

"Some Reminiscences of
Early Christchurch."

by

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Charter Member.

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I claim the distinction of being the oldest member of the Club - a distinction I am sure no one wishes to challenge, but although the oldest member of the Club I am not the oldest resident of the City of Christchurch. My old friend Andrew Anderson, although younger than I am, was born here, but the first fifteen years of my life were passed elsewhere.

I was born in Nelson and arrived with my Mother and Aunt as a small boy between three and four years of age. We came to Port Levy in a little cutter called the "Supply" and were fifteen days on the voyage. We now grumble if the ferry boat is an hour late.

The official settlement of Canterbury dates from 16th ~~January~~^{December}, 1850, when the 'First Four Ships' arrived, but there were a large number of settlers here before the arrival of these ships. Auckland, Wellington, Nelson and Taranaki were all founded from eight to ten years prior to Canterbury, and a considerable number of settlers from those parts had drifted south in anticipation of the Canterbury settlement.

Quite a number of well-known names were here before the arrival of the immigrants. The original John Deans, the Gebbies and the Hanson families all came out in the same ship that carried my Father and Mother - the "Thomas Harrison" to Nelson in 1842. The Hays family were here; R. and G. Rhodes and many other well known names.

The French settlers were also in Akaroa, and a considerable number of old whalers were scattered about. Most of this population was on the Peninsula.

A very considerable trade existed between Sydney and the various ports of New Zealand. The old firm of Peacock & Co., Cooper & Levy, from whom Port Cooper and Port Levy were named; Swinburne, and other trading firms were well known in those days.

Peacock & Co's. ships ran to various ports and they rendered great service afterwards to early settlers, both in bringing goods to Lyttelton and taking away our productions.

I do not wish to introduce any detail as to the Constitution of Canterbury, or any other matters of that kind. They are on record; but I must refer to John Robert Godley, whose Statue is in the Square, and who is called the "Founder of Canterbury". Few people realise how short a time he really lived in Canterbury. He arrived a few months only before the first four ships, having left England in the January that the ships arrived here in the December.

When he arrived at Lyttelton he found that Captain Thomas, Chief Surveyor, had done a lot of fine work, built the wharf, laid out the Bridle Path, erected barracks and other buildings. Mr. Godley found that he had spent the money and there was nothing remaining. He therefore went up to Wellington for a few months discussing the position with the Government

of the day, Sir George Grey being Governor, as to the constitution under a Provincial Government, of Canterbury. He did useful work.

When he heard that the first ships had sailed from London, he came back to Canterbury to meet them, having first negotiated a loan in Wellington for £5,000 on his own guarantee. Mr. Godley stayed two years after the ships, and left in December, 1852.

A farewell banquet was given him in Hagley Park by the residents, the banquet being prepared by Mr. Hart of the "White Hart Inn" as it was called. Mr. Godley made a noble speech. It must be remembered that they had not been a perfectly happy family. There had been a great deal of fighting and difference of opinion on many points with the early settlers, but Mr. Godley had been most tactful and kept everything well in hand.

His farewell speech is worth reading, and it seems to me that the last paragraphs are worth re-printing, if only to show that the same conditions exist to-day as they did then, and that his words still hold good :-

"Turmoil, agitation and strife are inseparable for the working of a popular constitution.

You must remember that we were never meant to enjoy quiet lives. Quiet lives are for beings of a higher or lower nature than man's.

It is the business of man to work, to struggle, to strive.

Life is a Battle - not a feast,

and those conditions are the best which most strengthen and harden us up for combat."

During Mr. Godley's reign as Agent for the Canterbury Association (which was a London Association not formed for commercial purposes, but with the highest ideals of colonial colonisation) 22 ships arrived bringing 3,500 passengers.

Lyttelton in the early days was an unknown name. It was Port Cooper - known everywhere. All Australian ships and old settlers only knew it by that name and it gave its name to the cheese exported. Port Cooper cheese was the best known article in Sydney. Only a few years ago - not more than twelve - I saw outside a store in Sydney cheese labelled "Port Cooper Cheese". There must have been something in the name after all.

Peacock & Co's. ships - "Mountain Maid"; "Heather Bell" and "Tor-rington" were very well known and used to run to Akaroa and supply some of the old French settlers; they also ran to some of the other ports in New Zealand.

