

*BLUE GUM
AND
WILLOW*

*A History of the
Northern District Cricket Club
1925 to 2000*

Alistair Kennedy

Foreword by Mark Taylor

BLUE GUM AND WILLOW
A History of the Northern District Cricket Club, 1925-2000

By the Same Author

Limerick Lines: The History of a Branch of the Quinn Family in Australia

100 Not Out: The Centenary History of the Narara-Wyoming Cricket Club

Published 2000

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Cover designed by Ross Longley.

Additional copies available from:

The Secretary

Northern District Cricket Club

c/- 23A Anembo Road

Berowra. NSW. 2081.

Telephone (02) 9456 1978

Printed by Bookworks Pty Ltd, 56 Bonds Road, Punchbowl. NSW.

ISBN: 0 947079 64 5

Foreword

I was delighted to hear that Alistair Kennedy was taking the time to research and tell the story of the 75-year history of the Northern District Cricket Club (NDCC).

The book follows the development of NDCC and the many characters associated with the club. Frank Buckle, **the club's initial first grade captain and also its first centurion**, way back on the opening day of the 1925/26 season. Hugh Chilvers, the great leg spinner who took 100 first grade wickets in each of three consecutive seasons. Les Fallowfield, who in 1941/42 compiled five consecutive centuries to kick off the season. A young Alan Davidson, playing in his first season, inspired the first grade team, under the leadership of Tim Caldwell to its first premiership flag.



Other greats such as Jim Burke and Neil Harvey, who captained the club to two further premierships in 1962/63 and 1966/67. Through to the 1970s and 80s with names such as Steve Bernard, currently the manager of the Australian Cricket Team; Ross Turner, who led the club to back-to-back premierships and was undoubtedly one of the best leaders I had the pleasure to play with; and into the 1990s with Randal Green's **outfit that won the competition in 1992/93. In that year Randal himself** compiled 1066 runs in all competitions, which remains a club record. Right through to today with the club as strong as ever, evidenced by ND winning its first club championship in almost 20 years in 1998/99 and its fourth overall.

I was fortunate to have joined the club in 1981 as a 16-year-old and have enjoyed my association immensely. Club stalwarts such as Austie Hughes, Neil Marks and Jim Barrett, as well as the many players I had the pleasure to play alongside have made my 20 years of membership memorable ones. And to me that is exactly what a **"club" is all about. It's not so much the number of premierships or club championships that make the club great but more the feeling an individual gets when he/she becomes a part of it. I'm sure that I speak for many when I say that Northern District has that special feeling.**

Congratulations to the club on its successful 75 years and to Alistair for the **magnificent recount of its history which I'm sure you will enjoy.**

Mark Taylor

Acknowledgments

As with so many aspects of the Northern District Cricket Club, the idea for the production of this history came from Austen Hughes. Austie, better known of course **as the club's longest**-serving president, is also the patron of my own local club, Narara-Wyoming, and based upon my published history of that club he approached me about doing the same for the NDCC.

My immediate problem was that, apart from a couple of players which ND had recruited from Narara (Austie began poaching within days of becoming patron!), I knew little of the club or its players. Fortunately the club has published a comprehensive annual report every year since its formation and at least two complete sets of these reports have been preserved. In 1995 Rae Richmond donated one bound four-volume set back to the club and it was these which form the cornerstone of this history. I later caught up with Rae at his rural property and he was able to give me much further help for which I am most grateful.

With the annual reports as a base upon which to build it then fell to the many present and former members of the club, their descendants and other family **members to provide a more personal view of the club's history. Here I was swamped** with assistance and my gratitude goes out to all those who gave generously of their time and of their invaluable memorabilia including Ian Black, Ian Fraser, Bob Frazer, Mrs Betty Caldwell, Vern Clifton, Frank Collins, Alan Davidson, Richard Errington, Mrs Judy Gallagher (nee Ziehlke), Stan Gilchrist, Hilary Griffith, Bill Hannam, Rocky Harris, Irvine Hill, Austen Hughes, Frank Hyde, John Iredale, Cyril Jagoe, John Jagoe, Bill Jocelyn, Max Lloyd, Ken Longley, Greg Lynch, Bob Mansfield, Neil Marks, Mrs Judy Mathers, Mick Mathers, Jack Moran, Alan Patterson, Phil Payne, Rae Richmond, Ellis Rothwell, Ray Stubley, Mark Taylor, Ross Turner, Mrs Joan Wynn (nee Chilvers) and Eric Ziehlke.

I would especially like to thank Tom Richmond who was not only able to provide me with much valuable information on the many players with whom he had been involved from the late-1960s onwards but who also dusted off his English **master's cap and proof read the book for me.**

Two fellow researchers who were able to save me significant amounts of time were Warwick Franks and Andrew Bayles. Warwick, together with a number of **Australia's most prominent cricket historians, is researching a major project aimed at** producing biographies of every Australian first-class cricketer, while Andrew has produced a unique series of books on Sydney grade records. To both Warwick and Andrew go my sincere thanks. Thanks also to Alf James whose history of the Hornsby-Ku-ring-gai Cricket Association was an invaluable source of information not only on that Association but also on the earliest days of cricket in the Hornsby and surrounding districts.

Special thanks also to Ross Longley **who volunteered to design the book's** cover and did such a magnificent job.

Finally, my apologies in advance for whatever errors or inaccuracies the book contains. In a book of this style there will undoubtedly be some and I urge anyone who finds anything which they know to be wrong to contact me either directly or through the club to enable corrections to be made for any future editions.

Introduction

By the time of the formation of the Northern District Cricket Club in 1924, cricket had been played in Sydney for at least 120 years with the first recorded match being held on what is now Hyde Park in early 1804.

Around 1826 the first Australian cricket clubs were formed including the Military Cricket Club, the Currency Cricket Club and the Australian Cricket Club, the latter reserved for Australian-born players. By the 1830s there were also a number of geographically-based clubs representing areas such as Sydney, Burwood, Liverpool and Cumberland.

Although matches were often popular and competitive there was no central organisation for inter-club cricket matches in Sydney with each game being arranged on an informal basis between the two participants. By the late 1840s it became obvious that the various Sydney clubs needed to get together and either form an association or allow one club to take control of the game as had happened with the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) in England.

It was to be Sydney/Melbourne rivalry, rather than the needs of Sydney club cricketers, which would eventually lead to the formation of such an organisation. Although NSW had defeated Victoria in the first inter-colonial match at the newly-built Melbourne Cricket Ground in March 1856, the Victorians won two of the three subsequent matches. This led to fears that the superior organisation of cricket in Melbourne could lead to Victoria dominating future matches.

Although a committee of representatives from the various Sydney clubs had met in 1856 to arrange the **first Sydney match between NSW and Victoria it wasn't** until December 1859 that the NSW Cricket Association was formed¹. Among its objectives was the raising of the standard of Sydney club cricket.

From the 1860s to the late 1880s club cricket in Sydney was dominated by non locality-based teams from the Albert, Warwick, Carlton and Belvidere clubs which were often able to attract large crowds to their matches. By 1890 however the dominance of a small number of clubs had led to a decline in the popularity of club cricket with crowds down from several thousand to several hundred.

During this same period the population of Sydney had been increasing rapidly with more and more suburbs opening up further away from the centre of the city. In conjunction with this expansion local councils were also beginning to provide parks and sporting fields for the use of their new population, many of whom were young and keen to play sport.

All of these factors contributed to the push for a new locality-based Sydney cricket competition and at the September 1892 meeting of the NSWCA a proposal was put ***“That cricket played on a borough (three months residential) qualification is best calculated to promote and revive the public interest in the game”***.² Although it took another year to establish, the Premier Competition, as it was then known, commenced on Saturday 7 October 1893 with four matches, in one grade only. The eight inaugural clubs were Canterbury, Central Cumberland, East Sydney, Glebe, Manly, Paddington, Redfern and (Sydney) University. Only four of the clubs had their own grounds with Central Cumberland playing at Parramatta Park, Glebe at Wentworth Park, Redfern at Redfern Oval and University at University Oval. The other four clubs shared the Association Ground (later the Sydney Cricket Ground).

The competition consisted of seven three-day (Saturday afternoon) rounds with each team playing each other team once and the winner being decided on a first-past-the-post basis. East Sydney, with six wins from their seven matches, took out the

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first premiership and the Hordern Shield, a 100-guinea shield donated by Samuel Hordern from the leading Sydney retailer Anthony Hordern.

The competition expanded rapidly with four new clubs (Leichhardt, North Sydney, South Sydney and Waverley) joining in 1894/95 and second and third grades being added in 1895/96 and 1899/1900 respectively. The new competition was popular right from the start – a crowd of 10,000 attended a match between Glebe and South Sydney at Wentworth Park in 1896.

In 1921/22 a further four new clubs (St George, Mosman, Marrickville and Randwick) were admitted bringing the total number to 16, as it remained, albeit with occasional changes in composition, until the 1985/86 expansion introduced a further four clubs. One of these changes occurred after the 1924/25 season when the Sydney and Paddington clubs amalgamated, creating the opening which Northern District filled to become the new 16th team.

The earliest record of a cricket match on the upper north shore was in ‘Bell’s Life of Sydney’ which reported on matches played between Pennant Hills and Ryde on 13 July and 24 August 1857.

The extension of the Sydney rail network from Strathfield to Hornsby in 1886 and from St Leonards to Hornsby in 1890 saw a significant increase in the population of the upper north shore, especially around Hornsby. This in turn saw the formation of a number of new cricket clubs, more often than not comprised largely of players from a few families. These included the Galston Cricket Club (formed in 1888), the Dural Cricket Club (1889), the Castle Hill Cricket Club (1890), the Hornsby Junction Cricket Club (1890), the Thornleigh Cricket Club (1894) and the Brooklyn Cricket Club (1894).

The Hornsby Junction Cricket Club is of especial interest, in that the club was formed at a meeting on **8 September 1890 held at Tibbett’s Hotel on Peat’s Ferry Road, Waitara** (now the Blue Gum Hotel and the Pacific Highway). The Blue Gum of course has a long and ongoing association with the NDCC, and indeed when it was decided, in the mid-1960s, that the club should have an emblem, the blue gum was chosen, partly because they flourished in the Waitara area but also in recognition of the part which **the hotel had played in the club’s** development. Also of local interest, the Hornsby Junction club played on a concrete pitch located not far from the hotel, where the RTA Motor Registry later stood.



The blue gum tree on the northern side of Waitara Oval which was planted by Tim Caldwell at the NDCC 50th anniversary celebration in 1975s.

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As cricket became more structured, local associations were formed to coordinate matches between teams and ultimately to organise competitions. In 1896 the Ryde Electorate Cricket Association was formed with its component clubs coming from Hunters Hill, Drummoyne, Ryde, Marsfield, Dundas and Pennant Hills. The Ryde Association lasted for only five years, eventually being replaced by the Northern Districts Cricket Association which was formed on 19 August 1908 and covered the area from Meadowbank in the south to Thornleigh in the north, extending for a three-mile radius on either side of the main northern railway line. Included in the teams which contested the first NDCA competitions was one from Barker College, which was later to prove such a fine cricket nursery for the Northern District Cricket Club.

The other association to operate within the NDCC grade boundaries was the Hornsby District Cricket Association which was formed on 11 March 1926. The inaugural HDCA competition in 1926/27 with ten clubs, including Cheltenham-Becroft, Normanhurst, Pennant Hills and PA James Pty Ltd - the latter a team from the timber mills owned by NDCC patron, Paul James which was narrowly beaten by Normanhurst in the final at Pennant Hills Oval.

Although many of the local clubs came and went, and switched between the two associations, the associations themselves have remained until the present time, although the northern association changed its name twice, firstly to the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Cricket Association and later to the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai and Hills District Cricket Association.

Although Northern District has had its share of international players, it also has had far more than its quota of players who were desperately unlucky not to play Test cricket. Hugh Chilvers, Les Fallowfield, Bill Englefield, Bill Alley and Neil Marks all were undoubtedly good enough to have represented Australia but through injury and illness in the case of Englefield and Marks, and just plain bad luck in the case of the other three, were overlooked.

The club has also provided Australian cricket with a disproportionate number of capable and dedicated administrators, the most notable of whom have been Tim Caldwell and Alan Davidson, who became chairman of the Australian Board of Control and president of the NSW Cricket Association respectively. Others to make major contributions have been Sid Storey, Cyril Jagoe, Neil Harvey, Geoff Weir, Austen Hughes, Neil Marks, Rocky Harris, Steve Bernard, Peter Taylor and David Sincock were to serve at various levels of cricket administration.

1924/25

Although the Northern District Cricket Club first competed in the Sydney grade competition at the start of the 1925/26 season, the club had actually been formed the previous season at a meeting held in Epping on 18 July 1924. “The Advocate” newspaper reported on that meeting in its 25 July edition: *“At a public meeting held at the Epping School of Arts, and presided over by Councillor R Allen, President of the Hornsby Shire, it was decided to form a northern district cricket club, with headquarters at the National Park and Sports Ground at Pennant Hills. The meeting was well attended by representatives from between Ryde and Hornsby. The meeting was most enthusiastic throughout, practically all the decisions being unanimous. It was decided that an attempt would be made to develop the Pennant Hills ground and that grade matches in the meantime should all be played on the Waitara Oval.”*³

The composition of the inaugural NDCC committee indicated the degree of support within the district for the new club, with most local clubs, as well as the Northern Districts Cricket Association, represented. The first president was Robert Vicars from the Cheltenham Cricket Club, with Albert Spencer (Pennant Hills) elected as secretary and Harold Renshaw (Hornsby) treasurer. Other clubs represented included Ryde, Eastwood, Epping, Beecroft and Thornleigh. The push for Northern District’s **inclusion in the Sydney grade competition** began almost immediately and received widespread support. At the Annual General Meeting of the Hornsby Cricket Club, held in August 1924, one of the two NSW Cricket Association delegates from the Central Cumberland club, Wally Rothwell, expressed his opinion that the club could be playing grade as early as the 1925/26 season. **Rothwell, who would become one of ND’s greatest representatives both on and off the field, had originally planned to play for the Hornsby club in 1924/25 but chose instead to remain at Cumberland where, as an Association delegate, he felt that he could exert more influence in the bid for grade status. While the club’s admission was probably inevitable, Rothwell’s lobbying certainly was a factor at the NSWCA where he was a well-respected figure:** *“No one was listened to with greater attention ... for he does not speak until he has something vital to say. He loves the sport, is broad-minded and not tainted with ‘clubism’ His fight for the Northern District club ... was prompted by an intense belief in the cricket possibilities of the new district.”*⁴One of the new club’s first functions took place at the Northern Suburbs Sports Ground at Pennant Hills (now Pennant Hills Oval) where they hosted a visit from Arthur Gilligan’s 1924/25 English touring team. Those attending read like a Who’s Who of cricket, including Jack Hobbs, Herbert Sutcliffe, Maurice Tate, Percy Chapman, ‘Tich’ Freeman, M.A.Noble, A.W.Green, Warren Bardsley, Bert Oldfield and Arthur Mailey. The goodwill which the club established with the tourists was seen four years later when many of the 1928/29 English touring team came to Waitara Oval for the laying of the foundation stone in the new grandstand. The first indication that the club’s preferred home ground at Pennant Hills Park, may not be suitable came at the reception for the Englishmen. *“The visit of the English cricketers on Sunday to the Recreation Ground revived the question of making a suitable oval for the playing of first grade cricket. We have no knowledge whatever of the financial position of the trust. It seems, however, to be a great pity that a first class oval should not be constructed here. Such an oval would make the ground revenue producing and, properly conducted, pay for itself in a few years, and in the meantime prove a big advertisement for the district. Failing any other way of financing the proposal we would suggest that the trust meet the cricketers with the view to*

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Players and officials from the 1924/25 English touring team with members of the Northern District Cricket Club, the NSW Cricket Association and local residents photographed at Pennant Hills Park on 23 November 1924.

getting some definite scheme for the improvement going. Certainly the ground is of little use the way it is."

Prior to the start of the 1924/25 grade season the NSW Cricket Association had established a committee to address the problem of a perceived decline in the **standard of Sydney grade cricket. The committee's major recommendation was for the formation of a new club in the "outlying districts" to Sydney's north** which would have its headquarters at Hornsby and draw players from the area between Parramatta River at Meadowbank in the south and the Hawkesbury River in the north along the main northern railway line, and south to Turramurra on the north shore line. The western section of this area had previously belonged to the Central Cumberland club **and the eastern section to Gordon. The committee's second recommendation was** that, because a 17-team competition would not be practical, the Paddington and Sydney clubs should **merge to allow for the new club's entry.**



Former NSW batsman, Lyall Berry, was a member of the NDCC Shires team in 1924/25.

Despite the loss of territory neither Cumberland nor Gordon opposed the formation of the new club, the only arguments coming from the Paddington and Sydney delegates. JT Pope, from Paddington, suggested that the new club would not have sufficient player strength to compete in first grade and they should be required to prove themselves in second grade and so earn promotion to first grade. CDB Wright, the Sydney delegate, felt that the loss of territory would further weaken the Cumberland club which was already struggling to be competitive.

The proposal was eventually passed unanimously and it was agreed that the Northern District Cricket Club would contest all three grade competitions from the start of the 1925/26 season.

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A panoramic shot of Waitara Oval during Northern District's inaugural grade match against Marrickville on 3 October 1925.

In the meantime the club had entered a team in the fledgling Municipal and Shire competition which had been formed just one season earlier, in 1923/24. The team was captained by Harold Renshaw and included a number of players who would subsequently represent the new grade club, including a young all-rounder named Hugh Chilvers and former NSW batsman, Lyall Berry. Tall and bespectacled, the 31-year-old Berry had played for the Glebe club between 1914/15 and 1923/24, and represented NSW on three occasions: once in 1918/19 and twice in 1919/20. With players of this ability the ND Shires team of 1924/25 did particularly well, playing eleven matches and finishing as runners-up in the competition.

Given the problems at Pennant Hills Park, the team played its home matches on the newly-built pitch at Waitara Oval. The oval had been built as part of a 10-acre park which had been cleared and established in 1906. The pitch itself had been laid as a joint project between the Hornsby Shire Council and the Hornsby Advancement Association and officially opened on 15 December 1922 with Hornsby Councillor Charles Somerville bowling the first ball.

With its grade future now assured, Northern District signed a five-year agreement with the Hornsby Shire Council and, using a grant of 120 pounds plus an interest-free loan of 100 pounds from the NSWCA embarked on a major improvements programme at the oval which included the provision of additional seating, improvements to the existing wooden pavilion, and the erection of sightscreens and a temporary scoreboard.

1925/26

The arrival of grade cricket to the Hornsby area was met with considerable enthusiasm and almost 100 interested parties attending a meeting at the Literary Institute building in Hornsby on Tuesday May 26, 1925. Among those present were

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Frank Iredale and EA Tyler, the secretary and treasurer respectively of the NSWCA, as well as **representatives from all corners of the club's specified boundaries.**

The meeting saw the election of a new committee, headed by a new president in Richard Allen. A local solicitor and member of the Hornsby Shire Council, Allen had a keen interest in sport and was active in the establishment of many new sporting facilities in the region. The senior vice president was Hedley Bennett, with Albert Spencer and Harold Renshaw staying on as secretary and treasurer respectively. The new patron was a prominent local businessman, shire councillor and cricket enthusiast named Paul James. Born in New Zealand, James had come to Australia in his early 20s where he established his own timber business in Jersey Street, Hornsby. In 1913 he was first elected to the Hornsby Shire Council and on 12 occasions between then and his retirement in 1931 he served as Shire President. He was also at one time a vice president of the Sydney Water Board.

Northern District's first delegates to the NSWCA were Wally Rothwell and Rupert Coogan. Another who was closely involved in the club's formation was Cyril Jagoe, a former lower grade player with the Gordon club who had recently moved, with his young family, into a war service home only about 500 yards from Waitara Oval. A school teacher and later an accountant at Hornsby Shire Council, Jagoe was to prove a tireless worker for the club over the next three decades.

The most important task for the new club however was the recruitment of players and this was even more successful with about 25 players with grade experience signing on. These included Wally Rothwell, Ellis Rothwell, Rupert Coogan, Wally Bain, Fred Wright, Harold Renshaw and Frank Buckle, all from Cumberland; Roy Loder and Clive Chin from Gordon; Sid Storey from Balmain; Bert Patterson from Paddington and Claude Achurch from Randwick.

The first groundsman at Waitara Oval was Albert Love, better known by his **nickname of 'Bricky'.** An experienced curator he had previously prepared pitches for the Gordon and Paddington clubs, and as all good groundsmen will, he quickly stamped his authority on the ground.

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Richard Allen (left), Hedley Bennett (centre) and Albert Spencer (right) were President, Senior Vice-President and Secretary of NDCC in its first grade season of 1925/26

The young Frank Collins, who worked the Waitara Oval scoreboard in the early-1930s and who later played first grade for ND, recalls travelling with Bricky on the horse and cart in which he commuted from his home at Pymble to the ground. At the ground, the horse would then be harnessed up to a cylinder mower to mow the outfield, most of the other work on the centre wicket and later, the turf practice wickets, being done by hand. Love would remain in charge of the ground for the next 15 years, through until his eventual retirement after the 1940/41 season.

The other 15 clubs which contested the 1925/26 Sydney Grade Competition were Balmain, Central Cumberland, Glebe, Gordon, Marrickville, Mosman, Manly, North Sydney, Paddington, Petersham, Randwick, St George, Sydney University, Waverley and Western Suburbs.

Northern District's first matches were played on the long weekend of Saturday October 3 and Monday October 5, 1925. The club's three grade teams were:

First Grade versus Marrickville at Waitara Oval: Frank Buckle (Captain), Lyall Berry, Travers Brett, George Burdon, Clive Chin, Rupert Coogan, WW Alexander, L Elvin, CE Griffin, Roy Loder and Fred Wright.

Second Grade versus Balmain at Birchgrove Oval: Wally Rothwell (Captain), R Adams, Wally Bain, Hugh Chilvers, S Howe, Harry Hunt, Reg Manton, H Mortimer, Bert Patterson, Sid Storey and Bill Weekes.

Third Grade versus Central Cumberland at St Luke's Oval: Harold Renshaw (Captain), R Bain, N Calder, J Connors, C Davis, B Martin, L Potts, C Smith, F Wild, R Williams and J Whittington.

The first grade team contained three players, Frank Buckle, Lyall Berry and Claude Achurch, **who had represented NSW. Berry had played for the club's M&S team the previous season and rejoined his former Glebe clubmate, Buckle in the team.**

Buckle, the team captain, joined Northern District from Central Cumberland. Born at Pymont in 1891 he was educated at Sydney Grammar School and played cricket for Glebe from 1910/11 to 1920/21, for North Sydney in 1921/22 and for Cumberland in 1922/23 (when he scored 715 runs at 55.0) and 1923/24. A fine, attacking batsman, he had captained the NSW Colts team in two matches in the 1913/14 seasons. In one, against Victorian Colts he scored 155 not out, adding 339 in

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180 minutes with future Test player Johnnie Taylor (226), himself to play a handful of matches for Northern District in the mid-1930s. Buckle also played one match for NSW against Tasmania in February 1914 at the Sydney Cricket Ground, scoring 10 runs. It was his only first class match.

Although 33 years old in 1925/26 Buckle was to play for the club for 11 years, the first four in charge of the first grade team. For many years he **was the club's delegate to the NSWCA and was also the Association's** honorary architect. In the latter capacity he was responsible for the design of Cricket House in George Street, Sydney. At the time of his death, at the age of 90 in June 1982, he was believed to have been the oldest surviving NSW cricketer.



Northern District's first captain Frank Buckle and one of the Ginger Meggs cartoons in which he is mentioned.

There is a fascinating story surrounding many of the early NDCC cricketers and Australia's most famous and best-loved cartoon character, Ginger Meggs. Meggs' creator, Jim Bancks (1889-1952), had grown up in the Hornsby area and had been a schoolmate of the red-headed Somerville and is widely believed to have been the **model on whom Ginger was based. One of Ginger's mates, although only occasionally** featured in the comic strip was the cricket-playing Frankie Buckle; there was a shopkeeper named Jagoe; while arch-enemy, Eddie Coogan, was reputedly based on Rupert Coogan. Bancks was an avid cricket follower who later accompanied the 1930 Australian team to England at his own expense, and almost certainly knew the local cricketers, so there is almost certainly some element of truth to the various stories.

Claude Septimus Achurch, born at Dubbo in 1896, had previously played for Sydney (1914/15 to 1917/18), Paddington (1918/19 to 1920/21) and for Randwick (1921/22). In that latter season a string of big scores in grade matches saw him win a place in the NSW team for matches against Queensland and South Australia. In **Northern District's 1925/26 eighth round match against Manly at Waitara Oval** Achurch (109) and Buckle (124 not out) combined in a fifth wicket partnership of 238. It remained the highest partnership in first grade for any wicket until 1934/35 when Hugh Chilvers and Dick Taylor put on an unbeaten 310 for the seventh wicket. It is still the highest first grade partnership for the fifth wicket. The match against Manly was notable also because the Northern District score of 5 (declared) for 458 remains **the highest first grade team score in the club's history. Also, with Roy Loder** scoring 122, it was the only occasion in which three batsmen had each scored a century in the same innings.

A fourth player with first class experience, Charles Morrissey, played several matches late in that **initial season. Known as "Tug", Morrissey was a 22-year-old** right hand batsman and right arm fast medium bowler. Born in Singleton, he had played his early cricket in the Maitland district, where he had been a teammate of Roy Loder. He played three matches for NSW with limited success and was also a fine rugby union centre/three-quarter who played for Newcastle, Randwick, Eastern Suburbs and NSW. He also played five Tests in 1925 and 1926. Sadly, he died at the age of 34 at Quirindi in 1938.

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The club also fielded a team in the Municipal and Shire competition and they could hardly have asked for a more impressive start, winning all four matches, three on the first innings and one outright.

At Waitara Oval the first grade match was preceded by a ceremony at which **the club's patron and the President of the Hornsby Shire, Councillor Paul James, hoisted the club's pennant and opened the ground as a grade oval.**

Frank Buckle won the toss and batted. By stumps Northern District had reached 9 for 333, the innings dominated by three fine innings: opening batsman Roy Loder scoring 93, Lyall Berry 63 and Buckle 106 not out, the latter narrowly beating second grade captain, Wally Rothwell, **for the honour of scoring the club's first century and winning for himself a bat donated by Barker College for the first century to be scored at Waitara Oval. Buckle's innings took only 95 minutes and included 19 fours.**

Roy Loder, who had joined Northern District from the neighbouring Gordon club, had an outstanding debut season, his 754 runs (average 53.85) winning both the club and Sydney grade batting average. A disciplined and solid batsman, **Loder's** record aggregate was to remain the best for the club in first grade aggregate until 1941/42. Born at Maitland in 1896 he had played his early cricket for the Robins Cricket Club in Maitland and had been a regular member of Hunter Valley representative teams prior to his move to Sydney in 1922. A useful rugby league player, Loder played a number of first grade games with the North Sydney club in 1923 and 1925.

But back to the first match. When the game resumed on the Monday, Buckle declared at the overnight score, and after a solid start Marrickville collapsed against the bowling of L Elvin (5 for 41) and C Griffin (4 for 33) to be all out for 148. Following on, Marrickville held out to be 6 for 152 at stumps.



The official opening of Waitara Oval as a grade cricket ground on Saturday 3 October 1925. On the extreme left at the front is the President of Hornsby Shire, Councillor Paul James is hoisting the club pennant, presented to him by the NDCC Senior Vice President, Hedley Bennett.

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Four Northern District first graders scored centuries during the season: Frank Buckle, Roy Loder, Fred Wright and Claude Achurch.

The second grade match ran a similar course to the first grade game with Northern District declaring overnight at 5 for 394, dismissing Balmain for 138, enforcing the follow-on and missing an outright win by just two wickets. For Northern District, Sid Storey had the bittersweet experience of scoring 99, while captain Wally Rothwell scored 101 not out.

Despite the fact that he was 40 years old, Rothwell still had almost 25 years of competitive cricket ahead of him, mostly with Northern District but also with the re-formed Pennant Hills Cricket Club in the late 1940s. Known as 'The Unbowable' he was an old style cricketer with an erect stance, reminiscent of WG Grace, who played with his trousers tied with a scarf. Rothwell had previously played grade cricket with the Western Suburbs club (from 1914/15 to 1919/20) before a change in residential boundaries had seen him move to Central Cumberland in 1920/21. His aggregate of 722 for the Wests second grade team in 1918/19 remains a record for that club. In addition to his club cricket, Rothwell regularly organised tours including a number to Tasmania where he was a well-known and popular figure among cricketing circles.

In third grade Cumberland batted first and was all out for 124 with R Williams taking 4 for 43 and F Wild 3 for 27. Northern District replied with 252 (Harold Renshaw 61 retired), dismissed Cumberland for 158 (C Davis 4-27, L Potts 3-31) and scored the required 31 runs for an outright victory with the loss of one wicket. It was the first time that a newly formed grade club had won all its initial matches. Wrapping up a great first weekend for the new club the Municipal and Shire team had a first innings win over Lane Cove, with young bowler, Dick Pymble, taking nine wickets in the match.

After such a promising start, the remainder of the 1925/26 season proved to be something of a let-down with the first grade team able to win only two of its eleven other matches, both on the first innings, and finish in 13th position on 20 points. Nevertheless it was a reasonable performance in an even competition where the eventual premiers, Paddington, totalled only 36 points.

The team's batting had proved competitive with a total of 3474 being scored at an average of 27.9, however they struggled in the field, conceding 3610 at an average of 39.7. Four Northern District batsmen scored a total of seven centuries. Loder scored three, Buckle two, while Fred Wright and Claude Achurch got one each. Despite being in the twilight of his career, the best of the bowlers was Rupert Coogan who took 29 wickets at 28.2. Coogan had been playing first grade since before the First World War and his record of 56 wickets for Central Cumberland in the 1913/14 season remains a record for that club.

The second grade team finished in ninth place winning five of their twelve matches (two outright), scoring 3497 runs (at 23.4) and conceding 3213 (at 20.3). Captain, Wally Rothwell, led from the front scoring 426 runs (average 71.0).

Second grade's other outstanding batsman was Bert Patterson. Born Robert Edward Patterson in 1899, he had served as a gunner in the merchant navy during the First World War. On his return from the war he trained as a telephone technician with the Postmaster-General's Department and played for the PMG City North team in the Moore Park business houses competition from 1918/19 onwards. A right-hand opening batsman with an excellent technique, he was a prolific



*Former Central Cumberland
pace bowler Rupert Coogan
led the ND first grade bowling
attack in 1925/26.*

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scorer on Moore Park, both for his PMG team and also for the Park's representative team which played in the NSW Junior Union U/25 Telegraph Shield competition. **Although only about 5' 6" in height and slightly built he was an aggressive batsman** and in 1923/24 and 1924/25 he played grade cricket with the Paddington club. In 1925 he married, moved to Turrumurra and subsequently joined Northern District.

Injuries and illness saw both Rothwell and Patterson required to play in the higher grade and the team suffered as a consequence during the second half of the season.

The best performed of ND's grade teams in 1925/26 was third grade. Their record of three outright wins, five first innings wins and four outright losses reflected the positive captaincy of Harold Renshaw who made many aggressive declarations in order to achieve outright results. Renshaw himself topped the batting aggregate with 499 runs at 33.7 although he was beaten for the best average by Hugh Chilvers, better known for his leg spin bowling, who scored 272 runs at 45.3.

Destined to be Northern District's greatest ever bowler, Hugh Cecil Chilvers was born at Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, England on 26 October 1903. His father, William George Chilvers, was a leading English maltster and was brought to Australia around 1905 by William James & Son of Toowoomba, Queensland. Shortly afterwards he was joined by his wife and four young children, the youngest of which was two-year-old Hugh. Around 1912 WG Chilvers was appointed manager of the **NSW Malting Company's factory at Thornleigh and the family (there were now seven children - the eighth and last, Doug was born in 1913) moved into the house adjacent to the factory.**

Hugh attended Beecroft Grammar School where his first sporting love was tennis, and he was good enough to win the 1917 All Schools Championship. At one stage he considered a career in the navy, however a voyage to New Zealand was enough to convince him that he should join his father at the malt factory. He was to remain there for the rest of his working life, completing a Diploma in Analytic Chemistry and eventually replacing his father as manager on his death in 1937.

Around 1921 Chilvers began to play cricket for the Pennant Hills club before joining the Northern District Municipal and Shire team in 1924/25. Originally a medium pace off-break bowler, he soon turned to the leg spin for which he was to become renowned, and which by the time he played his last first grade match in 1951/52, at the age of 48, he would have taken an incredible 1153 wickets (at an average of 16.0 each), an NDCC and Sydney grade record which is unlikely to ever be broken.

He bowled quick, relatively flat leg spinners with "***a curious bouncing gait that never failed to amuse spectators***"⁵ and earned him the nickname 'Felix' after the famous cartoon cat. Another nickname, apparently given him later by the **legendary SCG barracker Yabba, was 'Sawn-Off',** a reflection on his lack of height (he stood at around 5'7"). **The lack of flight in his bowling is reputed to have been the result of his practising in the malt factory where he would place a shilling on the concrete floor and attempt to land the ball on it. The factory's low ceiling thus forced him to keep**



Hugh Chilvers, aged about 17. His decision to concentrate on cricket rather than tennis was a major disappointment to his tennis mentors who had forecast a bright future for him in that sport.

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the ball low. He could extract considerable spin on even the hardest of wickets and had a well-**disguised wrong 'un which he could turn almost as far as his leg break.** This combination of pace, accuracy and spin was to make him one of **Australia's best** spinners through the 1930s – certainly the unluckiest.

Chilvers eventually played 34 first class matches (32 for NSW). Despite playing all his first-class cricket during a decade dominated by the bat he was able to capture 151 wickets at an average of 26.39. In the 1934/35 season he took 46 wickets, at the time the most ever in a season by a NSW bowler, including match figures of 11-125 and 10-109 against South Australia; 9-196 against Victoria and 10-192 against Queensland.

For Northern District, Chilvers was to capture 100 wickets in a season three times in succession (110 in 1941/42, 126 in 1942/43 and 102 in 1943/44), an achievement matched only by the great Bill O'Reilly. He was desperately unlucky not to represent Australia, a consequence of playing in an era which featured great leg spinners such as Arthur Mailey, Clarrie Grimmett **and Bill O'Reilly. Indeed O'Reilly is** on record as saying that he was the best spin bowler never to play for Australia.

