
Carlton Community History Group



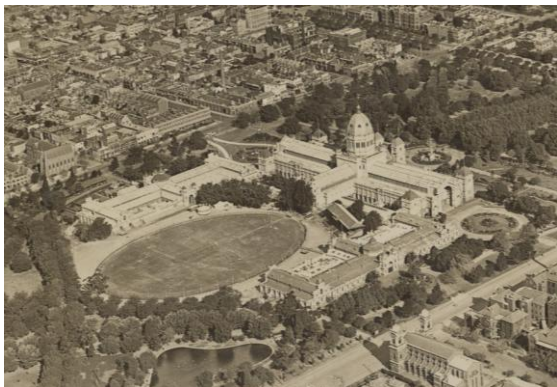
NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 2

July 2016

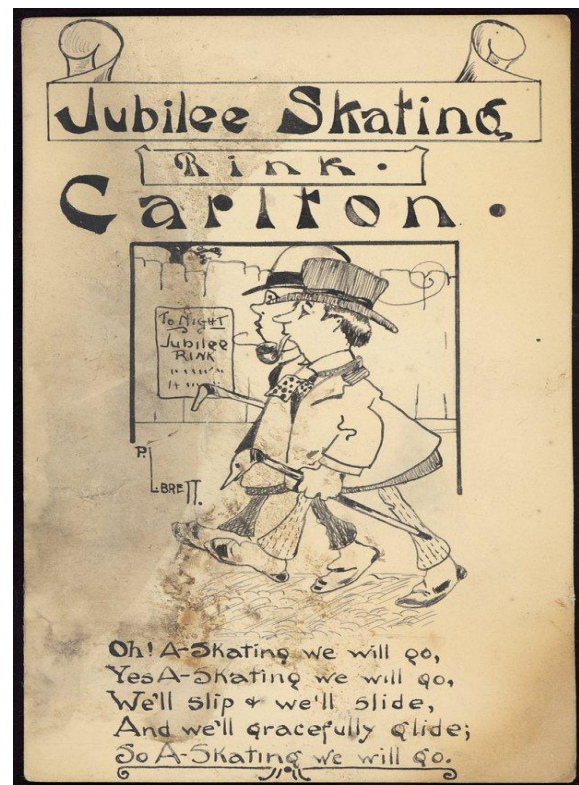
Sport and recreation in Carlton

Did you know that in the early 20th century, cycle racing was one of the most popular sports in Melbourne? It was so popular that the Trustees of the Exhibition Building in Carlton built a cycle racing track next to the building on the north side that attracted thousands of Melbournians to watch local and international stars race. The oval track is clearly visible in the aerial view below, taken in 1931. See inside for more details.



(Photo courtesy of State Library of Victoria)

This edition of the CCHG Newsletter focuses on sports and recreations in the early days of Carlton – including cycle racing, but also some of the more unusual pastimes such as roller skating. The Jubilee Skating Ring featured in the cartoon above right, was on the site of what is now the San Remo Ballroom on Nicholson Street.



In April, a well-attended CCHG talk was given by Tony De Bolfo, the official historian of the Carlton Football Club, on the early day of the club, and the houses, hotels, parks and other sites in Carlton associated with its early days. In this Newsletter we follow this up with an article on the founding of Carlton's famous football club in the 1860s and the story of its first few decades. More details of the club's history can be found in Tony's book 'Out Of The Blue' or on the Carlton Football Club's official history website at www.blueseum.org

When cycle racing was popular in Carlton

In the late 19th and early 20th century one of the more popular sports in Melbourne was cycle racing. This began as bicycle touring, and there were in the 19th century a number of bicycle touring clubs that organised outings for their male and female bicycle-riding members out into the countryside. But out of this grew the sport of cycle racing, which took place either around a circular track or over long distances on roads.