Gold played a very important part in the settlement of Canterbury, and in fact of New Zealand. The immigrants had no sooner arrived here than they heard of the wonderful discoveries in Victoria, Ballarat and Bendigo, and the attractions were irresistible, as they were to the whole world. Everyone who could get away was quickly on the move,

and it is estimated that Canterbury lost 500 people in this way. In the first few years everything that could be produced, in the way of produce or any other articles that could be transferred there were sent.

It is recorded that two drays were hauled up over the Bridle Path from the Heathcote Valley - no easy matter - and shipped to Melbourne. Drays were bringing fabulous prices there.

After a few years of quietness the next great rush was to Gabriel's Gully in the early 60's. These diggings were almost the richest alluvial diggings discovered in the world, and immense wealth was gathered from the claims and in the easiest fashion too.

Great stories could be told in the usual way of one man making a fortune and another man within a few feet of him getting nothing. All the old boatmen from Lyttelton cleared out and everyone that could get aboard a schooner or cutter, or those who could travel round by road (and many did - some by way of the Mackenzie Country) went off.

While this was most unsettling, a great deal of good resulted as there was a demand for everything that we could produce - cattle and sheep went down in thousands, and everything that we had to offer found a wonderful market, and in time many of those who left us came back again - some richer, some poorer.

Two years after Gabriel's Gully, a great rush to the West Coast set in. The same conditions prevailed and here again Canterbury scored immensely. A very large trade was done with Hokitika and Greymouth by sailer, and there can be no doubt that gold discoveries, although a disturbing element at the time, led to a very fine result in the end.

The great difficulty with the early settlers was the transport difficulty between Lyttelton and Christchurch. Lyttelton remained the headquarters of the merchants for some considerable time after Christchurch was settled. The only means of transport was over the Bridle Path where a certain amount was packed, but a great deal was sent by sailing boat up the Heathcote and River Avon.

It is related that the vessels were often delayed for weeks by adverse winds and commodities were particularly scarce in the city of Christchurch. Lots of tales are told of the difficulties that some of the earlier settlers underwent.

Only yesterday a man told me that he had heard his mother relate (and I remember his mother was one of the most beautiful women in the place) that she rode to Lyttelton on horseback and returned with a bag of flour on the front of her saddle, and the late George Gould was said to have carried a bag of sugar all the way from Lyttelton to Christchurch.

A little later on two steamers - the old "Mullough" and the "Planet" - were introduced. They traded

up the Heathcote River and relieved the situation tremendously. A little later two more steamers - the "Avon" and "Moa" arrived and they went up the river to Saltwater Creek and also to Kaiapoi. They proved of great service.

The Sumner Road was opened later on, and this was a very great help. I remember the opening when the Superintendent, Mr. Fitzgerald drove through in a buggy and pair. It was a red-letter day, both for Lyttelton and Christchurch, and carts after that regularly plied between the two places.

The great event in the 60's was the piercing in the first place of the Tunnel - May, 1867. A party passed through consisting of about twenty, and it is sad to look through their names, for every soul has since passed away. This is inevitable, but it comes as a shock when one reads through these old lists to see how the scythe of the Reaper has been relentless, proving that there is nothing so certain as death and taxes.

If at any time the old settlers got together, a favourite topic would be the "Good Old Times". All the troubles that they went through are forgotten. The real secret is that the whole community was young. There were few old people. Most of the men and women were in the prime of life, down to striplings of 18 to 20, and there is no doubt youth was the secret of those good old times.

As I look round the room at some of my fellow Rotarians, their

names recall old time memories. Dr. Gibson reminds me of his father - Captain Gibson - who arrived in command of the "Claude Hamilton", one of the steamers of the new Panama Mail Service, inaugurated by Crosby Ward, and he was afterwards Superintendent of the Port under the Provincial Government, prior to the formation of the Lyttelton Harbour Board.

The Panama Mail Service, which included "Lord Ashley" and "Lord Worsley" were of immense service to New Zealand. They arrived in Auckland and called at the ports down as far as Dunedin.

Mr. Hobbs reminds me of the fact that his father, Captain Hobbs and my father once owned a schooner together.

Mr. Reece recalls the late Edward Reece, who was an enterprising man, and ran a line of schooners from Lyttelton to Fiji and back, and I believe he acquired large interests in those Islands, and as a boy I can recollect that the arrival of that schooner was a matter of importance which had to be looked into. It generally resulted in our getting a coconut each.

Mr. George Booth recalls associations in industrial matters over 40 years ago, and our President Mr. Frostick recalls close business connections extending over about the same period.

