasure at being sent flying after completing the run-out was apparent to all, with the diminutive wicket-keeper flailing away upon the startled Leggett.

Southern Lakes players (including Sasha, Mark Jones German Sheppard dog) ran to the middle to aid our teammate but sense prevailed and the players were separated without a full scale brawl erupting. (Note Mark Jones is the recently appointed, September 2016, coach of Newcastle Jets Football)

The umpires were rattled and keen to get the match done, and after several dubious decisions, Ham-Wicks won the match.

In Monday's Newcastle Herald the feature story covered the incident, including a cartoon, but it was the aftermath at the Judiciary hearing where the real comedy was produced.

Hiscox was represented by a Solicitor, but in true fibro houses style, the best legal mind we could muster for Leggett was Steve Woodbridge, who, several years earlier almost passed Legal Studies 1, and was attached to the Police Department in an administrative role.

With Judiciary Chairman and Barrister Max Fox, presiding over the panel that included Gary Gilmour, Keith Curry and an impartial observer Dennis Broad, the testimony and interactions between the Legal representatives, witnesses and Fox became pure farce.

Those present were in stitches of laughter following the evidence provided by young umpire and now NDCA Secretary Royce McCormack, who refused to answer a question regarding the extent of sledging from the match citing that he "does not use that type of language" but finally, reluctantly agreed to do so in writing, only to have the usual stoney faced Fox announce to the room what, the words were, and with the hint of a smirk, stated for the records that the umpire had misspelt both of the common expletives.

But it was when Ham-Wicks spinner, Scott McGuinness, colourfully recalled Greg Jones's interpretation of McGuinness sexual preferences, that all decorum broke loose.

The late Jack Farrell, covering the hearing for the media, said that he had never laughed so much in 50 years of Journalism.

After the laughing subsided, Fox announced that both players, Leggett and Hiscox, were suspended for 12 months.

- **PAUL WILSON, who played one Cricket Test for Australia**, opened the bowling in a 1<sup>st</sup> grade match at Ron Hill Oval in season 1990-91 when he was bowling well and very quick. A left hander took strike and faced up to Paul who had three slips and a gully. At third slip was opening batsman **MATTHEW MAHER**, not exactly known for his slip catching. Third ball of the day the batsman edged the ball knee high to third slip and Maher dropped the chance. Paul had a way of letting fielders know if he wasn't pleased and I'm sure Matt felt Paul's piercing eyes as Matt gazed up into the sky trying not to look too shocked. Paul moved in for the fifth ball of the over and again the batsman edged to third slip and again Matt dropped the chance. Paul was down on his knees banging his fists on the wicket and shouted out "get him out of there".

Garry Pinches reminded me about the Waratah District Cricket Club wearing white shorts in an Under 21 game at Ron Hill Oval under Greg Arms. Garry Pinches, was our cricket club President at the time, and he put his foot down and said that the Waratah players had to put their long creams on for the match.

There was an unfortunate incident at Ron Hill Oval on 18 February 2015 when a body was found near the front door of the club house.



Ron Hill Oval was like batting on a wet wicket, haha.

## CHAPTER 10

### IN CONCLUSION

- 1974 Ron Hill Oval was constructed in 1974 and was first used in 1976-77 for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade cricket matches. For the next five seasons Ron Hill Oval was used for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades. In 1981-82 season 1<sup>st</sup> grade cricket was played at the oval for the first time and has been played there ever since.
- 2016 Ron Hill Oval is the home of Cricket Southern Lakes Inc. (the club plays under the name of Toronto Workers District Cricket), Toronto Croquet Club and Bolton Point Netball Club.
- 2016 The oval has been developed over it's 40 year history and today it is one of the best cricket ovals in the Newcastle District Cricket Association. The oval boasts good wickets, good practice facilities, a picket fence, nice and comfortable clubroom, comfortable change rooms and near new wicket preparation equipment. The oval is in demand for early season trial cricket matches because the wicket square is usually in very good condition in August and September each year.



Each year Ron Hill Oval is used for registrations of junior cricket and netball.

**Lake Macquarie City Council.**

I would like to acknowledge the large part that Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) has played in the development, maintenance and improvement of Ron Hill Oval. For many years our contact person at LMCC has been Chris Miner and he has dealt with all of the ovals issues from mowing, to oval bookings, Operating Committee issues, advice about grants, keying requests and development of the oval etc.

