

INTRODUCTION

In the hurlyburly of the life of today most of us seem to be fully occupied with the pressing problems of the moment. Some, of course, do find time to do at least some planning for the future — and it is good that they do. All too frequently our experience filled past has little or no place in our busy lives. It therefore behoves us occasionally to take time out to ponder the past and to record some of its humour, pathos and what will some day be of immense interest to those who follow us.

This year we come of age — having been established twenty-one years ago — and what more appropriate time, than this to pause and ponder the past. This booklet is an attempt to do just that, as objectively as possible.

In the course of the writing some names are bound to be mentioned and some equally deserving ones are bound to be overlooked. It is absolutely impossible to mention everyone — and indeed this would become a very boring document to read if we did — so we hope that all who read it will accept it in the spirit in which it is written. We trust it will bring pleasure to the reader and that it will be of some help to the historian of the future.

Murray Ansley
PRESIDENT.

AUTOGRAPHS

The Germ of an Idea

The early 1950's were good, happy and prosperous times. The immediate effects of the war's aftermath had worn off somewhat; not all ex-servicemen had yet spent all their gratuity or deferred pay; and the wool price boom had added a topping to the already growing feeling of confidence in the community at large.

Perhaps it was this which finally sparked the motivating forces within the hearts of the men who created the Club. Whatever it was, it seems apparent that the social amenities then available to them in the town of Raglan did not match their ideas of what they should be. The only drinking facilities, for example, were at the one hotel. The bars were small and poorly equipped and the facilities generally were not of a standard which many citizens considered acceptable to them.

There were no amenities like television, billiard tables etc etc, such as a club could provide so a positive move was eventually made with the calling of a meeting in the Town Hall Supper Room on Thursday, 23rd August, 1956. Twenty four persons attended.

Prior to this date much work had been done as the following extract from the minutes reveals:—

“Mr B. S. Banks read to the meeting the suggested Constitution and rules of the Club as drawn up by the interim committee of Messrs A. T. Kelk, L. V. Smith, T. S. Holmes and B. S. Banks. With one or two minor alterations, the constitution was adopted on the motion of Mr A. Donald, seconded by Mr A. Goodwin.

The following Executive members were elected at this meeting.

President — H. G. Orr

Vice-presidents — L. V. Smith

F. Cleare

Secretary — I. Peach

Treasurer — B. S. Banks

Executive — R. Pearce

W. Wright

F. Cleare

The position of Patron was held over until the first General Meeting of the Club on 21st September, 1956, when Mr F. H. Wright was elected as the first patron.

The original minutes refer to the Club as "Raglan Services Club" which was apparently the name the originators envisaged it would be. However, the name adopted was "Raglan Services and Citizens' Club" which was later changed to its present name, the Raglan Club.

We should all be grateful to those dedicated men who saw the need and had the courage and drive necessary to overcome the difficulties. The Raglan Club is a fine club, thanks to them and those who, since establishment, have helped to steer it on a sound course.

The records show that 107 members joined in the first year and it seems appropriate to publish their names here.

LIST OF MEMBERS

Amoore, E.	Henderson, H.	Pepperill, R.
Barker, G.	Halliday, J.	Peacocke, F.
Banfield, F.	Holmes, S.	Phillips, I.
Burr, W.	Hughes, B.	Pooley, F.
Banks, B.	Hargreaves, B.	Pooley, A.
Barry, L.	Hickman, I.	Rolandson, A.
Burrell, J.	Hayes, R.	Renwick, J.
Brown, J.	Jowsey, B.	Rollinson, M.
Burt, A.	Johnson, M.	Rennie, J.
Blake, J.	Jenkins, R.	Robertson, D.
Brosnan, J.	Jackson, G.	Robertson, A.
Carryer, N.	Jameson, A.	Rodgers, T.
Cornes, J.	Joyce, R.	Smith, B.
Cleave, F.	Kells, R.	Sweetman, P.
Cushman, H.	Kemp, R.	Shea, J.
Carryer, L.	Lelieuve, T.	Shea, R.
Common, R.	Leathes, E.	Smith, D.
Cleave, R.	Lovegrove, R.	Snowden, K.
Cleave, D.	Litchwark, F.	Smith, L.
Coombes, I.	McKenzie, I.	Smith, V.
Donald, I.	McGlashan, D.	Signal, M.
Dikes, L.	Marwood, W.	Shea, N.
Donn, M.	Milne, H.	Stephens, T.
Drummond, M.	Moon, H.	Stephenson, G.
Elliot, R.	Mead, M.	Shaw, C.
Farrell, B.	Martyn, J.	Tucker, E.
Goodwin, A.	Morrell, P.	Thomas, R.
Garrett, R.	Nichol, A.	Traill, J.
Gibbison, J.	Oliver, S.	Thompson, A.
Gordon, H.	Orr, H.	Van-Weesel, J.
Hird, P.	O'Connor, B.	Wright, H.
Hodson, R.	Orr, H. E.	Walters, W.
Harrop, J.	Parsons, M.	Wright, W.
Hunter, T.	Peach, I.	Walters, S.
Hird, C.	Pearce, R.	Welch, W.
Havelock, J.	Preston, J.	