I also remember walking over the Bridle Path one Sunday morning (I always appeared to be walking or riding over that old Bridle Path, but there

was no other way of getting out) when I overtook the late Mr. John Anderson and his daughter - Miss Anderson (as she was then). We stood and watched the old ship "Glenmark" disappearing in the distance. She was conveying John and Andrew Anderson home to Scotland to learn their professions as engineers.

I cannot pass this without making further allusion to their father Mr. John Anderson. He was Mayor of the city when the Duke of Edinburgh arrived, and he entertained him royally in the old Town Hall. I have no hesitation in saying that of all those early settlers there was no one more beloved than Mr. and Mrs. Anderson. When they died hundreds felt they had lost their best friends.

I moved to Christchurch in 1864 and at that time there was wonderful activity, particularly in connection with the West Coast trade.

Old Christchurch names come to my memory. I remember the arrival of William Strange from Sydney in the early 60's, and his erection of the building that he named Victoria House, and the block of buildings still retains the same name. He had a most successful career from the start. Needless to say the old buildings disappeared a long time ago.

I remember Mr. John Ballantyne's arrival from South Australia. I was with Mr. C.W. Turner at that time and Mr. Turner negotiated the sale of the business from William Pratt to John Ballantyne, and the result of that sale is

the magnificent block of buildings and business that we are in to-day, now conducted by his sons.

I remember A. J. White's arrival, also in the 60's. He bought a small furniture business down High Street, a little below his present buildings, from Mrs. Brown. I donot think he understood much of the furniture business in those days, but he was a born trader. He could buy and sell anything, and was willing to tackle any mortal thing. I remember selling him the whole fittings from one of the big immigrant ships - consisting of many thousands of feet of deal lumber delivered up the Heathcote River. He used to talk of it years afterwards and say he and I between us had introduced more bugs than had ever been introduced since. The whole of the fittings were full of bugs.

I remember George Whitcombe's start in Christchurch. He purchased a small stationery shop in the Triangle and it is pleasing to think all those names - although the Principals have all passed away - are still great and flourishing businesses.

There was one occurrence that Christchurch at the time felt, and perhaps now feels very proud of, that was the inauguration of the New Zealand Shipping Co. in the year 1871. This was a great feat for so small a population as there was at the time. Particular credit was due to Mr. J. L. Coater, who was then Manager of the Bank of New Zealand and the N.Z. Loan & Mercantile Co. At that time these two concerns were controlled by

the one manager.

Mr. C. W. Turner was sent to England to inaugurate the London business. He bought three or four sailing ships and established the London business on a sound footing, appointing Mr. C. R. Strickland as the manager, and he remained manager in London for many years.

Steam was introduced a little later by the chartering of the first ship "British Queen", and this was the first direct steam communication between England and New Zealand. She arrived at Lyttelton as her first port of call and this was also her port of departure. Other steamers followed. Now no steamer ever arrives from England direct to Lyttelton and no steamer ever leaves Lyttelton for London direct.

Perhaps the day may come, when the Otira Tunnel is completed and the northern trunk railway further extended, when Christchurch will take her place as a railway centre, and we may yet see ships bound for Lyttelton and outward bound for England and elsewhere.

Later on the Companies bought and built several very fine ships and finer ones still followed. It is a matter for regret that although the New Zealand Shipping Company's offices are still in the same old building in Hereford Street, it is no longer controlled here, but is part and parcel of the P. & O. amalgamation.

The original Cobb & Co's

coaches played an important part. These coaches came from California to Australia with the gold rush, and later on in the Gabriel's Gully rush they reached New Zealand. The two Christchurch partners Lee Cole and his brother Charles were very fine men. They ran coaches from Dunedin to Christchurch and to the West Coast, and wherever a coach could run or was wanted, Cobb & Co. were there. They became a wonderful institution.

W. R. Mitchell was their agent for many years, and their office was where Hallenstein's Clothing Factory now stands, and it was quite a sight to see the coaches with their fine teams arriving and departing from this point.

Mr. Mitchell lived to a good old age and was engaged in other work. He became a Director of the Kaipoi Woollen Mfg. Co. until 1905, and was a man held in the highest esteem.

I want to say something about the GAMES we played and the SONGS we sang.

Sport of all kinds had a strong hold from the very first. From the very nature of the people who came to Canterbury, it could not be otherwise. Many of the old settlers were from the hunting shires and from the great Public Schools of England, and the Universities.