The leading Sydney jewellery firm, Angus and Coote, donated a silver cup to the club which was to be presented annually to the most successful team in the club. Known as the Angus and Coote Championship Cup it was **awarded to the club's** Municipal and Shire team, which failed by just one point from taking out the premiership, having lost just one of their 12 matches. All-rounder Guy Chapman had a remarkable season, scoring 474 runs (at 31.6) and taking 70 wickets (at 9.5). Dick Pymble matched this wicket tally, his 70 wickets costing just 7.0 each. Charlie Somerville, although he only bowled 26 overs in his limited appearances, picked up 10 wickets.

1926/27

At the club's 1926 annual general meeting several new club rules were introduced, including the ratification of the decision made during the 1925/26 season **to appoint separate selection committees for each of the club's four teams.** The committee also approved a rather contentious rule by which team captains were to be elected by the players prior to the start of each match.

The financial statements for the club's first season, presented by Treasurer Harold Renshaw, revealed a profit for the year of just over 127 pounds. By the end of the 1926/27 season the club had been able to repay the 100-pound loan granted by the NSW Cricket Association.

Remarkably the club had four different secretaries during the 1926/27 season. The minute books for the first five years of the club have not survived and no one can recall the reasons for the turnover, but Wally Rothwell, elected at the July 1926 AGM, resigned in August 1926 and was replaced by Harry Hunt. He in turn resigned in October 1926 with Travers Brett taking over. Brett then resigned in June 1927 and the job was taken on by Sid Storey. So, between 7 July 1925 and 17 June 1927 the club had five secretaries. In contrast the next five secretaries (Sid Storey, Cyril Jagoe, Ron Ewington, Austen Hughes and Geoff Weir) held the position from 17 June 1927 until 14 July 1977!

In its second season, the Northern District first grade team struggled throughout, eventually finishing in equal last position (with North Sydney) on 21 points with three first innings wins, eight first innings losses and three draws from 13 matches. A number of the younger players who had shown potential in the previous season failed to deliver the improvement expected of them and again it was the seasoned batsmen such as Frank Buckle and Roy Loder who carried the side.

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Buckle, who again captained the first grade team (presumably re-elected by his team-mates before each match) scored 694 runs at an average of 46.3 – the third highest aggregate in the 1926/27 competition - and included a brilliant innings of 143 **in a memorable win over Paddington. The team's other two wins were against fellow** wooden-spooners North Sydney and Sydney University, where another Buckle century - his fourth in just two seasons – saw his team home to a narrow victory.

The team's other star batsman, Roy Loder, averaged 44.8 in scoring 537 runs including innings of 128 against Marrickville and 97 against Waverley. Early in the season he was chosen in a Possibles vs Probables match at the Sydney Cricket Ground planned as a selection trial for the first Sheffield Shield match of the season against Queensland. The Probables team included several established stars such as Alan Kippax and Hal Hooker, as well as the exciting young batsman, Archie Jackson. Alongside Loder in the Possibles was an 18-year-old from Bowral having his first match at the SCG. The young Bradman scored 37 not out and missed out on selection, yet Loder with 15 won a place. Opening the batting for NSW against Queensland at the SCG, Loder was dismissed for just four and was omitted from the team for the remainder of the season.

It may well have been Loder who tried to recruit Bradman for Northern District, something to which Sir Donald referred **in his 1950 book 'Farewell to Cricket'**: *"As I was still living at Bowral, it was necessary for me to continue my journeys to the city each Saturday at the commencement of the 1927/28 season. I had been approached to see if I would play for the Northern District Cricket Club, but in view of the happy relations which existed between the St George club and myself, I decided to continue with the latter."*⁶

One newcomer to the club in 1926/27 was Buckle's eventual successor as first grade captain - former Manly player, George Williams. Then aged 26, the slightly-built Williams was a capable right-hand batsman and a **brilliant fieldsman who would become one of the club's** finest leaders.

The only other first grade batsman to pass 300 runs for the season was Clive Chin who scored 343 runs at 26.4, including a fine innings of 113 against the strong **Glebe bowling attack. Chin's performance earned him a** place in a Combined Sydney First Grade team which played Combined Country Firsts at the Sydney Cricket Ground just a week after the Possibles/Probables match in which Roy Loder had played. Although Chin himself was dismissed without scoring he had the privilege of watching his own team captain, Charlie Macartney score 126 and then fielding while Don Bradman scored 100 of **the Country team's total of 7 for 173.**

As had been the case in the previous season, **bowling proved the team's weakness, lacking penetration** and variety. One exception was pace bowler Rupert Coogan who again headed the first grade averages, taking 31 wickets at 24.1 each. His 8-97 against Central Cumberland was the first eight-wicket haul by a Northern District bowler.

Led again by Wally Rothwell, the second grade team was the best-performed Northern District team in 1926/27, winning eight of their thirteen matches (one outright) to finish in third place, just four points behind the premiers, Petersham, whom they defeated in their Round 12 encounter at Waitara Oval. As had been the **case in the previous season, Rothwell dominated the team's batting, scoring 517 runs**



George Williams joined ND in 1926/27 from the Manly club.

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at an average of 47.0 including two centuries – the third best average in the Sydney grade competition.

The rise of Hugh Chilvers continued. A permanent member of the second grade team in 1926/27, he scored 340 runs (at 28.3) with a highest score of 92, and captured 37 wickets at 24.4.

With seven players aged under 20, most in their first season of grade cricket, the Northern District third grade team was clearly performing a development role. **The team's inexperience was further handicapped by the fact that, with no second home ground available, they had to travel south of the Harbour to play ten of their thirteen matches.** Despite this, the young team, led by Cyril Jagoe performed well winning five of their thirteen matches and finishing in thirteenth place. The outstanding performer was a 16-year-old left-arm pace bowler named Jack Scott whose 39 wickets at just 8.38 each (the second best average in the competition) earned him a spot in a coaching clinic held at the Sydney Cricket Ground in the latter half of the season.

The problem of obtaining a second home ground was addressed by the club committee during the season but despite protracted negotiations with the various controlling bodies to obtain leases at either Pennant Hills Oval, Turramurra Oval or Epping Oval no agreement could be reached by the end of the 1926/27 season.

A further frustration for the club was the introduction, at the start of the 1926/27 season, of residential qualifications for the Municipal and Shire competition. Northern District was particularly hard hit, losing many of its senior players from the previous year. This, together with the fact that the Shires team was effectively the **club's fourth grade team, and so frequently had its players called up to help out the three higher teams** – a problem not encountered by many of its opponents – led to the team finishing in last place without winning a match. Led by Ben Wheeler the M&S team fielded more than 30 players during the season.

As it had done in 1925/26 Northern District finished tenth in the Club Championship, on 227 points, 61 behind the winning Waverley club.



The picturesque Turramurra Oval became Northern District's number two ground in 1926/27.

1927/28

The Northern District first grade team again disappointed in 1927/28, finishing in 14th place, a marginal improvement on its equal last place of the previous season. Once again the competition was closely contested with the winners, Glebe, finishing on 34 points, just 11 points ahead of Northern District. Again the season was badly affected by weather - indeed on Saturday 18 February 1928 rain prevented play in all grade matches in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. It is believed to have been the only occasion that this has happened.

The Northern District team's performance was a little better than its final position suggests because, after a strong start to the season, they qualified for the A division of the split second round of the competition and consequently met the stronger clubs during the latter half of the season. One match was notable - but for all the wrong reasons. Playing against Gordon at Chatswood Oval, Northern District was dismissed in its first innings for just 22 runs, destroyed by Gordon's two Test all-rounders, Charlie Macartney (7-11) and Charlie Kellaway (2-6). It remains the lowest innings total by a Northern District first grade team and was the lowest by any team in the club until the second grade team was bowled out for 19 against Western Suburbs at Pratten Park in 1977/78. Gordon went on to win the match by an innings and 119 runs, which remains the highest losing margin by an Northern District team in first grade.

Once again Roy Loder **was easily the team's best batsman, scoring 653 runs**, the highest aggregate in the competition. One innings in particular stood out, an unbeaten 152 against a Paddington attack which included the great Australian Test bowler, Jack Gregory, and NSW bowler Ossie Asher.

In his three seasons with Northern District Loder had scored almost 2000 runs and his consistency was rewarded with selection in a NSW Second XI team to play Victoria in Melbourne, where he scored 20 and 22, on a sticky wicket. On the way back to Sydney he top-scored, carrying his bat for 80, in a match against an Albury District representative team, again on a wet wicket. Despite this he failed to regain his place in the full NSW team.

Supporting Loder in the Northern District first grade team were a number of promising young players including Arthur Allsopp, a talented 19-year-old right hand batsman who played during the second half of the 1927/28 season. In the 1929/30 season, in his first representative match, Allsopp scored an unbeaten 155 for NSW Colts against Queensland Colts and later represented both NSW and Victoria, scoring centuries on debut for each State - the first Australian cricketer to achieve such a feat. Spoken of in the same breath as players such as Archie Jackson, Don Bradman and Stan McCabe, his tough background (he had spent some time in boys' homes) is considered by some to have been held against him, and although he **toured India in 1935/36 with Frank Tarrant's unofficial Australian team**, he didn't play Test cricket.

In an effort to reduce a perceived gap in standard between interstate and grade cricket the NSW Cricket Association decided to trial what was called a Super-Grade Competition in 1927/28. Each of the 16 clubs were placed



Arthur Allsopp was one of the finest young batsmen of the early 1930s.

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in a broadly geographical grouping of four: North, comprising North Sydney, Mosman, Gordon and Northern District; South (Glebe, St George, Marrickville and University); East (Waverley, Randwick, Paddington and Manly); and West (Balmain, Petersham, Western Suburbs and Cumberland). Each team played four games, all on Wednesday afternoons, however this proved a problem for many leading players and the experiment was not repeated.

The Northern District second grade team was again the club's best performed, and again this was largely due to the batting of its captain, Wally Rothwell, who scored 509 runs at an average of 101.8. No other batsman had an aggregate in excess of 300. The highlight of the season came in a match against St George at the Sydney Cricket Ground No 2 where Northern District was set a winning target of 353 after St George declared at 8 for 352 at stumps on the first day. Struggling to avoid the follow-on at 7-200 Rothwell was joined at the crease by all-rounder Dick Pymble. With both batting aggressively, they took the score past the follow-on target and then set about chasing the win. Remarkably they achieved this without further loss and with only minutes to go, Pymble finishing on 85 not out and Rothwell on 100 not out.

The return match against St George proved to be equally exciting. Chasing 249 to win, Northern District was 5-245 when the St George skipper, in desperation, tried his eighth bowler, F Crew, who promptly clean bowled the next four batsmen for just two runs. The number 11 batsman then played and missed, the ball missing the stumps by the narrowest of margins, beating the wicket-keeper and going for the two byes which won the match for Northern District.

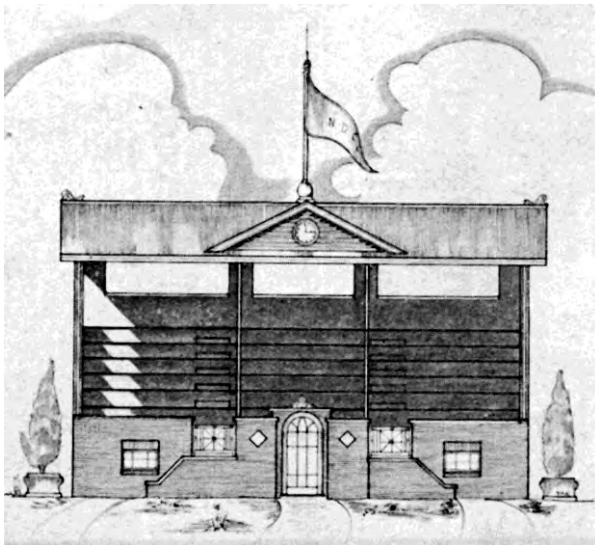
With two matches to play, the Northern District second graders looked set to **win the club's first premiership, especially having just completed a** good win over the strong Western Suburbs team, however upset losses against Waverley and Gordon Glebe saw them slump to finish in sixth place, on 29 points, six behind premiers Western Suburbs. For the second season in succession the team had defeated the eventual premiers but lacked the consistency to win the title.

Player turnover once again affected the third grade side with 31 players taking the field at various times during the season. Under the leadership of Perc Burdon the team began well but struggled when Burdon was called up to second grade midway through the year. Again the team was largely made up of young players, none better

than 16-year-old Dick Taylor, a future representative player who earned promotion from the Shires team, scored a fine 110 against University and was promptly pushed up to second grade late in the season. Although the return of Burdon helped stabilise the team they could only manage to finish in eleventh place on 25 points, 10 behind St George.

The Municipal and Shire team, again led by Ben Wheeler, finished 16th on 23 points. The joint premiers, Lane Cove A and Roseville, finished on 37 points.

After several years of frustration a second home ground was secured with the signing of a five-year lease on Turramurra Oval by the NSW Cricket Association. The club continued to try and gain a third



The plan for the grandstand at Waitara Oval as prepared by Frank Buckle, a partner in the firm of Buckle, Carfrae and Turner and Northern District's first grade captain from 1925 to 1929.

ground, this one on the main northern railway line, between Eastwood and Hornsby, but without success.

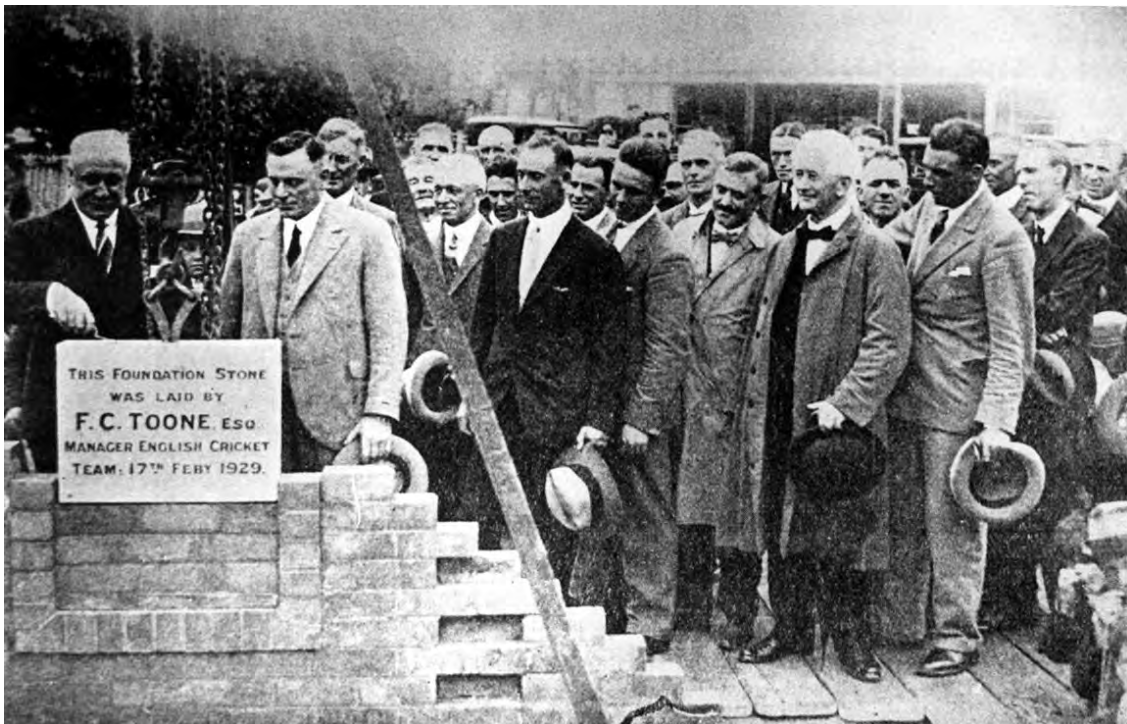
At the 1928 NDCC Annual General Meeting, held at the Hornsby Masonic Hall, Hedley Bennett took over from Richard Allen as the club president. At the same meeting, Bennett, who had been one of the most active workers in the drive for the formation of the club from 1924 onwards, and who had been the club's senior vice president since formation, was elected as the club's first life member. After three years as treasurer, Harold Renshaw stepped down with Ellis Robins taking on the job.

1928/29

Prior to the start of the 1928/29 season the club was granted a seven-year lease of Waitara Oval and, with this new security of tenure, work finally got underway on the construction of a new, permanent pavilion on the western side of the ground. On 17 February 1929 the foundation stone of the Waitara War Memorial Pavilion was laid by Frederick (later Sir Frederick) Toone, the manager of the touring M.C.C. team. A number of the leading English players attended the ceremony including the great opening batsman Jack Hobbs, Maurice Leyland, Maurice Tate and JC White

Determined to persevere with its policy of promoting young players, a number of the club's most promising players were tried in first grade during the 1928/29 season, including Dick Taylor and Jack Scott. The team again struggled, winning just four of its 12 matches to finish in 13th place, one higher than in 1927/28.

Three players dominated: Roy Loder (515 runs at 46.8), Frank Buckle (448 runs at 34.5) and Hugh Chilvers (33 wickets at 22.7). Such was the reliance on the



The laying of the foundation stone in the War Memorial Pavilion at Waitara Oval by Mr FC Toone (later Sir Frederick Toone), the manager of the 1928/29 English Touring Team. From left to right: Mr Toone, Councillor PA James (Hornsby Shire President), JC White, Jack Hobbs, Roy Loder, Maurice Leyland, Hedley Bennett, Richard Allen, TE Rofe (NDCC Patron), Sid Storey, Maurice Tate and B Bicknell.

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batting of Loder and Buckle that a first innings failure by either, or both, batsman invariably meant a defeat for the team. For the fourth consecutive season Loder scored in excess of 500 runs, a record which stood until the 1968/69 season when Neil Marks did it for the fifth time. For the first season since joining Northern District Loder failed to score a century, his top score being 98 against St George. His performance was good enough to earn him a recall to the NSW Sheffield Shield team for the match against Queensland at the Brisbane Exhibition Ground. In both innings Loder opened the batting with Archie Jackson, being dismissed for 1 in the first innings but scoring 49 (run out) in the second while adding 121 for the first wicket with Jackson (71). Don Bradman **came to the wicket after Loder's dismissal in both** innings, scoring 131 and 133! Despite his promising second innings performance Loder was unable to retain his place in the strong NSW team being replaced for the following match by Alan Fairfax.

After four seasons in the club's lower grades, Hugh Chilvers finally forced his way into the first grade team where he was to play for the remainder of his remarkable cricketing career. Chilvers **immediately established himself as the club's** leading all-rounder scoring 238 runs (at 21.6) and taking 33 wickets (at 22.7). Another making his first grade debut was the exciting young left-arm paceman, Jack Scott. He could hardly have been more impressive, taking 8-54 in his first match against Glebe at Wentworth Park. Despite its mediocre performances first grade was considered to be the best performed team in the club and was awarded the Angus and Coote Championship Cup for the 1928/29 season.

Second grade finished in 12th place on 41 points, 18 points behind the premiers **Waverley. Coincidentally the team's results were exactly the same of those of the first** grade team: four first innings wins, one draw and seven first innings losses. The team greatly missed its captain of the three previous seasons, Wally Rothwell, **who didn't** play during the 1928/29 season, his job being taken over by Harold Renshaw. The best of the second grade batsmen were L Daly (345 runs at 38.9), George Burdon (272 at 38.9) and Perc Burdon (271 at 30.1). All three of these batsmen scored centuries, **Daly's 131 against Glebe helping to add 167 runs for the tenth wicket – taking the team's score from 9 for 77 to 244 all out.**

18-year-old Jack Scott was the best of the second grade bowlers. His 31 wickets at 10.8 included 7-42 against Gordon and 7-59 against Waverley. He was promoted to first grade late in the season where he captured a further 18 wickets.

Third grade finished in tenth position with 39 points, well behind the runaway premiers, Western Suburbs. Captained in turn by Perc Burdon (Rounds 1 and 2), Sid Storey (Rounds 3 and 4) and Cyril Jagoe (Round 5 onwards), they won four of their twelve matches only to be penalised eight points for a registration error. The most promising player to emerge was a young spin bowler, Rowley Cuddy, who captured 39 wickets at 13.5 each.

For the first time Northern District entered a team in the Poidevin-Gray Shield competition. The shield had its origins in an Inter-District Colts Match, sponsored by the Waverley Cricket Club, and played between Waverley and St George during the 1924/25 season at Waverley Oval, with a young Jack Fingleton (93) top-scoring for the home team. The Shield itself was named after its joint donors, former NSW player, Dr LOS Poidevin, and FPJ Gray, both from the Waverley club, and was handed over to the NSW Cricket Association for them to conduct an expanded competition for players aged under 21. The first such competition took place in 1926/27 with 12 teams entering and it was won, appropriately enough, by Waverley.

The 1928/29 ND P-G team won three of its seven matches, including a 280-run win over Waverley, the eventual winners of the Shield. The team was captained by Bill Shortland, then in his third season with the club, having started as a 16-year-old **third grader in 1925/26. According to the club annual report he was "modest, cool**

*and discerning (and) gave entire satisfaction*⁷⁷ - qualities which would remain throughout the remaining 45 years in which he was associated with the club.

George Burdon played one match, scoring 104 not out against Gordon, before turning 21 and being excluded from further matches in the competition. This rule, sensibly, was later changed to allow any player under the age of 21 as at 1 October to play throughout the competition.

In the Club Championship Northern District finished in twelfth place, one lower than in 1927/28.

1929/30

The new pavilion at Waitara Oval was completed prior to the start of the 1929/30 season and officially opened on 7 October 1929 during the first match of the season against Gordon. Club Patron and Hornsby Shire President, Paul James, unveiled the special plaque which had been laid in February 1928 by Sir Frederick Toone, the manager of the 1928/29 English touring team. Sadly Sir Frederick, who was also the chairman of the Yorkshire County Cricket Club died shortly afterwards, on 10 June 1930.

A further improvement at Waitara Oval was the erection of a new wooden scoreboard largely funded by the leading Sydney paint manufacturer, Lewis Berger and Sons. Like the grandstand, the scoreboard had been designed by the Northern District first grade captain, Frank Buckle, a leading Sydney architect. The old scoreboard was removed and re-erected at Turramurra Oval.

For the first time since the 16-team competition was introduced in the 1921/22 season the draw was expanded to 15 rounds to ensure that every team would play each other. Unlike previous seasons, when the grade competition had been suspended while Sheffield Shield matches were being played in Sydney, grade matches were now played at the same time.

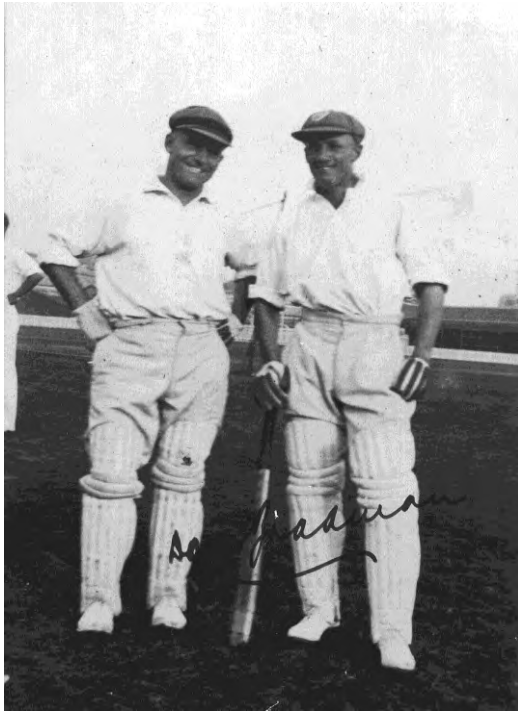
The Northern District first grade team was probably the strongest that the club had fielded to date with a number of the young players beginning to meet their potential. However, in an extremely frustrating season, a number of factors worked against the team, combining to again leave it languishing near the bottom of the competition table by the close of the season.

Firstly, in what was a particularly wet season, the captains (Frank Buckle and later George Williams) lost the



The original scoreboard at Waitara Oval was built in 1929, largely funded by the Sydney paint company Berger's. Under a seven-year agreement Berger's agreed to paint both the sightboard and sightscreens each year in return for the scoreboard advertising rights

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Hugh Chilvers and Don Bradman, teammates during the 1929/30 season. Chilvers made his debut for NSW in the match against Queensland at the SCG in which Bradman scored his record 452 not out.

toss in ten of the team's fifteen matches, a significant disadvantage in wet conditions and on uncovered pitches.

Despite this the team was able to win six of its fifteen matches (all on the first innings), losing four outright and two on the first innings, with three matches drawn. This would have left the team in tenth position on 49 points, however, in a controversial incident, the Association upheld a protest by the Marrickville club and reversed the result of the match between the two clubs. As a result Northern District dropped from tenth to fourteenth place.

There were a number of outstanding individual performances during the season, especially by the bowlers. Pace bowler, Jack Scott, became the first bowler in the club to take 50 wickets in a season in one grade while Hugh Chilvers **wasn't far behind with 43**, including a first grade best 8-37 (with a hat trick) against Manly at the Sydney Cricket Ground. **Scott's performances**, which included 6-53 against Petersham, 4-16 from 16 overs against Paddington, 5-

33 against Western Suburbs, 6-56 against North Sydney and 7-55 against University, won him selection in an Association team which toured NSW Country under former Test player Charlie Macartney, and in the NSW Colts team which played against Queensland. Still only 18, Scott bowled fastish left-armers with an easy action, a well-disguised change of pace and the stamina to bowl long, accurate spells.

Chilvers went one better than Scott, being selected in the NSW Sheffield Shield team. He clinched his place early in the season by taking 7-24 in a match against Western Suburbs at Pratten Park, including the prized wicket of former Test batsman Warren Bardsley.

Chilvers made his Shield debut in the match against Queensland at the Sydney Cricket Ground, remembered most as the game in which Don Bradman set a new **world record by scoring 452 not out in NSW's second innings. Set 770 to win**, Queensland were bowled out for just 84, Chilvers taking 2-22 on top of his 2-52 from 20 overs in the first innings.

In his second match, against South Australia, he took 4-57 and 4-38, dismissing Test batsman Victor Richardson cheaply in each innings and clearly **impressing him: "I think New South Wales has now got together a great side. Your slow bowler Chilvers has made a remarkable difference to the strength of the attack. I congratulate Chilvers"**⁸. Earlier Chilvers had demonstrated his all-round ability, scoring 52 in just 47 minutes in a 78-run last wicket partnership with Hal Hooker. **Unfortunately he didn't get to bowl in NSW's final Shield match of the season, which** was badly affected by rain. Despite having effectively played just two first class matches Chilvers was strongly tipped to be included in the 1930 Australian team to tour England. His omission was the first in a series of disappointments, although even after the selection of the 15-man touring team, there was a considerable push to add Chilvers to the team as a support bowler for Clarrie Grimmett⁹ from the three tour

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Best of the Sunday Papers—"Truth"

ROSEBERY RACES
To-morrow Wednesday
First Race: 11.30 a.m.
SPECIAL TRAM DIRECT TO RACECOURSE
J. STODOLSKY, Secretary

Sydney Sportsman

No. 1393. Published at the Daily Sportsman Press, Ltd., 100, Market Street, Sydney, N.S.W. TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 1930. PRICE THREEPENCE.

A GREAT DRINK
RESCH'S PILSENER
THE LIGHT BEER OF
D.A.
DINNER ALE

"THE SIDE I WOULD SEND TO ENGLAND"



C. Ginnist.



H. Chilvers.

THE CAPTAIN.
Most people agree that Jack Loder has done his best. A few cricketers are head in the clouds of "Good Old Jack." That is very nice of them, and he is a good fellow. But his selection would have had a better chance if he had been more than likely, a better man.

We must send the very best side we can get. Hugh Adams, and for that matter, I would like to pick a man on his reputation of past achievements.



A. F. Kippax.



A. Faulstich.



T. Wall.



H. G. Lavel.



INTERNATIONAL ALL-ROUNDER CHARLIE KELLEWAY gives "Sportsman" readers the benefit of his experience and shows from a Test selection viewpoint. He picks his side for England, and gives his reasons.

(SPECIAL TO "SPORTSMAN" BY C. E. KELLEWAY.)

SINCE Sunday's issue of "Truth" I have heard much comment regarding the team I consider should be selected to go to England. There is talk in the city, on trams, trains, and while strolling round the Sydney Cricket Ground criticisms shoot out from all sorts of unexpected corners. Some of the suggestions and remarks are merely made in good-humoured banter, but the majority of enthusiasts take their cricket very seriously, and earnestly express their views regarding the men

A STR.
The biggest surprise was occasioned by the inclusion of Hugh Chilvers. Few people regarded him as having any outside chance, but players engaged in the work of week-end cricket speak enthusiastically of his leadership. Talk of his selection seems to be the order of the day against him.



R. A. Hibbard.



V. Rickman.



R. K. Overton.



W. H. Pamphill.



A. Howard.



D. Brennan.

Board of Control Has Yet to Decide.

Former Australian Test player, Charlie Kellaway, later a leading journalist was one of a number of experts who considered that Hugh Chilvers should have been included in the 1930 Australian team to England.

selectors (Bill Woodfull, Vic Richardson and Alan Kippax) together with the team manager and treasurer.

Of the Northern District first grade batsmen, S Thomas had the highest aggregate (487 at 30.5), ahead of the consistent Roy Loder who had a relatively disappointing season by his own high standard - 422 runs at 23.4. For the first time no first grade batsman scored a century.

The club briefly had the services of another fine player in 21-year-old Frank Henderson who played just two matches in first grade before moving to Leeton. A close friend of Arthur Aillsopp, who had played for Northern District in 1927/28, he may have been an inmate, and certainly later was an instructor, at the Mount Penang Boys Home at Gosford. In 1928/29 he had played for the Stockton club in the Newcastle competition from where he had been

selected in two matches for NSW. In 1929/30 he played one match for the NSW Second XI against Tasmania at the Sydney Cricket Ground, scoring 101 in 131 minutes. Henderson later played for Leeton, where he scored 406 not out in 150 minutes against Narranderra, and later still he and Aillsopp played Melbourne district cricket for the Richmond club.

Similarly, F Edwards, the ex-Gordon first grade wicket-keeper played briefly for Northern District before work commitments saw him transferred to the country. A neat and skilful keeper, Edwards also played for the NSW Second XI in 1929/30.

After missing the previous season, Wally Rothwell returned to captain the second grade side, however like the first grade skippers he invariably managed to lose the toss and the team found itself batting on rain-damaged wickets. Midway through the season Rothwell injured his knee while erecting a temporary sightscreen at Turramurra Oval and missed a number of matches. The team ended in a disappointing 13th place on 46 points, with St George taking the title on 76 points.

Given the number of rain-affected matches the performance of Carl Brennan in scoring 742 runs in second grade was remarkable. 21-year-old Brennan had joined Northern District in its inaugural season from the Berowra club and had shown

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considerable all-round potential. He played several matches in first grade in 1926/27 **and 1928/29 without being able to retain a permanent position. Brennan's tally of 742 runs** was just 12 short of Roy Loder's club record but his score of 192 not out against Manly was the highest to date by any Northern District batsman. It remains the highest aggregate for the club in second grade.

The third grade team performed moderately well to win six of its fifteen matches but was frequently let down by poor fielding. In one match, against Petersham, 11 catches were dropped including five in three overs. As with the other grades batting proved difficult on pitches which were frequently rain-damaged and no batsman was able to score in excess of 300 runs.

Ben Wheeler's Shire team was again the best performed in the club, finishing in fifth place, and winning the intra-club Angus and Coote Championship Cup. The star of the team was a young left-arm bowler, S Stanton, who took 49 wickets from just 129.5 overs at an average of 9.2, including returns of 7-8, 5-13 and 5-19.

The Poidevin-Gray team also did well, losing only one of its six matches. As was the case for most of the 1929/30 season the ball dominated the bat, indeed in the second innings of their match against Gordon, Northern District bowled out its southern neighbours for just 19 runs with Rowley Cuddy taking 8-14. At the end of the competition two players, Dick Taylor and Jack Scott, were selected in a combined Metropolitan Colts team which played at Newcastle. Unfortunately work commitments prevented Scott from playing, however Taylor's **innings of 56 and 63** won the match for the Metropolitan team.

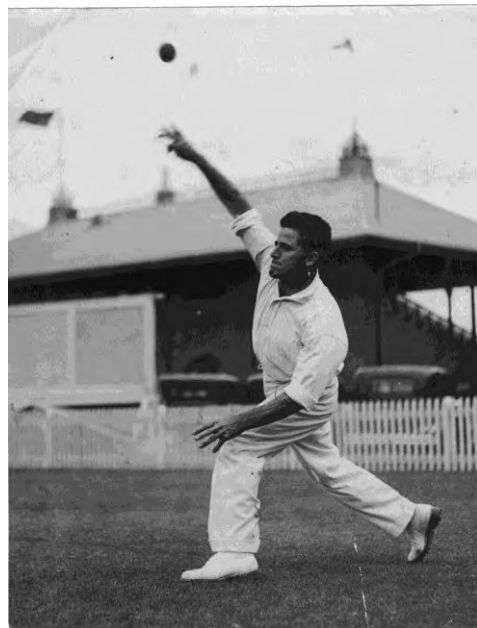
Another to impress was 14-year-old Frank Day, a batsman who already possessed a wide range of attacking strokes, who scored 258 runs in a combination of third grade, Municipal and Shire and Poidevin-Gray matches.

1930/31

By the start of the 1930/31 the debilitating effects of the Great Depression were having a serious impact upon all aspects of society including sport. With many players unemployed and unable to find work, cricket became a luxury they could no longer afford. Northern District lost 16 of its players from the previous season while a number of those who remained struggled to find the required playing fees. At the same time donations from **the club's large number** of Associate Members also declined significantly.

At the November 1930 NDCC Committee Meeting, in response to a request for assistance from the Hornsby Unemployment Relief Committee, it was agreed that an upcoming first grade match at Waitara Oval would be made available as a fund-raising resource.

Despite the various economic problems the club continued to function with a number of cuts in expenditure offsetting the revenue



A marvellous side-on shot of Hugh Chilvers' distinctive bowling action, taken at the SCG No 2.

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losses. The NSW Cricket Association also assisted by providing grants to clubs that were experiencing financial difficulties. Although the club did receive some criticism from the Association for a perceived excess in expenditure, a grant of 40 pounds was eventually received.

The committee minute book does show some background tension with a **motion carried at the meeting on 17 March 1931 that “In future, the Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Assistant Secretary be seated at a table removed from the rest of the committee, and that the Chairman be asked to always keep strict control of the meeting. Any member may only address the meeting with the consent of the Chairman and must stand while doing so. Any private discussions between members must be carried on outside the room.”**¹⁰

The Northern District first grade team disappointed once again, winning only three of their fourteen matches to finish near the bottom of the competition table. The composition of the team was largely unchanged. An application had been made to the NSWCA for the promising ex-NSW Colts batsman, Arthur Chipperfield, to play with the club¹¹ however he received an alternative offer to play and coach in Newcastle and it was to be another seven years before Chipperfield, by then a member of the Australian Test team, would join the club.

