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CROQUET CLUB.

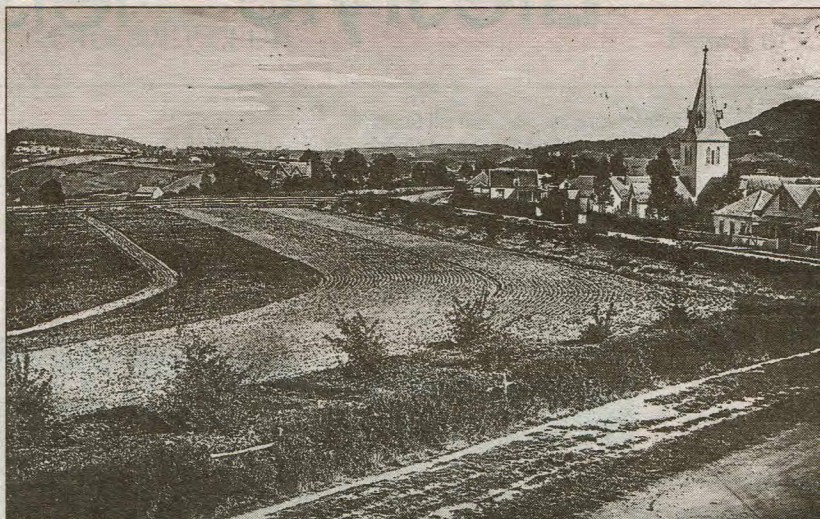
Daily Southern Cross, Volume XXIX, Issue 4805, 20 J.

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CROQUET CLUB.

A GENERAL meeting of the Parnell Croquet Club was held on Saturday afternoon at the Eastern Academy, when the report of the honorary secretary, Colonel Nation, was laid before the meeting. There was a good attendance of both ladies and gentlemen. Mr. G. Walker occupied the chair. From the report it appeared that upwards of 100 members had joined since the first starting of the club, which is not yet a year old. The committee expressed their regret that the state of the field is not what it ought to be, but considering the lateness of the season before the operations of levelling and setting the ground in order were commenced, as much has been done as could be expected. Still it requires some further improvement, and additional donations were required. The committee expressed their thanks to the Cathedral trustees for the gratuitous use of the beautifully situated piece of land they now occupied, and requested permission to continue its occupation (which permission will doubtless be granted). The committee tendered their thanks to Mr. Morin for the gift of the iron fencing round the ground. The report was unanimously adopted. — The hon treasurer, Mr. Dyer, then produced the balance sheet, from which it appeared that the income since the formation of the club was £62 1s. 6d., and the expenditure nearly the same amount, leaving a small balance in hand. The following were



Parnell view: Looking south west from Bishopcourt in 1870, this photo shows St Stephens Ave in the foreground, Parnell Rd, the site of the Holy Trinity Cathedral and St Mary's Church, the Church of England Grammar School master's house, Mt Eden and Mt St John. Reference: 4-2509

appointed office bearers :—President : Mrs. Reader Wood. Members of committee : Mrs. Dargaville, Mrs O. Jones, Mrs Ruck, Miss Thom, Miss K. Gossett, Miss S Coates, Messrs. Dyer, Churton, Biddulph, Walker, Weetman, and Nation. Colonel Nation was re-appointed secretary, and Mr. Dyer treasurer. Thanks were voted to the retiring office bearers. The rules were then considered and adopted, and a vote of thanks to the chairman terminated the meeting. The piece of ground used by the club is in every way an appropriate one, and commands a charming view on all sides. Nothing is wanting but a little more money to make it one of the most ornamental and beautiful places in the suburbs of Auckland. Croquet has usually an attraction for young people apart from its intrinsic merits as a game, and we shall be much surprised if the Parnell Club does not grow and flourish exceedingly during the next twelve months.

God only looks to pure, and not to full hands—Laberius.

We understand that Mr Goldie has made arrangements with the North Shore ferry-steamers, whereby a return ticket and strawberries can be had for 1s. 6d. We advise all who can to go.—(A.V.)

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Anyone for Lawn Tennis?

The Domain is home to the 142-year-old Parnell Lawn Tennis Club — New Zealand's oldest. Club secretary Gail Mazur recounts its proud history.

The Parnell Lawn Tennis Club is the oldest tennis club in New Zealand and the second oldest in the world, although Clevedon in the UK boasts that they are, being founded in 1880.

Like the All-England Lawn Tennis Club, the Parnell Lawn Tennis Club has the interesting distinction of tracing its origins back to a date prior to the date of the first formulation of the rules of lawn tennis.