Horse racing was quickly inaugurated, and the first meeting was held in Hagley Park, not very long after the arrival. The old programme is still in print

and it is amusing to read it. One item was a prize of £2. for a test between bona fide cart horses. The racing, however, took a higher level as it went along, and Nelson was the stronghold of the racing.

The Redwoods, Staffords hailed from there with very fine horses, many of them imported from Australia, and Canterbury very soon followed suit.

The Canterbury Jockey Club was formed in 1854, and Canterbury established a very high standard in racing. Malloch and Lance imported old Traducer, afterwards sold to Mr. Hosworthy, and he raised some of the finest horses that have ever been raised in New Zealand - Lurline and Calumny are still referred to by Australians as two of the finest mares that ever raced in Australia.

I was present at the first Grand National, won by Frank Brittan's "Royalty" in 1876, ridden by Mr. Martelli. The Course was on the Linwood Downs, now merged into the City as Linwood. It was a good cross-country course. Mr. Frank Brittan still survives. The first New Zealand Cup was run in 1883.

Cricket, naturally, from the men who came here from the different schools of England, had a very strong hold, and for many years Canterbury was the premier cricket district of New Zealand. We not only had these men themselves from England, but under their tuition a number of very fine cricketers were raised, and for a long time we held the lead. Cricket was, and we think it is still, our national

game, notwithstanding the wonderful advance that football has made. We have not the lead in cricket that we had - it is perhaps, not that we have gone back so much, but that other places have come forward.

I remember the arrival of the first All-England Eleven. They played in Hagley Park - Tom Lockyer (a famous wicket keeper); E.M. Grace, (brother to W. G. Grace) were in the team, also Hayward and others. I remember the disgust of the public when E. M. Grace was bowled first ball, and some of the public thought the Umpire should have "No balled" the bowler so that they could have had the opportunity of seeing him bat.

Athletics also had a good hold, and I remember the meetings in Latimer Square, and later on in Lancaster Park. Football was also played. Tennis was unknown.

In the way of amusements, we had no picture shows, but it is wonderful to relate that we were able to run in the 60's a theatre with a stock company of very fine actors and actresses the whole year round. Hoskins who controlled the Company was himself one of the finest actors that ever came south of the line. He was well known in England before he came here.

He trained a beautiful girl in Florence Colville, and those who saw it will never forget her playing "Lady Teazle" in the "School for Scandal" and many other plays. She died in Christ-

church quite young and is buried in the Barbadoes Street Cemetery.

We had Penny Readings also.

In the 60's. R. W. Kohler, who had come from Australia with Cobb & Co's. coaches, and who was a native of California, took over what was known as "Taylor's Gardens", now the site of the West Christchurch School. Kohler erected a very fine dancing hall and he himself, perhaps the finest cornet player in the world, and his brother Jack, also a player, and Zingraef, the pianist, formed a band which has never been surpassed since.

Kohler, as well as being a cornet player (and it was he who taught the late Charles Coombs the cornet) was a genius as he could play any instrument and was a band in himself.

I remember the opening night of Kohler's Gardens. It was wonderfully supported and was a very great institution whilst it lasted. Ultimately the Kohlers drifted back again to San Francisco and the buildings were pulled down and the present West Christchurch School erected on the site.

Rowing was also very vigorously prosecuted. All the Rowing Clubs were formed in the 60's - Canterbury, Union, Black Eagle, Kaiapoi and Lyttelton Snowdrop.

Regattas were frequently

held, and there was a tremendous interest taken in rowing.

Altogether all those living in Christchurch at that time were by no means dull. There was plenty to interest and amuse.

I want to tell you now something about the "Songs we sang". Every age produces its own cycles of songs. In 1850 (the year of the gold rush to Victoria) Katherine Hayes was a wonderful draw and her great song was "Kathleen Mavourneen". She must have sung it thousands of times. The diggers wanted it, and they literally pelted her with gold. She must have collected thousands from that song, and the words "it may be for years and it may be for ever" almost became by-words. When the sergeants of police wanted to warn a man who was on the downward track, they would say "Be careful or you will get the Kathleen Mavourneen" - "It may be for years and it may be for ever".

The songs our early immigrants sang on their voyages out, and on their arrival were those composed by Henry Russell - the great English song writer, who not only wrote songs, but sang them all over England, and was considered to be the greatest emigration agent that England ever possessed, as hundreds of thousands of people were affected by the songs and emigrated to Canada, America and elsewhere.