While **in previous seasons the first grade team’s batting had been stronger** than its bowling, in 1930/31 the reverse applied. Indeed the quality of the bowlers was such that two of them, Hugh Chilvers and Gordon Stewart, were selected in the NSW Sheffield Shield team.

Chilvers played in all eight of the NSW team’s Shield matches as well as both matches between NSW and the touring West Indians, the first appearance by a Northern District player in an international match. In the two matches Chilvers captured 15 wickets at an average of 17.7 (4-84 and 5-73 in the first match including the wicket of the great George Headley in both innings and Learie Constantine in the second – but only after being hit for three huge sixes; 3-56 and 3-53 in the second).

Stewart, aged 24 at the time of his selection, was a left-arm fast-medium bowler who capped a meteoric rise having begun the previous season in the Northern District third grade team. He made an impressive debut, taking 3-25 from 15 overs in the first innings of the match against South Australia at the SCG, including a wicket with the third ball of the match. In four matches for NSW that season he took 22 wickets at an average of 31.4 each, including 4-58 against Queensland at the Sydney Cricket Ground and 3-45 and 3-59 in the return match against South Australia at the Adelaide Oval. Stewart also played a match for NSW Colts against Queensland Colts at Main Oval, Brisbane, taking 1-57 and 6-67. Frank Henderson, who had played a few matches for Northern District in 1929/30 also played in this match, scoring 26 and 3 not out. Tall and powerful, Stewart was a talented and versatile athlete who played in the second row for the Eastwood YMI rugby union team as well as being a district tennis champion. Stewart played with Northern District until 1933/34 and later became a vice president of the club.



***NDCC left arm pace bowler
Gordon Stewart played four
matches for NSW during the
1930/31 season.***

In addition Harry Hunt, Jack Scott and Dick Taylor were all selected for the NSW Second XI match against the Victorian Seconds, Taylor eventually being made twelfth man.

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Another factor in the disappointing first grade performance was clearly the contentious method of selecting the team captain in the dressing room prior to the start of each match. Whilst this had not had a detrimental effect in previous seasons, where Frank Buckle had retained the leadership uncontested, during the second half of the 1930/31 season the captaincy changed for virtually every match. **The consequent decline in the team's performance was hardly surprising.**

Only two batsmen passed the 300-run mark: George Williams (392 runs at 21.8) and Dick Taylor (374 at 24.9), and for the second consecutive season, no batsman scored a century. With Chilvers and Stewart missing a number of matches, the bowling honours went to Harry Hunt who took 49 wickets at 14.7 each. A tall, right-arm medium pace bowler with a smooth, easy action, Hunt used his height to advantage and was touted at one time as a replacement for NSW medium pacer Hal Hooker.

The second grade team, captained by Bert Patterson, improved significantly to finish in seventh place with eight wins from their fourteen matches (two outright). The batting was dominated by Clem Mann who scored 449 runs from just seven innings at an average of 74.8 with a highest score of 139. With a sound defence and **great powers of concentration, Mann's efforts were rewarded with promotion to first grade** in the latter part of the season. Other successful batsmen were Nigel Westgarth (404 at 26.9), Bert Patterson (396 runs at 26.4) and Wally Bain, back with the club after a three-year absence (360 at 28.1).

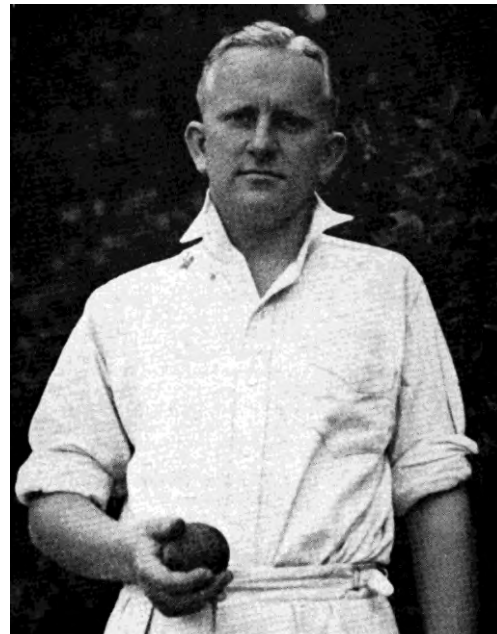
The second grade bowling was dominated by Rowley Cuddy (49 wickets at 16.6) and Bill Seale (46 at 11.1). Both bowlers played matches in first grade, where Cuddy took four and Seale five wickets – both thus taking in excess of 50 wickets for **the season. Seale's performance in particular was remarkable given that it was his first season in grade cricket.**

After narrow losses in each of its first two matches, the third grade team rallied well to finish in seventh place with six wins, two of them outright, five losses **and three draws. With 33 players going through the team's ranks it was a particularly good effort** under the leadership of Wally Rothwell.

A young left-handed batsman won both the batting aggregate and average in his first season on turf. 18-year-old Hilton Spurway, who came to Northern District from the Dundas club, scored 489 runs at an average of 37.6 with two centuries: 102 against Western Suburbs and the same score against University. Other young players to impress were Jack Chin who took 8-35 and scored 61 not out in his first match in the team, and J Stanton who took 33 wickets at 16.5 including 8-25 against Waverley

The Municipal and Shire team, led in the absence of regular captain Ben Wheeler, by Cyril Jagoedid extremely well to finish runners-up **in their 'B' Grade** competition. The team won ten of its fourteen matches, five outright and five on the first innings, including an outright win over the eventual premiers, Randwick.

A number of promising young players made their debuts for the club in



Tim Caldwell


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the 1930/31 Shires team, including 17-year-old, Tim Caldwell. Born Timothy Charles John Caldwell in Brisbane on 29 October 1913, his family moved to Sydney when he was a young boy where he attended Newington College. There he played cricket for **the school's First XI in 1929 and 1930, primarily as a leg spin bowler, but already a good enough bat to average 50 in his final year at school.** In his first season of senior cricket the young Caldwell showed considerable potential, capturing 33 wickets at an average of 15.3 with his leg breaks. Interestingly he was **to establish himself as one of NSW's leading off-spinners – the switch brought about when he was trying to force his way into the club's first grade team and saw little hope of pushing Hughie Chilvers aside.** Fortunately the switch in bowling styles proved successful; Chilvers and **Caldwell going on to become one of the club's most outstanding spin combinations.**

In the 1930/31 season the administrative abilities of two clubmen was recognised when each of the two club delegates to the NSWCA were appointed as managers of touring Sheffield Shield teams, Sid Storey for the match against Queensland in Brisbane, and Frank Buckle for the match against Victoria in Melbourne. Buckle also played in the annual match between the NSWCA and a Press XI at the SCG, top-scoring with 124. The Press XI included Test players Arthur Mailey and Jack Fingleton, cartoonist Jim Bancks who picked up 3-25, and leading Sydney journalist, Jim Mathers, the father of the future ND player of the same name.

Since its formation in 1925 the club had produced a printed annual report at the end of each season containing summaries of the season for each team, statistics, financial statements and general information concerning the club. At the May 1930 committee meeting **the club's first president, and now vice patron, Richard Allen suggested that "it is folly and unjust to ourselves and the Association to print an Annual Report this year"**¹². Fortunately he was eventually out-voted and the Annual Report was actually expanded to allow for the inclusion of paid advertisements. The 1930/31 Annual Report was produced on time with a full-page advertisement for Bert Oldfield's Sport Store (for which they paid 30 shillings) on the inside front cover and one for Stokes McGown Limited (worth 20 shillings) on the inside rear cover.

After a three-year break, Richard Allen returned to the club presidency at the 1931 NDCC Annual General Meeting. **At the same meeting Allen was elected as the club's second life member,** joining Hedley Bennett, who had been president in his absence and who now resumed his previous role as senior vice president. Both Allen and Bennett were to remain in these positions until the end of the Second World War. Ben Wheeler became club treasurer, replacing Ellis Robins, who temporarily left the area and joined the Mosman club.



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The 1931/32 NDCC Annual Report was the first to carry paid advertisements, for Sydney's two leading sports stores, operated by ex-Test cricketers, Alan Kippax (top) and Bert Oldfield (bottom).

1931/32

At the 1931 Annual General Meeting common sense prevailed and the selection of team captains was amended with the captain of each team for the first two matches being chosen by the club selectors and, after round two, the players were to elect their own captain for the remainder of the season.

A new method of choosing selectors was also introduced. It was rather complex with teams for the first two rounds being chosen by a five-man selection committee appointed at the AGM. For the remaining rounds the selections were made, still by a five-man committee but this time comprising three non-playing members appointed by the general committee plus the captain of the team being selected and the captain of the team immediately below that being selected.

Although the composition of the first grade side was largely unchanged, the team improved steadily after a poor start. Captained by George Williams they won five of their fourteen matches (all on the first innings), including an outstanding win over the eventual premiers, North Sydney. Midway through the season Frank Buckle, **one of the club's** two outstanding batsmen of its earliest seasons, dropped out of first grade to make way for Arthur Clifton, a fine attacking batsman who joined Northern District from the Lisarow club on the Central Coast and won the first grade batting **average with 151 runs at 30.2. Clifton's younger brother, Vern,** and his nephew, Alan Davidson, were later to follow him to the club.

For the third season in a row no Northern District first grade batsman was able to score a century and the team again relied heavily on its bowlers especially Hugh Chilvers (44 wickets at 13.2), Harry Hunt (35 at 19.6) and Gordon Stewart (25 at 23.7). Chilvers was again a regular member of the NSW Sheffield Shield team.

As had been agreed during the previous season, the gate takings for the first day of the first match of the season at Waitara Oval, against St George, were donated to the Hornsby Unemployment Relief Committee.

The 1931/32 first grade premiers, North Sydney, became the inaugural holders of the Belvidere Cup. For the previous nine seasons there had been no trophy for the first grade premiers, each of the three previous ones, the Hordern Shield (1893/94 to 1898/99), the Rawson Cup (1903/04 to 1912/13) and the Percy Arnott Shield (1919/20 to 1921/22) having been retained, under the different rules of the donors, by clubs which had won it on three occasions (two in the case of the Arnott Shield). In 1930, Dr Percy Charlton, a foundation member of the old Belvidere Cricket Club donated a trophy, the Gardiner Cup, which the club had won permanently in 1883/84, to the NSW Cricket Association as a permanent trophy for the Sydney first grade premiers¹³. Almost 70 years later the Belvidere Cup remains as **Sydney grade cricket's major trophy, and in the absence of incursions by milk companies will hopefully remain so for many years to come.**

The second grade team finished, as it had done the previous season, in seventh place with six wins (one outright), four first innings losses and four draws. Best of the



Arthur Clifton topped the first grade batting averages in his first season with Northern District.

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team's batsmen were **Reg Burdon** (429 runs at 26.8) and Nigel Westgarth (332 at 22.1) while Albert Small, playing in his first season of grade cricket, provided the innings of the season: 108, including 94 from boundaries!

Rowley Cuddy, topped his 49-wicket haul of the previous season by taking 53 wickets at 16.5 including a **hat trick in the team's outright win over Cumberland**. He received good support from Max Fitzsimons whose 36 wickets cost 22.2 each.

Third grade finished in thirteenth place with four wins, nine losses and one draw from its fourteen matches. **The team's major weakness was in its batting, being dismissed in the first innings for under 150 on eight occasions**. By contrast the bowlers performed well, dismissing their opponents in the first innings for less than 200 in all but three matches. Best performed players were captain Wally Rothwell (**369 runs at 26.4, including the team's only century** – 121 against Gordon), Tim Caldwell (355 runs at 27.3 and 15 wickets at 21.8), Bill Shortland (31 wickets at 15.1), J Stanton (30 wickets at 9.5 – with 6-41 against Petersham and 7-38 against Gordon) and Ellis Rothwell junior (28 wickets at 20.0 – with a best of 7-16 against University). Hidden away in the team **performances for the season is the entry “K Griffith 1-24”, the start of the career of one of Northern District's long-serving players**. Aged just 14 in 1931, Ken Griffith was to play for the club until the mid-1960s.

Prior to the start of the 1931/32 season the club submitted an application to the Grade Committee of the NSW Cricket Association to enter a second team into the Municipal and Shire competition. The application was rejected, the Association deciding that no new teams were to be admitted at that time.

Once again, of the club's four teams, the Shires team was the best-performed, winning eight of its thirteen matches and taking the Angus and Coote Championship Cup for the third successive season. Led by Cyril Jagoe the team was dominated by young players, although former first grade skipper, Frank Buckle, by now aged in his early 40s, managed to squeeze in a couple of matches - scoring 146 and 92 in his only two innings. The other batting stars were all under 21. Frank Day, a former NSW Schoolboys player had spent several seasons playing in the Shires team where he had established himself as a batsman of quality. In 1931/32 he scored 436 runs at 39.6 with a top score of 134 against Balmain. Within one season he would be playing first grade. Still a schoolboy, Ron Crebert scored 283 runs in just four completed innings with centuries against Balmain (104 not out) and Manly (136). Youngest of all was 13-year-old Bill Morris, who played five innings for four ducks and a 51 not out.

The best of the Shire team's bowlers were Frank Sherington and L Bunny, both of whom captured 34 wickets.

The Poidevin-Gray team had a poor season, winning only one of its five matches. Hilton Spurway (214 runs at 30.1), Jack Scott (123 runs at 24.6 with a top score of 105 not out and 14 wickets) and L Stewart (157 runs at 39.3) all played important roles.

The club finished in twelfth place in the Club Championship with 460 points. The winners, Western Suburbs accumulated 630 points, while the last-placed club, Manly had 223 points.

1932/33

During the 1932/33 season progress was finally made in the club's long drawn out quest to secure new grounds within the district with control of the ground in the Pennant Hills National Park handed over by the trustees of the park to the Hornsby Shire Council. As well a new ground was built by the Ryde Council at Eastwood.

For the first time the Northern District club fielded five teams, adding a **second Municipal and Shire team and so competing in both the "A" and "B" grades** of that competition. Indeed the club submitted an application to enter a third Shires team, to be known as Epping. The application was rejected by the NSWCA due to a lack of suitable grounds.

The first grade team, again captained by George Williams, had its highest finish in its eight seasons in the competition. Although they only finished midtable they won five of their thirteen matches. The two leading wicket-takers were Gordon Stewart (33 at 16.9) and Hugh Chilvers (24 at 22.5). Chilvers, although hampered throughout the season by a nagging finger injury, was able to top the first grade batting averages with 217 runs at 36.6. He was only chosen once for NSW, in the **second of two matches against Douglas Jardine's touring English team, where** he took 5-73 and 3-29 including the wickets of Walter Hammond, Maurice Leyland (twice), Les Ames (twice) and Hedley Verity.

Pace bowler, Gordon Stewart, was able to win back his place in the state side, playing four Shield matches and taking 11 wickets at 25.8. He also played in the second match between NSW and England but was hit out of the attack by Bob Wyatt (0-38 from six overs) in the first innings and didn't bowl in the second.

The leading first grade run scorers were George Williams, whose 410 runs at 31.5 included the first century (106 not out) by a Northern District first grade batsman since Frank Buckle's 126 against University in the 1928/29 season, and left-hand opening batsman Lionel Stewart who scored 372 runs at 24.8 in his first full season in the top grade.

The 1932/33 also saw the debut of a young player who was to become one of **Northern District's finest batsmen with 18-year-old Les Fallowfield** joining the club from the Ryde Cricket Club. He played several games in third grade before being promoted to seconds where he topped both the batting aggregate and average with 393 runs at 39.3, including a chanceless 149 against North Sydney. He played four innings in first grade, totalling 108 runs and also led both the Poidevin-Gray aggregate and averages (327 runs at 81.8), with a highest score **of 162. His season's tally of 893 in all matches set a new club record.**

Captained by Wally Bain, the Northern District second grade team finished in the middle of the competition table, winning five and losing eight of their thirteen matches. Apart from Fallowfield the best performers were Tim Caldwell (44 wickets at 17.4), Cecil Armitage (34 wickets at 14.8) and Bert Patterson (343 runs at 26.3).

The third grade team had an excellent season, finishing in third place on 69 points, just five behind the premiers, Randwick. With a little more luck the team **could easily have become the club's first premiers: they lost one match, against St George**, by just four runs, while in two others their opponents were nine wickets down at the end of the match. The team had a strong batting line up including three ex-first graders in captain Wally Rothwell, Frank Buckle and Roy Loder. While all three were past their prime, their experience had a significant effect on what was generally a young team. Rothwell in particular did well, scoring 578 runs (a record NDCC third grade aggregate) at an average of 41.3 with two centuries, while Buckle and Loder, **both members of the 'A' grade Shire team made significant contributions in important**

matches. Although he only played one or two matches, Roy Wenholz was to become closely involved with Northern District in later years. Then in his late thirties he had previously played cricket with the Petersham and Mosman clubs and would for many years, well into the 1970s, cover Northern District first grade matches in his job as an AAP news reporter.

There were several outstanding bowling performances in third grade, none better than Frank Smith, who took 49 wickets at 12.6, and J Moore, who only played a few matches but picked up 23 wickets from just 66 overs at an average of 10.8, including match figures of 12-58 against University.

Although it was the first time a Northern District team had contested the **Municipal and Shire 'A' grade competition, the team was expected to perform well**, with two former State batsmen in Frank Buckle and Roy Loder in the team for at least half of the season. Although Loder scored 495 runs at an average of 70.7 (including a club record M&S score of 144 against Lane Cove) he was unable to inspire the side and they were able to win just three of their thirteen matches.

The second Shires team, led by Ben Wheeler, **remained in the 'B' grade** competition and performed moderately well, finishing in eleventh place in the 18-team competition.

1933/34

The 1933/34 season saw Northern District finally break through and win its first title. Although it was the Poidevin-Gray Shield rather than a grade premiership it again reinforced the young talent which the club was continuing to nurture.

Led by Doug Chilvers, the younger brother of Hugh, the team included three future NSW Sheffield Shield players in Les Fallowfield, Tim Caldwell and Noel Miller, one (Frank Day) who was to play for the state Second XI, and four others (Chilvers, Frank Smith, Bob Firth and Frank Sherington) who were to become regular first graders with the club within the next couple of seasons.

The Poidevin-Gray team went through the competition proper undefeated and met the strong Western Suburbs team in the final at the Sydney Cricket Ground, winning a closely contested match by just 16 runs. Les Fallowfield, Noel Miller and Frank Day **were the team's leading batsmen. In five** innings Miller scored 287 runs at an average of 95.7 **including a top score of 102; opener Fallowfield's tally** of 273 (at 54.6) included two 70s and a 95, while the stylish Day scored 210 at 42.0 including a superb innings of 127 against Manly. The best of the bowlers were Frank Smith (26 wickets at 14.6) and Tim Caldwell **(15 at 20.2). The latter's performance** in taking 6-45 **in the final proved crucial to the team's** success.

The first grade team again proved capable of defeating even the strongest teams in the competition but lacked the consistency to push higher than its eventual final placing. There was a good blend of youth and experience in the team, with the return from a brief sojourn in the lower grades of Roy Loder and the arrival in the district of ex-Test player, J.M. (Johnnie) Taylor – the batsman who had so



*Former Australian Test batsman,
JM Taylor played with Northern
District during the 1933/34*

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enthralled the young Don Bradman during the Sydney Test of 1920/21. Unfortunately Taylor, then in his late-30s, and retired from first class cricket for about six years, only played five matches for Northern District. Nevertheless he showed that he was still a high quality batsman during a stylish innings of 77 against University.

Overall, the first grade batting was disappointing with only one player, captain George Williams, scoring in excess of 300 runs (319 **at 31.9**). **The club's talented** teenaged opening batsman, Les Fallowfield played his first full season in the top grade but struggled throughout, lacking the confidence to use the wide array of shots which he possessed.

The star of the season once more was Hugh Chilvers who took 41 wickets at an average of 12.0 and scored 188 runs at 20.9, including his initial first grade century – an even 100 against Glebe at Waitara Oval, most of the runs scored in a 175-run ninth wicket partnership with Clem Mann, who went on to score 96.

Chilvers again played regularly for NSW and was considered desperately unlucky not to be selected for the 1934 Australian tour of England. Instead he was one of four NSW players chosen in an Australian team to tour New Zealand, however he was again disappointed when that tour was cancelled by the NZ Cricket Council.

Despite a promising start, the second grade team also performed only moderately, winning just four out of thirteen matches. The team was led for the first half of the season by Frank Buckle, and in the second half by Bert Patterson. Young opening batsman, Noel Miller, impressed in scoring 436 runs at 39.6 while Bert **Patterson's total of 398 runs included two centuries** – 102 against Cumberland and 140 against Gordon.

Third grade, again led by Wally Rothwell, once more was the best-performed grade team, finishing in fifth place on 61 points, eight behind the premiers, Randwick. From thirteen matches they won three outright, three on the first innings, drew five and lost just two, both on the first innings. With a little more consistency the team could have won the competition, having wins over Randwick, Glebe and St George – three of four teams which finished ahead of them, yet lost to poorly performed teams in Balmain and Manly.

Both the batting and bowling aggregates were won by Rothwells, the ever-reliable Wally Rothwell scoring 400 runs at 33.3 with a top score of 106 against Paddington, while his son Ellis Rothwell took 36 wickets at an average of 19.5. Albert Small scored the **team's other century: 115 not out against Gordon, on the way to an** aggregate of 353 runs at 27.2.

Prior to the start of the 1933/34 season, on 23 September 1933, Epping Oval was officially opened with a one-day match held to celebrate the occasion. An approach had been made to Don Bradman to play in the match, but unfortunately he was unavailable. Instead the former great Test all-rounder, Charlie Macartney, aged 47 and still playing grade cricket for the Gordon club, led a team against the Northern District first grade team. Entry to the match required the donation of a silver coin.

The acquisition of the new ground cleared the way for the creation of the Epping Cricket Club, and at a public meeting on Friday 21 July 1933 the club was formed. Because the boundaries of the new club lay entirely within those of the Northern District Cricket Club it would act as a feeder club for players good enough to be promoted to grade level. However, apart from this the Epping Cricket Club was entirely independent. On the matter of club boundaries the Northern District area was expanded to include Dural and Galston.

Northern District again fielded two teams in the Municipal and Shire S **Competition, one in 'B' Grade (known as Group Two), the other in 'C' Grade (Group Three)**. The new Epping Cricket Club also contested Group Three and, remarkably, went on to win the competition with the Northern District team finishing a creditable fourth. For Northern District there were several excellent individual performances,

none better than that of left-arm wrist spinner, Jack Wilson, who took 64 wickets at an average 11.2 including 8-20 against Manly and 8-39 against Cumberland.

The club's leading, Group Two, Shires team, captained by Cyril Jagoe, played poorly for most of the season, winning just four of their thirteen matches.

1934/35

The 1934/35 season was easily the best to date in the Northern District Cricket Club's brief history. **Not only did the Municipal and Shire team win the club's first premiership**, but more importantly, the first grade team finally lived up to the potential it had shown for several seasons to finish as runners-up behind Paddington. The nucleus of the team came from **the club's successful Poidevin-Gray team** of the previous season blended with the experience of players such as Hugh Chilvers, Roy Loder and George Williams.

After disappointing in his initial full first grade season, Les Fallowfield blossomed during 1934/35, scoring the amazing total of 1252 runs at all levels of cricket: 397 in first grade; 101 not out, 54 not out and 65 in two matches for NSW against Western Australia at the WACA Ground in Perth; 67 for NSW against WA Colts on the same tour; 66 for NSW against Newcastle; 96 (once out) in one match for **the NSW Second XI; and 406 for Northern District's Poidevin-Gray team**. In the NSW Second XI match, against the Victorian Second XI at the SCG, Fallowfield opened the batting in the first innings with Alan McGilvray, **later to become Australia's premier cricket commentator**. Another member of the NSW team was Alec Marks, the father of **two of Northern District's finest ever batsmen, Neil and Lynn Marks**.

Fallowfield's opening partner from the Northern District Poidevin-Gray team, 21-year-old Noel Miller, joined him in first grade and scored a remarkable 614 runs in his first season in the top grade. Both Fallowfield and Miller surpassed Roy Loder's record first grade score of 152 not out set in the 1927/28 season; Fallowfield scoring 164 not out against Waverley (at Waverley Oval) and Miller 175 against Western Suburbs (at Concord Oval). Young off-spinning all-rounder, Tim Caldwell, had an equally impressive first full season in first grade capturing 48 wickets at 16.1

As good as the performances of these three youngsters were, they paled alongside the achievements of Hugh Chilvers. From just ten club matches, Chilvers captured 64 wickets at 11.4 to win the Sydney Grade bowling aggregate. In the match against St George he set two new records, taking 9-46 in the first innings (beating his own 1929/30 best innings analysis of 8-37) then followed up with 6-38 in the second innings to establish a new match record of 15-84. Both records still stood at the start of the 2000/01 season.

With **Bill O'Reilly** missing much of the Sheffield Shield season through work commitments **Chilvers shouldered the NSW team's spin bowling responsibility, taking 46 wickets in six matches:**

vs South Australia at Sydney:	6-67 and 5-58
vs South Australia at Adelaide:	5-58 and 5-51
vs Victoria at Melbourne:	3-144
vs Queensland at Sydney:	3-91
vs Victoria at Sydney:	3-120 and 6-76
vs Queensland at Brisbane:	4-68 and 6-124

Thus in six of the ten innings in which he bowled he took five or more wickets in an innings, and in three of the six matches he took ten or more wickets.

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The 1934/35 season was a remarkable one for spinners with three bowlers all passing the previous Shield record number of wickets in a season of 44, set by NSW off-spinner, Tom McKibbin, in 1896/97. Firstly, the Victorian left-arm wrist-spinner **Leslie 'Chuck' Fleetwood-Smith** who took 60 wickets, then Chilvers, and finally South Australian Clarrie Grimmett **who took 49 wickets. Chilvers' 46 wickets** thus became a **NSW record, although only until the 1939/40 season when Bill O'Reilly** took 52 wickets¹⁴.

In any other season Chilvers would have been an automatic selection for international matches, however the success of Fleetwood-Smith and Grimmett saw **both, together with O'Reilly, selected ahead of him for the 1935/36 Australian tour to South Africa.**

Another new player to join Northern District in 1934/35 was 25-year-old Frank Gilmore, who had formerly played with Waverley. A genuinely fast bowler with a low, skidding style, and a useful batsman, Gilmore was of average height and strongly built and was also a leading rugby league player. Between 1931 and 1935 he played 48 first grade games for the Newtown club and was a centre three-quarter in the Newtown team which defeated St George in the 1933 Sydney premiership final. Gilmore had also played cricket at Centennial Park for the Dulwich Hill club and it was there in a match against Campsie early in the 1933/34 cricket season that he, and teammate Tom Ellis (the Newtown RL captain) spotted a young player who fielding brilliantly for the other team. Impressed with his obvious athletic ability, Gilmore and Ellis approached the player, whose name was Frank Hyde, after the match and suggested that he trial with Newtown at the start of the next football season. This he **did and the career of one of Australia's best-known** rugby league players and undoubtedly its most famous radio commentator, was born.

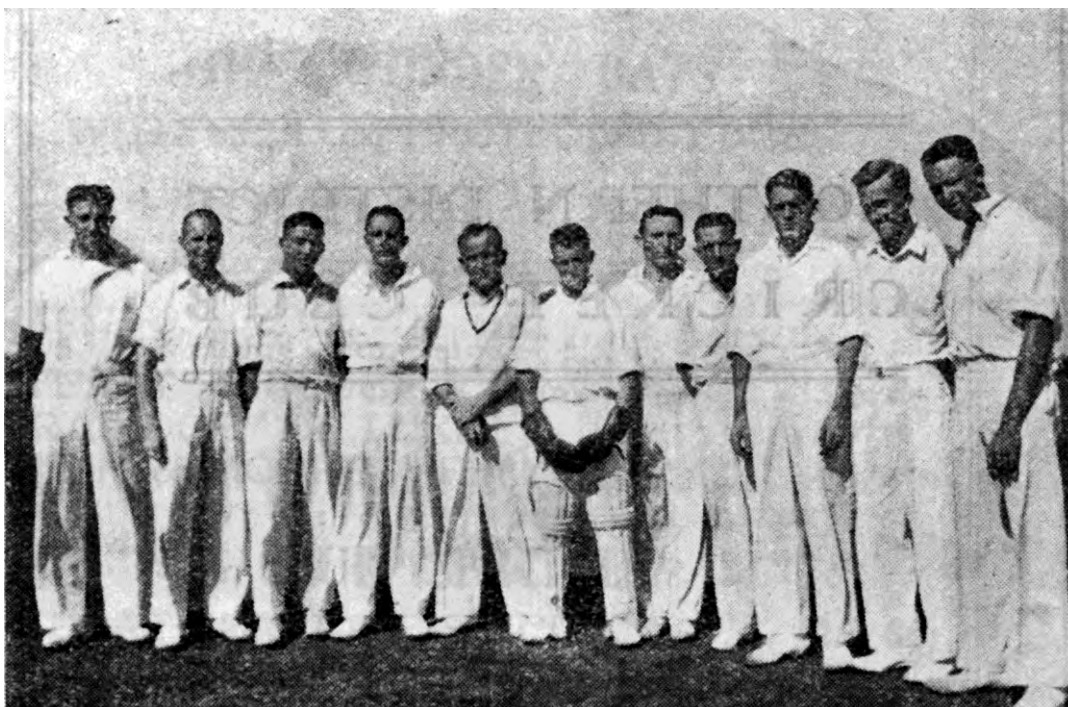
The 1934/35 Northern District first grade team had two captains: George Williams for the first six and last four matches, and Doug Chilvers for the middle four. Four rain-affected draws and a crucial mid-season loss to the eventual premiers, Paddington, were all that stood between the young team and a first premiership.

By contrast, the second grade team played poorly to finish in second last place with just two wins from fourteen matches. Inconsistent batting proved to be the **team's major problem, with both the bowling and fielding generally up to standard.** Apart from the batting of Bert Patterson (396 runs at 39.6) and George Burdon (379 at 37.9) the other highlight was the arrival of a fine cricketer in 19-year-old Phil Payne. Originally from the Bexley Shires team, Payne had played second grade for St George in 1932/33 and 1933/34, transferring to Northern District when his family **moved within the club's** residential boundaries. Destined to be a long-serving player of the club, Payne began the season in third grade, and when promoted to seconds scored 186 runs including a top score of 84 not out. Jack Chin was the best of the second grade bowlers, capturing 35 wickets at 21.3, including 6-58 against St George and 6-66 against Petersham.

After having finished in third and fifth place respectively in the two preceding seasons the Northern District third grade team also had a poor season, finishing in thirteenth place with just three wins from fourteen matches. Albert Small was the **team's best batsman, scoring 417 runs at an average of 34.8 including a hard-hitting** 121 not out against Glebe. Team captain, Wally Rothwell, finished a disappointing personal season (240 runs at 24.0) with 101 not out against University, his fourth century in successive third grade seasons, and his ninth for the club.

For the first time in Sydney grade cricket a fourth grade competition was organised, although it was not included in club championship calculations. Northern District entered a team, led by Cyril Jagoe, which was largely made up of players from **the previous season's Group Two Municipal** and Shire team. There were also several new recruits, including a young left-handed batsman named Tom Cole who would

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The Northern District team which won the B Grade Municipal and Shire competition in 1934/35 – the club's first senior premiership. Left to right: Frank Hansell, Jack Agnew, A Little, AO Windeyer, Ben Wheeler (C), Les Molloy, Jim Fitzsimons, F Johnson, Ron Chin, Ray Badger and Geoff Seale.

eventually become a regular first grader. Cole was a member of a pioneering family from Brooklyn on the Hawkesbury River which at one time was able to field its own cricket team. While Bill Alley **would later become Brooklyn's best-known** cricketer, many locals considered that Tom Cole was at least his equal in ability.

Young left-arm spinner, Jack Wilson, after taking 64 wickets in the lower Municipal and Shire team the previous season, was the best of the bowlers, taking 28 wickets at an average of 17.1, including a hat trick in the course of taking 7-76 against Western Suburbs.

With the introduction of the fourth grade competition, Northern District reverted to having one team in Municipal and Shire. And it was this team which was **the club's other success story of the 1934/35 season, winning the Group 2** premiership. The team, again led by longtime Shires stalwart Ben Wheeler, entered the final round at the head of the competition table, but by the narrowest of margins - one point ahead of both Western Suburbs and Glebe. Needing an outright win to ensure the title Wheeler and his team played aggressively in the final match to take the maximum points. Fortunately so, because both Wests and Glebe also had outright wins.

The team's batting was solid and reliable with five players scoring in excess of 300 runs. The bowling was dominated by an outstanding performance by left-arm medium pacer, Jack Agnew, who took remarkable 88 wickets for the season at an average of 9.8. In his third season with the club, Agnew had proven to be a consistent, rather than a brilliant bowler with totals of 22 and 26 wickets in 1932/33 and 1933/34 respectively. His record remains as the highest by a Northern District bowler in Shires competition and was the most in any grade for the club until 1941/42 when one-day matches were held and Hugh Chilvers captured in excess of 100 first grade wickets in each of three successive seasons. Sharing the honours with Agnew was Frank Hansell, a right arm fast medium bowlers, who took 57 wickets at 12.1 in his first season on

turf pitches. Hansell also scored 340 runs (at 26.1) and took a number of superb catches in slips.

Despite fielding almost the same team as in its successful 1933/34 season (only Tim Caldwell had passed 21), the Northern District Poidevin-Gray team had a disappointing campaign winning only two of their six matches. This was despite a remarkable performance by Les Fallowfield who scored 403 runs from five innings including scores of 155 not out, 92 not out and 118 – an average of 134.3!

The inaugural patron of the Northern District Cricket Club, Paul James, died **suddenly during 1935. The President of Hornsby Shire at the time of the club's** formation, Councillor James had been a keen supporter of the club and had conducted the opening ceremony at Waitara Oval when the club played its first match there in October 1925.

Four new life members were elected at the 1935 Annual General Meeting: Frank Buckle, Harold Renshaw, Sid Storey and Ben Wheeler. The meeting also discussed the furore which had broken out in July 1935 over the Australian Board of **Control's decision to refuse** permission for a number of players, including Hugh Chilvers, to go to India on a private tour funded by the Maharajah of Patiala and organised locally by former Victorian and Middlesex cricketer, Frank Tarrant. The decision, on the grounds that the banned players may be required to play for their respective States, made headlines around the country and at one stage a player revolt similar to that which had rocked the game in 1912 was considered possible. Northern District secretary, Sid Storey, in a front page interview in the "Daily Telegraph" stated *"It is the most unpardonable action I have known of in my cricketing career. Chilvers can be certain that his delegates will do all in their power to try and remove the ban"*¹⁵.