On August 12 1872, it was proposed that a club, to be called the “Parnell Croquet Club” be formed. In 1898 this was changed to the “Parnell Lawn Tennis Club and Croquet Club”. A provisional committee of eight was set up and over the next four months 114 people became members at a subscription cost of half a guinea. The first AGM was held on January 18 1873 and only 3 rules applied:

Visitors were to be admitted only once

Children under 15 were not allowed

All dogs would be hunted off the field or the owner fined one guinea

The game of lawn tennis emerged on the paddock at the top of Parnell Rd at Cathedral Pl, and the game of croquet disappeared early in the twentieth century. At the 43rd AGM, held in 1915, rules were amended by the deletion of the word “croquet” and the club became the Parnell Lawn Tennis Club.

During this period the club flourished and WWI only slightly restricted the club's activity. At the end of the war, the question of increasing the playing area was raised and a deputation visited the Reserves Committee of the then-Auckland City Council about the possibility of gaining a lease of the Titoki St site (the present site of the courts). Unfortunately the expense of the move precluded consideration of new courts in The Domain. The move to The Domain was finally to be made 38 years later.

The first 50 years of the club produced a number of tennis personalities; two stand out above all the rest — Miss J. Mowbray and Colonel J.P. Stevenson. Miss Mowbray was secretary and ladies' champion from 1892 to 1905. In 1932, at the age of 80, she served the first ball at the Club's 50th Jubilee season. Col. Stevenson was club champion from 1892 to 1902, made a life member in 1900 and was president from 1917 to 1928.

Following a Special General Meeting in November 1927, the club took action to become an incorporated society. At this time also, moves were afoot to choose a club blazer and badge. A blazer with a maroon stripe, a narrow fold strip and a wide blue strip was selected, and a badge became available soon after. And just as modern, the club installed a telephone in February 1930 — but had it taken out again over the winter months.

Depression times had left the club short of funds, but at the 61st AGM the membership was boosted by the admission of 31 members of the closing United Tennis Club.



An afternoon's action, 1955. The rather challenging grass surface has since been replaced with astroturf. Photo courtesy of Parnell Lawn Tennis Club archives

The club survived the war years, even when the ball ration was seven pairs a fortnight. At war's end, membership was full and finances sound. A limited number of United Services personnel had been welcomed as honorary members, recalling an earlier custom when visiting officers of the Royal Navy were accorded the same privilege. Again in 1950, officers of HMAS *Sydney* were similarly welcomed. In 1944/45 the club, for the first time, won the Caro Bowl, given in memory of a Parnell player, Maurice Caro, who was killed in the war.

With a return to peace there began a period of playing strength not seen before, and the move to the new courts in Titoki St, which were opened in November 1956 by the Auckland mayor, John Luxford. In the 1972/73 Benson & Hedges Open Tournament, eight of the 15 New Zealand entrants in the men's singles were Parnell members.

Now, 141 years after its founding, the Parnell Lawn Tennis Club goes from strength to strength. With eight astroturf courts, it is fortunate to be in an idyllic location on the border of The Domain, among the pohutukawa and with the chorus of many native birds heard in the trees. With a strong social and tennis focus, the club has grown in membership and achieves outstanding results in the Auckland Tennis interclub competitions. PLTC also hosts a number of social and competitive tournaments throughout the year, including the Caro Bowl and the club champs, which attracts an average of 450 entrants and is played over two months.

Parnell Lawn Tennis Club also boasts the distinction of having held a Davis Cup tie, when New Zealand played the Philippines in 2008. Unfortunately New Zealand was beaten on this occasion but the successful hosting of this event was a major feather in the cap for PLTC. — *Gail Mazur*

CROQUET. — OPENING OF THE PARNELL CLUB.

Auckland Star, Volume V, Issue 1511, 14 December 1874, Page 3

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CROQUET. — OPENING OF THE PARNELL CLUB.

LET athletics and blue stockings sneer as they will, the invention of croquet has supplied a great want in society. An outdoor game equally adapted for either sex, and especially suited to a mixture of both, was a thing hardly known before the introduction of croquet, and many and divers were the shifts which town and country dames were put to to find amusement for their young folks when the ordinary stereotyped resources had been exhausted. Croquet has enough of the element of skill about it to render it interesting to thinking heads, while its simplicity makes it attractive to those who do not "go in" for science in their games. The croquet lawn is rapidly becoming as much an institution as the cricket field. It has the advantage of cricket in being less *exigeant* upon the physical powers of its votaries. Some people find fault with it for its tendency to foster flirtation. This we regard as its great charm. Here is that *sonpcon* of danger which is necessary to make any English pastime alluring. The same element is present in hunting, cricket, tiger-shooting, foot-ball, the ball-room and if taken away would leave each vapid and uninteresting. Then there is this to be said for croquet. The flirtations it encourages are all fair and above board, and in the presence generally of other parties. The little game of attack and defence which has to be carried on both in the actual use of the mallet and hoops, and in the more serious bye-play, has to undergo the scrutiny of watchful eyes, and the result is a sharpening of the wit and brightening of the conversational powers which are most useful. No doubt the croquet law has to mourn its bruised hearts as the cricket field has to mourn its broken limbs, but a serious accident in either case is rare, certainly not frequent enough to cause us to denounce either game, more especially, as in most instances, the casualty is the fault of the sufferer. The event which led to these remarks was, the opening of the Parnell Croquet Club on Saturday afternoon. The occasion was celebrated