Our worthy Past Presidents

So far there have been only five Presidents. The President, as leader of the executive team needs to be a man of good character, high integrity and of considerable ability. So far the Club has been fortunate in its choice of Presidents.

It would seem appropriate at this time to briefly record a little about each of the past Presidents, all of whom contributed, each according to his talents, to the welfare of the Club.

The first was H. G. (Harold) Orr. He served the first two years which were undoubtedly difficult years involved as they were with the formation of the Club. He was a builder by trade who came to the district some 44 years ago. He was overseas during the first world war, with the N.Z. Rifle Brigade in France and Germany. His skills as a builder were always in demand and he was always a willing helper. He was President of the Citizens' League in the days before Raglan town had a representative on the County Council. After he vacated the President's chair he served a number of years in other executive capacities, in the Club. Other interests include RSA and outdoor bowls.

The second was L. V. (Les) Smith, who served two terms for a total of eight years. He also was a builder and came from Otorohanga to work for Geo. Cornes. He enlisted from here and joined the first echelon in World War II. He received one of the rare decorations of the war for his part in helping with the escorting of the King of Greece out of Crete. After the war he set up (with partners) in a building business in Raglan. Later he and his wife Olive and John Burrell started the business of Raglan Supplies in Wallis Street. Les died in 1971. His wife Olive still resides here. His other interests included RSA and Pipe Band.

The third was W. H. (Whit) Wright. He is a local lad having been born at Kauroa and having lived there all his life. He still farms there. His father was the patron of the Club for the first 10 years of its existence. Whit served two years as President before handing the reins back to Les Smith. During World War II service took him to Egypt and Italy with the 18th Armoured Regiment. His current interest are very much RSA and (of course) our own Club.

After Les Smith's second term, came B. R. (Ralph) Blanchard who served for eight continuous years. He arrived in the town some 18 years ago and bought a pharmacy business which he has operated ever since. With the energy typical of the man he set about getting for the town some of the amenities it then lacked. One of these needs he saw as being a charter for the Club. This was

obtained during his term of office, and in addition the extension of the premises to their present size and standard. He has given generously of his time and effort not only to the official business side of the Club, but also to the task of ensuring the success of its social and sporting activities. He and his good wife, Avril, are renowned for their culinary capabilities which have added so much to the popularity and enjoyment of many a Club function. In fact, in this respect they have become a legend in their own time.

In spite of all these efforts, Ralph still finds time for his hunting and fishing — both of which he enjoys and excels at — often to the benefit of Club raffles.

The Club and the Community

If there is any one thing this Club has done really successfully it is to gain the acclaim of the community. Time and time again, without being asked, the Club has taken the initiative and involved itself with some section of the community to their benefit and enjoyment. Examples would be involvement with RSA and with 161 Battery (refer to separate chapters on these two activities).

Other examples include:—

- (a) Invitations to the Club and entertainment of Senior Citizens.
- (b) Games evenings between club members and members of other town organisations, such as Bowling Clubs, Lions Clubs, Fire Brigades, etc.
- (c) The sponsorship of sons of members to the Outward Bound School.
- (d) Often invitations to special visitors during the Centennial Celebrations of Raglan County.
- (e) The ever popular Newsletter.
- (f) Anzac Day entertainment.