The protests fell on deaf ears and the banned players, including Chilvers, Alan Kippax, Bill Woodfull, Ron Oxenham, Keith Rigg and Bill Ponsford stayed behind. The team which did eventually make the tour was largely made up of retired Test players such as Jack Ryder and Charlie Macartney, although Arthur Allsopp, who had played a handful of matches for Northern District in the late-1920s, was also in the team. The final insult came when Chilvers was not chosen for any of the NSW matches during the time the team was away, and in fact did not play for the State at all during 1935/36.

At the age of 21 Tim Caldwell joined the NDCC committee, the start of what was to be an outstanding contribution to cricket administration which was to span a period of almost 50 years and take him to the very top of the game in Australia.

1935/36

Prior to the start of the season Northern District lost one of its most promising young players when someone at the Balmain club discovered that Noel Miller's **address in Ryde fell within that club's boundaries (by the narrowest of margins** apparently – one side of his street belonged to Balmain, the other to Northern District) and applied to the NSW Cricket Association for him to be required to play for them. Northern District unsuccessfully appealed against the decision and Miller was forced to play for Balmain – successfully so, scoring 486 runs at 40.5.

In 1935/36 Miller played one match for NSW against Queensland at the Woolloongabba ground in Brisbane, where coincidentally he opened the batting with his former team-mate from both the Ryde club and Northern District, Les Fallowfield. Miller scored 21 in the first innings (adding 50 with Fallowfield) and 9 in the second. It was his only first class match. The following season he was a member of the Balmain team which won the Sydney first grade premiership. He later played for

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Western Suburbs and Paddington before retiring to concentrate on his accounting career.

On a similar vein Northern District continued to appeal against one of the **club's best young players, Jack Scott**, being selected for Western Suburbs, there apparently being some doubt about the genuineness of his residential qualifications. The club eventually backed off and Scott subsequently played for Wests. Several years later he moved to Adelaide where he played for the West Torrens club. Between 1937/38 and 1938/39 he played five matches for South Australia, taking seven wickets at an average of 51. He returned to Northern District during the Second World War where he again played first grade.

The first secretary of the NDCC, Mr Albert Spencer died on 11 November 1935 at the age of 52. Only an occasional player, Spencer had been secretary during the 1925/26 season and from then until his death had been a Vice President and Associate Member.

During the season the club committee decided to erect an honour board in the **Waitara Oval grandstand on which was to be recorded the name of each season's most successful team**. The board replaced the Angus and Coote Silver Cup, which had been awarded since the formation of the club in 1925. The season also saw the erection of a brick kiosk at Waitara Oval, adjacent to the grandstand. For the first time the club played a home first grade game away from Waitara Oval – at Turramurra Oval.

After a good start, winning two of its first three matches, the first grade team was seriously disrupted by the loss of up to five players at a time to representative matches. At various times Les Fallowfield, Hugh Chilvers, Frank Day, Tim Caldwell and Frank Gilmore were missing and in their absence the team slumped, losing five straight matches and sacrificing any hope of winning the competition. By the time the full strength team was available again it was too late, and although they came home strongly, losing just one of their last six matches, could only gain third place.

The star of the season was undoubtedly Tim Caldwell, whose 65 wickets at 13.4 not only pipped Hugh Chilvers' **club record of 64 set in the previous season, but** also won the Sydney grade bowling aggregate. Although previously a leg spinner, Caldwell had, in a short time, turned himself into a tight, accurate off spinner with a well-disguised variation in pace. He made his first class debut, playing alongside Fallowfield, Miller and Chilvers, for NSW in the Sheffield Shield match against Queensland in Brisbane. Unfortunately an injured knee hindered him during the match and it was his only representative game for the season.

Chilvers himself had a disappointing season with injury and ill health restricting his appearances for the club, although he was still able to take 21 wickets at 21.0.

Likewise, Frank Gilmore, himself pressing for State selection, injured his knee early on and missed much of the season, bowling only 65 overs for 12 wickets at 20.8. Prior to the injury he played one match for NSW Colts against Queensland Colts at the SCG, taking 3-70 and 0-41.

The big improver of the season with the ball for the club was Frank Sherington who captured 29 wickets at 19.0.

After a few seasons in the club's lower grade teams Roy Loder returned to first grade, opening the batting with Les Fallowfield. Although past his prime, Loder was still good enough to top the batting aggregate with 445 runs at 26.2, while Fallowfield won the batting average with 301 runs at 30.1 mainly through an unbeaten 114 against North Sydney. Otherwise it was a disappointing season for



Frank Day was one of the most talented batsmen of his era.

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Fallowfield after his huge scoring of the previous season. Likewise the club's most stylish batsman, Frank Day, began the season with a superb innings of 101 against Waverley, one which earned him a spot in a state trial where he scored 18 and 21 for a NSW B team against an A team attack which included teammates Caldwell, Chilvers **and Fallowfield. Known as 'Snodger', Day was one of the most talented and brilliant** batsmen of his era, but lacked the discipline required to make the step up to first class cricket. He struggled for the remainder of the 1935/36 grade season, able to score just 128 more runs in his remaining 14 club innings.

After a number of seasons away from grade cricket, Dick Taylor made a successful return to first grade scoring 429 runs at 28.6.

The second grade team improved significantly, winning seven of its thirteen matches, as against just two in 1934/35. With the record number of first grade players selected in representative matches the team was frequently disrupted, especially early in the season. Four batsmen scored centuries, as against none in 1934/35. Bill Morris scored 108 against Western Suburbs, Frank Ferguson 111 against Paddington), while Ken Griffith (109) and Jack Chin (124) each scored hundreds in adding a record 207 **for the sixth wicket University. The partnership, and Chin's innings, took just 100** minutes. Off-spinner, Bill Law, and paceman, Ellis Rothwell, were the best of the **team's bowlers, taking 38 and 34 wickets respectively.**

After its disappointing performance in the previous season, the third grade team also improved, although its eight wins from thirteen matches was still only good enough to finish in ninth place in a tight competition. They were unlucky in several matches especially in the game against Manly when rain saved the seashiders with Northern District needing just 11 runs with five wickets in hand. There was an exciting **finish to the team's last match of the season, against University. Chasing 210 for a first** innings win Northern District were 9 for 188 when Dick Pymble joined Jack Agnew at the wicket. The two bowlers edged closer to the target before a straight-driven six from Pymble finished the match. The best performed third graders in 1935/36 were Agnew (36 wickets at 15.4 and 128 runs at 25.6), Pymble (29 wickets at 13.6), Frank Hansell (27 wickets at 12.8), Tom Webb (346 runs at 28.8) and the ever-reliable Wally Rothwell (331 runs at 25.4).

Although the fourth grade team had a poor season a number of promising **young players made their grade debuts in 1935/36. The team's 18-year-old wicket-**keeper/batsman, Bill Englefield, showed the outstanding potential which would **eventually see him become Northern District's first grade keeper** and to play Sheffield Shield cricket for South Australia. Englefield had joined Northern District from the Ryde Cricket Club having impressed by scoring 632 runs at 52.7 in the Municipal and Shire A grade in 1934/35.

The Northern District Municipal and Shire team, once more led by Ben Wheeler, **again contested the 'B' grade competition. With many of its star players** from the previous season now playing higher grades they were unable to defend their title, but nevertheless remained competitive, finishing in a creditable sixth place. After a season in fourth grade, spinner Jack Wilson returned to the Shires team where he took 63 wickets at an average of 11.4, just one short of his tally in 1933/34. Two batsmen scored centuries: F Dundon, 121 against Lindfield on his club debut, and 100 not out against Paddington by Herb Fallowfield, one of two brothers of the first grade star batsman who played for the club.

The Poidevin-Gray team, led by Frank Gray, was unbeaten, with three first innings wins and one draw. Bill Morris (228 runs at 45.6) and Mick Collins (172 at 43.0) were the best of the batsmen, while Frank Smith (13), Reg Crowe (12) and Phil Dunncliffe (12) took all but four of the wickets to fall to bowlers. **The club's seventh** life member, Cyril Jagoe, was elected at the 1936 Annual General Meeting on 8 July 1936.

1936/37

The best season to date overall by the club saw it finish in second place in the Club Championship, runners-up in first grade, fifth in both second and third grades, seventh in fourth grade and 12th in Municipal and Shire.

By 1936/37 Northern District boasted one of the strongest teams in the first grade competition and, with only minimal disruption because of representative commitments, they went frustratingly close to winning the title, eventually finishing in second place, just two points behind Balmain. In three seasons the team had now finished runners-up twice and in third place once. The decisive game proved to be the fifth round clash between the two teams where Balmain scored a six run win.

The three players who had dominated in recent seasons – Les Fallowfield, Hugh Chilvers and Tim Caldwell - continued to do so.

For the third successive season Fallowfield topped the batting averages and, for the first time, the aggregate - scoring 617 runs at 47.5. He scored two centuries: 152 not out against Gordon and 100 against Glebe, the latter innings in an innings total of 169 all out. Despite this Fallowfield was unable to force his way back into the NSW team.

The friendly rivalry between the club's two outstanding spin bowlers continued in 1936/37 with Chilvers and Caldwell bowling a total of just under 500 overs between them. In 1934/35 Chilvers had broken Jack Scott's **previous record of 50 wickets** in a season, taking 64, only to see Caldwell surpass it by just one wicket in 1935/36. It was destined to be the last time that anyone but the little leg spinner was to hold the record. In 1936/37 Chilvers reclaimed it with 67 wickets at an average of 13.2 and held it through until the war years when he broke it twice in successive seasons, eventually setting an **"unbeatable" new club and Sydney grade mark of 126 wickets** in 1942/43. Chilvers again proved that he was a more than useful batsman, averaging 26.9 and scoring a brilliant 154 not out against Marrickville. With Bill O'Reilly again fully available for NSW Chilvers played just one match for the state, **against 'Gubby' Allen's touring MCC team at the SCG where he took 4-2 from seven overs in the first innings, combining with 'Ginty' Lush to bowl England out for just 73.**

For the first time in Northern District's history two first grade bowlers passed 50 wickets in a season with Tim Caldwell taking 52 wickets at 15.2. He was selected in **NSW's southern tour but had limited opportunities.**

Apart from Fallowfield two other batsmen topped 400 runs for Northern District in 1936/37. Dick Taylor's **aggregate of 424 at 35.3** was dominated by a purple patch of 91, 173 not out and 82 in successive innings, while the evergreen Roy Loder, now 40 years old scored 407 runs at 27.1, including his tenth club century -102 against Manly.

The club's promising young wicket-keeper, Bill Englefield, made his first grade debut at the age of 19 during the second half of the 1936/37 season. At 6' 1" (1.87 metres) Englefield was unusually tall for a 'keeper and although still raw he made enough brilliant dismissals to show that he had the ability to play in the top grade.

Despite playing with much the same team as in the previous season, the Northern District second grade team, captained by Bert Patterson, began the season poorly and after seven matches were sitting near the bottom of the table with just 20 points. They then struck form with a vengeance, winning all five remaining matches (three outright) to finish on 58 points and in fifth position.

The most remarkable individual performance came in the match against North Sydney where Frank Gilmore became the first Northern District bowler to take all ten

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wickets in an innings, finishing with 10-41 including a hat trick. Other bowlers to do well were left-arm paceman, Jack Agnew, who continued his progress up the grades, taking 33 wickets at 16.4; and medium-pacer Phil Dunnicliff (30 wickets at 21.6). Another promising young bowler, Ray Badger, in his first season with the club, won promotion from fourth and third grades, to play in the final second grade match of the season against Glebe where he captured 7-49 in the first innings.

Of the second grade batsmen Phil Payne headed both the aggregate and averages with 395 runs at 35.9, Tom Cole scored 374 (at 24.9) and Ken Griffith 314 (at 22.4). Payne, Cole and Bill Morris all scored centuries.

Payne's performance in second grade capped a memorable season for the former St George player. He began the season in third grade where he scored a club record 218, compiled in just 210 minutes with 36 fours, from a record team score of 9 for 453. It was the highest individual score by a Northern District batsman in any grade, and the first double century. A talented baseballer who played with the Mosman club, Payne was a regular member of the NSW Claxton Shield between 1937 and 1938.

The third grade team won seven of its twelve matches to finish in fifth place. It was a fine team effort with only one batsman scoring in excess of 300 runs (Stuart Kilgour (404 at 31.7) and no bowler passing 30. A talented young batsman, Kilgour had played for NSW in the 1935/36 Interstate Junior Carnival, scoring 7 and 46 against South Australia at the SCG and 30 against Victoria at North Sydney Oval.

At the end of the season, Wally Rothwell, who had captained the third grade team since 1930/31, stepped down. After the final match he was presented with a leather wallet by his grateful team-mates. **One of Northern District's greatest clubmen, Rothwell, was to captain the club's Shires team in 1937/38 but when called upon was to later return to lead third grade.**

Despite having 34 different players in the team at various times the fourth grade had its best result to date, winning six of its 12 matches (two outright) and finishing in the middle of the competition table. Ray Badger, before being promoted to higher grades won the bowling aggregate/average double with 28 wickets at 12.6, including 7-5 against Paddington. In all matches for the club in 1936/37 Badger took a total of 63 wickets (7 in second grade, 16 in third grade, 28 in fourth grade and 12 in the Poidevin-Gray Shield). Of the batsmen, Herb Fallowfield (360 runs at 20.0) and Les Molloy (335 at 23.9) did best.

The Shires team again contested the "B" grade competition and as usual had a number of young cricketers playing on turf wickets for the first time. A number showed potential although many, in the captain's own words "sacrificed judgement for brilliance"¹⁶. For the first time since 1925/26 the Shires team was led by someone other than Ben Wheeler or Cyril Jagoe with Arthur Wilson, in his first season with the club, taking over the reins. Although the team performed only moderately, winning four from 12 matches, there were a couple of fine individual efforts, including a brilliant innings of 102 against North Sydney by Stuart Crouch, and a hat-trick by 13-year-old Bill Hannam against Lindfield.

Tom Cole took over the captaincy of the 1936/37 Northern District Poidevin-Gray team that could only win two of its five matches. Centuries to the two emerging first grade players, Bill Morris (109 not out vs Waverley) and Bill Englefield (101 not out vs Mosman) and 20 wickets from just 41 overs by off-spinner G Brown, were some of the individual highlights.

1937/38

Prior to the start of the 1930/31 season Northern District had attempted to recruit a promising young batsman named Arthur Chipperfield. Although born at Ashfield (in 1905), Chipperfield had played his early cricket in Newcastle before commencing his grade career with Western Suburbs in the 1926/27 season. He later returned to Newcastle and it may have been from there that Northern District tried to recruit him. A brilliant, but inconsistent batsman he came to prominence when he scored 152 in just 206 minutes for a Northern Districts representative team at **Newcastle against Douglas Jardine's 1932/33 MCC team**. He made his debut for NSW in 1933/34 and although he only scored 105 runs in three innings he was selected for the 1934 Australian tour of England. Picked in the First Test at Trent Bridge he became the first Australian batsman to be dismissed for 99 on debut. He toured South Africa in 1935/36 this time scoring 109 in the First Test at Durban¹⁷. In 1937/38 Chipperfield joined Northern District – the first Test cricketer to play for the club.

Chipperfield reinforced what was already an extremely strong first grade team – and one of the favourites for the 1937/38 premiership. Going into the eighth round match against Randwick the team was undefeated. Randwick batted on the first day of the game (8 January) and scored 337, however, because of representative matches, the second day was not played until almost three weeks later, on 26 January – the Australia Day holiday. The long break, on top of a four-week break over Christmas, meant that most of the Northern District batsman had not been to the crease since the 11th of December. This, together with a lack of net practice told, and the team was dismissed for just 192. The loss triggered a slump that saw the team lose its next two matches, and despite wins against St George and Mosman and an unlucky draw against Marrickville, the chance of taking the title had gone. The team eventually finished in sixth place.



Arthur Chipperfield

Once again Hugh Chilvers and Tim Caldwell **dominated the team's bowling**, each taking in excess of 50 wickets for the second consecutive season – **Chilvers' 56 wickets at 14.5 giving him a share of the grade aggregate (with Balmain's Fred Mair)** while Caldwell was only just behind him with 54 at 17.8. In the four seasons since Caldwell had joined the first grade team on a permanent basis (from 1934/35 to 1937/38) the two spinners had taken a total of 427 wickets: Caldwell taking 219 and Chilvers 208.

With Chipperfield absent on a number of occasions on representative duties the batting again relied heavily on Les Fallowfield who, for the fourth season in a row headed the batting averages (37.1), and for the second consecutive season, won the **batting aggregate (556)**. **His 150 against Petersham was the team's only century of the season** although Chipperfield, Bill Morris and Dick Taylor all scored 90s.

In seven innings Chipperfield scored 209 at an average of 34.8 including a determined 93 which allowed the team to hold out for a draw in the second round match against Waverley. He played seven matches for NSW, including one against a touring New Zealand team, scoring 278 runs at 25.3 and won a place in his second tour to England in 1938. Rather surprisingly, given the consistently good performances by Caldwell, Chilvers and Fallowfield, Chipperfield was Northern District's **only representative player during the 1937/38 season**.

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The second grade team again finished in mid-table (sixth) with six wins (including three outright) from its 13 matches. Despite finishing the previous season **in first grade, the club's promising young wicket-keeper**, Bill Englefield, was shuffled between the top two grades for most of the season. In second grade he scored 338 runs and topped the team averages with 67.6 with a top score of 111. Another exciting young batsman, Stuart Kilgour, **promoted from third grade in 1936/37 was the team's most consistent bat**, his 402 runs including five fifties. An aggressive batsman especially on **the straight drive, Kilgour also backed up as the team's wicket-keeper** whenever Englefield played first grade.

The second grade team's strength lay in a well-balanced bowling attack with the top four bowlers all taking 30 wickets or more. Phil Dunncliffe, with 49 wickets at **an average of 16.9 won the bowling 'double', his best performances being 6-34** against Mosman and 5-29 against Cumberland. Ray Badger had the best match figures for the season, taking 10-43 (5-25 and 5-18), also against Cumberland, on his way to a total of 30 wickets, while Jack Agnew (35) and spinner, Bill Law (34) also bowled consistently throughout the season.

A glance at the 1937/38 third grade team's batting statistics gives a fair indication of the team's performance. In 13 matches five of the team's batsmen played in excess of 20 innings each while one of them, Albert Small, won the batting averages with 19.5. A legendary hitter, Small hit 19 sixes during the season. The team managed **to win just one match all season. One of the few positives to come out of third grade's** season was the debut of Greg Lynch, a 24-year-old leg spinner who had played all his previous senior cricket at Moore Park in the business houses competition. His tally of 44 wickets (at 12.4) including returns of 6-36, 6-42, 6-41 and 5-47, the latter two in the same match against Mosman at Mosman Oval.

The performances of the three grade teams gave the club 485 points in the Club Championship and ninth place, well behind the winners, Glebe (715 points).

Prior to the start of the season, the NSW Cricket Association abolished the fourth grade competition and replaced it with a new Colts Grade, to commence in the 1938/39 season. Only players under the age of 23 as at the start of the season would be eligible with the exception of the team captain.

In 1937/38 the club's fourth team again contesting the Municipal and Shire "B" Grade competition. That great club stalwart Wally Rothwell captained a young side to seventh place with eight wins from 13 games. But for bad luck the team would have two more outright wins, losing outright to both Glebe (the eventual premiers) and Ryde after taking first innings leads in both matches but then having players absent through illness for the second innings (against Glebe) and captain Rothwell, injured in a serious car accident, and unable to bat in the second innings against Ryde.

Rothwell **recovered sufficiently to make the team's highest individual score of** the season, 94 against North Sydney at Turramurra Oval, including a remarkable 32 from one over (eight balls) with two sixes and five fours. As ever, there were a number of fine young players in the Shires team, most playing on turf for the first time. At least five of them were to later play first grade including Jim Laird, Maurice Hartigan, Bill Hannam, Cyril Jagoe and John Jagoe. The 16-year-old Laird came from the far north coast where he had played with the Riverslea and Tintenbar clubs. In his first season at Northern District he headed the batting aggregate with 460 runs including a top score of 96 against the NSW Juniors team, while 15-year-old Hannam took out both the batting and bowling averages with 191 runs at 38.2 and 19 wickets at 9.5.

Probably the most disappointing performance of the 1937/38 season was that of the **Poidevin-Gray team who failed to win any of their six matches. The club's outstanding batting prospect, Bill Morris, produced one of the few highlights, scored 127 (from a team total of 189) in the match against Gordon.**

The success of the Poidevin-Gray competition in developing junior cricketers led to the inauguration, in 1937/38, of a second age competition, this one for schoolboys under the age of 17 to be played on grade turf wickets on Saturday mornings during the final school term each year. The shield for which the teams would compete was donated jointly by FM Cush and RG Herford and was originally planned to be known as the Cush-Herford Shield. However shortly afterwards, in recognition of its recently deceased former president, the NSW Cricket Association, decided that it should be named the AW Green Shield.

Northern District entered a team in the inaugural Green Shield competition, which was led by Bill Hannam and included several young players who would make huge contributions to the club over the years, in 12-year-old John Kershaw (a nephew of Hugh Chilvers) and 13-year-old Ian Fraser. The team did well, winning three of its five matches to finish in sixth place.

1938/39

After finishing second in the 1936/37 Club Championship and ninth in **1937/38, Northern District's slide continued and they were only able to finish in thirteenth place** in 1938/39, principally because of an extremely poor performance by the second grade team who were able to win just one match all season. Indeed all four lower grade teams disappointed – winning just nine matches from a total of 52 played.

The first grade team, again captained by George Williams, once more had the personnel with which to take the Belvidere Cup but could only manage to finish in **sixth place. The team's batting again proved to be its weakness with the main weapons, Fallowfield and Chipperfield both averaging only in the high 20s. Indeed when the centuries that each scored (Fallowfield's 133 against Cumberland and Chipperfield's 112 against Wests) are deducted their averages dropped to the low 20s.** The only batsman to play to his potential was Bill Morris who scored 415 at an average of 37.7 including a 99 against Cumberland.

The season did see the grade debut of an exciting young cricketer destined to become one of the great characters of the game. In just three seasons with the Brooklyn club, the first in 1934/35 when he was aged 15, Bill Alley had scored 2693 runs, including seven centuries – five of them in excess of 150. His highest score of 251 not out during the 1936/37 season set a new record individual score for the Hornsby District Cricket Association competition. The record stood until the 1957/58 season when it was broken by another Northern District player, Gordon Dorrrough, who scored 255 not out for Thornleigh against Berowra at Berowra Oval¹⁸.

Northern District had been aware of Alley's talent for several years and he had attended a number of club practices during the previous season. There was a minor controversy when a member of the Hornsby Junior Cricket Association who had accompanied Alley to the first 1937/38 pre-season practice accused the club of snubbing the youngster, an charge which was refuted by those in charge of the practice. Later in the 1937/38 season Alley represented combined NSW Junior Union against a NSWCA team at the SCG and also played for NSW in the Australian junior carnival played in Adelaide.

Alley went straight into the first grade team and made an immediate impression. Playing regularly on turf for the first time, he scored 365 runs at an average of 26.6 and also kept wickets, no easy task against spin bowlers of the quality of **Chilvers and Caldwell. The latter once again were the club's leading wicket takers,**

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with 46 and 33 wickets respectively, while Frank Gilmore's **32 wickets was the most** by an Northern District first grade pace bowler since Gordon Stewart had taken 33 in the 1932/33 season. Gilmore was rewarded with selection in the NSW Sheffield Shield **side for matches against Victoria at the SCG and Queensland at the 'Gabba. A bowler** of genuine pace he opened the bowling in both matches, capturing 3-50 and 1-30 in the first game, but was punished in the Queensland game having 83 runs taken from his 13 overs without a wicket, and subsequently losing his spot. They were to be his only first class matches.

The second grade team, led for the first time by Bill Law, had an abysmal season. From 13 matches, they had one first innings win, six outright losses and six first innings losses. Their 13 points was the lowest ever by a Northern District second grade team and the second lowest by a Northern District team, and it was the first time that second grade team had finished last. Despite this there were several useful **individual performances: captain Law's double of 365 runs and 25 wickets, Reg Crowe's 48 wickets, and Charlie Carruthers' 417 runs.**

Third grade performed only marginally better, finishing in 14th place with just three wins and eight losses. After a season with the Shires team, long-serving captain Wally Rothwell, now aged 53, returned to again lead the side. The tireless Rothwell missed a couple of matches when he travelled to Melbourne and Adelaide as manager of the NSW Sheffield Shield.

Young leg spinner Greg Lynch again showed himself to be a bowler of potential, taking 44 wickets at 17.2 and earning a second grade spot at the end of the season. Another youngster having his first season on turf was all-rounder, Ray Rowell, who scored 345 runs (at 26.5) and took 21 wickets (at 17.1). His innings of 141 against Waverley on a damp wicket marked him as a batsman of real quality. The **team's hitter, Albert Small**, again provided entertainment as well as threatening local houses, in topping the third grade batting aggregate, highlighted by his customary century – 117 not out against Gordon.

A new grade competition was introduced for the 1938/39 season. Known as the Colts grade it was open to players under the age of 23 as at the start of the season **with an age exclusion for each team's captain. The competition was well received**, certainly by Northern District, a club which had a long history of promoting young players. As it was, the competition ran for just one season due to the onset of the Second World War, although it was resurrected again briefly immediately after the War, although again only for one season. The Northern District team was captained by Jack Wilson **who was the best of the team's bowlers, taking 38 wickets at 13.2.** Maurice Hartigan had the best individual performance, taking 9-32 against Manly at **Epping Oval. The team's batting was disappointing with only one batsman, Charlie Webster (312 runs at 22.3), topping 300 for the season.**

The Shires team continued the season's poor lower grade performances winning just two of their 13 matches. Bob Butcher (43 wickets) and Tom Marchington **(33) were the best of the team's bowlers**, with C Moore (378 runs at 22.2) was the only batsman to exceed 300 runs.

In an extended Poidevin-Gray competition the Northern District team played seven matches, winning three and losing four, all on the first innings. Bill Alley was brilliant, easily passing the previous club record Poidevin-Gray aggregate (403 by Les Fallowfield in 1934/35), and establishing a new Shield record of 573 runs at an average of 71.6; taking 12 wickets at 21.9; keeping wicket when he **wasn't bowling; all** while captaining the side, playing first grade on Saturdays, working as Assistant Club **Coach, and travelling down from Brooklyn for practice and matches. Alley's travelling** distance paled when compared with that of Bob Frazer, who came down from Woy Woy each weekend to play third grade and Poidevin-Gray.

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In the younger junior competition, the Northern District AW Green Shield played six matches, winning two, losing three and drawing one. There was one minor modification to the competition rules with the team captain allowed to be over the age of 17, although he was not allowed to either bat, bowl or keep wicket! Whether many clubs took advantage of this supposed concession is not known.

Although he was to make his mark as an outstanding batsman, 13-year-old John Kershaw, **put in the Green Shield team's best bowling performance of 5-22** in a match against Mosman. Several other young players made their club debut with the 1938/39 Green Shield team, including Max Lloyd.

The season also saw the opening of Cricket House in George Street, Sydney, the building having been designed by leading Sydney architect, and former NDCC first grade captain, Frank Buckle.

During the season Wally Rothwell, in his capacity as one of the two NDCC delegates to the NSW Cricket Association, managed the NSW team on its southern tour to Victoria and South Australia.

1939/40

At the club's 1939 Annual General Meeting, held on 12 July 1939, Wally Rothwell, Hugh Chilvers and Bert Patterson were all elected as life members. Sadly, just six months later, Patterson died from an infection following an operation to remove a kidney stone at Sydney Hospital. Just 40 years old he left a wife, one son (Alan Patterson, who later also played for Northern District), and two daughters, the youngest only a toddler. A foundation member of the club, Patterson had been a great servant of ND both on and off the field, captaining the second grade team between 1930/31 and 1937/38 as well as being a selector and a member of the general committee.

Patterson's death was one of three to strike the club within a twelve-month period. Carl Brennan, **one of the club's most promising young players in the mid-to-late 1920s,** also died, as did former Shires team captain and NDCC treasurer, Ben Wheeler, at the age of 51.

The outbreak of the Second World War just one month prior to the start of the 1939/40 season brought calls from some directions for the Sydney grade competition to be cancelled, however in the best interests of the community in general it was decided to continue as normal. Indeed the Sydney grade competition was to continue throughout the war years although the Sheffield Shield competition was suspended between 1940/41 and 1945/46.

Although, the next five years would see a large number of Northern District players join the various armed services, the effect during the 1939/40 season was negligible and the standard of competition remained high. Allowances were made for those players who were called away on military duties, substitutes were allowed for the second day of a match where a player became unavailable after having played on the first day.

On paper, the Northern District first grade team had arguably its strongest line-up since the **club's formation.** In **Hugh Chilvers,** Tim Caldwell, Arthur Chipperfield, Les Fallowfield and Bill Alley it



Vern Clifton.

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had five past or future first class cricketers and another, Bill Morris, who played one match for the NSW Second XI in 1939/40. The only significant loss was all-rounder Frank Gilmore who moved to the country, and this was largely offset by the arrival of ex-Marrickville batsman Vern Clifton. Considered by many to be the best batsman ever to play on the Central Coast, Clifton was a younger brother of Arthur Clifton who had played for Northern District in the early 1930s. Vern had previously played first grade with the Marrickville club in 1932/33 and 1933/34, travelling down from Lisarow each weekend to play. Rejected for army service because of a serious arm injury he moved to Carlingford in 1939 where he worked in a wartime production factory. He had originally planned to play for Central Cumberland but subsequently **found that he lived within Northern District's boundaries. As his brother had done in** the 1931/32 season Vern Clifton topped the first grade batting averages in his first season with ND, scoring 300 runs at 42.9.

While **the team's young batsmen, Bill Morris** (510 runs at 42.5), Bill Alley (472 at 29.5) and Tom Cole (326 at 21.7) each performed up to expectations the senior bats, especially Chipperfield (267 at 26.7) and Fallowfield (292 at 22.5) were disappointing.

The first grade bowling was again placed squarely on the shoulders of the two spinners, Caldwell and Chilvers who took 49 and 47 wickets respectively although, for only the second time since 1931/32, another player won the bowling averages – fast bowler Reg Crowe with 30 wickets at 19.3.

Despite the abundant talent the first grade team finished in a disappointing ninth place, its lowest placing in seven seasons. At the end of the season, George Williams, who had captained the side for the previous ten seasons, announced his retirement. Tragically for one who had been such a brilliant athlete, Williams was being increasingly incapacitated by a combination of osteoarthritis and asthma and found it difficult to continue playing.

The 1939/40 Northern District second grade team was captained, until his untimely death, by Bert Patterson and from then on by Col Cameron, who had joined the club in the previous season. The team won four matches from 13 played to finish in 13th place with insufficient practice and player turnover being seen as major contributors to the disappointing results. There were several good individual performances. With the bat Ken Griffith (430 runs) and Phil Payne (428) both topped 400 runs for the season, the latter again showing the capacity to make big scores, his 183 against Petersham being the highest score in the second grade competition for the season. Only one bowler, Col Cameron 43 at 16.7), exceeded 25 wickets.

Wally Rothwell once again began the season as captain of the third grade team, but later had to step down when he was appointed secretary of the Pennant Hills Golf Club, handing the reins to Jack Wilson. With 32 different players selected during the season the team never settled, finishing in twelfth place with five wins from thirteen matches. Topping both the batting aggregate and averages for the season was Albert Small whose 377 runs included two typically hectic centuries (his fifth and sixth for the club) against Petersham and St George.

Second in the batting averages with 199 runs at 49.7 was a 17-year-old right hand batsman named Frank Collins. **Although he made his debut in 1939/40, Collins'** association with Northern District went back to the early 1930s when he and another youngster, Vince Holt, had helped maintain the scoreboard at Waitara Oval. From that vantage point Collins was able to watch many of the



Frank Collins.

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great players of the era in action, including a number with whom he would eventually become teammates.

Collins had a fine cricketing pedigree, his father being a first cousin of former Australian Test captain, Herb Collins. Frank played his early cricket with the Hornsby club in the Hornsby Cricket Association from where he was selected in the NSW Junior Union team which played in the Shires competition. While playing there he was noticed by Wally Rothwell and Cyril Jagoe who suggested that he join ND. A fine attacking batsman he was to represent Northern District with distinction, both on and off the field, until the early 1960s. In addition, his talent spotting ability was to prove critical to the club winning its initial first grade premiership in the late 1940s.

With many young men enlisting for war service the Association decided to abolish the U/23 Colts grade and to re-form the fourth grade competition. Later, as the flow of enlistments increased the fourth grade competition would lapse between 1940/41 and 1947/48. The 1939/40 ND fourth grade team was captained by Tom Marchington and won four out of 13 matches. Only one batsman exceeded 300 runs (Norman Moore, 355 at 39.4) and one bowler passed 30 wickets (Albert Dawkins, 35 at 19.3). Maurice Hartigan was the only century maker, scoring 104.

The Poidevin-Gray team was again dominated by Bill Alley who, for the second successive season, passed 500 runs, scoring exactly 500 at 62.5 with three centuries. Despite this the team could only finish with three wins and three losses from their six matches.

The club fielded an extremely young Green Shield team with many of the players still under 14 years of age. Despite the undoubted promise they struggled against much older players and were beaten in all four of their matches. One of the youngsters had a most prestigious pedigree. P Garrett was a grandson of Tom Garrett, who had played for Australia in the first Test match against England in 1877 and later made three tours to England, playing a total of 19 Tests. The longest surviving member of the 1877 Test team, Garrett was an Associate Member and Vice President of the Northern District Cricket Club from 1927 through until his death in 1943.

1940/41

By the start of the second wartime season the club had lost a number of players to the various armed services. The biggest loss was undoubtedly Tim Caldwell who had joined the AIF and was destined to be away from cricket for the entire duration of the war, eventually returning midway through the 1945/46 season. During the war Caldwell saw action at Tobruk, El Alamein, New Guinea and Bougainville. He was wounded at Tobruk but was fortunate in that bullet which



Jim Laird (left) and Doug Fagan.

struck him passed through his elbow without striking the bone or seriously damaging any muscle. At El Alamein in 1942 he was awarded the British Empire Medal for outstanding gallantry when, as one of five members of an ammunition party, he held his post for five days while under constant enemy fire..

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Ian Fraser, Bob Firth, AV Mayne, Ray Rowell, Alan Parker and Bill Morris also joined the AIF; Tom Marchington enlisted in the Royal Navy; Cliff Arthur in the RAN; Arthur Wilson and Alan Somerville in the RAAF; while Bob Frazer, Cyril Jagoe, Jim Laird and Tom Millner were involved in Home Defence.