His songs were - "Cheer, Boys, Cheer", "Far, Far, Upon the Sea", "Life on the Ocean Wave", and many others.

I can well remember as a boy going to the Barracks. They had community singing, there is no doubt, in those days, and the song they sang was "Hard Times Come Again No More". They had left hard times, and felt that in a new country they could sing this song.

"Auld Lang Syne" we sang on the least provocation. I hope we shall continue to sing it for many a day.

The next phase of our songs was the arrival of the American Civil War songs. They came down in the early 60's, and I remember hearing them first introduced by an amateur troupe of Christy Minstrels in Lyttelton - "Sherman's March Through Georgia", "John Brown's Body", "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp the Boys are Marching" and songs of that kind, and they had a vogue for a long time. Some are still sung.

Later on we had a visit from the original Christy Minstrels. I well remember the rush for seats. They opened in the old Music Hall, just opposite the present Theatre in Gloucester Street. They sang - "Come Where My Love Lies Dressing"; "My Old Kentucky Home"; "Swanee River"; "Hollie Gray", and many others.

Lyttelton had a very fine Glee Club under the control of Mr. J. F. McCardell, and as a boy I remember coming to Christchurch with a party, and we sang at the first concert given in Christ-

church at the old Royal Hotel - about eight boys, and some very fine male voices. We were clad in Eton coats and orthodox collars, but where we got these Eton coats from I cannot for the life of me remember. I am certain I did not own one or the other boys. We must have borrowed them.

A great entertainer who travelled all round (the diggings particularly) was Thatcher. He was one of the cleverest men that ever came to the Colonies. He could enter a city or town, and in an hour's time he would collect the names of well-known individuals and their peculiarities and that night they would be in song and very cleverly written too.

A sample of Thatcher's verses is as follows. At the time that the Maori prisoners were kept in a hulk in Auckland Harbour, about 150 of them escaped, Sir George Grey being then the Governor, and supposed to be controlling the whole Maori War. The Maoris escaped, every mother's son of them. This was good for Thatcher, and I well remember the refrain of his song to the tune of "Hellsie Gray" -

"Kakene Georgie Grey. You let us get away
And you'll never, never see us any more.
Much obliged to you we are, and you'll
find us in a Pah,
Rifle-pitted on the Taranaki Shore."

What I want to say next I would not have said at all, had it not been for the little Rotary notice issued to-day which contains among other items,

"Rotary Benefits - Enlightened as to other men's work, problems, and successes" (and "failures" should be added). With that paragraph staring me in the face, I thought I would give you in tabloid form just my own 60 years' experience as a business man.

You know the old saying - "Do not put all your eggs in one basket" which has since been modernised to - "Put all your eggs in one basket, but watch that basket carefully". Well, my opinion is that if your sole object is to accumulate this world's possessions, you will do it better by following the modern version, and in keeping to one basket, but in doing so you will probably be worth very little to your town or your country. You will probably be leading a life of selfishness, studying yourself only, without considering others. If you are to help your place, you are bound to have some of your eggs in other baskets, and some of your efforts.

My career in business commenced when I was between 14 and 15 years of age by my being duly apprenticed to the old firm of Peacock & Co., consisting then of Mr. J.T. Peacock and Mr. Beverley Buchanan. Mr. C. W. Turner joined the firm later when Mr. Peacock retired.

My indentures were drawn up in the orthodox old-fashioned way for three years, to learn the business of a merchant. The first year's salary was to be a peppercorn if demanded. Then I had an active life among the ships

and shipping. This life appealed to me as I came from seafaring ancestors. It must have been in the blood. I was sometimes sent to Port Levy to weigh in potatoes for the old "Mountain Maid" for Sydney, or to weigh Port Cooper cheese, also for Sydney. Down on the wharves to weigh out whalebone from Hugh Buchanan's station at Paraki; often boarding ships, of which our firm was sometimes the agent, with the ship's papers; mixed up with the merchandise - anything and everything.

In my nineteenth year I was appointed super-cargo on the old brig "Windhover" belonging to the same firm, and sent to Valparaiso, South America, to buy wheat which was then scarce in New Zealand. I bought two cargoes and I remember that I weighed in every bag of these cargoes, and some months afterwards weighed them out this end, one cargo being delivered to Lane's Mill on the Island at Hereford Street, and the other cargo to Wood's Mill at Riccarton.

I then had experience amongst merchandise of every kind and salesmanship. I remember well that we dealt largely in liquore at that time. I am noting this just to refer to the change in what people drink.