by a large gathering of ladies and gentlemen at the croquet lawn, opposite St. Mary's Church. Bishop Cowie and Mrs. Cowie, and several of the neighbouring clergy were present, as well as the most influential residents in the suburb. During the afternoon some capital games were played. Strawberries and cream were served in the temporary pavilion on the ground. The following are the officers of the ensuing season:—Lady-President: Mrs Reader Wood. Committee: Mrs Ruck, Miss Thom, Miss Mowbray. We understand that the club has received an accession of numbers, and we trust it will have a successful season.

Papers Past — New Zealand Herald — 20 January 1873 —

DAY, TO THE STRONGS RESPECTING CROWN LAND PURCHASES IN THAT PROVINCE.

A meeting of the members of the Parnell Croquet Club was held, in the Eastern Academy, on Saturday afternoon. About 25 ladies and gentlemen were present. Mr. R. Walker took the chair, and called upon Colonel Nation, the secretary, to read his report. The report gave an outline of the history of the club since its formation in August last, and showed it to be in a very prosperous condition. The committee advised the election of a new committee, as some of the committeemen were desirous of retiring. The club now numbered 103 members. The report also tendered the thanks of the club to the Cathedral Trust, for the use of the croquet ground. The report was adopted *nem con*. The treasurer's report showed that the receipts of the club amounted to £62 1s 6d, and its expenditure to £61 11s. A fund for the erection of a shed for the purposes of the club had been started, and the sum of 16s contributed towards it. The treasurer's report was also adopted. A vote of thanks was proposed to the outgoing committee, and carried unanimously. The following persons were then elected to act as the committee of the club, seven to form a quorum:—Mrs. Reader Wood (re-elected as president), Mrs. Dargaville, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Ruck; Misses Thorne, Gossip, and Coates; and Messrs. Churton, Biddulph, Walker, and Weetman. Colonel Nation was re-elected secretary, and Mr. Dyer treasurer, to the club. This closed the business, and the members of the club then adjourned for a game of croquet to the neighbouring field.



2010 - site now occupied by St Mary's Church, Parnell Rd

CROQUET. (Auckland Star, 1914-10-29)

CROQUET.

AUCKLAND CROQUET ASSOCIATION.

The Parnell Croquet Club have been compelled to retire from the senior inter-club matches, after making all arrangements for the season, owing to the Tennis Club not leaving the croquet members enough ground to play on. Each club will score a bye from Parnell.

PARNELL CLUB'S REPORT.

The 49rd annual meeting of the Parnell Lawn Tennis Club will be held at the clubhouse on Monday evening, commencing at 7.45. The committee, in its report and balance-sheet for the past season, congratulated the members upon what had been perhaps the most successful season in the history of the club. At a special meeting of the club held prior to the commencement of the playing season it was decided to increase the number of tennis courts by making an additional one on a portion of the area devoted to croquet, owing to the falling off in the membership of that branch of the club. Later it was decided to discontinue croquet and play tennis on the whole of the area. The club therefore now had six courts. The club won the inter-club contest with an unbeaten record. Notwithstanding a slight decrease in the membership roll the finances were still in a sound condition, as the balance-sheet showed a balance in hand of £79 7s 3d; while there was an excess of assets over liabilities amounting to £199 16s 11d.

The thanks of the club were due to the following who presented prizes for competition: Professors Segar and Egerton, and Messrs. W. Pavitt, J. P. Stevenson, W. J. Rainger, R. J. Coates, G. H. Baker, and A. A. Martin.

The following competitors were successful in club matches: Men's championship singles, J. Hunter; ladies' championship singles, Miss M. Steele; men's handicap singles, C. E. Carr; ladies' handicap singles, A grade, Miss M. Steele; ladies' handicap singles, B grade, Miss V. M. Ziman; men's handicap doubles, Coates and Ralph; ladies' handicap doubles, Misses Cooke; combined handicap doubles, W. R. Bamford and Miss D. Cooke.

The membership roll for the season was: Playing, 94; honorary, 40; life, 4; total, 138. The thanks of the club were again due to those ladies who contributed to the success of the Saturday afternoon tournament.

"Memories" - Parnell Croquet Club founded
1872 (the earliest in NZ?)