Three new players made their first grade debuts with the club. Jim Laird, one of the club most promising young players, while Cec Davidson and Doug Fagan both came from the Lisarow Cricket Club on the Central Coast. Davidson was a cousin of Vern Clifton and an uncle of Alan Davidson, while 17-year-old Fagan was one of the most promising all-round cricketers in the Gosford competition, having set a new district record individual score of 262 not out (in just 135 minutes!) during the previous season.

Northern District's location on the northern region of Sydney gave it a significant advantage over others clubs in that it was the natural club for players from the Central Coast to join. While all clubs were governed by the strict residential rules of the Sydney grade competition, players from outside of Sydney were free to play for the club of their choice. Since the arrival of Arthur Allsopp in 1927 Northern District had attracted many talented cricketers from north of the Hawkesbury and in the 1940/41 season they had four such players in Clifton, Davidson, Fagan and Bob Frazer.

The season for first grade could hardly have been more disappointing, **finishing in second last place, the club's worst performance in first grade since 1926/27** when they finished in equal last place. The loss of Bill Morris and Tim Caldwell, together with an inexplicable slump in form from Les Fallowfield, were the main contributors. Of the remaining batsman only the rising star Alley performed up to expectations, although by his later standards even he had a modest year, scoring 393 runs at 24.6. Phil Payne (315 at 22.5) played several good innings while Vern Clifton's **120 against his former club, Marrickville**, was the only first grade century for the season. Fallowfield could manage just 176 runs at 10.4, although he justified his place in the team by picking up 30 wickets at 16.5. Doug Fagan with 216 runs and 27 wickets showed genuine all-round ability.

Hugh Chilvers, as usual was the dominant bowler, taking 50 wickets in a season for the fourth time. Late in the season Chilvers took over the captaincy of the team from Col Cameron, whose form saw him dropped to second grade.

The second grade team had a moderate season, with one outright and five first innings wins from 13 matches, finishing in 12th place. Led by Frank Day they struggled to find batting consistency with only Day himself (520 runs at 43.3) and Maurice Hartigan (384 at 25.6) scoring in excess of 250 runs for the season. Tall and thinly built, Hartigan was a steady, reliable right hand opening batsman and right-arm medium pace bowler, who was later wounded while overseas on military service.

The bowling was more reliable with Greg Lynch (36), Hartigan (31) and pace bowler Albert Dawkins (26) being the main contributors.

Also playing in the team, in his first season of grade cricket, was 29-year-old Alf Ziehlke. The grandson of a German doctor who migrated to Australia in 1871, Ziehlke came to ND fresh from a remarkable 962-run/60-wicket double with the Hornsby District club in the 1939/40 Hornsby DCA A grade competition. He bowled leg-spin with an unusual low, side-arm action, and although he didn't turn the ball a great deal he had a good variety including a well-disguised wrong-'un and a top-spinner which consistently trapped any batsman foolish enough to try



Alf Ziehlke, pictured in his early 20s.

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The 1941/42 NDCC first grade team. Rear (l to r): D Metcalfe (Umpire), Bill Englefield, Les Fallowfield, Maurice Hartigan, Doug Fagan, Bill Alley, P Bates (Umpire). Front (l to r): Phil Payne, Frank Day, Bill Hannam, George Williams (C), Lloyd Gollan, Hugh Chilvers.

and play him of the back foot. With Greg Lynch he would form a spin bowling partnership to rival that of Chilvers and Caldwell in first grade - each consistently taking 50-plus wickets in a season for the best part of a decade.

Ziehlke, who was to become one of the club's great characters, was an intense and enthusiastic cricketer. Whenever he was away from the bowling crease for any length of time he would impatiently patrol the field chewing pieces of grass. Indeed the groundsman at Waitara Oval, Jim Sullivan would joke that he could always tell **when Alf hadn't been given a bowl by the bare patches on the ground!**

George Williams' brief retirement lasted only through the winter months, the shortage of players, especially experienced ones, drawing him back to captain the Northern District third grade team. With the principal focus within the community being on the war effort, cricket, especially in the lower grades, became a little less serious than previously and many of the third grade matches took on a picnic atmosphere. Enjoyment of the game took precedence over results and with 31 different players in the team at various times the third grade team was only able to win one match all season. Only two batsmen passed 250 runs: Williams (386 at 29.7) and Bob Frazer (399 at 33.2) while the leading bowler, R Quint, took just 18 wickets.

With the cancellation of the fourth grade competition the Shires team again **became the club's number four team. Led again by Cyril Jagoe** they also struggled, winning just two matches although four of their six first innings losses were decided by **small margins. The skipper's 18-year-old younger son, John Jagoe,** was the standout player, scoring 303 runs (at 17.8) including the season high score of 96

against the strong Ryde team, and taking 53 wickets (at 15.4). B Connors was the **team's leading run scorer, with 423 runs at 20.1.**

Despite the loss of Bill Alley, who had turned 21 prior to the start of the season, the Northern District Poidevin-Gray team performed well, losing just one of their seven matches, the others being two outright wins, two first innings wins, one draw and a tie. The Poidevin-Gray season featured a number of excellent performances, most with the ball, including Doug Fagan's **twin efforts of 7-19** against Glebe and 5-31 against Manly, and captain Bill Hannam's **8-67** against Mosman.

Hannam, who had previously captained the club's Green Shield team, was clearly an all-rounder of promise, both as a right-hand batsman and an off-spin bowler. He played the entire 1940/41 season in first grade and although he struggled with the bat he did manage to pick up 18 wickets (at 28.9). Unfortunately Hannam had his thumb crushed the following winter when playing rugby union for Sydney University and, fearful that any further injury might jeopardise his chosen career as a doctor, he decided to give up both cricket and rugby. After graduating Hannam worked at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and after five years at Lithgow set up a private practice at Eastwood where he remained until his retirement in the mid-1990s.

At the end of the season the Hornsby Council's long-serving groundsman, 'Bricky' Love retired. 'Bricky' had spent most of his working life as a cricket pitch curator, maintaining the home grounds of the Gordon and Paddington clubs before taking over Waitara Oval at the start of Northern District's first season in 1925/26. He established a tradition which was to be carried on by his various successors for many years to come. His immediate successor, Jim Sullivan, himself a Northern District player, was to maintain the ground from 1941 through until the late 1950s.

1941/42

Prior to the start of the 1941/42 season the NSW Cricket Association again resisted some external pressure to cancel the grade competition and continued with the three grades and Municipal and Shire. Midway through the season it became clear that many players were finding it difficult to guarantee being able to play on two successive Saturdays and so the NSWCA changed to one-day matches with each team having half of the available time (not overs) for their innings.

A further threat to the competition came at the end of 1941 when severe water shortages almost prevented the preparation of turf wickets throughout Sydney. At many grounds water was carted in, while at others bores were sunk. At Waitara Oval, Northern District was fortunate in its proximity to the Hornsby Bowling Club, the two sporting bodies combining with Hornsby Council to sink a bore at the northern end of the oval.

With the shortage of senior players, George Williams returned to captain the first grade team, for the 11th season. The team played 19 matches, winning nine and losing nine with the other game drawn. The glorious uncertainty of cricket was rarely more evident than in the two-year performance of Les Fallowfield. In 1940/41 he had batted 18 times for 176 runs with a highest score of 38. His batting average of 10.4 was the lowest of any player in the team. In 1941/42 Fallowfield batted 17 times for 1011 runs at an average of 72.2, and in scoring five consecutive centuries, broke a 44-year-old Sydney grade record set by the legendary Victor Trumper. His effort was all the more remarkable in that, firstly, he was employed at an aircraft factory and generally worked through each Friday night; secondly, that he opened both the batting and the bowling in most matches; and thirdly that he missed the last three matches of the season. His run of centuries began in the first match of the season

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against Balmain at Birchgrove Oval where he scored 109, followed by 103 against Cumberland at Lidcombe Oval, 109 against North Sydney, 129 against Marrickville and 135 against Mosman, the last three all at Waitara Oval. Surprisingly **Fallowfield's 1011 runs was not the highest of the Sydney grade season, Marrickville batsman and future Test player, Ron Saggars, scoring 1150. Fallowfield's average of 72.2 was the best, ahead of Saggars' 63.9.**

Fallowfield's was just one of three extraordinary performances by Northern District players. Hugh Chilvers, with 110 wickets easily surpassed his own record for the most wickets in a season of 67 set in 1936/37; and wicket-keeper, Bill Englefield, made 56 dismissals – a new Sydney grade record. Whilst the greater number of matches played during the season (19) clearly made it easier for all three players to set these new marks it should be noted that Fallowfield played 17 innings in 1941/42 against 14 by Roy Loder when he had set the previous batting aggregate record in 1925/26 and that Chilvers bowled 319 overs in 1941/42 as against 271 in 1936/37.



By 1941/42 Bill Englefield had established himself as one of the best wicket-keepers in the Sydney grade competition.

Chilvers' 110 wickets (at 10.4) was the most in a season since the formation of the Sydney grade competition in 1893/94, passing the previous record set by Arthur Mailey, playing for Balmain in 1915/16. The record was a close thing however, Bill O'Reilly taking 108 wickets for St George and winning the district averages with 9.00. Indeed, in the 14 seasons between 1931/32 and 1944/45 O'Reilly was to win the Sydney grade bowling averages on no less than 12 occasions.

The improvement in Englefield's game was quite dramatic. His potential had been recognised since he made his grade debut in the 1935/36 season, but it wasn't until 1941/42 that he was able to make the first grade 'keeping spot his own. His ratio of stumpings to catches (28 of each) in 1941/42 indicates the degree to which he and Chilvers complemented each other. The pace at which Chilvers bowled, together with the turn and bounce which he generated, made him a difficult bowler to 'keep to and it is a measure of the quality of Englefield's play that he virtually took every chance offered during the season. By the end of the season he was widely acknowledged as the best wicket-keeper in the Sydney competition, however in the absence of the Sheffield Shield competition this could not be recognised.

Fallowfield's batting tended to overshadow the fine performance of Bill Alley, who scored 658 runs at an average of 34.6. The unorthodox nature of his batting, together with his power made him an ideal batsman for one-day cricket, as his performances over the following two seasons were to indicate. Of the other batsmen the best performed were Fallowfield's opening partner Maurice Hartigan (478 at 23.9 with a century against Marrickville) and Phil Payne (376 at 19.8).

The second grade team's effort to finish in ninth place was quite respectable given the fact that 31 different players took the field at various times during the season. Indeed only one player played in every match. The team was captained by Greg Lynch until a broken thumb in the match against Randwick forced him to miss a number of matches. In his absence Ellis Rothwell took over the captaincy. Unlike first grade no individual player dominated, although Frank Collins (453 runs at 26.6), Ken Griffith (282 runs at 47.0) and Albert Dawkins (34 wickets at 23.1) all performed well.

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In third grade, a record 45 players passed through the team during 1941/42. Led by 56-year-old Wally Rothwell, the team began poorly and had barely a point on the board by Christmas. In the New Year they clicked and by the end of the season had accumulated 61 points to finish in a creditable ninth place. No player stood out with the highest batting aggregate being just 205 runs and the bowling aggregate 34 wickets, by Maurice Slade, a 17-year-old right arm fast bowler from the Eastwood Cricket Club who played just four matches and captured 64 wickets at an average of 6.9 – the best not only for the club but also for the entire third grade competition. A big future was forecast for Slade and another promising young quick in Owen Cotter. Indeed both were to play a number of first grade matches during the following season. A talented all-round sportsman, Cotter was also one of the district's best tennis players, golfers and captained the Eastwood Burke Cup rugby team to a premiership in 1946.

After playing until early in January 1942, the Northern District Shires team was forced to drop out of the competition after a number of other teams had withdrawn necessitating a re-draw. The team would not be re-formed until the 1944/45 season.

One interesting innovation by the club was the erection of a notice board at the entrance to Hornsby Railway Station on which were posted details of upcoming matches.

1942/43

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the batting, bowling and wicket keeping records set during the 1941/42 season by Les Fallowfield, Hugh Chilvers and Bill Englefield respectively was that all three were broken in 1942/43. In the first full season of one-day matches, each of the three grades played 23 matches. This, together with a decline in the overall standard of play due to the increasing loss of experienced players, undoubtedly contributed to the breaking of the three records but, nevertheless it was still a considerable achievement by the three players involved. Hugh Chilvers and Bill Englefield, by now the most potent combination of bowler and wicket-keeper in Sydney, each broke their own record. The illness to regular captain, George Williams, meant that Chilvers had the extra burden of captaincy however



A fascinating photograph of the wartime crowd at Waitara Oval during the match between Northern District and Mosman on 15

it didn't affect his bowling, taking 126 wickets at an average of 10.4 from 292 overs –

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The 1942/43 Northern District first grade team which played St George at Waitara Oval. Rear (l to r): Bill Englefield, Bill Alley, Vern Clifton, Jim Sullivan, Owen Cotter and Ellis Rothwell. Front (l to r): Jim Laird, Les Fallowfield, Hugh Chilvers (Captain), Phil Payne and Alan Parker.

27 fewer than he had bowled when taking 110 wickets in 1941/42. His tally remains a club record, Steve Whitfield's 1984/85 tally of 64 being the closest any other player has come to it. It also broke the Sydney grade record, and this time he comfortably defeated his old rival, O'Reilly, who 'only' took 109 wickets, although again the 'Tiger' had a superior average (8.6 against Chilvers' 10.4). For the second successive season, and the third in his career, took nine wickets in an innings: 9-58 against Paddington at Waitara.

Behind the stumps, Bill Englefield broke his own one-year-old Sydney grade record of 56 dismissals by taking 66, with 34 catches and 32 stumpings, a record which still stands in 2000.

Les Fallowfield's club batting record of 1011 runs also fell, narrowly beaten by Bill Alley, who scored 1026 at an average of 46.6 including centuries against Cumberland (113) at Waitara Oval and Randwick (103) at Coogee Oval. Again, as had been the case with Fallowfield's aggregate in 1941/42, Alley's was not the highest in the competition, North Sydney's Test batsman, Sid Barnes, establishing a new Sydney grade record of 1333 runs. Alley, however, was to have the final say. In the 1943/44 season, while playing with his new club, Petersham, he scored 1413 runs to establish a record aggregate which still stands 57 years later.

In five seasons with Northern District, all in first grade, Alley had scored 2914 runs at an average of 33.5. However, by 1942 he had married and the following year he and his wife moved to Petersham. As a consequence he was no longer permitted to play for Northern District but with his local club, Petersham, where he scored a further 3040 runs in next five seasons. Despite scoring three centuries for New South

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Bill Alley.

Wales in interstate matches during the 1945/46 season¹⁹ Alley was unable to hold a permanent place in the post-War NSW team, and following the tragic death of his wife he moved to England. There he played Lancashire League for nine years before being called up, at the age of 38, to play county cricket for Somerset. In 1961, at the age of 42, he amassed 3019 runs in an English county season – the only non-Test cricketer to have done so, including eleven centuries (two plus a 95 in three innings against Richie Benaud's touring Australian team) and was named one of the five Wisden Cricketers of the Year. After his retirement Alley became a first class umpire and, between 1974 and 1981, a highly respected Test umpire.

In the absence of Sheffield Shield cricket, the NSWCA arranged several matches between NSW and Combined Services teams, the latter including Test players such as Jack Fingleton and Bill Brown, and future Test players like Ray Lindwall, Arthur Morris and Don Tallon. In the 1942/43 match both Fallowfield and Chilvers played in the NSW team.

Compared with his own previous season, and Alley's effort, Les Fallowfield had only a moderate year, but was still able to score 498 runs at an average of 31.1, the third best behind Alley. Splitting these two was a most promising young all-rounder named Ossie Elliott who opened the batting with Fallowfield in several matches, scoring 242 at 35.6. A student at the King's School, Elliott had joined Northern District midway through the 1941/42 season, playing during the school's summer break. Such had been his obvious talent that, after just one match in second grade, he was promoted to firsts where he played several matches. His innings of 84 against Waverley in the 1942/43 season, played on a treacherous wicket, marked him as a player with the potential to play cricket at least at first class level. Tragically Elliott was killed in action just weeks before the end of the war in 1945. He was the only Northern District player to die during the Second World War.

The outstanding performances of its leading players saw the first grade team finish in fourth place in the 1942/43 competition, its best finish in six seasons.

The second grade team also performed well, winning 12 of its 23 matches. It could easily have been 15 with two matches against Paddington being lost by five and three runs respectively, and one against Manly by just one run. The outstanding performers for the team were its captain, Greg Lynch, whose tally of 63 wickets (at 10.6) broke Rowley Cuddy's 11-year-old second grade record; leg-spinner Alf Ziehlke, who also passed the old mark, taking 58 wickets at 11.9 while also scoring 268 runs; and Ellis Rothwell, playing for most of the season against doctor's orders, who had a fine double of 368 runs and 26 wickets.

Despite fielding a team composed almost entirely of new players to the club, the third grade team, led again by veteran Wally Rothwell, began the season in most promising style winning four of its first five matches. They eventually finished in a creditable fifth place with 13 wins from 23 matches. Remarkably, given that he was now 58 years old, Rothwell was able to take the batting aggregate/average double with 376 runs at 22.1, a feat he had first achieved 17 years earlier, in second grade in the club's first (1925/26) season and had repeated on four occasions.

As was generally the case in that era most matches were dominated by bowlers and Hedley Day (68 wickets), Ron Boswell (37) and Bill Warburton (35), all with averages around 13 took the majority of third grade's wickets. Day was the first third

grade bowler to take in excess of 50 wickets in a season, passing Frank Smith's record of 49 wickets, set in 1932/33. Day's record still stands.

Northern District's cricketer/groundsman, Jim Sullivan had the distinct advantage of playing every match on his own ground: eight in first grade, eight in seconds and four in thirds. Less impressed was the Petersham club which played Northern District twice during the season. In the Round 15 second grade match at Waitara, Sullivan hammered 107 in just 61 minutes, an innings which his captain described as the "*finest exhibition of controlled hitting ... for some years*"²⁰. Then in Round 21 he repeated the dose in the third grade match against Paddington.



Jim Sullivan

Despite the problems of military transfers and the frequent last-minute cancellation of leave, only in **two of the 69 matches did any of the club's three teams take the field with fewer than 11 players**. All of this helped the club achieve its best finish in the Club Championship since 1936/37 – fifth behind the powerful St George club.

1943/44

The 1943/44 season was again played under a one-day format with every team scheduled to play 24 matches – the most ever in the Sydney grade competition.

Northern District's first grade team was severely weakened by the loss of Bill Alley to the Petersham club and, for all but five matches, of Les Fallowfield because of work commitments. Regular captain, George Williams, also missed the entire season. Although Bill Englefield established himself as a quality bat, opening the batting and scoring 544 runs for the season, the batting was generally disappointing and the team finished in second last place.

For the third successive season Hugh Chilvers took in excess of 100 wickets: **102 at an average of 12.3. This time however his old nemesis, Bill O'Reilly, scooped the pool, passing Chilvers' 1942/43 aggregate of 126 wickets on the way to 147 wickets at 8.2** – a Sydney grade record which still stands in 2000 and seems likely to remain forever. The performance of these two great leg spinners in the three seasons of full and partial one-day cricket between 1941/42 to 1943/44 was quite remarkable:

	<u>1941/42</u>	<u>1942/43</u>	<u>1943/44</u>	<u>Total</u>
Chilvers	110 at 12.3	126 at 10.4	102 at 12.3	338 at 11.6
O'Reilly	108 at 9.0	109 at 8.6	147 at 8.2	364 at 8.6

When the first Northern District second grade team took the field in their first match back in 1925 they were led by the experienced Wally Rothwell. Almost twenty years later, with many experienced players absent, he stepped into the breach as he had done on so many occasions before. The team began the season in great style winning six of their first eight matches, and although they were unable to maintain that form they did enough to finish in a creditable fourth place.

Playing on water-starved grounds the batsmen in all teams struggled, and for Northern District only three players were able to pass 300 runs for the season. Jim

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Beuzeville, available for most of the season for the first time since joining the club from North Sydney in 1941/42 topped the batting aggregate with 413 runs, while right-hand opening batsman Ron Boswell (348) and Charlie Carruthers (320) were the only others to top 300 runs. Such was the dominance of the bowlers that no second grade batsman could average more than 19.

Yet another bowling record fell. With Greg Lynch promoted to first grade, his former bowling partner, Alf Ziehlke took the opportunity to pass his 1942/43 second grade record aggregate of 63, taking 81 wickets at an average of 11.1. A steady, accurate leg-spinner, Ziehlke relied more on flight than turn and was able to pick up returns of 6-19, 7-41, 6-66, 5-30, 5-52 and 7-5, the latter against Marrickville on the **treacherous Turramurra Oval wicket. In the 12 matches played at Northern District's** number two ground there was just one team score in excess of 150, with most innings not reaching 100. Other bowlers to reap the benefits of the poor wickets were Hedley Day (50 at 16.8, including a hat-trick) and Albert Dawkins (39 at 15.1). As with so **many records set during the war, Ziehlke's second** grade bowling aggregate stills stands today.

One player destined to have a big future in the game who made his debut during the 1943/44 season was 16-year-old second grade wicket-keeper, Jim Mathers. Born James Wesley Mathers in Melbourne on 6 February 1927, his father, also Jim Mathers, was **a classics master at Wesley College (hence his son's** middle name) and later became a well-known Sydney journalist. Jim Mathers senior (1894-1977) was himself a talented cricketer who played first class cricket for Victoria. Although he played just one match, it was a memorable one, with Victoria amassing a then world record innings total of 1059 against Tasmania at the MCG in February 1923. Although Mathers scored a respectable 46, his innings was dwarfed by that of the young Bill Ponsford whose score of 429 was also a world record.

The young Mathers first attracted attention when he became the first student from Parramatta High School to receive CHS Blues for both cricket and rugby union. In 1942, at the age of 15, he scored a record 257 not out in an Under 16 match in the NDCA competition before joining ND the following season. Wally Rothwell, in his 1943/44 end-of-season report, described **him thus: "Safe, sure and fearless ... (he) gave a splendid exhibition behind the sticks, and a good future is predicted for him in higher grades, as he is a batsman of the punishing type."**²¹ Mathers played again in 1944/45 before joining the RAAF in 1945 where at one time he was the RAAF Lightweight boxing champion. While there he won selection in a Combined Services XI which played Queensland at Brisbane. After two seasons playing non-grade cricket he resumed with Northern District during the 1947/48 season.

While player shortages had been a problem in the past, the opposite was the case with the Northern District third grade team in 1943/44. Early in the season a number of new, young players had been recruited to fill the team. Later players who had joined the various services would return on leave and so the club would always endeavour to give them a game of cricket. The high turnover (there were 33 different players) made it virtually impossible to bond a team together and they struggled for much of the season, finishing with eight wins from 24 matches. The team was captained by Bill Weekes, a foundation member of the club who played in the late



Jim Mathers was an outstanding schoolboy sportsman, winning CHS Blues for both cricket and rugby.

1920s and returned to help the club out during the war years. In the interim Weekes had served for 18 years as secretary of the Hornsby Junior Cricket Association where he worked tirelessly in the promotion of junior cricket. He was especially active in the establishment of new wickets in the Hornsby district, frequently organising working bees of players to assist in their preparation.

The 1943/44 season saw the return of an old stalwart to the club. When Jim Sullivan joined the RAAF his place as Waitara Oval groundsman was taken by a Mr Matheson, previously the groundsman at Epping Oval. A First World War veteran, **Matheson succumbed to illness and the original Waitara curator, 'Bricky' Love** came out of retirement to again look after the wicket for much of the season. Jim Sullivan later returned to the job after being invalided out of the Air Force in March 1944.

1944/45

After much discussion, the NSW Cricket Association reverted to two day cricket to the Sydney grade competition from the start of the 1944/45 season. The decision was made partly because the Federal Government had decided not to re-introduce daylight saving in the summer of 1944/45 and partly because of dissatisfaction with the style of one day cricket. The comments of Northern District club president, Richard Allen, make interesting reading. They are as relevant 55 years on as they were then: *"The charm of cricket and the future of cricket lie, not in the craze for speed in scoring runs, but the healthy competitive spirit engendered in all players by a captain with the right attitude towards the game. One-afternoon cricket imposed an average batting time of twelve minutes on each batsman. Such a farcical state of affairs did nothing to assist in developing young players, encouraged smart tactics in bowling, 'depth in defence' field placing and presently very little of that which the real cricket loving public sought."*²²

The first grade team was again captained by Hugh Chilvers and after a reasonable start (three wins in the first five matches) they slumped to seven successive losses and an eventual 14th place finish. Although Les Fallowfield played for most of the season his form had deserted him and he could only total just over 200 runs in 13 innings. Likewise with the promising young batsman, Jim Laird, whose early season form saw him play one match for NSW against a Combined Services XI, but who faded in the second half of the season. Arthur Chipperfield returned to the club but was only available for one game, where his match total of 95 showed that he remained a quality batsman. Although there were high hopes for Chipperfield returning in the following season it was to be the ex-**Test player's last match for Northern District**.

The best-performed first grade batsman turned out to be all-rounder Ellis Rothwell who batted so well early in the season that after eight matches he had scored 407 runs. Unfortunately his form subsequently fell away and he could only add a further 83 runs in the remaining five matches. Nevertheless, his 490 runs at 28.8 was still enough to win the first grade batting aggregate and averages. The only century of the season in first grade came from Phil Payne who scored 108 against Balmain.



Ellis Rothwell.

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During the season Hugh Chilvers passed a notable milestone when on the 9th December 1944 he captured his 1000th wicket in Sydney grade cricket, the first player from any club to achieve this. By the end of the season he had reached 1019 wickets: 19 in third grade, 54 in second grade and 946 in first grade, 41 of them that season.

While Chilvers took the most wickets, leg spinner, Alf Ziehlke, promoted to first grade midway through the season, performed the remarkable feat of winning both the first and second grade bowling averages, taking 46 wickets at 7.0 in second grade and 35 at 13.6 in first grade. On top of this he came second in the second grade batting average and second, behind Chilvers, in the first grade bowling aggregate. At the end of the season, the team was strengthened by the return of left-arm bowler Jack Scott. **One of Northern District's finest bowlers of the early to mid-1930s**, Scott had moved outside the club boundaries in 1935/36 and had subsequently played for Western Suburbs before moving to Adelaide where he had played Sheffield Shield cricket for South Australia.

Following on their good performances in the two previous seasons the Northern District second grade team again challenged strongly for the premiership, this time under the captaincy of Charlie Carruthers, a consistent batsman who had been with the club since the mid-1930s. Going into the final round of the competition Northern District were coming off five straight wins and were one of three teams in contention for the title. At the end of the first Saturday of the final match, played at Waitara, Northern District were all out for 198 and had Paddington in trouble at 3-50. **Tragically rain washed out the second day's play and the team had to settle for equal second place**, the best performance in 20 seasons by an Northern District second grade team.

No one player dominated with Hilton Spurway, back full time at the club for the first time since 1935/36, scoring the most runs with 437 at 24.3. Although only small in stature, Spurway was an aggressive right-hand batsman who later played with the Central Cumberland club. Carruthers (307 at 21.9) and Lloyd Gollan (302 at 18.9) also performed well with the bat. Of the bowlers, leg spinner Greg Lynch (35 wickets at 9.1) was second behind Ziehlke in both aggregate and averages, while Knox College student, Ian Thew bowled with pace, control and stamina to take 32 wickets.

The third grade team also did well, winning nine of their last ten matches to finish in equal fifth place. The latest in a line of players who travelled down from the Central Coast to play for Northern District, Trevor Chapman, was the leading run **scorer with 411 runs at 24.2 including the team's only century. Next best was Archie Doyle**, who scored 356 runs at the best average of 29.6, while the pick of the bowlers were Ray Badger (29 at 18.3 and Hedley Day (22 at 12.0).

After a gap of two and a half seasons Northern District again fielded a team in the Municipal and Shire competition. Led by veteran Bill Weekes the (54 wickets at 9.9), L Stranger (40 at 8.6) and W Shaw (306 runs at 19.1) the best performers.

The 1945 NDCC Annual General Meeting saw Richard Allen step down as club **president having occupied that position for 18 of the club's 21 years. His place was taken by Sid Storey**, who in return was replaced as secretary by his long-serving assistant, Cyril Jagoe.

1945/46

With the end of the Second World War on the 14th August 1945, cricket gradually returned to normal and immediately became more serious again. At the September 1945 meeting of the Northern District Cricket Club a letter from the

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NSWCA Grade Committee was read regarding a claim by the Balmain club that Bill Englefield **lived within that club's residential boundaries** and that he should therefore be playing for their club. Although the club, and Englefield, appealed against the decision it was rejected and the talented wicket-keeper subsequently played for Balmain in 1945/46.

Unable to win the State selection which many felt that he deserved Englefield moved to Adelaide, almost certainly at the urging of Don Bradman, prior to the start of the 1946/47 season. He played four matches for South Australia, his first class debut being against Wally Hammond's **touring England team at Adelaide Oval**. There he was involved in three of the five England wickets which fell as the tourists amassed 5-506 declared, catching Cyril Washbrook and stumping both Hammond and Bill Edrich. Then, just when Englefield had become a real contender for the 1948 Australian team to England there was a rapid deterioration in an existing eye ailment, **possibly a 'turn' in one eye, which cut short his first class career**.

The ailment didn't stop him from playing altogether, and the following season he returned to Sydney to rejoin Balmain where he played from 1947/48 to 1949/50. Around 1950 he had the eye problem corrected and after a break of several seasons he returned, this time playing with the Gordon club. While there he helped coached that **club's teenaged wicket-keeper** Brian Taber, who would eventually replace him as first grade keeper, before eventually progressing to the Australian wicket-keeping position in the mid-1960s.

While Sydney grade cricket had been played throughout the war, there was no first-class cricket played between December 1941 and November 1945. Although the Sheffield Shield competition did not resume until the following season, there were 18 first-class matches played in 1945/46, many featuring the Australian Services team as well as matches between the states. The first match, between Queensland and NSW, was played at the Gabba ground in Brisbane and it saw the debut of two of Northern **District's most exciting batsmen of the latter half of** the 1930s, in Bill Alley (for NSW) and Bill Morris (for Queensland). Morris, now 27 years old, had settled in Brisbane during the war, and would be a regular member of the Queensland team until midway through the 1949/50 season. He played a total of 34 matches, scoring 1987 runs at 34.9, including five centuries.

The residential rules which forced Englefield to leave ND also saw Ellis Rothwell leave under similar circumstances. Rothwell, who had moved to Ryde in the late 1930s, received a letter from the Balmain club advising him that he lived within their boundaries and that in future he must play for them. Although he subsequently attended the Balmain pre-season practices he was not selected in any of the grade



Former NDCC President Hedley Bennett died in 1945.

teams for the first match. When he questioned the reason for his non-selection he was told that he was being taught a lesson because he had played for the wrong club for a number of years and would be picked only when the selectors saw fit. Instead Rothwell chose to play for the Cheltenham-Becroft team in the NDJCA competition, topping the district batting aggregate in 1946/47 with 861 runs. In the late 1940s he and his young family moved to Manly where he resumed his grade career with the Manly club. By now an off spin bowler he played first and second grade, and despite being aged 43, was still good enough to win the district second grade bowling aggregate in the 1956/57 season. Originally planning to retire he was talked into playing one

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final season as captain of a young fourth grade team which he took to the 1957/58 competition final.

On 12 September 1945 the NDCC lost one of its hardest working and most respected administrators with the death of Hedley Bennett. Bennett, who had played his early cricket with the Concord Cricket Club, had been one of the prime movers in the formation of the club in the early 1920s and was its inaugural senior vice **president. In 1928 he had been elected as the club's first life** member. From 1928/29 to 1930/31 he had been club president in the absence of Richard Allen before resuming the vice presidency in 1931/32. He remained in that position until his death.

The loss of Bill Englefield was offset by the return during the season of many **of the club's ex-**servicemen, including Tim Caldwell, Frank Day and Doug Fagan. Their experience, together with that of players like captain Hugh Chilvers, Les Fallowfield and Jack Scott, blended well with the blossoming talent of young players such as John Kershaw and Jim Laird. Despite its promise, the team performed below expectations and could win only four of their 14 matches to finish in 13th place.

The highlight of the first grade season was the return to form of Les Fallowfield who scored 622 runs at an average of 51.8, including his first century since the 1942/43 season. No other batsman had a top score of more than 60, with John Kershaw (247 runs at 30.9) and Jim Laird (320 at 20.0) the next best performed. Kershaw again underlined his talent in a social match against a Moss Vale District Cricket Association XI at Moss Vale in the 1946 Easter weekend, scoring a magnificent 160 not out, including 11 sixes.

After years of 50-plus wicket hauls it came as a surprise to see Hugh Chilvers take only 25 wickets for the season, sharing the bowling aggregate with Jack Scott. With a number of quality bowlers in the team Chilvers bowled far fewer overs than had previously been required and consequently had his lowest season aggregate in **over ten years. At the start of the season Chilvers' career tally of first grade wickets** had stood at 946 and there must have seemed a reasonable prospect of him achieving the 1000-wicket mark that year, something no other bowler had done in the Sydney grade competition.

Despite playing under a different captain each season, the Northern District **second grade team had consistently been the club's best-**performed team throughout the war years. Again in 1945/46, this time under Jim Beuzeville, they finished higher than any other team, and as in the previous season they went tantalisingly close to taking out the premiership. Of the 14 matches played they won three outright and six on the first innings, with one draw, four first innings and one outright loss.

The latter match proved crucial. It was a fifth round clash against Waverley at Woollahra Oval in which Northern District dismissed the home team for just 41. Passing their target four down, and keen to push for outright points, the Northern District skipper declared at 4-46. In their second innings Waverley declared at 9-153, setting ND a target of 149 to win. Some poor batting which saw six Northern District batsmen out to slow full tosses led to the team being dismissed for just 79. The two teams met again late in the season, Waverley clinching the premiership with a first innings win, leaving Northern District as runners-up for the second season in a row.

There were several outstanding performances during the season, including that of leg spinner Greg Lynch, whose 56 wickets at 11.8 included match figures of 14-55 (7-14 and 7-41) in a match against North Sydney at Waitara Oval. Throughout his career Lynch was to play in the shadow of Hugh Chilvers with most contemporary observers adamant that he would have been an automatic first grade selection with most other Sydney clubs. Forming a potent spin partnership with Lynch, Reg Giddey took 55 wickets at an average of 11.2, including an unprecedented two hat-tricks: one against St George where he took 8-43, the other against Wests (6-29).

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The best of the second grade bats were Ron Boswell (403 at 23.7), Jim Beuzeville (382 at 22.5) and Charlie Carruthers (**353 at 23.5**). **Beuzeville's 97 against St George at Hurstville Oval** was the highest score of the season.