One of the earliest and most successful of the racing clubs was the Carlton Cycling Club, which began in the 1890s. It organized regular races for its members, usually out in the countryside at Campbellfield, and fielded teams in competitions with other clubs. In June 1896, for example, they organised a club race that started on the corner of Elgin and Lygon Streets, Carlton, went out to 'the eleventh mile post on the Bulla Road', and back to

Queens College in Carlton. According to a newspaper report at the time 'Great interest was taken in the race, some 300 or 400 people witnessing the start'.

It is not clear where in Carlton the cyclists had their club rooms, but wherever they were, they were well equipped and offered club members a wide range of sporting and social activities in addition to cycling. A 1909 newspaper report noted that:

'Things are in full swing at the rooms of the Carlton Cycling and Social Club. The punching ball, home trainers, and other athletic appliances are in great demand. The new hot and cold showers have proved to be a great boon to the pedal pushers. The rifle range has turned out a great success, and some excellent shooting is witnessed every night ... The boys under Capt. Watts had a run to South Morang on Sunday, a full muster turning out. The destination was reached in good time for dinner, after which football was indulged in. A start for home was made about 4.30, the club rooms being reached in record time'. (*Table Talk*, 27 May 1909).

In the 1890s many of the cycle clubs had a Cycle Polo team. This was a game similar to the horse mounted one but played on bicycles. An 1899 article in the *Ballarat Star* noted that the Carlton Cycling Club's polo team, 'reputed to be one of the best teams now playing for the metropolitan premierships', was coming up to Ballarat to play a local team. By 1900 cycle polo had lost popularity. But the cycling clubs, including Carlton's, continued their popularity right through the 20th century. There has been a recent revival of interest in Cycle Polo, with games now played on courts at the Neill Street Reserve in Carlton.

Cycle track at Exhibition Buildings

In the early 1890s, as cycling sports were taking off in Victoria, a large cycle racing track was constructed on the northern side of the Exhibition Building where the Museum now stands. The track had grandstand seating for about 3,000 people and standing room for thousands more. Arc lights were added in 1905, making it Australia's premier cycle track

with international champions regularly competing there. It was a popular attraction for over half a century. Refurbished several times over the years, it was by the 1920s being used for both cycle and low-powered motorcycle races. An oval board track was constructed in 1936 but removed in 1939 after a Supreme Court ruling that it restricted free public access to the grounds.

During World War Two, the Exhibition Building was taken over by the Royal Australian Air Force, and when they moved out in 1946, the track was completely unusable. It was eventually removed to make way for a migrant reception centre, ending over sixty years of cycling at the Exhibition Building.

(Based on material from website of Museum Victoria).



(Photos on this page and previous page courtesy State Library of Vic)

Publications

The following Carlton Community History Group publications, on topics related to the history of Carlton, are available via the website at www.cchg.asn.au

Carlton Girls Born & Bred

By Margaret Rich \$7.00
The story of Ruth Bailey... and her mother... and her grandmother... and her daughters.

The Stockade. Carlton's Forgotten Prison and the People Who Inhabited It

By Jeff Atkinson \$8.00

Through the Eyes of a Child. A Street in Carlton 1939-45

Paintings by Des Norman \$20.00

Walking Along Rathdowne Street

By Margaret Rich \$10.00
100 years of shopping, services and stories in North Carlton

Some Women of Davis Street. 1891 and 2008

By Judith Biddington \$5.00

The Troublesome American

By Jeff Atkinson \$5.00
The story of Charles Ferguson, foreman on the Burke and Wills Expedition, which started from Carlton.

John King.

By Marian Turnbull \$5.00
The story of the only member of the Burke and Wills Expedition to cross Australia from south to north and return to Melbourne alive.

(NB - Prices do not include postage).

Historical walks in Carlton

Historic Carlton Walk and Talk **Saturday 22 October 2016, 10am to 12 noon.**

Walk through the historic and interesting streets of Carlton to find remnants of the 1860s before the era of the cast iron terraces, and learn something of Carlton's most notorious crimes, notable migrants, and more recent public controversies.

Presented by Princes Hill Community Centre and CCHG.

Starts at Church of All Nations, corner Palmerston and Drummond Streets, Carlton.