23/3/11

Morning Bruce,

Please forgive for contacting you but, 3 weeks seemed to be a long time away.

Attached is a photocopy of what I remembered reading somewhere!!

The gentleman writing the history of St Mary's and Holy Trinity is-

The Rev Frank Wright
314/9 Shaftesbury Ave.
Selwyn Village
Point Chevalier.
Auckland. 1022

845 0260

I do not have his telephone number but, I am certain it will be listed in the Telephone Directory.

It was such a surprise to find someone interested -plus who had been to the top of the building - in The Cathedral of Holy Trinity.

I hope you have time to checkout the Labyrinth sometime.

Regards,

Nal Puntani

Parnell

PP Star 9/2/1877

One of the most favourable aristocratic resorts is the Parnell Croquet Clubs ground, the position of which is excellent, as it is situated on the high road.

PP Star 22/11/1878

We learn the Parnell Croquet and Tennis Club will open the season at the grounds, Parnell, tomorrow afternoon

History of the Cathedral complex...2

Bishop Selwyn bought 6.5 acres of land in 1843 for 56 pounds 7 shillings and 6 pence. Its Manukau (later Parnell) Road boundary ran along the highest ridge in Auckland and then flowed down St Stephen's Avenue to Brighton Road and ended at what eventually became Kenderdine Drive and Cathedral Place. The Trust Board managed the land. Fourteen lots were leased around the edges on 99-year so-called Glasgow (no relation to any people named Glasgow you may know) leases. The Parnell Tennis Club continued there until April 21, 1956.

Over the road from this the original Parnell parish church was built in 1859. It flourished and became the social centre of Parnell. In the 1885, knowing it would be years before the Cathedral was built, Bishop Cowie decided that the new and larger St Mary's, which was to be built, should be used as a Cathedral. In 1887 a new church hall was built, left of the church, to house all church

social functions, and Synod was also held there. A ball was held every year.

A shop and house on the corner were owned by the parish and let. The parish had a cricket team, a gymnasium, a Scout Troop and Girl Guides. Many also played tennis.

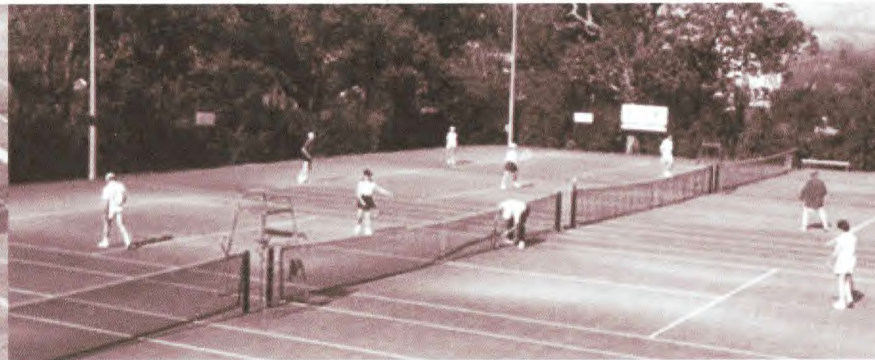
A new vicarage (later the deanery) was built below St Mary's and was ready by 1902 for the MacMurray family to occupy. The previous vicarage, which was to the right of the church, near the road, had become very damp and was too small. The lower house was called St Mary's Lodge and many of our elderly clergy, assistant priests at St Mary's and some Cathedral choir members have lived in its two flats. It was moved off the parish section and to the left and has an entry from Birdwood Crescent. This clearing and the removal of the deanery after St Mary's moved over the road allowed development of St Mary's Close with 15 town houses. Profit from that went to the building

fund of the Cathedral. The land from the street front where St Mary's stood was sold to developers.



Marjory Glasgow

Parnell Lawn Tennis Club (Inc)

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History

The Parnell Lawn Tennis Club was established in 1872, which gives the club the interesting distinction of having its origins date prior to the date of the first formulation of rules of lawn tennis. On the 12th of August 1872 our club "The Parnell Croquet Club" was formed on Cathedral Place.

The season's subscription was set at half a guinea and only three rules applied:

1. Visitors were to be admitted only once
2. Children under 15 were not allowed
3. "All dogs would be hunted off the field or the owner fined one guinea."

The Club finally came to incorporate tennis in its name in 1898. Over the 83 years at the Cathedral site, the club went through both difficult and prosperous times that included two World Wars.

Parnell Lawn Tennis Club moved to its current idyllic location on the border of the Auckland Domain among the pohutukawa trees in 1956 (after turning down the option of the current Gladstone Road site in earlier years)

" It's one-on-one out there, man. There ain't no hiding.

I can't pass the ball."

Pete Sampras



W. Stevenson, photo.

PARNELL CROQUET LAWN.

Nov 1901

Libraries Heritage Images