The third grade team again began the season under the leadership of Wally Rothwell, who celebrated his 60th birthday during the season. With a large number of ex-servicemen now keen to renew their cricketing careers, Rothwell unselfishly volunteered to withdraw from the team, returning to play Shires cricket with the Pennant Hills club where he played until the early 1950s.

Ellis Branz, who took over the captaincy of the third grade team, had joined Northern District the previous season. By then aged in his late 30s, Branz had been a prolific scorer for both the Galston and Hills District clubs in the Hornsby DCA competition, accumulating 8344 runs at an average of 33.9 in 15 seasons between 1926/27 and 1940/41. Earlier, his father, Lorenz Branz, **had been one of the district's finest bowlers** from before the turn of the century through until the start of the First World War²³.



Alan Patterson

With eight wins from 14 matches the team performed quite well, finishing in eighth position on the competition table. Opening batsman, Alan Mitchell, with 375 runs at 31.3 won the batting aggregate/averages double, while the talented but inconsistent, Ray Stublely **scored the team's only hundred.**

The Shires team also did well, finishing in seventh place with seven wins from 14 matches. Led again by veteran Bill Weekes, who topped both the batting aggregate and averages with 349 runs at 21.8. Disappointingly only two other batsmen scored over 200 runs: Alan Patterson (219) and Keith Powell (200). Now aged 18, Patterson was the son of the late Bert Patterson, **an NDCC life member and captain of the club's second grade team during the 1930s. Patterson's presence** at the club was largely due to the help of Cyril Jagoe, who had taken him under his wing, coaching him and transporting him to practice as well as to matches.

Two promising young bowlers, John Weekes and W Henry, with 47 and 40 **wickets respectively, dominated the Shires team's bowling, taking more than half of the wickets** to fall.

For the first time since 1939/40 the AW Green Shield for Under 17 players was contested. The Northern District team, although they showed **plenty of ability, didn't** manage to take their net form to the centre.

As he had done back in 1928, Ellis Robins replaced Harold Renshaw as the **club's treasurer, a position he would hold until shortly before his death** in 1956.

1946/47

The 1946/47 season was memorable mainly for Hugh Chilvers' **achievement in** passing 1000 first grade wickets – the first bowler to do so in the 53-year history of the Sydney grade cricket competition. The record wicket came during the Round Six match against Sydney University at University Oval, a game which also saw Les Fallowfield make the highest individual score (204) by a Northern District first grade

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batsman. At 43 years of age Chilvers was still as **dangerous a bowler as ever, his season's tally of 51** being the eighth occasion that he had taken at least 50 wickets in a season – all in first grade.

Tim Caldwell resumed his pre-war position as first grade captain, and although the team improved slightly, its eventual finish in 10th place was disappointing. Caldwell also resumed his spin bowling partnership with Chilvers, taking 45 wickets at an average of 19.2.

The first grade bowling average was won by a newcomer in right arm fast medium bowler, Bruce Buckley **who took 28 wickets at 16.5. Buckley's** bowling had impressed Northern District officials when the club had played a trial match at Lithgow earlier in the season and he had been invited to join up. Formerly from Gulgong, Buckley had built a big reputation in country cricket and but for his wartime production job would undoubtedly have played Sydney grade cricket much earlier. As it was he travelled from Lithgow to the city each weekend to play, making his debut on the Saturday before Christmas 1946. Tall and angular, Buckley was also a useful left-hand batsman, good enough to finish third in the 1946/47 first grade batting average with 188 runs at 26.8, including innings of 55 and 45.



Bruce Buckley.

Although Les Fallowfield again scored the most runs (479) at the best average (34.2), apart from his record 204 against University, his tally of 275 in his other 13 **innings was a little disappointing. The club's star colt, John Kershaw** (428 runs at 22.5), and the experienced Frank Day (376 runs at 28.9) were the most consistent **batsman, Day's fine innings of 107 not out against Mosman at Waitara Oval being the** only other century of the season in first grade.

The second grade team was once more the club's best, finishing in fifth place with seven wins from 13 matches under the captaincy, initially of Jim Beuzeville and late of Charlie Carruthers. The best of the batsmen was Peter Van Zuylen, an Under 21 player who batted consistently throughout the season to score 437 runs at an average of 36.4 in his only season with the club.

Frank Collins earned a recall to first grade with a fine century against University at Waitara Oval.

The most memorable finish of the season, indeed of many seasons, came in **second grade's Round 10 match against Marrickville at Belmore Oval. Batting first** Northern District was dismissed for just 85 and in reply Marrickville declared at 4-92. In their second innings ND improved, scoring 6-182 declared, leaving the home team with a target of 176 for an outright win. With just five minutes remaining in the match Marrickville were 7-89, no chance of winning outright but with first innings points seemingly safely in their grasp. The game looked even safer when there were just three balls left in the last over, being bowled by Alf Ziehlke. Then, amazingly, Ziehlke picked up all three remaining wickets in successive balls, claiming both a hat-trick and outright points for his team.

Ziehlke and Greg Lynch again dominated the second grade bowling, sending **down more than half of the team's overs** to take 50 and 45 wickets respectively.

Led again by Ellis Branz, the 1946/47 Northern District third grade team could only manage four wins from 13 matches to finish in 14th place. With Turrumurra Oval unavailable for the entire season, having been allocated to the Hornsby Junior Cricket Association, the team had the disadvantage of playing most of **its matches at either their opponent's home grounds or on neutral grounds. On the**

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subject of playing fields, there was better news with the laying, after more than 20 years of unsuccessful lobbying, of a new turf wicket at Pennant Hills Oval. At one stage it was planned to use the new pitch for the last three matches of the season, however after an inspection by club and NSWCA representatives, it was decided to postpone use of the ground until the start of the 1947/48 season.

Best performed of the third graders were Lloyd Gollan, whose 340 runs at 22.7 included the only century of the season, an unbeaten 115; and Charlie Richardson who led the bowlers with 44 wickets at 10.8.

With so many players clamouring for a game of cricket each weekend the club decided to enter a team in the Hornsby Junior Cricket Association competition. Known within the club as the Colts team it was led by Ron Foskett, and played 11 matches of which they won two outright, two on the first innings, drew won and lost six on the first innings. The leading batsman was Les Molloy who scored 390 runs at 30.0. J Millar (292 runs and 22 wickets), Ron Foskett (248 runs and 13 wickets), Clarrie Millar (217 runs at 43.4) and Jack Chalkley (21 wickets) were the other better-performed players.

The Northern District Municipal and Shire team was also affected by the loss of Turramurra Oval and had to have its first match of the season abandoned because no alternative ground was available. A third round bye meant that the team, captained by the indestructible Wally Rothwell, was considerably underdone but nevertheless did well to go on and finish 11th in a competition which was now back to its pre-war standard. Although no batsman could total more than 250 runs for the season, two managed to still score centuries, Ray Stubley and Kevin Laird each scoring 106, while left hand all-rounder Ian Fraser impressed in his first season back with the club following war service.

The 1946/47 season saw the re-introduction of the both the U/21 Poidevin-Gray and U/16 AW Green Shield competitions. Despite having a number of players with first and second grade experience, such as batsmen Peter Van Zuylen and Wally Fallowfield and wicket-keeper Bill Lees, the P-G team performed below expectations. Lees, originally from Bathurst, was a student at Riverview College and had been a **member of the school's First XI** for the past two seasons.

The Green Shield team also disappointed, with a score of 103 by Ian Eldred against Glebe being one of the few highlights. The youngest player in what was a very young team was a 12-year-old all-rounder named Geoff Bryant, who would play with the club for a total of 16 seasons.

1947/48

Just prior to the commencement of the 1947/48 season the Pennant Hills Oval, together with its new turf wicket, was opened, appropriately enough by Councillor Sid Storey, president of the Hornsby Shire, the local member of State Parliament and president and life member of the NDCC. After the opening ceremony a match was held between the Northern District First XI and a combined Sydney First Grade XI, the latter team including a number of leading players such as ex-Test wicket-keeper, Bert Oldfield; NSW batsman, Sid Carroll; State cricketer and writer R.S.(Dick) Whittington; and ex-Northern District all-rounder Ellis Rothwell.

A few weeks earlier the Pennant Hills Cricket Club had been formed, and had been accepted to compete in the Municipal and Shire competition. Many former Northern District players and administrators, including brothers Charles and Frank Sherington were actively involved in the formation of the new club, which would act as a feeder club for Northern District.

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The 1947/48 season saw a substantial improvement throughout the grades in the performances of the various teams fielded by the club. With all three grade teams finishing in the top six places of their competitions the club had its best finish in the club championship since its second placing in 1936/37, and its second best ever, finishing fourth behind Gordon, that club becoming the first winners of the newly donated Sydney Smith Cup.

Apart from the Municipal and Shire, Poidevin-Gray and AW Green Shield, the club also entered the City and Suburban competition for the first time.

With Tim Caldwell continuing as captain, the first grade team finished in equal fourth place with Manly, with its southern neighbour Gordon taking the title. The team was strengthened significantly by the arrival of all-rounder Vince Collins who had recently moved to Epping and so fell **within Northern District's residential boundaries**. Tall and powerful, Collins was a right handed bat and right arm medium pace bowler, as well as a brilliant slip fieldsman – a genuine all-rounder who could hold his place in any first grade side either as a batsman or bowler. Aged 31 when he joined Northern District, he had been a product of the Petersham club, where he had made his first grade debut around 1933/34 at the age of 15. In 1936/37 he had won the Sydney grade bowling averages with 31 wickets at 11.0, and the following season scored 139 for Petersham against University. Between 1940/41 and 1946/47, apart from a break when he was on war service, Collins played for the Marrickville club where his best innings included a score of 101 against Northern District. In 1941/42 he played one match for NSW against Queensland in Brisbane, scoring 49 for once out and opening the bowling with 20-year-old Ray Lindwall, who was also making his first class debut. Such was his impact at Northern District that by the end of the season he had become the first NDCC player to win all four major awards in one season: the batting aggregate (510 runs), batting average (36.4), bowling aggregate (40 wickets) and bowling average (15.6).



Vince Collins

With the acquisition of Collins, and that of former Gordon first grade opening batsman, Jim Sutherland; together with the retention of Lithgow-based Bruce Buckley; established stars such as Tim Caldwell, Hugh Chilvers and Les Fallowfield, and some talented young players like Jim Laird and John Kershaw, Northern District had moulded together its strongest first grade team since the mid-1930s when they had gone so close to winning the premiership.

Although they won only five of their 14 matches, there were so many washed-out draws that this was enough to give them their relatively high final position. Although only one batsman, Frank Collins, was able to score a century (an even 100 against Petersham, whose attack was led by Test bowler Ernie Toshack), Vince Collins could easily have scored three, being dismissed for 85 against his old club Marrickville, 92 against Mosman and 99 against Balmain. Although Les Fallowfield played, he struggled with illness for most of the season, and could only total 199 runs at 16.6.

The first grade bowling, as mentioned, was headed by Vince Collins whose 40 wickets included match figures of 11-74 (6-32 and 5-42) against Cumberland at Waitara Tim Caldwell (36 at 16.3) and Hugh Chilvers (28 at 19.7) were next best.

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The 1947/48 ND first grade team and club officials at Waitara Oval.

During the season Vince Collins played several matches for NSW while John Kershaw was selected in the NSW Colts team.

The second grade team, led again by Greg Lynch, had seven wins from 14 matches to finish, as first grade had done, in equal fourth place. A total of 25 players took the field at various times during the season, a number more expected in lower grade teams than higher. Most of the problem was that age-old bane of cricket selectors – **player unavailabilities, and the team’s momentum was adversely affected.** All-rounder Alf Ziehlke had a marvellous season, scoring more runs than any other player (338) and taking 40 wickets. For the third time in six years Greg Lynch reached the 50-wicket mark, **finishing with exactly 50 at the season’s best average of 13.8.**

Another player to impress was a 6 foot 4 inch (1.93 metres) left-hand bat and slow left-arm bowler named Irvine Hill. **Then aged 28, Hill hadn’t played cricket since** before the war when he had been Green Shield and Colts grade for Western Suburbs. He served overseas with the Commandos during the war and when he joined Northern District was a policeman, based at Balmain and living at Denistone.

Third grade skipper, Phil Payne, **described the problem as that of the “floating population”**²⁴, players moving in and out of teams from game to game. In total there were 30 players in third grade during 1947/48 with only three of the eleven who took the field in the first round being there in the final round. Given these difficulties the **team’s effort in finishing in equal sixth** place had merit. Although there no outstanding aggregate performances (the leading batsman, Phil Payne, scored just 289 runs and the highest wicket taker, slow left armer George Niblett, took 33 wickets) there were several fine individual performances: Harry Stoyles, with match figures of 11-47 against Randwick at Turrumurra Oval, and left arm spinner Ken Clarke’s 7-29 in an innings against Waverley at Waitara.

1947/48 was the final season in which Northern District entered a team in the Municipal and Shire competition and the first in which they had a team in the City and Suburban competition. With both the Pennant Hills and Epping clubs acting as feeder to Northern District it was no longer deemed necessary for the club to

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participate directly in the Shires competition. Led by Ron Foskett the team struggled for most of the season winning just three matches from 13 played.

The City and Suburban Cricket Association had been formed in 1903 with 30 clubs participating in its inaugural (1903/04) season. Unlike the grade and Shires competitions, City and Suburban cricketers played purely for the enjoyment of the game. Matches were played on turf, were of one-day (one afternoon) duration with time split evenly between the two teams. No points were allotted and there was no competition table.²⁵ The first Northern District City and Suburban team was led by Jack Wilson and was composed largely of young players. Wet weather and ground shortages led to them playing just ten one-day matches of which they won four and lost six.

Both the Poidevin-Gray and Green Shield teams performed reasonably well, indeed a number of the younger players were in both teams. The two captains were Ray Stublely and Brian Baldock, both future first grade players.

The 1947/48 NDCC Annual Report also reported on a most important rule change: *“The re-introduction of the afternoon tea interval was a much belated step in the right direction. The mingling of players one with the other for even such a short time adds a social touch to the game which was hitherto lacking.”*²⁶

1948/49



Destined to become one of Australia's greatest all-round cricketers, Alan Davidson made an immediate impact when he joined Northern District at the start of the 1948/49 season.

Shortly after the end of the 1947/48 season, during the 1948 Easter long weekend, the Gordon club travelled to Gosford for a match against a local representative team at Grahame Park. Northern District batsman Frank Collins, who had a number of friends in the Gordon team, played in the match.

More than 40 years later Collins still recalls the match clearly. *“I opened the batting for Gordon and faced this young left-artermer who bowled from the bowling club end. He bowled beautifully, moving the ball in sharply, and even though I'd been in good form in Sydney, I could hardly get bat on ball. I couldn't believe it when the skipper took him off after only four overs and didn't bring him back on.”*

The young bowler was 18-year-old Alan Davidson, and during the lunch break Collins tracked down he and his father, Keith, and suggested that Alan was good enough to play Sydney first grade and that he should trial with Northern District at the start of the 1948/49 season.

Davidson came with an outstanding cricketing pedigree. His maternal grandfather, Arthur “Paddy” Clifton was one the greats of Central Coast cricket having played local grade cricket from the turn of the century right through until the early 1950s

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when he was almost 70 years old. Paddy had five sons, all of whom were fine cricketers. Two, Arthur and Vern Clifton, played first grade cricket in Sydney during the 1930s and 40s, Arthur for Northern District and Vern, originally for Marrickville and later for Northern District (both were winners of the Northern District first grade batting averages - **in 1931/32 and 1940/41 respectively**). Davidson's paternal grandfather, George Davidson, was also a prominent cricket administrator while his father and two Davidson uncles were also fine cricketers. One of the uncles, Cecil Davidson, had also played for Northern District - in 1940/41.

Davidson recalled arriving at his first ND club practice: *"I was entranced by this cricketing hive of activity. Sixty or more candidates in the orderly row of nets hurtled themselves into the fray. The selectors handed me a new ball and I joined the hopefuls. I was handicapped by a painful lump on my bowling shoulder, the result of an indiscriminate kick in a football match a week earlier. But my bowling form was satisfying enough. The trials continued for another two weekends before the selectors gravely conferred and decided the gradings. I journeyed home after the final trial but at the crack of dawn the following day set off for the Lisarow Railway Station to intercept the papers before they were delivered to the local newsagency. I waded through the sports columns then came upon my own name in the Northern District First XI. I marched home in triumph".*²⁷

The addition of Davidson to the Northern District first grade team filled the **last remaining gap in a team which had gradually evolved into one of Sydney's strongest**. In Les Fallowfield and Vince Collins they had two of the best batsmen in the competition, supported by talented young bats like John Kershaw, Jim Laird and Ray Stublely; two reliable opening bats in Irvine Hill and Frank Collins; spin bowlers Hugh Chilvers and Tim Caldwell were without peer as a combination; a capable young wicket-keeper in Jim Mathers, **all bonded together under Caldwell's astute leadership**.



The 1948/49 Northern District first grade premierships-winning team. Rear (l to r): Jim Mathers, Ron Ring, Cyril Kearney, Irvine Hill, Alan Davidson, Jim Laird, Frank Collins. Front (l to r): John Kershaw, Vince Collins, Hugh Chilvers, Tim Caldwell (C), Les Fallowfield, Ray Stublely.

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In the first match of the season Northern District was unluckily held to a draw by Glebe in a rain-interrupted match at Waitara; then defeated Petersham, also at home before being well-beaten by Gordon at Chatswood. A four-run first innings win against the powerful St George team showed what the team was capable of, and although they lost their next match narrowly to Manly, wins in five of the next six games took them to the top of the table with just three rounds remaining. Davidson had been improving steadily through the season but really began to be noticed when he captured three wickets in the first five balls of the round 11 match against Waverley **at Waitara, including those of former Shield batsmen O'Brien and Solomon.**

A good win over Cumberland followed, then came the vital return match against second-placed St George at Hurstville Oval, the star-studded home team including Arthur Morris, Ray Lindwall, Les Favell and - as a late replacement and coming out of retirement - **Bill O'Reilly.** The game was another which was affected by rain with just four hours of play possible. Batting first, the St George batsmen hit out and in just 95 minutes scored 6-173 leaving ND with 140 minutes batting time. After losing early wickets Caldwell instructed his batsmen to play out time, which they did, finishing at 6-69 with Cyril Kearney batting 46 minutes for just one run.

Despite this the team needed to win its final round match against Balmain. Batting first on a good Waitara pitch Northern District could only manage to score 159 but turned around and bowled Balmain out for 109 with Davidson taking 6-56. Still not sure of the premiership Caldwell pushed for outright points, declaring at 3-51 and setting Balmain a target of 102 in under an hour. At stumps the visitors were 9-80, but as it turned out the first innings points had been enough and Northern District had won the Sydney first grade championship for the first time.

A number of players and officials who had been with the club since its formation were there to enjoy the celebrations, but none would have had more satisfaction than Hugh Chilvers who had played second grade in the first match in 1925 and bowled in the 1949 match against Balmain. Indeed the 45-year-old, for the 15th time in his career, took most wickets in first grade – 42 at 17.7.

Others who had remained involved with the club throughout included president Sid Storey, vice presidents Harold Renshaw and Wally Rothwell and secretary Cyril Jagoe. **Sadly one official who failed to see the club's success was Richard Allen, club president for 18 years between 1925/26 and 1944/45, who died on board the SS Moolton on a voyage to England.**

The win was a genuinely popular one within the Sydney cricket community, the club having built up considerable goodwill over its 23 years in the competition. At a Victory Smoke Social held at the Hornsby Masonic Hall on 13 May 1949 many of the biggest names in NSW and Australian cricket were in attendance including NSWCA President, Sydney Smith, and Secretary, Harold Heydon, Board of Control members, Aubrey Oxlade, Keith Johnson and Frank Cush. Former NDCC first grade captains, Frank Buckle and George Williams, who had laid so much of the groundwork for the win, were also guests.

Davidson's debut season saw him win both the club and Sydney grade bowling averages, his 38 wickets costing 14.2 apiece - the youngest ever winner of the Sydney grade bowling averages. Early in the season he generally batted around number nine, however as the season progressed it became clear that he was a more than useful batsman as evidenced by an innings of 68 not out late in the year. In the field Davidson was brilliant, running out three batsmen in one afternoon from the bowling of Chilvers. On occasions he was even over-enthusiastic, drawing the following mild rebuke in Tim Caldwell's end-of-season review: *"(Davidson) was the outstanding fieldsman of the team, and is equipped with a glorious throw. This he was inclined to overdo, but again he is still learning, and he used it more judiciously as the season progressed."*²⁸ Midway through the season Davidson, a bank clerk, was transferred from Gosford to

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Strathfield and moved to Sydney to live – fortunately with an aunt and uncle at **Epping, safely within Northern District’s residential boundaries.**

No batsman dominated, with Les Fallowfield missing much of the season but back for the critical last three matches of the season. The star bat of the previous season, Vince Collins, had a disappointing season scoring just 179 runs at an average of 11.1 with John Kershaw (404 at 26.9), Ray Stublely (312 at 28.4) and Irvine Hill (408 at 22.7) the best-performed batsmen.

In contrast to their consistently high finishes in the previous six seasons, the second grade team performed poorly, winning just two of their 14 matches and finishing in last place. For a number of years the team had relied on the dual leg spin attack of Greg Lynch and Alf Ziehlke to win the majority of their matches, and although Lynch was as effective as ever, taking 48 wickets at 19.1, he received little support, Ziehlke being next best with 19 wickets at the high average, for that time, of 31.4.

On the other hand, the team’s batting was generally of a high standard with six batsman scoring in excess of 300 runs – never before in second grade had more than four passed that target. Frank Collins and Jim Sutherland each scored two centuries on their way to aggregates of 329 and 392 respectively. Collins was promoted to first grade during the season but struggled to maintain his form. All-rounder, Ron Ring, in his second season with the club was impressive, scoring 303 runs at 37.4 (including a innings of 99 against Gordon) and taking 12 wickets at 19.8, before he too was promoted. The other three to top 300 were George Little (366 at 30.5) , Max Lumby (349 at 29.1) and John Jagoe (375 at 25.0).

Third grade did slightly better, winning five matches from 14 played to finish in 11th place. The highlight of the season was a win over Mosman, when Northern **District, chasing Mosman’s total of 9 for 291 declared, scored 381, Alan Parker** top scoring with 144. A right handed bat and occasional leg spinner bowler, the bespectacled Parker had joined Northern District from the Hornsby Association competition in the 1937/38 season and had been with the club ever since. During the war he served with the AIF, and although he missed a couple of seasons, he did play one full season (1942/43) in first grade. He later returned to the Hornsby junior competitions where he played for many more years.

1948/49 saw the re-introduction of the fourth grade competition, with points now included in club championship calculations. Northern District fielded a very young team, primarily made up of players from the now-abolished Shires team, which struggled throughout to finish in second last place. Tom Geelan, who had won the Shires bowling aggregate and average in each of the two previous seasons did so again, finishing with 39 wickets at 13.4. Formerly with the Galston Cricket Club, Geelan would later serve for many years on the committee of the Hornsby-Ku-ring-gai District Cricket Association.

In only its second season, the City and Suburban team did well to finish with 11 wins, two ties, one draw and just one loss from their total of 15 matches. Had there been a formal competition they would probably have won it. The team was captained by Jack Wilson, with another former grade player, George Burdon, scoring most of the runs and contributing significantly to the development of the young players in the team.

The Poidevin-Gray team had a 3:2 win/loss ratio. The team had three first graders in captain Ray Stublely, Alan Davidson and Cyril Kearney and, not surprisingly they dominated the batting. Davidson topped both aggregate and averages with 223 runs at 55.8, highlighted by a whirlwind innings against North Sydney which confused the scoreboard attendant to such an extent that he posted **Davidson’s 100 while he was still only 96. Seeing the hundred on the board Davidson**

threw his wicket away only to find that he was still four short of what would have been his first century!²⁹ Alan Patterson was also unlucky to miss a century, dismissed for 91

Kearney was an interesting player. A dashing batsman, like Bruce Buckley before him, he travelled from Lithgow each weekend to play, with the club meeting the cost of his train fares and his playing fees.

The Green Shield team performed well, winning its division in a play-off against Glebe before going down to St George in the final played at the Sydney Cricket Ground No 2. A couple of boys with grade careers ahead of them, Bob Doyle and Garry Hammill, performed best with the bat totalling 228 (at 38.0) and 259 (at 32.4) respectively.

The 1948/49 season ended with the club's 24th Annual General Meeting at the Hornsby Masonic Hall on 19 July 1949 where NSWCA President, Mr Sydney Smith, presented Tim Caldwell with the Belvidere Cup. Mr Smith then presented each first grade player with premiership caps and badges as well as blazers which the club had supplied.

1949/50

The first grade team's success of the previous season permeated through the club with all teams finishing in the top half of their respective competitions and the club finishing as runners-up in the club championship, beaten by just eight points by Waverley on final round results.

Although the first grade team weren't able to defend their title they performed well to finish in sixth place, their final tally being five wins, four losses and six draws, including each of the last five matches – an indication of the weather conditions during February and March 1950.

As quickly as Alan Davidson had arrived, so he just as quickly left, at least intermittently, into representative cricket. At the end of the previous season he had, along with Jim Mathers and John Kershaw, been selected in a NSWCA team which toured a number of country centres. After playing matches for the NSW Second XI and NSW Colts (scoring 60 and taking 3-64 and 1-9) he made his Sheffield Shield debut against South Australia at Adelaide Oval, scoring 34 and taking 4-32 and 0-90. By the end of the Shield season, won by NSW, Davidson had played five matches for the State and had taken 26 wickets at 18.8, including 5-28 against Victoria in the final match at the SCG. Just over two weeks later he was on his way to New Zealand with a second-string Australian team led by Bill Brown. There he virtually guaranteed himself future Test selection with an astonishing all-round feat in a second-class match against Wairarapa at Masterton where he took all ten wickets for 29 runs and scored 157 not out.

Despite his various representative commitments Davidson played enough grade games to again top the club bowling averages with 31 wickets at 13.4, well clear of the evergreen Hugh Chilvers average of 19.5, although his 38 wickets were enough to win him the bowling aggregate for a 16th time.

The highlight of the 1949/50 first grade season was undoubtedly the performance of John Kershaw who scored 536 runs at the excellent average of 48.7. This immensely talented young batsman had first played for the club almost a decade earlier whilst in his early teens and had made his first grade debut at the age of only 17 in the 1942/43 season. Seen by many as a future Test player his impetuosity had previously stopped him from making high scores. Northern District and Australian Test batsman, Jim Burke, **once commented that if Kershaw had his (ie. Burke's)** concentration then he would have been the best batsman in Australia³⁰. In 1948/49 Kershaw did show a new maturity as evidenced by his first club century – 120 not out.

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The other batting star of the season was the experienced Vince Collins who, after a disappointing season in 47/48, returned to the form which had seen him play for the State the season before. Although his highest score of the year was just 74 he batted consistently throughout to total 478 runs at 36.8.

Les Fallowfield had a poor season with the bat, scoring just 201 runs at an average of 22.4, although as had happened previously when he had a run of outs with the bat, he chimed in as a part-time bowler picking up a number of valuable wickets at crucial times.

Irvine Hill scored 279 at 19.9 with a top score of 80 in what was to be his final season with Northern District, although he continued to play in the lower grades for Randwick and later for the NSW Police team in the Moore Park competition until he **was in his early sixties. One of five brothers who all played first grade cricket, Hill's** son, Dennis Hill, later played first grade for Sydney University and Randwick as well as for NSW Colts, while a grandson, Nathaniel Hill played Green Shield for Mosman (after having been rejected by ND) and Combined Green Shield in the late 1990s.

At the end of the season Tim Caldwell announced his retirement as a player, principally due to work commitments (he was by now a leading executive with the ES&A Bank, later the ANZ). In a club career which spanned almost 20 years Caldwell had taken a total of 544 wickets, including 462 in first grade, and would have taken many more but for missing four and a half seasons through war service. With Hugh Chilvers **he had formed one of Sydney grade cricket's greatest ever spin bowling** partnerships, and although he played only three matches for NSW, he could easily have played more but for the glut of great spin bowlers during the 1930s. Universally **respected as a man and a cricketer, the highlight of Caldwell's playing career was** undoubtedly not his various personal achievements but the victory of the team which he led to the 1948/49 first grade premiership.

Caldwell's retirement from the cricket field was far from the end of his involvement with the game, indeed he was to achieve far more prominence off the field than he had on it. From the age of 21 he had served on the NDCC committee, and in 1952 he became the **club's senior vice president. In 1955 he also became one of Northern District's two delegates to the NSW Cricket Association.** There he was quickly recruited onto the Grade Committee (from 1956/57 to 1958/59) and then to the Executive Committee, where he served from 1959/60 to 1967/68. In the 1966/67 and 1968/69 seasons he was one of the three NSWCA representatives on the Australian Board of Control. At the same time he remained committed a club level, and in 1963, after 11 years as NDCC senior vice president, he replaced Sid Storey as club president.

After a brief break when he was transferred to Brisbane with the ANZ Bank (he eventually rose to **become the bank's Assistant General Manager**), Caldwell returned to the NSWCA in 1970, initially as vice president, then back to the Executive Committee (later known as the NSW Cricket Board) and in 1972 he succeeded Syd Webb as the chairman of that committee. He also returned as a NSW representative to the Australian Board of Control, and in September 1972 he became the most influential man in Australian cricket when he succeeded Sir Donald Bradman as Chairman of the Board.

After being a major disappointment in the previous season, the Northern District second grade team, led by Frank Day, returned to the top half of the ladder in



Following his retirement as a player, Tim Caldwell became one of Australia's most outstanding cricket administrators.

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1949/50, finishing in a creditable seventh place with five wins, three losses, a similar string of end-of-season washed-out draws to first grade and a thrilling tie in the first match of the season against the eventual premiers, Waverley at Turrumurra Oval. The team, and the club, lost one of its most promising all-rounders when Ron Ring, a school teacher, was transferred to Narranderra. In just two and a half seasons, mostly in second grade but with a handful of first grade matches, Ring had passed the 1000-run/100-wicket double, taking 37 wickets and scoring 291 runs in 1949/50 prior to leaving during January.

Also leaving was Jim Laird who had played most of the season in second grade. Laird had been wounded during the war and as a consequence had been unable to fulfil his outstanding cricketing potential. For some time he had worked for Bert Oldfield in his cricket shop in Sydney before opening a shop of his own, firstly in Sydney and later in the Riverina, where he continued to play for several more years.

For the third successive year, and the sixth time in ten seasons, Greg Lynch topped the second grade bowling aggregate; and for the fourth consecutive season **won that grade's bowling averages. With the bat, Max Lumby** (385 runs at 25.7) and Jim Mathers (235 at 33.6) were the other good performers.

Having waited 23 years for its first premiership in a grade competition, Northern District had to wait just 12 months for the next, with the third grade team taking the 1949/50 title. Led by Phil Payne, the team won ten of their 15 matches, including an important final round match against Mosman at Pennant Hills Oval, when most other matches were washed-out draws. The two most consistent batsmen in the team were the two most experienced: Jim Beuzeville, who scored 432 runs at 24.0 with a top score of 95 against Gordon; and Payne, with 306 at 27.8. But perhaps the most **crucial ingredient in the team's success was the superb** bowling of Ken Clarke who took 52 wickets at just 9.7 each, only the second Northern District third grader to take more than 50 wickets in a season and the first outside of the one-day match war years (Hedley Day had taken 68 wickets in 1942/43). Clarke had joined Northern District in 1947/48, then missed the following season, otherwise he would almost certainly have begun the season in a higher grade. As it was he was promoted to second grade for several matches in the latter stages of the season. Two other bowlers also made major contributions, Harry Stoyles taking 39 wickets at 11.4 and Alf Ziehlke 35 at 11.2.



Ian Fraser led the NDCC fourth grade team from 15th place in 1948/49 to second place in 1949/50.

The fourth grade team also made a dramatic improvement, going from second last place in 1948/49 to second place in 1949/50, despite having 30 players go through the team at various times during the season. Captained by Ian Fraser, who made a major personal contribution by scoring 226 runs and taking 39 wickets, they could easily have won the competition but for late-season washouts. Other good performances came from Bill Neville (271 runs at 45.2 and promoted to third grade), Gordon Heddles (216 runs and 9 wickets and promoted to second grade) and John Rainsford (33 wickets at 13.8).

Neville, Heddles and Rainsford all backed up for the Poidevin-Gray competition, as did the team captain, Alan Patterson, who made his first grade debut during the season. The team struggled, winning just two of their six matches, while the Green Shield team could only win one from six.

After losing its first three matches the City and Suburban team bounced back to finish the season with 13 first innings wins, six first innings losses and one draw.

Max Lloyd with 350 runs and 35 wickets stood out, while Geoff Tallents **wasn't far** behind with 267 runs and 26 wickets.

1950/51

After the successes of the two previous seasons Northern District slipped quite badly, dropping to 11th place in the club championship, 14th in first grade, 13th in second grade, and 6th in both third and fourth grades.

With the retirement of Tim Caldwell, Hugh Chilvers resumed as captain of the first grade team, a team which was seriously weakened in its batting by the absence of John Kershaw with illness for the entire season, and Les Fallowfield and Cyril Kearney for the first half of the season. Alan Davidson, although also suffering an illness during the season and missing a number of games, still did enough to win both the club bowling aggregate and averages with 21 wickets at 15.5. He again represented NSW in Sheffield Shield and in a Second XI match against Victoria in Melbourne. Ex-State player Vince Collins **was again the team's best batsman, and the only one to** score more than 230 runs, totalling 374 at 28.5, including a brilliant 121 against North Sydney at Waitara Oval.

In second grade the team won just two matches, one outright and one on the first innings from 14 played. Although there were several quality batsmen in the team, none batted with any consistency. Captain, Frank Day, had the best aggregate and average with a modest 268 runs at 29.8, while Jim Sutherland's **107 not out against** Cumberland at Parramatta was the highest score and the only century.

Greg Lynch (37 wickets at 15.2), Ken Clarke (36 at 17.7) and Len Shaw (28 at 17.4) were the best of the second grade bowlers, Lynch having the best club second grade bowling aggregate for the fourth season in a row and the top bowling average for the fifth in a row. Clarke had the best innings figures for the season, taking 9-45 against Glebe at Redfern Oval – still the second best return for the club in second grade behind Frank Gilmore's **10-41** in 1936/37 against North Sydney.

After winning the premiership the previous season, third grade did reasonably well to finish in sixth place with seven wins, three draws and four losses from 14 matches. Two players stood out, Alan Parker with the bat (548 runs at 32.2) and Alf Ziehlke (60 wickets at 8.0) with the ball. No other player in the team came close to these performances. Parker scored two centuries and one innings in the nineties, while Ziehlke had a best return of 8-23 in the first match of the season against Cumberland at Turramurra Oval and also took a hat-trick.