Bookings: phone: 9387 7740, or email: enquiries@princeshill.org.au Cost \$10.

Melbourne General Cemetery Walk and Talk

Saturday 12 November 2016, 10am to 12 noon.

Explore and learn about some of the interesting or notorious characters who are buried in the oldest and most historic of Melbourne's existing cemeteries.

Presented by Princes Hill Community Centre and Carlton Community History Group.

Starts at Princes Hill Community Centre, rear 270 Macpherson Street, Princes Hill.

Bookings: phone: 9387 7740, or email: enquiries@princeshill.org.au Cost \$10.

Melbourne General Cemetery Night Tours

Fridays 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

For an interesting and educational experience, try the popular night tours of Melbourne General Cemetery, one of Australia's most important burial grounds. Notable interments included on the tour are various Prime Ministers, legendary billiards player Walter Lindrum, ill-fated explorers Burke and Wills, and Federici, the famous ghost of the Princess Theatre.

Bookings: phone 8558 8210, or visit the website at <http://www.mgc.smct.org.au>

DID YOU KNOW?

Olympic Games in Carlton

In 1952, the newspapers announced that the 1956 Olympic Games were to be held at the Carlton Oval. A plan for a stadium at Princes Park to seat 150,000 people was drawn up and some preliminary work done. However it was decided that the expense of constructing a brand new stadium would be too great, especially as there was a ready-made one at the Melbourne Cricket Ground that could be modified to suit. In 1953 it was decided that the MCG and not the Carlton Oval would be the main stadium for the Olympic Games.

First children's playground in Victoria

The first children's playground in Victoria was in Lincoln Square, Carlton, opened in 1907. It had a fence and gates, which were open from ten in the morning until sunset (closed on Sundays of course). No person over the age of 12 was to use the 'appliances' (seesaws, maypoles and swings) and neither football nor cricket was allowed. But rules are made to be broken, and in October 1912 *The Argus* reported that six youths had been fined 20 shillings each for playing football in Lincoln Square on a Sunday.

Tennis and bowls combined

In the 1880s lawn tennis and lawn bowls were so closely associated that in Carlton they were played by the one club, the Carlton Bowling and Lawn Tennis Club. Although it was referred to as 'lawn' tennis, the game in Carlton was actually played on asphalt courts, next to the bowling green in Princes Park