It has been very obvious to me that LMCC does a lot more for the oval now than 10 or 20 years ago. These days we only need to ring the LMCC Customer Service Centre and make a request and it gets carried out, often very quickly. Council attends to a wide range of maintenance requests like mowing, blocked gutters, spraying for pests and weeds, graffiti removal, landscape maintenance and Ranger matters.

One very good example of this is the height that Council mows the outfield at the oval. The height for years was about 40 mm and the cricket club thought that was too high and stopped the ball running to the boundary fence in the outfield. For some years Council would mow the oval on Friday mornings and then the cricket club would tow a set of gang mowers around the oval and cut the grass lower than the Council had cut it. For the past few seasons Council has mowed at 30mm and this height is very acceptable to the cricketers because the ball will run through the outfield to the boundary. We no longer mow with our own gang mower.

The recent work to remove and replace the leaking roof was a great boost to the facility. The roof no longer leaks and the smart looking hip roof looks and makes the pavillion look like a dwelling on a country estate.

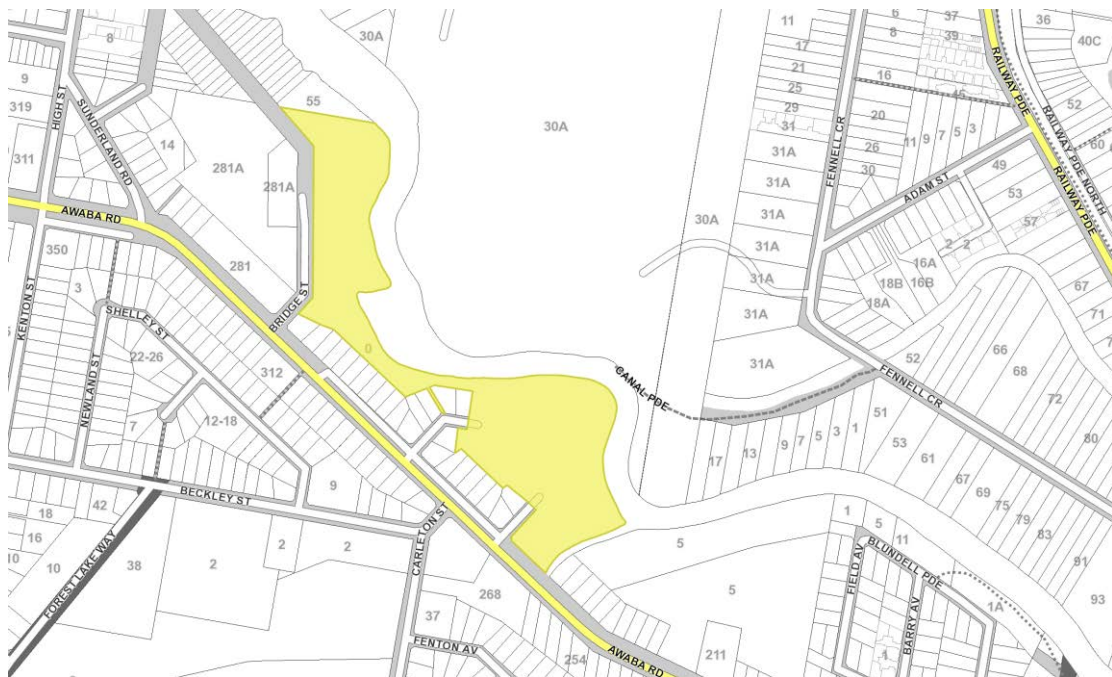
**CHAPTER 11**

**APPENDIX**

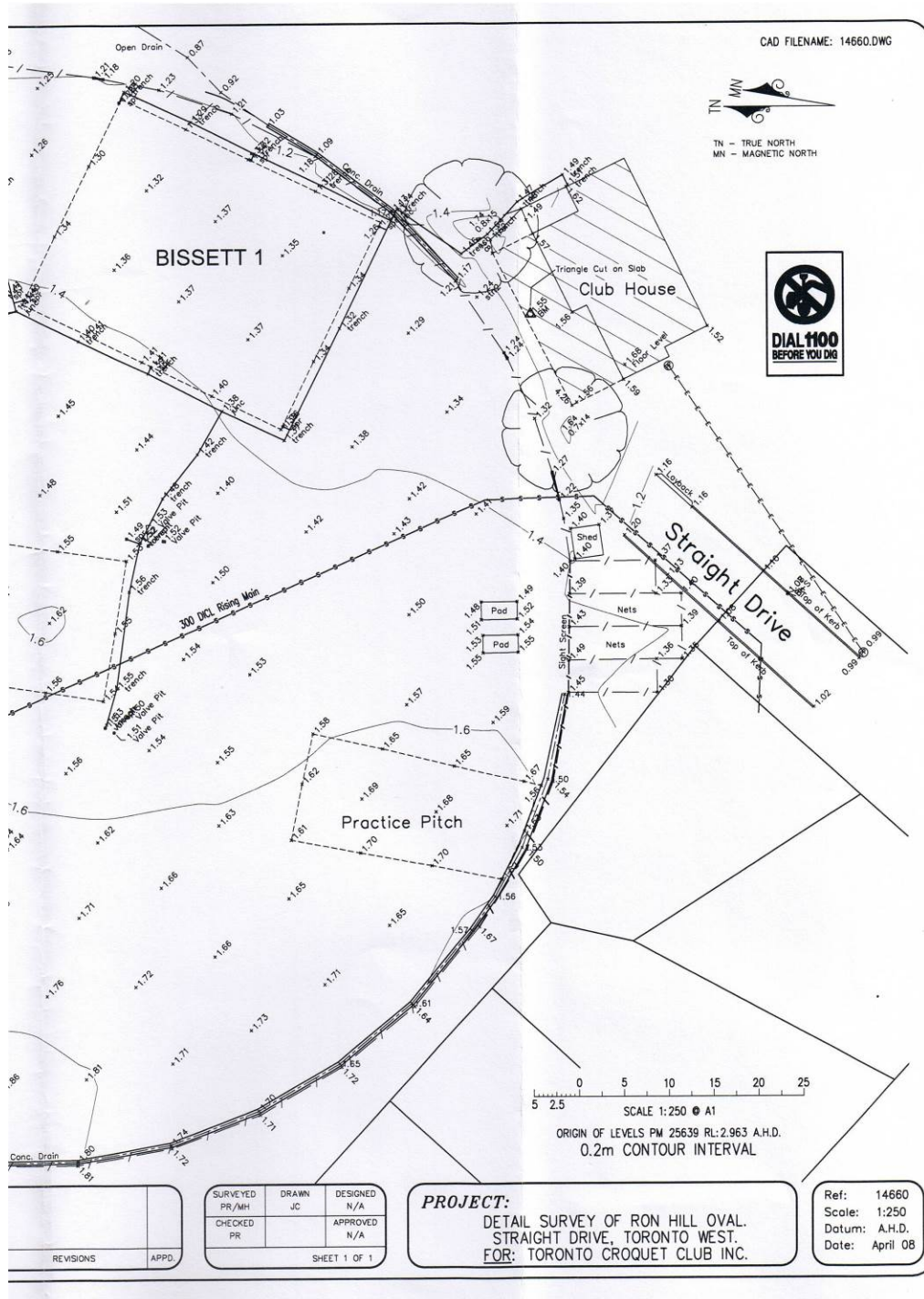
Plans



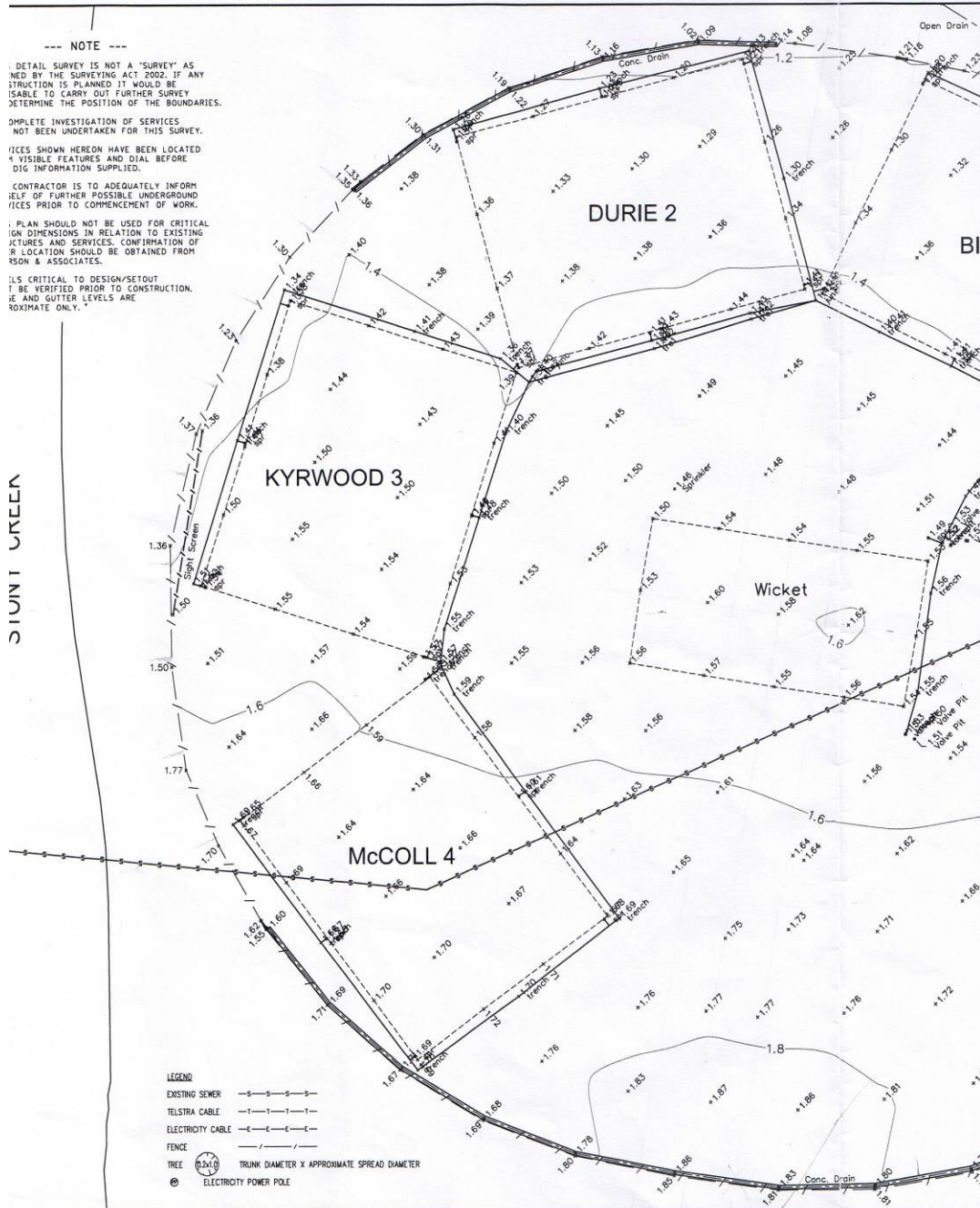
Aerial Photo of Ron Hill Oval.



Ron Hill Oval is built on Lot 1 DP246215 shown on this plan in yellow colour.



Detail Survey showing half of Ron Hill Oval as at April 2008



--- NOTE ---

1. DETAIL SURVEY IS NOT A "SURVEY" AS REQUIRED BY THE SURVEYING ACT 2002. IF ANY CONSTRUCTION IS PLANNED IT SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE TO CARRY OUT FURTHER SURVEY TO DETERMINE THE POSITION OF THE BOUNDARIES.

2. COMPLETE INVESTIGATION OF SERVICES NOT BEEN UNDERTAKEN FOR THIS SURVEY.

3. SERVICES SHOWN HEREON HAVE BEEN LOCATED BY VISUAL INSPECTION AND DIG BEFORE DIG INFORMATION SUPPLIED.

4. CONTRACTOR IS TO ADEQUATELY INFORM HIMSELF OF FURTHER POSSIBLE UNDERGROUND SERVICES PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF WORK.

5. THIS PLAN SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR CRITICAL DIMENSIONS IN RELATION TO EXISTING STRUCTURES AND SERVICES. CONFIRMATION OF SERVICE LOCATION SHOULD BE OBTAINED FROM PERSON & ASSOCIATES.

6. DIMENSIONS CRITICAL TO DESIGN/SETOUT MUST BE VERIFIED PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION. SERVICE AND GUTTER LEVELS ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY.