In fourth grade Northern District also finished in sixth place. In a season of mediocre individual performances but reasonably good team ones, no batsman scored in excess of 200 runs for the season, although Jack Mater and L Gordon both scored centuries in a 203 run fourth wicket partnership against Balmain at Pennant Hills Oval – still the highest partnership on record in fourth grade for Northern District. The fourth grade bowling average was won by Don Stephens, still young enough to play Green Shield, who took 21 wickets at just 5.7 each. The leading wicket taker was the team captain, Ian Fraser, with 24 at 10.3.

The City and Suburban team won nine and lost six matches; the Poidevin-Gray team disappointed; while the AW Green Shield team were narrowly beaten



*Neil Marks made his debut for
NDCC as a 12-year-old in
1950/51.*

for the top place in their division by North Sydney. Two 12-year-olds with big futures ahead of them, Neil Marks and Graham Southwell, both made their first appearance for Northern District in the Green Shield team. Marks was the older of two cricketing sons of former Randwick and NSW batsman, Alec Marks, who had moved to the area recently and had become involved with the club in an informal coaching capacity as well as playing several second grade matches. The Northern District Green Shield captain, Geoff Bryant, was the best of the batsmen and was rewarded with selection in a Combined AW Green Shield team to play at Newcastle.

1951/52

Prior to the start of the 1951/52 season the Petersham and Marrickville clubs merged allowing the entry of the Bankstown-Canterbury club and the retention of the 16-team competition.

It was another disappointing season for the Northern District club, with none of the four grade teams able to finish any higher than tenth place. The first grade team was severely disrupted with its four best players (Davidson, Kershaw, Collins and **Chilvers**) **all missing around half of the team's matches for a variety of reasons.**

Although their low finishing positions ensured that no Northern District team had any involvement, a new semi-final and final format for deciding the premiership was introduced to the Sydney grade competition for the first time for the 1951/52 season. After 12 rounds of each of the four grade competitions, the top four teams competed in semi-finals, with the first and third-placed teams playing in one match, second and fourth in the other. The two winners then met in the final while the two losers played off for third and fourth places. The 12 teams which missed the semi-finals played two further rounds amongst themselves during the final two weekends of the season.

With the exception of 1958/59 when, for that season only, the competition reverted to being decided on a first-past-the-post basis, semi-finals and finals were to be played from then onwards.

The remarkable grade career of Hugh Chilvers came to an end midway through the 1951/52 season when the great little leg spinner announced his retirement at the age of 48, although he continued to play with the Pennant Hills Shires team for several more seasons and was still bowling well enough to win that **club's A grade bowling averages in 1953/54. Since his first match for Northern District** as a 21-year-old on the October long weekend of 1925 Chilvers had played continuously for the club, taking a total of 1226 wickets – 19 in third grade, 54 in second grade and 1153 in first grade. The latter still stands as a Sydney grade record. In first class cricket he captured a further 149 wickets, including 102 in Sheffield Shield matches. A much under-rated batsman, Chilvers scored 5125 runs for the club (4507 in first grade) including two centuries, the best an unbeaten 154 in the course of a seventh wicket partnership of 310 with Dick Taylor against Marrickville. The partnership is still the highest in the Sydney first grade competition for the seventh wicket and the highest for any wicket for the club in first grade.

Statistics aside, Chilvers as a man had the respect of all who knew him. His longtime captain and friend, George Williams, made this tribute: *“There has not been a more gentlemanly cricketer, nor one who has had such success and remained so self effacing. I shall always remember his complete absorption in his task, his boundless energy, his humility, and yet his sturdiness, and I shall keep with me a deep feeling of honour that I have been associated with him.”*³¹

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Chilvers' retirement from the playing field was far from the end of his involvement with the club. He remained on the club committee with the club's administration for several more years and right through until the time of his death in late 1994 at the age of 91 he followed the club's fortunes and was a regular spectator at club matches.

Alan Davidson was again a permanent member of the NSW Sheffield Shield team throughout 1951/52 and his appearances for Northern District were limited to **eight matches. For the first time in his four seasons with the club Davidson didn't win** the first grade bowling averages, taking just 13 wickets at 39.3. However to compensate, he did win the first grade batting averages, scoring 393 runs at 56.1 **including his first grade century: a superb 139. It was to be Davidson's final season** with Northern District. Now married, he and his wife had moved into their own home **at Strathfield and so was required, under the NSWCA's residential rules, to play for** his local club, Western Suburbs.

In four seasons with Northern District he had gone from a raw, country bowler **to one of Australia's most talented all-round cricketers.** Despite this his path to the Test team was not made easy, especially because the presence in the NSW team of Test opening bowlers Keith Miller and Ray Lindwall meant that he rarely bowled with the new ball. After two seasons of frustration Davidson performed impressively for NSW in 1952/53, scoring 221 runs at 31.5 and taking 26 wickets at 24.8, he was rewarded with a place in the 1953 Australian team which toured England. He made his Test debut in the first Test at Trent Bridge and was to remain a permanent member of the Australian team until his eventual retirement at the end of the 1962/63 season.

Just as his first club captain Tim Caldwell had done, Davidson continued to contribute to the game long after he had retired from playing the game. In 1970 he succeeded EG McMillan as President of the NSW Cricket Association, at 41 the youngest person ever to occupy that position. Philip Derriman, in his history of the NSWCA, said of Davidson: *"Because he was so well known by the public, he proved a most effective ambassador for the game. From the start, he demonstrated a remarkable willingness to represent the Association at all kinds of official functions. It is hard to imagine there has been a president more widely liked."*³² In 2000 Davidson celebrated his 30th year as NSWCA President, equalling the record set by Sydney Smith between 1936 and 1966.

The limited appearances in 1951/52 by Chilvers and Davidson was **compounded by absences by the first grade team's two leading batsmen, Vince Collins and John Kershaw, who each missed six matches. Nevertheless the team's batting was** solid with teenaged wicket-keeper/opening batsman, Dick Beard, scoring most runs (667 runs at 33.4), as well as making 29 dismissals. A student, and later a teacher, at Barker College, Beard was an extremely talented all-round sportsman who many believe was good enough to have played first class cricket. He had just the one season with Northern District, later playing for Sydney University before eventually moving to England and playing both league cricket and rugby league.

Another newcomer, ex-Marrickville batsman, Jack Josephs, had the next highest aggregate (525 at 35.0) while, after a slow start, John Kershaw batted brilliantly scoring two centuries and a 90 on his way to a total of 490 runs at 49.0. Vince Collins (313 runs at 34.8) and John Jagoe (311 at 20.7) were the other two of six batsmen to pass 300 runs for the season.



Jim Sutherland was both a keen NDCC cricketer and a long time sponsor of the club.

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While the first grade batting was good, the bowling was most disappointing. 19-year-old right arm pace bowler, Ian Humphreys, who had made his debut with the club during the previous season, stood out, taking 37 wickets at 22.6 with genuine pace and aggression. No other bowler took more than 13 wickets.

After looking to be serious wooden spoon contenders, with just 21 points after 10 matches, the second grade team came home strongly, gaining 35 points in the final five matches to finish in tenth place. They suffered from the same dearth of quality bowlers as first grade. Indeed it was a problem throughout the club with just three bowlers in the four grade teams taking 30 wickets despite each team playing 15 matches. Second grade had the other two with the ever-reliable Greg Lynch taking 30 wickets at 12.5 (despite missing over half of the season with business commitments), and newcomer Ron Ewington 38 at 16.3. The 36-year-old Ewington, who joined Northern District from the Paddington club had a tremendous first season. A right hand bat and off spin bowler, Ewington earned promotion from number nine to opener, scoring 482 runs at 25.4, including a top score of 100. Team captain, Jim Sutherland, with 491 runs at 28.9 narrowly beat Ewington for the batting aggregate, while Ken Griffith piped them both for the batting averages with 303 runs at 43.3. **Sutherland's 116 was the highest second grade score of the season.**

During the 1951/52 season Northern District lost its second outstanding leg spin bowler for the season when Alf Ziehlke retired. For most of his grade career Ziehlke had played in the shadow of Chilvers and for years had semi-seriously chided Chilvers for not having retired when he had turned 40, back in 1943, to give younger players the opportunity to play first grade. Despite now being the obvious replacement for Chilvers in the first grade team, Ziehlke was a man of his word, and when he himself turned 40 during the 1951/52 season he announced his retirement. A most passionate of cricketers he had taken 504 wickets (at 13.2) in just 12 seasons, including 50 or more wickets in a season on five occasions: 58 in 1942/43, 81 in 1943/44, 83 in 1944/45, 50 in 1946/47 and 60 in 1950/51. His total of 81 wickets in 1943/44 remains a club second grade record.

Ziehlke played most of his cricket in second grade where he took 357 wickets at an average of 14.0 but proved himself more than capable of playing first grade by taking 37 wickets (at 12.1) in one of his rare opportunities during the 1944/45 season. On at least two occasions he took hat-tricks, the first his amazing three wickets from the last three balls of a second grade match between Northern District and Marrickville in 1946/47. He was also a useful batsman, scoring 2354 runs at 18.2 with one century, also scored in 1946/47.

A most passionate and dedicated cricketer, Ziehlke found the early years of his self-imposed retirement quite harrowing but remained closely involved with the club for the remainder of his life. Both of his two sons, Bob and Eric, played lower grade cricket for Northern District, Bob for two seasons from 1957/58 and Eric for five seasons from 1965/66. Alf Ziehlke died at the age of 74, only two weeks after having attended the NDCC silver jubilee dinner at Pennant Hills Golf Club in May 1986.

Just two years after winning the premiership the Northern District third grade team finished in last place. Of course the composition of the team had changed almost completely over this three-year period with a number of players promoted and other retiring, leaving a very young and inexperienced team. The fact that the team had 31 **different players didn't help. One young player to impress** was 17-year-old Warwick Lane, promoted from fourth grade, who took 7-8 as his team dismissed Waverley for just 35 in a Round 13 match.

Another newcomer to Northern District, who played most of the season in third grade, was former North Sydney fast-medium bowler, Geoff Weir who topped the bowling aggregate with 22 wickets (at 26.7). For the next four decades Weir was to be an outstanding contributor, both on and off the field, not only for his new club

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but also for NSW cricket in general. By the time he retired from playing after the 1973/74 season he would have played in every grade as well as City and Suburban and **would have taken 831 wickets, at the time the club's second-highest** bowling aggregate behind the great Hugh Chilvers.

The fourth grade team was even younger than thirds with a number of the players still at school. Despite this they did very well to finish in 10th place with seven wins (one outright), one draw and six losses from 15 matches. Young Cyril Jagoe, the son of the club secretary, was the best all-rounder, taking 18 wickets and scoring 228 runs before winning promotion to third grade late in the season. Ian Eldred (203 runs and 27 wickets) also showed promise.

Despite the team containing four players with first grade experience, including leading wicket taker, Ian Humphreys, and leading run scorer, Dick Beard, the Poidevin-Gray team struggled, winning just one match. The Green Shield team did better, winning three, drawing one and losing three. Don Stephen, who captained the team and backed up for both grade and Poidevin-Gray matches, won selection in the Combined AW Green Shield which played Combined Country. Another player, Wally Pierce, was selected in the Combined Green Shield Second XI.

The City and Suburban team, captained by Max Lloyd, had a good season winning 13 of their 22 matches. Don Lumby was the leading batsman, scoring 495 runs at 41.0 while George Anderson, **with an unbeaten 100, became the club's first** City and Suburban century maker. Lloyd (44 wickets), Jack Chalkley (42) and Ray Inman (33) were the best of the bowlers.

In the absence of a regular wicket-keeper the gloves were given to a 23-year-old newcomer to the club named Rae Richmond who would go on to become the **club's longest-serving** City and Suburban player and a tireless worker for the club for almost three decades.

1952/53

Just three years after the triumph of winning its first premierships and two after going within eight points of taking the club championship, Northern District hit rock bottom, finishing last in both first and second grade, third last in third grade and second last in fourth grade. From 52 matches played in the four grades, there were just seven wins, as against 39 losses. Not surprisingly they finished last in the club championship.

As is the way with graded teams, the poor performances through the club all filtered down from first grade. The team was going through a rebuilding phase with a number of players, one as young as 14, being blooded. In such a situation it is crucial to have the right senior players alongside them to ensure that they benefit. Here the loss of two players, Les Fallowfield and Vince Collins, on top of the loss of Chilvers and Davidson the previous season, left a huge hole.

Fallowfield, although 38 years old and past his prime, was still a vital component of the first grade team. However, in early 1953 he was seriously injured, losing the tips of four of his fingers in an industrial accident at the Chullora railway workshops. Although he fully recovered from the effects of the injury it was the end of one of the most distinguished careers in the history of the NDCC. At the time he was without doubt the most successful batsman in the club's **history, having scored a total** of 8279 runs (6818 in first grade) with 19 centuries (15 in first grade, one in second grade and three in the Poidevin-Gray Shield). He was the first Northern District batsman to score more than 1000 runs in a season, held the club record for the highest first grade score (204) and the Sydney grade record for the most consecutive centuries. In 19 seasons he won the first grade batting averages eight times, the

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batting aggregate six times, and for good measure also won the first grade bowling averages in 1940/41.

He played 11 matches for NSW, where his record of 761 runs at an average of 44.8 beggars the question of why he never became a permanent member of the State team, and so the possibility of pushing for Test selection. Those who saw him play are adamant that he had all the required qualities. He remained a close follower of the club for many years and eventually died, aged 85, in May 1994.

The loss of Fallowfield, combined with that of captain, Vince Collins, who had moved to Queensland midway through the season, left John Kershaw with the huge of burden of being the only seasoned first grade batsman and of captaining the team. Although he had a reasonable season, topping both the batting aggregate and averages with 427 at 25.1, he received little support, only John Jagoe (322 at 20.0) scoring in excess of 300 runs. The bowling was even worse, with Len Shaw, the leading wicket taker, capturing just 18 wickets – the lowest winning first grade **bowling aggregate in Northern District's history. The club clearly though had its eye** on the future with 14-year-old left hand batsman, Graham Southwell, playing a number of matches in first grade – indeed the youngster played matches in each of the four grade teams at various times during the season.

In second grade, Jim Sutherland again captained the team, which like first grade won just one match throughout the season. Several times they were on the end of large scores by opponents, Balmain scoring 6 for 371 (declared) in the ninth round and Glebe 7 for 391 (declared) in round 12. In the latter match Northern District were dismissed for 81 and 141 to lose by an innings and 169 runs – the second heaviest defeat in club history in that grade. At Waitara Oval, in the corresponding first grade match, Glebe had declared at 4 for 418.

On top of the first grade player losses, Greg Lynch, who had once again topped both the second grade bowling aggregate and averages (41 wickets at 16.9), played his last match for the club at the age of 40. A senior executive with the Esso company, work commitments had increasingly made it difficult for him to keep playing although he did continue to serve on the club committee, as he had done since 1939. Between **1946 and 1955 Lynch was the club's assistant treasurer, and following the death of** long-serving treasurer, Ellis Robins in 1956, took over that role. In 1957 he was transferred to Melbourne where he remained for five years, then went to the Philippines for a further five years, before returning to the district in the late 1960s.

In 15 seasons with the Northern District club Lynch took a total of 685 wickets (53 in first grade, 528 in second grade and 104 in third grade). Between 1940/41 and 1952/53 he won the second grade bowling and averages each on eight occasions, including the aggregate for four consecutive seasons (1947/48 to 1950/51) and the averages for an unprecedented seven consecutive seasons (1946/47 to 1952/53). On five occasions he took in excess of 50 wickets in a season, with a best of 63 wickets in 1942/43. As well he captured a hat-trick on two occasions. As to his batting, Lynch is one of those rare cricketers who took more wickets than he scored runs (594 at 4.1). During the seven-season period when he won the bowling averages he had a high score of 10 not out – his only double figure innings in seven years!

Greg and his wife, Pat, had five sons, three of whom played cricket for Northern District. The best of the three was Denis Lynch **who was the club's first** grade wicket-keeper and one of the best in the Sydney grade competition during the late 1960s through to the early 1980s. Earlier, during the 1954/55 season, older son John was the first grade scorer. He later played in the City and Suburban team during the mid-sixties, while Greg Lynch junior played in the lower grades during the mid-1960s.

The 1952/53 Northern District third grade team finished in 14th (or third last place) – **and was the club's best-performed** grade team of the season! Again a very

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young team, captained by Ray Stubleby, they won just two matches. The batting was very disappointing with just two batsmen, Stubleby and Graham Findlay, passing 200 runs for the season, with 274 and 278 runs respectively. Take out each of their top of 115 and their performances were as moderate as the remainder of the team. Leg spinner, Kevin Moore, with 27 wickets at 10.2 was the best of the bowlers.

The fourth grade, captained by Ian Black, had 30 different players, and consequently struggled to find a combination. They won three matches (one outright and two on the first innings) and finished in second last place.

The City and Suburban team, again captained by Max Lloyd, were easily the **club's best**-performed team winning 12 matches, including all seven played at their home ground, Turrumurra Oval. Jack Chalkley had a brilliant season, taking 75 wickets at an average of 8.5, including many grade players seeking practice by **backing-up in their club's City and Suburban teams. The team's wicket**-keeper, Rae Richmond, also took out the batting aggregate with 302 runs, while skipper Lloyd had a good double with 242 runs and 49 wickets.

Like the grade teams, the Poidevin-Gray and Green Shield teams failed to live up to their potential. Graham Southwell had the distinction of playing both first grade and Green Shield in the same season, while Neil Marks, John Rainsford, Geoff Bryant and Malcolm Chambers all showed promise.

At the 1953 Annual General Meeting life membership was given to the club's long-serving scorer, vice president and committeeman, Percy Day. **The club's first** grade scorer from its inaugural season in 1925/26 through until the late 1940s, he also scored for NSW teams both in Sheffield Shield and international matches. He was the father of Frank Day, **one of the club's most exciting batsmen of the 1930s and 40s. Day's job as first grade scorer was later taken on by Bob Fraser**, the father of Ian Fraser.

1953/54

After the abysmal performances of the previous season, there was only one way the club could go, and all teams did improve significantly, although that improvement was not truly reflected in the final club championship position of 12th.

The great hope for the immediate future of the club was its new recruit Jim Burke who had moved to a new **home within Northern District's residential** boundaries. Born James Wallace Burke at Mosman on 12 June 1930 he had shown such talent for cricket that by the time he was 13 he was playing third grade cricket for Manly, carrying his bat twice in a match against Gordon at Killara Oval. By the age of 14 he was in the First XI at Sydney Grammar School, and the following year he made the Manly first grade team, scoring 323 runs at 80.8 in his first season. Early in the 1948/49 season he scored 134 for NSW Colts against Queensland Colts and by the end of that season he had played three Sheffield Shield matches for NSW, scoring 76 not out, 59 and 69.

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In 1949/50 Burke was a team-mate of Alan Davidson **on the Australian Second team's** tour of New Zealand, and he made his Test debut in the Fourth Test of the 1950/51 series against England at Adelaide Oval. Batting at number six he was dismissed in the first innings for 12 but in the second innings scored 101 not out, the eighth Australian to make a century on his Test debut, and at 20 years and 240 days, the second youngest after Archie Jackson.

Despite this great start Burke had to struggle to retain his Test place, playing in the final Test of the 1950/51 series, but then being omitted for the first two Tests in the following **season's series against the touring West Indies** team. He played in the Third Test of that series but was dropped again for the final two Tests.

He didn't play against the 1952/53 South Africans and was omitted from the 1953 Australian team to England. When he joined Northern District at the start of the 1953/54 grade season he was a very seasoned and determined 23 years old. When he had made his initial Test appearance Burke had been an attractive, stylish and aggressive batsman, however his omission from the team motivated

him to such an extent that he eliminated all risky shots from his game, and was henceforth remembered as a dogged and dour batsman.

Burke was appointed captain of the Northern District first grade team and his impact was immediate, leading them to wins in three of their first four matches. His opening partner was another newcomer to the club in Finley Brian, an experienced right-hand batsman aged in his early 30s who had previously played with the North Sydney club. Brian had a slightly ungainly but effective batting style and a good temperament which blended perfectly with that of Burke. It took the pair just three matches to set a new club record opening partnership of 234 against Western Suburbs at Waitara Oval, breaking the 19-year-old mark set by Les Fallowfield and Noel Miller in 1934/35. This was followed by a stand of 151 against Balmain at Drummoyne Oval in the fourth round, and 162 against Waverley at the Sydney Cricket Ground in round 10. When Burke left the team in February 1954 to join the Lancashire League club Todmorton, John Kershaw took over his opening role, he and Brian then put on an opening stand of 186 against Petersham at Petersham Oval in the 13th round.

Coinciding with Burke's mid-season absence on Sheffield Shield duties the team slumped to lose three of their next four matches, and any realistic hope of winning the first grade premiership. They eventually finished in eighth place with seven wins and seven losses from their 14 matches.

In just 11 innings Jim Burke totalled 648 runs including three centuries and three fifties. His average of 81.0 was a club record, beating Les Fallowfield's **previous** record of 72.2, and also winning him the district first grade competition. Finley Brian scored 650 runs at 36.1 including scores of 137, 80, 98, 90, 54 and 101.

After a disappointing season in 1952/53 young fast bowler Ian Humphreys bounced back to take both the bowling aggregate and averages with 27 wickets at 22.3, including 7-79 against Waverley at the SCG, and 6-57 against North Sydney at North Sydney Oval, including only the third recorded club first grade hat trick.



Australian Test batsman Jim Burke joined Northern District at the start of the 1953/54 season..

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Making his debut in first grade was all-rounder Ian Fraser. A left-arm inswing bowler and attacking left hand batsman he had earned promotion through the grades with some consistent performances with both bat and ball. In the team's match against Randwick at Coogee Oval he picked up three wickets help win the game. The next day's 'Sun-Herald' newspaper featured Fraser's performance under the heading 'Youth Shines', a description of the 30-year-old Fraser which didn't escape the notice of Jim Burke - **from then on he was to be known as 'Youthful' Fraser.**

After a good start, in which they won four of their first five matches, the Northern District second grade team slumped badly, winning just one of its remaining nine matches and finishing in 14th place. Having three different captains (Ray Stubley, David Meagher and Alan Patterson) and 23 different players is unlikely to have helped team stability. Both Stubley (363 runs at 51.9) and Patterson (205 runs at 29.3) scored centuries and so earned promotion to first grade. The bowling was disappointing with only left-arm medium pacer Jim Sullivan junior (35 wickets at 19.6), **the son of Waitara Oval's cricketing groundsman, having an average under 25.0.**

With 40 players in their books it is not surprising that the third grade team had a poor 1953/54 season. Like second grade they won five matches from 14 and finished in third last place. Only one batsman, Don Lumby (254 at 28.2) averaged above 20.0 with the bat while E Lean (27 wickets at 16.8) was the only bowler to take more than 20 wickets.

The best performed grade team of the 1953/54 season was fourth grade, captained by Cyril Jagoe junior. In 14 matches they had nine wins and five losses, all on the first innings to finish in a very creditable fifth place. There were a number of batting highlights including a record club fourth grade score of 150 not out against Western Suburbs at Turramurra Oval by Gordon Dorrough, which set him on a path of grade-by-grade promotions which eventually took him to first grade by the end of **the season. The team's only other century, a fine innings of 113, was made by 15-year-old left hand batsman, Neil Marks, and clearly earmarked him for future higher honours.**

Likewise with the ball, there were several good individual performances, the best being John Mattingly's 7-66 and Ron Allum's 6-7 which included a hat trick.

The two junior teams had contrasting seasons, with the Poidevin-Gray team again disappointing but the AW Green team going within two runs of taking the Shield for the first time. The latter was the losing margin in the decisive match against Manly, the eventual winners. The Green Shield team manager, Ian Black, identified seven potential first graders in the team, five of them winning selection in Green Shield representative sides late in the season. Two batsmen, captain Neil Marks and John Blazey each scored centuries, combining in a record opening partnership of 229 against Balmain. A product of the Pennant Hills club, Blazey was the oldest of three cricketing brothers who between them would play for Northern District until the mid-1980s.

The City and Suburban team had a younger than usual line-up with a number of promising players taking the field at various stages. Despite this it was experienced Jack Chalkley (324 runs and 43 wickets) and captain Max Lloyd (332 runs and 60 wickets) who again dominated. Jim Burke, looking for some additional practice, played one match, scoring 66.

1954/55

For the third time in four seasons the Sydney grade competition was disrupted by the visit of an international team. At that time, the competition draw was made to ensure that no grade cricket was scheduled whenever international matches were being played in Sydney. To compensate, a number of one-day matches were played with extended hours meaning a morning start. This in turn caused problems to the clubs because most people worked on Saturday mornings and so were often unable to play.

The first grade team finished in 12th place, the low position caused mainly by the fact that they had eight drawn matches from the 14 played. Of the other six, three were won and three lost. Jim Burke again led the team with John Kershaw taking his place when Burke was away for representative matches including two Test matches. For NSW, Burke began his quest to regain a Test place with a score of 137, batting at **number seven, in NSW's only innings against Queensland in Brisbane. In the match** between NSW and the MCC at the SCG he scored 6 and 34 not out, opening the batting in the second innings. An injury to Keith Miller, finally saw Burke recalled for the Second Test in Sydney where he scored 44 and 14. He was then omitted from the Third Test team before returning for the Fourth Test at Adelaide Oval where he scored 18 and 5. Despite scoring 62 in the second innings of the second NSW vs MCC match (he and Bob Simpson added 159 for the second wicket) Burke was again dropped for the Fifth Test in Sydney.

Although Burke scored 401 runs for Northern District at 44.6, he was beaten for both the batting aggregate and averages by John Kershaw, who scored 513 runs at 51.3. Both batsmen scored centuries: Kershaw 103 against Gordon at Chatswood Oval and 124 not out against Balmain at Waitara Oval, and Burke a superb innings of 160 not out against St George at Hurstville Oval. Finley Brian missed the first four matches with appendicitis but still managed to score 385 runs at 35.0.

Although better known for his batting, Burke was also an extremely capable off spin bowler, good enough to have won the district first grade bowling averages (36 wickets at 6.13) in his final season with Manly (1952/53). He had a notoriously suspect action, once humorously described by ex-English Test cricketer and journalist, Ian Peebles, as *“looking like a policeman applying his truncheon to a particularly short offender's head”*³³ and more technically by Jack Pollard as *“delivering the ball with a flipped action from an arm bent so low only the fingers were above his head at the moment of delivery”*³⁴. Despite continual comments about the legality of his action Burke went through his entire grade and first class cricket career without ever being called for throwing, Pollard suggesting that because first class umpires had passed his part-time bowling at that level, Sydney umpires were unwilling to rock the boat by calling him in grade matches, despite the fact that he was an extremely potent force at that level.

Burke was called at least twice in minor matches. One was in a City and Suburban match at Parramatta where the opposition captain was umpiring at square leg and decided to try and make a name for himself. The other was during a match at Cooma where Burke was playing for one of the Jack Chegwyn country touring teams. Neil Marks **takes up the story:** **“It was during the years of the Snowy Mountains Scheme where the population was made up of people of all nationalities. The umpire was a big Dutchman, newly recruited to the game of cricket and unaware of Jimmy's reputation. After a couple of deliveries with that extraordinary action of his, Burke's NSW team-mate Bill Watson, fielding at slip, called out: ‘Come on Jim, that's enough of that funny stuff. Bowl properly!’. After the next ball, Watson shrugged his**

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shoulders apologetically and called out to the Dutchman. ‘Sorry ump. I’ve tried to get him to bowl normally, but he won’t listen’. Sure enough, as Burke let go of the next delivery, the umpire thrust out his right arm and called ‘No Ball’ much to the delight of Bill and the rest of the Chegwyn team, although not to the intensely competitive Burke.”

In 1954/55 Burke won the Northern District first grade bowling averages, his 35 wickets costing just 13.5 each – missing a second Sydney grade averages by just 0.25. The leading wicket-taker was a good friend of Burke’s and a former Manly teammate named Nigel Sutherland who, in his first season with the club, took 38 wickets at 16.7 with his left-arm orthodox spinners. Pace bowler Ian Humphreys had a disappointing season, taking 16 wickets at 34.9.

The second grade team, captained by Ray Stublely, had its best season since 1947/48, finishing in sixth place with six wins, two draws and six losses – including each of the last three matches. Of the batsmen only Garry Hammill passed 300 runs, scoring 351 at an average of 25.0. The second grade batting average was won by Alan Patterson with 291 runs at 29.1 – exactly 20 years after his father, the late Bert Patterson, had done the same. Two bowlers dominated, Ron Ewington with 40 wickets at 14.1 and Jim Sullivan, 41 at 19.5. On four occasions Ewington took five wickets in an innings, with a best of 5-31 while Sullivan’s 7-78 was the best return for the season.

Third grade also performed well, especially in the early part of the season. After six rounds the team was unbeaten and in second place, with five wins and a draw. Three straight losses however cost them a real chance of making the semi-finals and they eventually finished in seventh place with seven wins, six losses and a draw. The outstanding innings of the season was a brilliant 170 by Ken Griffith against Glebe at Erskineville Oval, which saw this great club man promoted to second grade.

The bowling honours were shared evenly with the leading wicket taker, Dick Walker, taking just 21 wickets, while Geoff Bryant had the best average, his 17 wickets costing only 9.5 runs each.

The fourth grade team, captained by E Ferris, played some entertaining cricket having two outright wins, two outright losses, four first innings wins and six first innings losses – no draws! The season was memorable for the remarkable achievement of young bowler, Dick Walker, who took all ten wickets (for just 18 runs) in the first innings of University at the University No 2 Oval in the second round, then backed up with 4-55 in the second innings for a fourth grade record match return of 14-73 - still as a club fourth grade record.

It was only the second occasion in the club’s history that a bowler had taken ten wickets in an innings, the other bowler being Frank Gilmore, who took 10-41 in a second grade match against North Sydney during the 1936/37 season. Sadly Gilmore, who had played two Sheffield Shield matches for NSW, one in 1938/39 and one in 1939/40, died on 28 April 1955 at the young age of 45. Another club stalwart, Reg Manton, who had played for the club from its inaugural season through until the early 1930s and had subsequently been a keen supporter of the club, also died during the season.

The Poidevin-Gray Shield team could win only one of its four matches. Although the team had some exceptionally talented players, many were still in their mid-teens and so were up against much older opponents. 16-year-old Neil Marks was the leading batsman, playing two outstanding innings: 107 not out and 58. Team captain, Geoff Bryant, had returns of 5-79 and 4-66 while John Blazey and Bill Cloros also bowled well.

The Under 16 AW Green Shield team did much better, narrowly missing a place in the final when two matches were washed out with the team in a dominant position. Bruce Gilroy, a promising young wicket-keeper/batsman from Trinity

Grammar, scored the team's only century (111 not out), while Graham Southwell also batted well. Making his debut for the club was 12-year-old Lynn Marks, the younger son of Alec Marks and a brother of Neil Marks.

In the City and Suburban competition, Northern District won ten of their 22 matches, losing 11 and having one draw. A total of 42 players took the field at various times during the season. Veteran bowler, Geoff Weir, became the second player in the season to take all ten wickets in an innings (eight bowled and two lbw), while 22-year-old Allan May, in his first season with the club, picked up 37 wickets at 7.4, including a hat trick – the fourth in a cricket career which had begun with the Marsfield Cricket Club only five years previously. Phil Harris, with 248 runs at 22.5, was the best of the **team's batsmen.**

The C&S team was lucky to finish the season with all their players intact following a match at Goddard Park, Concord where seven players, including John Leard, Geoff Draper and Jack Chalkley, were struck by lightning while on the field. **The incident made the front page of the following day's 'Sunday Telegraph'.**

1955/56

The 1955/56 season saw the start of a great NDCC tradition with the release of the first issue of a new fortnightly club newsletter. The brainchild of Ian Black, who wrote and copied it using an old Gestetner copying machine, it was Doug Cameron who came up with the name ***Blackmail***. When Black, a school teacher, left to take up the position of headmaster of a small country school in February 1957 the newsletter continued to be published by club secretary Ron Ewington **and others, until Black's** return in the early 1960s.

The first grade team, again captained by Jim Burke, included a new player who had moved from Adelaide with his work, and who arrived at Waitara with the best possible referral. Aged 30 when he joined the club, Colin Millard had first played senior cricket for the Kensington Cricket Club in Adelaide immediately after the war and had played a number of matches with Don Bradman. He came with a letter of introduction from the great man.

The team began the season strongly and after five matches had first innings wins against St George, Manly and Randwick, a thrilling tie against Glebe at Waitara Oval and just one loss, against Mosman. From then on, with Burke missing for much of the time and John Kershaw unavailable for the second half of the season, the team was unable to maintain this form, eventually slipping to a disappointing twelfth place.

In what was to be a memorable season **personally, Burke topped the club's batting averages (73.6), bowling aggregate (41 wickets) and bowling averages (9.3), the latter figure giving him the Sydney grade bowling averages for a second time. Fully recovered from his previous season's illness, Finley Brian was the team's leading run scorer with 430 at 30.7, including the only century of the season: 101 against Gordon at Chatswood Oval. Kershaw, who was transferred to the country with his work and would miss the following three seasons, was next best with 232 runs at 29.0. Although he wasn't to secure a permanent first grade spot until the following season, young left-hander Neil Marks, showed the**



Colin Millard.

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concentration and determination which were to be the hallmarks of his batting, in innings of 33 against Cumberland and 31 not out against University.

Apart from Burke, the best of the first grade bowlers was Nigel Sutherland, who matched his 1954/55 performance of 38 wickets (at 18.2 each) - including returns of 5-15 against St George, 5-55 against Manly, and 5-76 against Gordon.

In second grade Northern District finished in the bottom half of the table with three wins, five draws (three abandoned because of rain) and six losses. The team suffered from the effects of having 29 different players and consequently were never able to settle properly. This was most noticeable in the opening bowling positions where eight different players were tried at different times. The best of the bowlers was Ron Ewington (26 at 18.9, including 8-89 in one innings) while no batsman was able to score more than 250 runs.

Third grade had similar problems, using a total of 36 players. Team captain, Cyril Jagoe junior, had a good season winning both the batting and bowling aggregates, with 330 runs and 17 wickets respectively.

Likewise, the Northern District fourth grade team, led by Max Lloyd, struggled - winning just four from 12 matches played. Wicket-keeper/batsman, Dave Olive, was the best of the batsman, scoring 316 runs at 31.6 including a whirlwind 114 (in 86 minutes) against University at University Oval No 2. The versatile Allan May, who could bowl either fast medium or leg spin, was the best of the bowlers with 28 wickets at 14.2.