These are but a few examples of what the Club does in its efforts to help with the creation of a real "community" atmosphere. The same policy has been adopted over many years and there is no doubt about its popularity and success. What is more, it is an ongoing thing as the Club profits are earmarked for further development on more land already purchased. If it has been a success in the past it seems assured of even more success in the future. In fact the Club seems destined to go from strength to strength in its involvement with the community, which, of course, is in line with the thinking of its founders and past administrators.

The Club and the RSA

(This contribution from a prominent member of the Returned Services Association).

Many RSA members over the years have had the impression that the Raglan Club is an RSA Club. This is not so, nor has it ever been. Most local branch members of the RSA are financial members of the Raglan Club, and indeed most look upon it as their local headquarters.

The Club Executives of the past and present have welcomed and encouraged its RSA members to hold functions in the Club rooms, to the extent that today the Club is used for:—

Monthly Committee Meetings

RSA Club Ladies' Games Nights

RSA Club Men's Games Nights for shield donated by the 161 Battery 16 Field Regiment.

The red carpet treatment has been given to the King's Empire Veterans on their yearly visits to Raglan.

This hospitality was also bestowed on the 18th Battalion when a number of their ex-servicemen paid a visit to the Club during their re-union in Hamilton. Let's not forget the many Club members who helped to make their function such a success, by their work behind the scenes, and their good fellowship.

Anzac Day is one of the outstanding days of the Club's year. All RSA members must be appreciative of the time, work and organisation that makes this day such a success. Our sincere thanks to the Club Executive, fellow Club members, 161 Battery, our ladies and all helpers.

Many RSA financial members of the Raglan Club, must look at Anzac Day now. We have our Service and Parade, then entertained to lunch with our ladies in the club together with our Club mates and the 161 Battery lads. This has not just happened but has been built up over the years by good faith, goodwill and comradeship that is CLUB.

RSA Corner. Some years ago the Club executive was approached and permission was given to build a show case in the Clubrooms to display items from the two world wars. This created an interest not only to ex-servicemen but many members who came up with cap badges, medals etc, so that now we have an impressive collection which has been envied by many outside clubs. Just a little free advertising. If you have a cap badge or medal for the display case please contact: Sandy Goodwin or Doug Arter.

In conclusion, RSA members wish to congratulate the Ragan Club on its 21st Anniversary and wish the Club and all members a bright future.

The Club and 161 Battery — 16 Field Regiment

When New Zealand troops were fighting in Vietnam a scheme to forward food parcels was introduced by members of the Fire Brigade and the Town Committee. They adopted 161 Battery. It was natural that many of the returning troops would visit Raglan both to see the town (many for the first time) and to thank those folks for the donations etc.

When 161 Battery paraded in Bow Street on its return to New Zealand, many will recall that the resulting reception in the Club cemented the friendship between the Raglan Club and the Battery members.

Many of the decorations in front of the bar were presented as a result of this liaison and these will always be a reminder of the many happy occasions when the Club and Battery have met.

The President's gong was organised and fashioned by Battery members Darcy Pollard and Bert Hallyer. The flag above the bar is the flag which flew over the last gun position in Vietnam.

The Club has always extended a welcome to members of the Battery so that as well as on official visits, you may often see a familiar uniform in the Club when sections of the Battery are on manoeuvres in the Raglan County. Over the years also, the executive of the Club has enjoyed the pleasure of attending social and ceremonial visits to Papakura.

All in all this has been a very pleasant contact for the Club and its members. It looks like lasting for many years to come.

Some do more than others

This is no criticism of the many dozens of fine men who over the years, have made a contribution to the establishment and welfare of the Club. Without them it would not have been the success it has and we know full well, that not all are in position to devote a lot of time and effort. However some have given service far beyond the normal call and these deserve special mention.

For example there are men like Harold Orr the first President, who gave considerable time and lent his trade skills freely in the early hard days at the start. Many other names come to mind — Smith, Cleave, Wright, Peach, Pearce to mention but a few. And there are men like Murray Parsons who did stalwart work for the Club in many capacities.