**LEGEND**

EXISTING SEWER ————

TELSTRA CABLE ————

ELECTRICITY CABLE ————

FENCE ————

TREE (2.1x1.0) TRUNK DIAMETER X APPROXIMATE SPREAD DIAMETER

⊙ ELECTRICITY POWER POLE

**PEARSON & ASSOCIATES PTY. LIMITED**  
 CONSULTING SURVEYORS

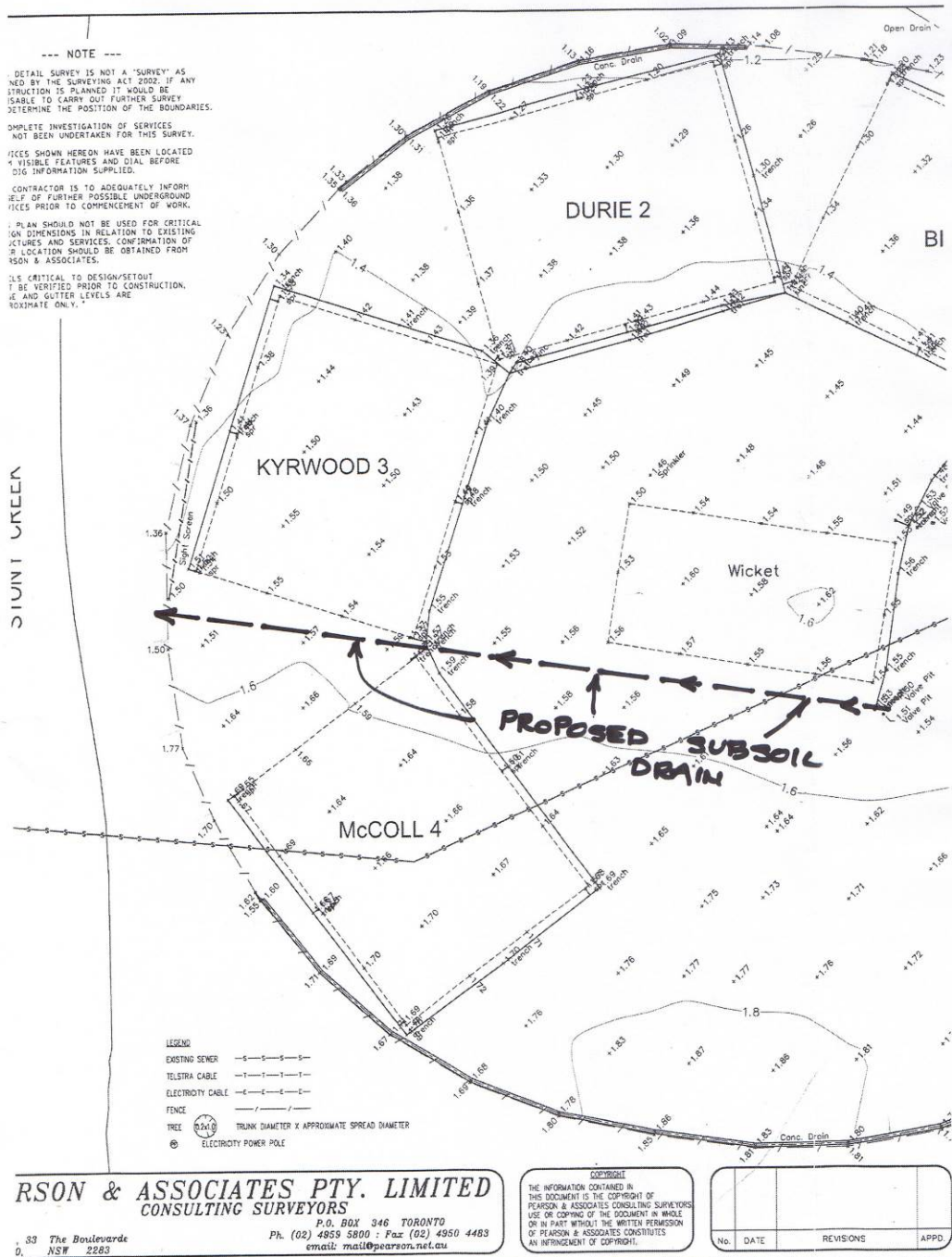
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No.	DATE	REVISIONS	APPD.

Detail Survey showing half of Ron Hill Oval as at April 2008.



Proposed subsoil drain, installed May 2012.

THE END