Whiskey in the early days was not much known - in fact I do not remember whiskey in the first instance. It was Brandy and Geneva, red-cased J.D.K.Z. This came from Holland, and was the almost universal spirit, and rum. Whiskey was a later innovation.

On one occasion Mr. Turner (with whom I was at the time) and Mr. W. Montgomery, imported an entire cargo of red-cased Geneva direct from Rotterdam - about 15,000 cases. I am sure such a thing has not occurred since, but the public rose manfully to the occasion and it was not long before it was put into consumption.

I remained with Mr. Turner until after his return from London, where he had been to float the Shipping Company. Here I might mention that Mr. Turner was one of the most enterprising men that we had in those days.

He came to Lyttelton and opened for the Bank of New South Wales, established the branch in Lyttelton and bought the present site in Hereford Street, it then being the residence of the Superintendent, Mr. W. S. Moorhouse, and that remained the Bank until the new building now erected was completed.

Mr. Turner was an exceedingly clever business man, and had ships sailing to all parts of the world. He was the first to import teas to New Zealand direct from China; he was the first to import sugar direct from Mauritius; the first to import Oregon timbers direct to New Zealand. His ramifications were very great, but he was not successful from a financial point of view, and died a poor man.

I then embarked on my own in the leather trade, built a tannery,

and engaged in boot manufacture in its various forms; built a sawmill at Little River, and cleared the land. Altogether I have cleared in New Zealand upwards of 5,000 acres of bush land and made a lot of blades of grass grow where none grew before; owned sheep and cattle; and my connection with the Little River Mill brought me into touch with cocksfoot in the first instance.

This was a wonderful project 50 years ago. The late William Wilson was the first man to introduce the seed to the Peninsula, and it became a wonderful industry. I was one of the first shippers of cocksfoot to England, and to the Continent, and I remember selling a considerable parcel by cable one day for Denmark.

They wrote to say it turned out splendidly. They asked for "Akaroa" cocksfoot, and this seed with its brand, became the standard for the world. They wrote to say it had been distributed throughout Denmark, and to clients as far as Iceland. During the last three years we have been importing cocksfoot from Denmark - probably the product of the very seed we sent them forty years ago.

Except for one man, I am the only surviving member of the first Board of Directors of the Kaipoi Woollen Mfg. Co., although I have not been connected with the Company for many years. I am the sole survivor of the first Board of Directors of the Christchurch Trassway Co. (first horse, and afterwards steam) - every other soul has passed away - Directors, Engineers, Managers and

the first two secretaries. I am alone. We built the line from Papanui to Sumner, and its various branches. This line has now all disappeared and the present splendid electric service takes its place.

I assisted in founding the Industrial Association - the first in New Zealand. I was its first President, and presided over two exhibitions, including the Canterbury Jubilee Exhibition in 1900, when we opened the Canterbury Hall, and as a Commissioner of the International Exhibition of 1906.

I have served on a Road Board; I was for nine years a member of the Lyttelton Harbour Board, and there again every member of that Board has disappeared. The Hon. Ed. Richardson was its Chairman, and I am the only survivor - the Engineer; Mr. Napier Bell the Harbour Master, having all passed away.

This analysing of my connection with those old things is rather pathetic, but it seems inevitable. I was also one of the founders of the Union Rowing Club. I was one of a committee of four which met in the Bank of New South Wales in the office of the Inspector - Mr. Oswald Gilchrist, who was a keen rowing man.

We decided on the name of the Club - there was no Union Steamship Co. in those days. We did not copy them - they must have copied us. I was the Club's first Treasurer; Mr. Ollivier was its first Secretary, and I think there are only about five survivors of the original

members at that time. Mr. George Jamason, who is still alive and well, formed one of our most successful crew, and I know he is the only surviving member of that crew.

We were very proud to have the Rev. O'Brien Hoare as our Captain and Coach. He was an old University man and he was most successful as a coach and trainer.

Among other events in my life, and for which no particular merit is due to me (except that I got off the mark quickly) is that I have celebrated a Golden Wedding.

I shall plod away down the rest of the long, long trail, and it does not seem long, and when the time comes for handing in my passports, I shall plead that while I have had my full share of failures and mistakes, and a full share of all the sins of omission and commission, yet I have tried to do my bit for the land I have lived in, and I believe I shall hear the verdict - "He has been a trier, pass him in".

Robert Allan.