There are others too, of course, but the record of some of the Secretaries is worthy of mention. I. R. Peach served for 4 years. S. Phillips and G. Keyte served three years each. This is not an easy position to fill, a fact which makes the performance of our present secretary all the more creditable. Doug Arter has been secretary since 1970 and is still going strong. He not only does the normal secretarial duties, and does them well, but also produces the Club Newsletter, which could well be likened into a Raglan Town Newspaper and which benefits the Club greatly by the favourable comments it attracts from

the community in general.

But if the secretaries deserve special mention for all their hard work there is one person who stands head and shoulders above all others for the contribution he has made over the years. That person is Brian Banks.

Brian was one of the handful of people responsible for the creation of the Club in the first place. He was appointed as its first Treasurer and he has held that first appointment ever since. In his 21 years as Treasurer, goodness knows how many hundreds of man hours he has given to the work. And besides keeping the book records straight, his loyal and conscientious approach to other matters of Club business in property dealings, investments, wage regulations, etc, has given other Executive members much needed confidence and safeguarded the Club's position all along the line. On many, many occasions he has been known to sacrifice his own personal pleasure and convenience for the benefit of the club. He is deserving of the highest possible praise for these actions.

The books of account kept by him and his membership records are a picture to behold, they are so neat, so tidy and so accurate. They should be preserved in the archives of the Club for all time as, whether we are a monument to the devoted labours of the man to whom the Club owes its greatest debt of gratitude — Brian Banks.

Snippets *(humorous and otherwise)*

The first Ladies' Night was held on Thursday, 13th December, 1956 — so "ladies in the Club" is not such a recent thing at all!

While on the subject of the ladies — did you know that what is now our Committee Room was originally built for the express use of mothers and babies?

Television was installed in the Club on 17th August, 1964.

The co-operation and assistance of the local police constables in Club affairs has always been appreciated. Special mention to Constable A. T. (Paddy) Kelk who was of considerable help at the time of formation of the Club and to Constable Ron Antill who gave invaluable advice and assistance at the time when a charter was applied for.

From minutes of Executive meeting of 14th January, 1947 "Mr Banks reported that he had managed to borrow a fridge over the holiday period."

Also from minutes of Executive meeting of 14th January, 1947. "Moved L. Smith seconded Mr Peach, that Mr Banks be permitted to entertain the landlord (Mr W. Jones) in the Club premises at any time."

From minutes of Executive meeting of 19th September, 1956. „That the price of all bottled beer be two shillings and sixpence (2/6d) per bottle."

The Twiggy. Every visitor and member of the Club knows the twiggy — that handy-size small glass beer handle. Some visitors to our Club have been known to enter similar establishments in other towns and ask for a twiggy only to be met with a blank stare. It is a name not known elsewhere and for good reason. It is the brainchild of our popular Steward, Sean French, who introduced it and gave it the name. Thank you Sean for this small but worthwhile contribution to the general Club character.

From the minutes of Executive meeting of 19th September, 1956:—
"Club hours when Public dance held. Considerable discussion took place on this subject and the following motion moved by Mr Smith and seconded by Mr Wright, was carried unanimously. "That in the event of a Public Dance being held in the town, the Club will close at 6.15 p.m. and not re-open again that evening."

This resolution is an indication of how jealously guarded was the reputation the Club had for good behaviour — a very significant and helpful factor when it later applied for a charter.

In our special chapter on Presidents you will learn that there have been only five since the Club started. Patrons can go one better. There have been only three of them and the present dearly loved and respected Con Hird has been there for the last seven. In spite of his 91 summers (and winters) it looks more than likely that we will have him around for quite a while yet. As everyone knows, it will be a pleasure to do so. Patron's birthday is always a good day in the Club.

Life members at present are:— Geo. Jackson, Harold Orr, Murray Parsons, Con Hird and Ralph Blanchard.

We have two honorary members, Trevor Gillies Esq., S.M. and Lord Raglan of Usk, Wales U.K., after whose ancestors this town is named.

What of the future?

In the words of the song —

“The future's not ours to see,
What will be, will be . . .”

To a degree those words are true, but if past performance is anything to go by, then the Club has a bright and prosperous future indeed. Its past is really one big success story and with that tradition to inspire them, it would seem that those who are chosen to guide its future cannot help but carry it on from strength to strength. After all, the Club is the place we enjoy going to for our entertainment and our cordial social contacts with fellow members and friends. May it always be so. It is up to us.