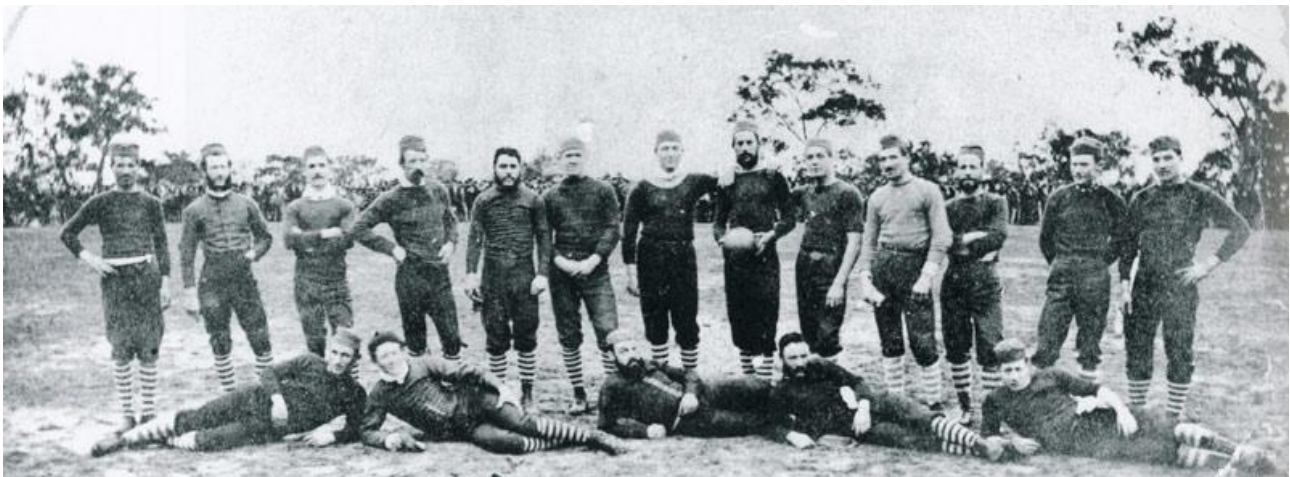
150 years of the Carlton Football Club

Carlton's famous football club, the 'Blues' has been in existence for over 150 years. It was founded in May 1865 (although some say July 1864) at a meeting held in the University Hotel on the corner of Lygon and Grattan Streets. According to its first annual report published four months later, the club grew rapidly in membership and repute:

'Since its first match, which was played with the Grammar School Club, it has steadily increased its position among footballers till it attained the top of the ladder by being ranked second to none in the Colony. During the season it has played ten matches, won two, lost one and drawn nine; has kicked five goals and has lost five goals'.

Clearly the method of scoring was somewhat different in those days! The other teams that Carlton played against in those early days included Williamstown, South Yarra, Royal Park, and one called the Warehousemen.

The Carlton Football Club fielded its first team on a clearing in Royal Park and that reserve provided the backdrop for the first ten years of its existence. Over the next few decades it played on grounds in the University and at the southern end of Princes Park. It was not until 1896 that it acquired a permanent home when it and the Carlton Cricket Club were granted permissive occupancy of some rather rustic sports grounds on the site of the current oval. A small stand opened in 1900, and further facilities for spectators were constructed in the 1930s. (Source and photo – Bluseum, Online Carlton Football Club Museum).



The Carlton Football Team, 1874, probably taken in Royal Park.

History Lovers' Book Club

If you love history then this is the book club for you!

Join fellow history buffs and book lovers at Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre as they explore a range of historical fact and fiction. The club meets on the third Tuesday of the month, 6pm to 7pm. For more information contact:

Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre, 251 Faraday Street, Carlton.

Roller Skating in Carlton

The Jubilee Roller Skating Rink (its name reflecting Queen Victoria's then recent achievement of 50 years on the throne) opened in December 1887 on the Nicholson Street cable tram route, at the corner of Lee Street north of Princes Street. In the previous month the periodical *Table Talk* had reported excitedly on the progress of the building with its weatherboard walls, corrugated iron roof and the all-important floor 'as smooth as a sheet of virgin limestone'. The rink was said to be the largest in Australia. The opening night on 21 December saw 300 patrons gliding along to the sound of music. Soon there were sessions three times a day, the mornings being free and restricted to ladies and children only.

Roller skating was all the go. In 1888 there were at least another eight rinks in Melbourne suburbs. Over the years all kinds of events took place at the Jubilee, fancy dress carnivals, concerts, polo on skates.

The Jubilee Rink continued to advertise and operate but the craze was dying. Directly under its ad in

Punch in July 1908 was an ad for ice skating at the Glaciarium which had opened in 1906 in City Road, South Melbourne, not far from today's Arts Centre. In 1912 the North Carlton rink became the Jubilee Picture Palace. Ten years after that it was enlarged and renamed the Adelphi. Films were shown there until 1967 when the cinema was closed and the site was taken over by the San Remo Ballroom which continues today.



Inside the Jubilee Rink, circa 1902. (Photo State Library of Vic)

Carlton Community History Group Annual General Meeting

Speaker: Susan Young

on the historical work of the activist Carlton Association in the 1970s.

Monday 1 August at 7.30pm

Meeting Room, Carlton Library, 667 Rathdowne St, Carlton North.

Other meeting dates: 5 September, 3 October, 7 November, 5 December.

Topics of meetings, special events and alternate venues, are posted on the CCHG website.

Carlton Community History Group, P.O. Box 148, Carlton North, 3054.

Email: carlton@cchq.asn.au. Website: www.cchq.asn.au