The City and Suburban team broke all records, using a total of 51 players during the season and still struggling on occasions to put eleven on the field. They played a total of 22 matches of which they won 13 (nine of the last ten) including a three-run win over North Sydney, a one wicket win over Balmain and a last over victory against Hunters Hill. No batsman scored more than 200 runs while the evergreen Jack Chalkley (36 wickets at 13.6) and Barry Wright (35 at 5.3, including an amazing 10-16 in one match).

With most of the club's group of young players rapidly maturing the Northern District Poidevin-Gray team finally clicked and were desperately unlucky not to gain a place in the final, finishing equal with Gordon at the top of the Northern Division but missing out narrowly on averages.

The Green Shield team, failed to win any of their seven matches, drawing four and losing the other three.

On the representative scene Jim Burke had a sensational season. Putting the disappointments of previous seasons behind him, the determined Burke, finally playing permanently in his preferred opening spot, went about accumulating so many runs during the 1955/56 Sheffield Shield season that the selectors had little choice but to include him in the 1956 Australian touring team to England.

Scores of 85 and 56 against Queensland in Brisbane; 189 against Western Australia in Perth; 150 against South Australia in Adelaide; and 98 and 57 not out against Victoria in Sydney helped him total 701 runs at an average of 77.9 in seven Sheffield Shield matches - more than any other player in the competition. At the end of the season a Testimonial match for ex-Test players Johnnie Taylor and Arthur Mailey was held at the Sydney Cricket Ground. The game doubled as a selection trial for the team to England, and Burke cemented his place in the team with a fine innings of 192.

The English tour finally established Burke as a permanent member of the Australian Test team. Playing in



Cyril Jagoe.

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all five Tests, frequently on difficult pitches, he topped both the Australian Test aggregate and averages with 271 runs at 30.1. In all matches he also scored more runs (1339) than any other batsman.

On 11 May 1956 the club was devastated by a tragic car accident which led to the deaths of long-serving club secretary and life member, Cyril Jagoe, and his wife. The accident occurred on the Hume Highway about 15 kilometres north of Goulburn, Mrs Jagoe dying instantly and Mr Jagoe at Yass Hospital two days later. Formerly a wicket-keeper/batsman with the Manly Cricket Club, Cyril Jagoe had been involved in the formation of the NDCC in 1924 and 1925 and had served on the committee for every one of the following 32 years. For 17 years he had been assistant secretary and at the time of his death was in his 16th year as secretary. From 1941/42 through until **his death he was one of the club's delegates to the NSW Cricket Association where he served for a number of years on the Country Committee.** In his capacity as a club delegate he also managed a number of NSW Sheffield Shield teams on interstate trips. Mr and Mrs Jagoe left four sons and a daughter. Two of the sons, Cyril and John, had played all of their cricket with Northern District and were current players at the time **of their parents' deaths.**

At the 1956 Annual General Meeting, Ron Ewington took over as club secretary while Greg Lynch replaced Ellis Robins as treasurer. Although he only played cricket for the club intermittently, Robins had been a loyal and hard-working member since the mid-1920s, serving as treasurer for a total of 14 years, in three separate periods (1928 to 1931, 1940/41 and 1946 to 1956. His other sporting interests **didn't take him far from Waitara Oval** – he had also been the president of the Hornsby Bowling Club. Sadly, shortly after stepping down as treasurer and on the eve of moving to Melbourne he died quite suddenly.

1956/57

Another disappointing season for Northern District with the young first grade team (average age of 20) slipping to second last place. In the eight seasons since the team had won the premiership they had finished in the top half of the competition only twice, and in the last three seasons had finished 12th, 13th and now 15th. While the team clearly missed Jim Burke (representative commitments meant that he missed almost half of the season) and John Kershaw, the batting line-up was reasonably strong. However the bowling was well below first grade standard with opposition teams averaging almost 30 runs per wicket.

The team was captained, during the first half of the season, by Colin Millard until a broken ankle ended his year, his injury coinciding with the return of Burke who resumed the captaincy. On the way home from the tour to England, the Australian team had played one Test in Pakistan and three in India – the first Tests played by Australia on the subcontinent. There, Burke had scored his second Test century: 161 against India in the Second Test at Bombay. His performances, especially in England, were recognised **when he was later made one of Wisden's five Cricketers of the Year for 1957.**

The highlight of the first grade season was the emergence of the 18-year-old Neil Marks as a batsman of genuine high quality. In ten innings Marks scored 402 runs at an average of 57.4, including his initial grade



Jim Sullivan junior was a prolific second grade wicket-taker during the 1950s.

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century: 106 not out against Waverley at Waitara Oval. Three other batsmen topped 300 runs for the season: Finley Brian (353 at 22.0), Geoff Bryant (338 at 21.2) and Don Stephen (318 at **39.8**), **the latter's total dominated by one brilliant innings of 157** not out. In six innings Jim Burke scored 251 runs.

The already threadbare first grade bowling was further weakened with the loss through an arm injury of left arm spinner Nigel Sutherland, who had taken 38 wickets in each of the two previous seasons. In his absence the brunt of the bowling fell on former Manly right-arm medium pacer, John Dower, who topped the bowling aggregate in his first season with the club, taking 24 wickets (at 27.5) – the only bowler to take more than 20 wickets for the season.

The Northern District second grade team did only marginally better than firsts, winning five games from 14 to finish in 11th place. The team was led at various times by Ron Ewington, Doug Cameron and Ray Stubbley, the latter one of only two batsmen to score more than 300 runs (316 at 24.3). The other was Alan Patterson who 302 runs at 20.1. John Jagoe, who began the season in first grade but was dropped midway through the year, regained his form to score 256 runs at 36.5.

Of the bowlers, paceman Jim Sullivan took almost twice the number of wickets as any other bowler. Tireless and aggressive, Sullivan captured 36 wickets at 17.6 while leg spin bowler, Lionel Fowler, played half a season in each of the top two grades, taking 18 wickets at 33.2 in first grade and 19 at 17.2 in seconds.

Third grade was the best-performed of the Northern District grade teams in 1956/57, finishing in sixth place. At one time they looked likely to become the first team in the club to play in a semi-final but late-season losses to lower-placed teams saw them miss out. Alan Pearson **was the team's best player, scoring 436 runs at 36.3** and taking 15 wickets at 21.2 before being promoted to second grade. Others to do well were Tom Hobson (23 wickets at 15.8), Bob Doyle (275 runs at 27.5) and Barry Wright whose hat-trick against Bankstown won that match for his team.

In fourth grade Northern District performed poorly winning just three matches and finishing in 12th place. As was often the case player movements and unavailabilities in higher grades ensured that fourth grade were never a settled side, 31 players taking the field at different times. No batsman passed 300 runs and no bowler reached 30 wickets, Tom Townley (292 runs at 29.2) and Morrie Perrott (28 wickets at 14.7) coming closest.

The most remarkable achievement of the season came in the City and **Suburban team's match against** Overseas where Allan May took five wickets in successive balls (all bowled) on the way to taking 8-8. It is the only known triple hat-trick in Northern District's history. **The C&S team, led by Rae Richmond, was easily the club's best for 1956/57, winning 23 matches from 27 played, with one draw and** just three losses. Although there was no formal competition table, an examination of all match results shows that the team would have won easily had there been a competition. Other outstanding performers were Ken Griffith who scored well over twice as many runs (675 at 35.5) as anyone else in the team; Geoff Weir, who took 52 wickets at 8.6; May who finished with 46 runs at 6.9; Bill Wood who also took a hat-trick; and Ron Butler who scored 311 runs at 25.9. Both Griffith and Butler won places **in a Combined City and Suburban team which played matches against the Teachers' Association and a NSW Cricket Association team.**

In the two age competitions Northern District did poorly in the Poidevin-Gray Shield, winning two of their five matches. Neil Marks (234 runs at 58.5), Bruce Gilroy (217 at 43.4) and Graham Southwell (164 at 27.3) all batted well with both Marks (102 not out vs Balmain) and Gilroy (149 not out vs Paddington) scoring centuries.

To ensure a continuing flow of young cricketers the NDCC embarked on an ambitious coaching scheme at the start of the 1956/57 season. In partnership with the other local cricket bodies, the Pennant Hills and Epping Shire clubs, and the

Hornsby-Kuring-gai and Northern Districts Cricket Associations, a series of Saturday morning coaching clinics were held during September 1956 at Waitara Oval, Storey Park, Eastwood Oval and Epping Oval. More than 250 boys participated, receiving coaching not only from club coaches such as Alec Marks, but also from guest coaches such as former Test players Stan McCabe, Arthur Chipperfield and Martin Donnelly.

The scheme had immediate results with many more players seeking places in the Green Shield team which improved significantly on its poor effort of the previous season to lose only two of their seven matches and finish third in their division. Included in the team was a 13-year-old from the Eastwood Marist Brothers named John Phillips, then a promising pace bowler **but destined to become one of ND's finest spin bowlers of the 1960s.**

1957/58

With the grade season coinciding with the Australian tour of South Africa, Northern District was without Jim Burke for the entire season. Burke had another fine tour scoring 389 runs in the five Tests at an average of 64.8 including a sequence of 189, 2, 83 and 81 between the Second and Fourth Tests.

Burke's absence, together with the loss of Finley Brian who had left the district, again **placed a great deal of responsibility on the club's emerging young batsmen**, and again they responded superbly. Leading the way was Neil Marks who scored 624 runs at 41.6 including an unbeaten even 100, winning a place in both the NSW Colts team and a Combined Sydney team which played matches against Combined Country and Newcastle. Wicket-keeper/batsman, Bruce Gilroy, was also selected in the NSW Colts squad but was twelfth man in the only match in which he was chosen. Gilroy played predominantly as a batsman for Northern District, scoring 342 runs at an average 19.0, with Jim Mathers behind the stumps making 29 dismissals (13 catches and 16 stumpings). Graham Southwell established himself as a permanent first grade batsman, scoring 319 runs at 40.0, desperately unlucky to be dismissed for 99 against St George on a difficult Waitara wicket. Spin bowling all-rounder John Blazey, likewise won a permanent spot in first grade, only to miss the latter part of the season on National Service. With the exception of Mathers, all of **these players were still under 21 and were members of Northern District's Poidevin-Gray team.** All four (Marks, Gilroy, Southwell and Blazey) were selected in the Combined Metropolitan Poidevin-Gray team which played Newcastle.

The first grade bowling, with a couple of notable exceptions, was again weak. Don McDonald, with 51 wickets at 22.1, became only the fourth Northern District first grade bowler to take more than 50 wickets in a season (Jack Scott, Hugh Chilvers and Tim Caldwell were the others). A slow left arm orthodox bowler who flighted the ball and gained considerable turn, McDonald had joined the club in 1955/56 and although he had played a number of first grade matches the previous season, 1957/58 was his **first and only full season in first grade. McDonald's season had started rather unusually when his name had appeared in first grade teams of both Northern District and Gordon which were published prior to the first match. McDonald had decided to try out with both clubs and hadn't bothered to inform Gordon that he was staying with ND.**

Right-arm paceman, John Dower, was the only other bowler to take in excess of 20 wickets. Bowling long spells he took 33 wickets at 23.9. All bowlers suffered at the hands of an exciting 20-year-old **St George's batsman, Norman O'Neill** who hammered a magnificent 201 not out against Northern District at Waitara Oval. A

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week later O'Neill scored 233 in 244 minutes against Victoria in a Sheffield Shield match.

The absence of Burke, lack of quality bowlers and the general inexperience of the young team told and they finished in twelfth place with four wins, two draws and eight losses. The team was captained by Colin Millard.

Second grade began the season poorly, losing each of their first three matches, but recovered to record five wins and two draws in their remaining 11 matches to finish in 11th place. The star of the season was undoubtedly left arm medium pacer, Jim Sullivan, who captured 69 wickets at an average of 18.3, the most wickets in a season by a Northern District grade bowler outside of the three one-day match seasons during the Second World War. He received good support from medium-pacer Geoff Weir, promoted from third grade midway through the season, who took 29 wickets at 17.7 and Ken Clarke who took 12 wickets in his few matches with the team. The second grade batting, although consistent overall, cracked under pressure on a **number of occasions. Each of the team's specialist** batsmen scored at least one fifty but none were able to convert them to big scores. Opening batsman, Warren Trotman, who had joined the club in the 1955/56 season and had a quite a bit of first grade experience topped both the batting aggregate and averages with 429 runs at 33.0, while Ian Fraser (340 at 30.9), Alan Patterson (330 at 20.6) and Doug Cameron (323 at 32.3).

The third grade batsmen also struggled with no player able to top 300 runs for the season and only one, Trevor Manser, able to average more than 20.0 per innings (21.8). Two newcomers impressed: Harry Griffin, a leg spin bowler and aggressive batsman, scored 213 runs and took 8 wickets; and Kevin Miller who scored 204 runs and took 15 wickets. The leading wicket takers were Allan May (27 at 15.1) and Geoff Weir (20 at 14.3) – the latter taking a total of 49 wickets for the season in second and third grades. After finishing in sixth place in 1956/57, the third grade team slipped to 11th in 1957/58.

Fourth grade was the only grade team to finish in the top half of the competition, seven wins (four of them outright) helping them into seventh place. Captained by former first grade spin bowler, Nigel Sutherland, unable to bowl through a shoulder injury but able to top the batting aggregate and averages with 498 runs at 29.3 **including the team's highest individual score of the season** - an unbeaten 95. **Like second and third grades, the team's batting lacked consistency although two** promising young batsmen did emerge in Simon Chilvers and 14-year-old Dallas Ryan who had top scores of 82 and 75 respectively.

Chilvers, no relation to Hugh, played three seasons for ND, and was a good enough cricketer to reach second grade. He would later go on to become a leading Australian actor, starring in a number of films and television shows, including TV mini-series such as *The Dunera Boys*, *The Cowra Breakout*, and *True Believers* where he played the ALP leader of the 1950s 'Doc' Evatt, who coincidentally, has been an NDCC Associate Vice President in the 1930s.

The fourth grades bowlers performed well, led by Morrie Perrott (40 wickets at 13.1), Kevin Clews (35 at 12.2), Alan Taylor (33 at 14.1) and Barry Wright (26 at 11.7). **Perrott's total, the highest to date in fourth grade for the club** included returns of 7-31, 6-53 and 6-49.

With a glut of young talent emerging from the junior ranks, the club had high hopes of taking either or both of the 1957/58 Poidevin-Gray and Green Shields. The Under 21 team went closest, finishing second in the Northern Division with big wins over Balmain, Paddington



*Rae Richmond led the C&S
A team to a win in the CA
Fairland Cup in 1957/58.*

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and North Sydney, and a crucial loss against Glebe. Appreciating the drop in standard against their one age group, three of **the team's four first grade batsmen scored** heavily. Graham Southwell, in just four innings hit 309 runs for twice out (average 154.0) with unbeaten centuries against Balmain and Paddington, before being run out when a third looked likely against North Sydney. In the latter match Neil Marks scored 103 in one of his two innings for the Poidevin-Gray team, while John Blazey scored 147 runs for once out with a top score of 74 not out.

The AW Green Shield performed poorly, failing to win any of its seven **matches with three losses and four draws. While the team's batting was reasonable**, only being dismissed twice in seven matches, the bowling lacked penetration and the fielding inconsistent. The district coaching scheme was again held in September with more than 350 young players receiving coaching from guest players including Norm O'Neill.

For the first time the club entered two City and Suburban teams, one captained by Rae Richmond (**designated Northern District 'A'**), the other by Max Lloyd (**Northern District 'B'**). **The A team, had a great season, and despite having a** total of 51 players take the field at various times, won 22 of their 25 matches to take out the CA Fairland Memorial Cup. The Cup, which had been donated in memory of the late Charlie Fairland, a long-serving administrator with the City and Suburban Cricket Association, was only awarded from the mid-1950s until the early 1960s. It brought a quasi-competition status to the C&SCA – welcomed by some, and not by others – and was awarded to the team with the highest quotient for the season³⁵. **However, because many clubs chose not to submit their team's quotients, it was never** truly recognised as being equivalent to a premiership. Nevertheless the presentation of the Fairland Cup was often a gala occasion with special guests such as Richie Benaud there to present the Cup, the winning team not being known until its name was called out.

The A team's batting was dominated by Ken Griffith who scored 576 runs, more than twice as many runs as any other player, at an average of 33.9 including an **innings of 105 against Hawkesbury. However it was the team's bowling which** provided the spark, with six bowlers taking over 200 wickets between them, four at an average of less than 10 runs per wicket. Leading the way was off-spinner, Ken Tulk, who took the most wickets (48) at an average of 7.6. Then aged 28, Tulk had joined Northern District at the start of the season having played lower grade cricket with the North Sydney club since the mid-1940s. His father, Reg Tulk had been a long-serving member of the North Sydney club committee, the NSW Cricket Association and had been a member of the Australian Board of Control for Cricket for 25 years.

Former North Sydney left-arm medium pacer, Don Simpson, won the bowling average with 33 wickets at just 6.7. The other bowlers to take in excess of 20 wickets for the year were left arm wrist spinner Peter Leyden (37 at 8.1), medium pacer Ron Boswell (36 at 8.4), and pacemen Bob Read (27 at 15.4) and Barry Wright (23 at 13.2).

The decision to field a second City and Suburban team was justified with the B team winning 15 from 22 matches. Team captain, Max Lloyd was the dominant player, scoring 289 runs at 20.1 and taking 26 wickets at 12.3, while a 15-year-old destined to become **one of Northern District's greatest batsmen, Lynn Marks**, played his first senior match with the team.

Throughout the period that Northern District fielded City and Suburban teams it was not uncommon to have high quality cricketers playing. Although these were generally grade players who for one reason or another were not available for both days with their normal team, it was not unknown for the two wily C&S captains to slip a player into their teams without revealing their true ability to the grade selectors. Neil Marks **recalls his brother's senior debut as a case in point. Although Neil was** playing first grade at Waitara Oval, Alec Marks, decided that he would do the right

thing and also watch at least a part of Lynn's match which was being played at Rydalmere Hospital. When he got there the District's bowling attack was being led by two new players in Alf Hodges and David Gilroy. Alec eventually returned to Waitara with a puzzled look on his face. "What's going on here?", he asked, "I've been here watching our first grade opening bowlers and then went over and saw the C&S openers. They're better than the first graders!"

Hodges, then aged 26, had previously played for the Gordon Shires club and would played higher grade cricket for ND, including a number in first grade. However Gilroy would played just two games in first grade in 1958/59 before leaving to attend the Royal Military College at Duntroon. A bowler with genuine pace, Gilroy opened the bowling for the RMC with John Moodie (the father of Test cricketer Tom Moodie). Some indication of his speed came when he bowled to a Sheffield Shield batsman who declared him the fastest bowler he had faced that season anywhere in Australia. Gilroy later became a brigadier in Australian Army.

Another newcomer who played in each of the City and Suburban teams of 1957/58, as well as several fourth grade matches was Austen Hughes. Born at Ballina in October 1925, coincidentally but appropriately, the month and year that Northern District had played its first match, Hughes had played all his cricket in the Northern Rivers area where he had built a formidable reputation, not only as a wicket-keeper/batsman, but also as an extremely capable cricket administrator. Although still in his early 20s at the time, he played a major role in the re-organisation of cricket in the Ballina area immediately after the Second World War, and did a similar job when he moved to Casino in 1950. He was also involved with the organisation of a number of the popular country tours by Jack Chegwyn's teams which provided such a benefit to country cricket over many years. A school teacher, Hughes was transferred to Epping Boys High in 1957 and subsequently joined Northern District.



Austen Hughes

Both Tulk and Hughes, whilst capable lower grade cricketers, were to prove prolific workers for the club over the next four decades, Tulk as treasurer for a total of 21 years, Hughes as secretary, senior vice president and president for a combined total of 38 years.

Sadly, while the season saw the arrival of two great contributors, it saw the loss of two others, both of whom had been foundation members of the club. Bill Weekes had played in Northern District's second grade team in the first weekend of matches in 1925 and for many years had been the secretary of the Hornsby Junior Cricket Association. Player shortages during the Second World War saw him make a comeback to again play with Northern District. The other death was that of the club's original Waitara Oval curator, 'Bricky' Love.

1958/59

With Peter May's England team touring Australia the Sydney grade season had its customary interruptions to avoid clashes with international matches. There was a three week break during November, another three week break over the Christmas/New Year period, and then another one week break in February when NSW played Victoria at the SCG. To ensure that the required 14 rounds of cricket

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were played, there were nine two-day and five one-day rounds with the premiership being decided on a first-past-the-post basis, the first time since 1950/51 that a finals series had not been played.

While all clubs were affected by this stop-start cricket, the lack of continuous match practice and the need to adapt to the differing requirements of one-day cricket told on the young, inexperienced Northern District first grade team. After winning their first two matches they gradually slipped down the table, winning just two more of their 14 matches.

One advantage of the breaks for Sydney first class matches was that the absences of Jim Burke were reduced somewhat and he was able to play in about **two thirds of Northern District's matches**, under the captaincy of John Dower. Towards the end of the season Burke announced his retirement from first class cricket. Although, **at 29, he was still young in terms of today's** international cricketers, there was little money to be made from playing cricket and many players were forced to retire at around 30 to ensure that they were able to establish themselves in an occupation. Fortunately for Northern District, Burke was to continue playing for the club for another five seasons.

The end of Burke's first class career coincided with the start of that of Neil Marks. And what a start! Early in the season he was selected in the NSW Colts team which played Queensland Colts at the Sydney Cricket



Neil Marks made a spectacular entry into first class cricket in 1958/59.

Ground where he impressed with scores of 44 and 169 against an attack which included future Test bowlers in Peter Allen and Tom Veivers. Despite this performance he was unable to break into the strong NSW team immediately, although he did receive his chance with the NSW vs South Australia match at the SCG coinciding with the First Test between Australia and England in Brisbane. Batting at number five, Marks scored 180 not out, only the 13th NSW batsman to score a century on debut and the third highest score on debut by any Australian player. Batting with fellow 20-year-old, Grahame Thomas, himself in only his third match, Marks set a new record Sheffield Shield sixth wicket partnership of 332, going well past the previous best of 289 set by Sam Loxton and Doug Ring for Victoria against Queensland in 1946/47. The record still stood at the end of the 1999/2000 season. During his innings Marks *“showed commendable ability and coolness ... His footwork, particularly against slow bowling, was excellent and the soundness of his strokes gave the bowlers small hope of breaking through his defence.”*³⁶

Despite the return of the three NSW Test batsmen (Jim Burke, Neil Harvey and Norman O'Neill) Marks retained his place in the team for the traditional Christmas match against Victoria at the MCG. Again batting at five, he scored another century (103) and followed up with innings of 54 against Queensland; 46 against the MCC; 88 and 1 in the return match against Victoria; 63 and 5 against SA in Adelaide; and 8 against WA in Perth. By the end of the Sheffield Shield season he had scored 502 runs at an average of 71.7 and established himself not only as a permanent member of the State team but also as a future Test player. In all grade and first class matches in 1958/59 he scored a total of 1447 runs at an average of 72.4, finishing on

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top of the NSW, Sydney grade and NDCC averages. A remarkable performance, especially as he was still just 20 years old.

The club's other outstanding prospect Graham Southwell scored 306 runs at 23.5 including a brilliant innings of 109 against Balmain at Waitara Oval. Southwell and Marks played together for NSW Colts against Queensland where they staged a match-saving stand of 149, taking the score from 5-55 to 5-204. Opening batsman, Warren Trotman, was the only other player to top 300 runs for the season, scoring 306 at 23.5.

The team was strengthened, albeit briefly, by the arrival of former English Test batsman, John Dewes, who, in February 1958 had been appointed headmaster of Barker College, Hornsby. Then aged 31, Dewes had played cricket for Cambridge University and Middlesex between 1945 and 1957, scoring 8564 runs at an average of 41.8. He made his Test debut in the Fifth Test of the 1948 series between England and Australia at The Oval – it was Don Bradman's **final Test** – opening the batting with Len Hutton, and



Left hand opening batsman Graham Southwell.

scoring one run as England collapsed to be all out for 52. He later played two Tests **against the West Indies in 1950 and toured Australia with Freddie Brown's 1950/51** team, where after failing in the first two Tests was dropped. The following year he began his teaching career at Tonbridge School before being appointed assistant master at the famous Rugby School from which he applied for the position at Barker College³⁷. Dewes played just four innings for Northern District, three in first grade where he scored 65 runs at an average of 21.7, and one in the City and Suburban A team.

Although he rarely bowled in Shield or Test matches, Burke's off spinners yielded him 40 first grade wickets at 10.6 apiece, winning the club bowling aggregate and both the club and Sydney grade bowling average. The latter meant that Northern District players had won three of the four major Sydney first grade awards for 1958/59. With John Blazey now playing for Sydney University, left arm orthodox bowler, Ken Clarke, was given his opportunity in the top grade where he shouldered much of the bowling responsibility taking 20 wickets at 20.3. He and Burke were the only bowlers to take 20 wickets for the season.

Although they eventually finished towards the tail of their competition, the Northern District second grade team, captained by Doug Cameron, had more than their share of exciting finishes: a one-run loss to Glebe, three-run wins over Balmain and Randwick, and a four-run loss to Gordon. Overall the batting was disappointing with no batsman passing 300 runs for the season. Jim Sullivan again topped both the bowling aggregate and averages, although his total of 29 wickets (at 17.1) paled alongside the 69 wickets he had taken the previous season. All-rounder John Jagoe had another fine season, scoring 298 runs and taking 25 wickets while Don Stephen **scored the team's only century: 116** against Waverley at the SCG No 2. Yet another of **the club's exciting young batsmen, 15-year-old Dallas Ryan, scored 149** from just three innings including a brilliant 84 against Mosman at Waitara Oval.

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The third grade team, led by Nigel Sutherland, also had a disappointing season with just three wins from 14 matches. As in the higher grades the bowling lacked penetration, shown clearly by the fact that Harold Griffin with 17 wickets at 26.5 topped both the aggregate and averages – the equal lowest winning aggregate **and easily the highest winning average in the club's fourth grade history**. Sutherland himself was the only batsman able to pass 300 runs for the year although Stuart Woodger, with 265 runs at 33.1 showed potential especially in a fine innings of 93 against St George on a damp wicket at Pennant Hills Oval.

Fourth grade was the club's best performed grade team, winning eight of its 13 matches (the final round game against North Sydney was abandoned without a ball being bowled), including its last five straight, to finish in third place. No individual player stood out, although Ken Tulk's **effort in taking 24 wickets from just 32 overs** at an average of 4.7 stood out. One thrilling match deserves mention. It took place in the one-day round 13 match against Mosman at Rawson Park, Mosman. Batting first Mosman were all out for just 90, with Northern District all out for 110. In their second innings Mosman declared at 9-113 leaving ND a target of 94 for an outright win. They collapsed to lose 9 wickets for just over 20 runs before the last pair, Ken Tulk and Peter Leydon, held out to save the first innings points.

Because of the restrictions caused by representative matches the 1958/59 Poidevin-Gray Shield competition was severely curtailed. Instead of normal two eight-team divisions the 16 teams were split into four four-team divisions (Northern, Southern, Central and Western) with each team playing just three matches and the winner of each division going into the semi-finals. Northern District was able to win the Northern Division but were eliminated after their rain-affected, drawn semi-final against Randwick at Chatswood Oval was lost on a countback. It was a particularly good effort by what was virtually an all-new team - both Neil Marks and Graham Southwell, although still qualified to play, were unavailable because of various representative commitments. Fast bowler, Bob Read, with 10 wickets at 13.8, and 16-year-old Lynn Marks (125 runs at 41.7) were the stand-out players.

The club's pre-season schoolboy coaching clinics were proving so successful that a total of 57 players tried out for the AW Green Shield team. The team which eventually took the field was led by NSW Schoolboys captain, David Davidson, a first cousin of Alan Davidson and a very talented cricketer in his own right. From seven matches they had three wins, two draws and two losses with all-rounder Michael Strong (166 runs and 16 wickets) the best performer.

After its successes of the previous season the club again fielded two City and Suburban teams with the A team, although less dominant than in the previous season still able to retain the CA Fairland Memorial Cup, winning 18 of its 25 matches. Again captained by Rae Richmond it was the first time that a Northern District team had won back-to-back titles. Ken Griffith again dominated the batting, passing 500 runs for the third successive season on his way to 560 at an average of 62.2, while the bowling honours were shared by Peter Leyden (39 wickets), Alf Hodges (34), Barry Wright (33) and Kevin Clews (31). Right arm pace bowler Hodges also played a number of matches in the B team, where he took a further 45 wickets - a total of 79 for the season. The best of the B team batsmen was newcomer Brian Sexton who scored 597 at 28.4.

The 1959 NDCC Annual General Meeting saw Austen Hughes replace Ron Ewington as club secretary, the start of a remarkable 41-year period of service which was still going in 2000.

1959/60

Northern District's long-standing policy of developing the district's junior cricketers paid dividends in the 1959/60 season with all four grade teams finishing in the top half of their competitions, second grade taking out that premiership and the club winning the club championship for the first time since entering the grade competition 34 years previously.

In what was a frustrating season, the first grade team had eight draws from their 14 matches, many of which they looked certain to win. In round four at North Sydney Oval, chasing the home team's score of 102, ND were 3-66 when the game finished; the following round they were 1-43 chasing Waverley's 116; in round six defending 6-248 declared they had Cumberland 9-168; and in round nine they had Balmain 7-117 chasing 190. To be fair Northern District did escape with one lucky draw, being 7-146 in reply to St George's 3-319 declared. As it was Northern District lost just one match during the 1959/60 season, and that to the eventual premiers, Western Suburbs, and despite two outright and one first innings win in the last three rounds could only finish in sixth place.

Following his retirement from first class cricket, Jim Burke resumed the captaincy of Northern District's first grade team, and although he had a disappointing season with the bat (215 runs at 30.7), he easily topped the bowling aggregate with 46 wickets at 13.6. Neil Marks was again the team's best batsman, scoring 372 runs at 41.3 including two centuries: 119 against Mosman at Mosman Oval and 112 against Paddington at Rushcutters Bay. Marks had a disappointing Sheffield Shield season with the first signs of a serious health problem beginning to emerge. Graham Southwell, between representative matches (he captained the NSW Colts team against Victorian Colts, and was twelfth man for one Sheffield Shield match) also batted consistently scoring 290 runs at 36.3, while John Kershaw made a welcome return to the club late in the seasons after several years in the country.

Wicket-keeper Jim Mathers had his best season to date, winning the batting averages with 204 runs at 51.0 and keeping brilliantly, with one notable stumping of former Test opener, Arthur Morris. The surprise packet of the season was pace bowler Alf Hodges who had played in the City and Suburban team in 1958/59, and won promotion from second to first grade midway through the season. Hodges then went on to top the bowling averages, his 23 wickets costing just 10.9 runs each and including the amazing match figures of 12-35 (6-27 and 6-12) in the match against Glebe at Waitara Oval.

In his first season as captain, John Jagoe was able to lead the second grade team to the club's first premiership in that grade, and only its third title in the grade competitions. After ten rounds the team was well placed with four first innings wins, two draws and two first innings losses. Then, in the next three matches their bowlers dismissed Paddington for 85 in round 11 at Waitara Oval; Glebe for 74 in round 12 at Redfern Oval; and Bankstown-Canterbury for 55 in the semi-final (after the experiment with a first-past-the-post premiership in 1958/59, semi-finals and finals were re-introduced in 1959/60). In all three matches Northern District went on to record outright wins and met their southern neighbours, Gordon, in the final. Batting first Northern District scored 252 and dismissed Gordon for 134.

Although there were several good individual performances by a number of bowlers in the crucial games late in the season, Jim Sullivan once again was the cornerstone of the attack taking 75 wickets from 282.6 overs at an average of just 13.0. It was the second highest tally of wickets in a season in second grade, just six behind Alf Ziehlke's record and breaking Sullivan's own 'non-war' record of 69 set two

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year's earlier. Although no other bowler passed 20 wickets for the season, there were good contributions from Alf Hodges who took 18 wickets at 14.4 and from all-rounder, Don Stephen, who shared the new ball with Sullivan after Hodges was promoted to first grade, and bowled superbly in the semi-final win over Bankstown. Stephen, who also opened the batting, scored consistently through the season, totalling 452 runs at 28.3 with a top score of 166 against Petersham at Waitara Oval – the third highest club score in second grade behind Carl Brennan's **192 not out** in 1929/30 and Phil Payne's **183** in 1939/40. There were also good contributions from Ken Longley, who topped the batting averages with 301 runs at 33.4 including an invaluable 80 in the semi-final; Garry Hammill (317 runs at 28.8) and Lynn Marks (224 runs at 32.0). Longley, who had played Green Shield for Northern District in the early 1950s, rejoined the club after a number of seasons with the Ryde Shires team where he topped the 1958/59 M&S A grade aggregate and averages with 1064 runs at 62.6 – still a record aggregate for the Ryde club.

In what was the tightest of competitions, the Northern District third grade team was in first place with just two rounds of the normal competition to play, then lost their last two matches to drop down to seventh place. Captained by Lionel Fowler, their attack was as good as any team in their grade, dismissing Mosman for just 24 in the second round at Pennant Hills Oval; eventual premiers, Cumberland, for 92, and semi-finalists, Balmain for 79 and 102. Indeed, during the season **Northern District defeated three of the team's which finished in the top four.** Leg spinner, Ken Tulk, topped both the bowling aggregate and averages with 46 wickets at 7.7, including returns of 7-37 (against Glebe at Jubilee Oval), 6-49, 5-19 and 5-29. His spin partner, Lionel Fowler, was next with 31 wickets at 16.9, while pace bowlers Geoff Weir and Allan May captured 26 and 20 wickets respectively, with May taking a hat-trick in the rout of Mosman. No batsman dominated with the consistent Austen Hughes (299 runs at 23.0) winning both the batting awards as well as keeping wicket (7 catches and 14 stumpings).



The 1959/60 NDCC second grade premiers.
Left to right: Simon Chilvers, Lynn Marks, Don Stephen, Warren Trotman (obscured), Ian Fraser, Jim Sullivan, Bill Wright, Stuart Woodger, Ken Longley, John Jagoe (C), Alan Paterson. Absent: Alf Hodges, Roy Matthews and Bob Reid.

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The fourth grade team, captained by Ron Boswell, finished in equal second place (with Western Suburbs) after the 12th round, with two outright wins, five first innings wins, three draws, one outright and one first innings loss. In a closely fought semi-final against Wests, Northern District batted first and scored 152, Wests replying with 167. Needing an outright win to stay alive the ND batsmen hit out but were all out for 114, giving Wests an even 100 target for an outright win. Still ND fought back, taking eight wickets before Wests got home. In the play-off match for third and fourth places Northern District defeated Petersham-Marrickville. Best performers for the team were Bill Neville (357 runs at 19.8), Harry Griffin (34 wickets at 11.6) and Kevin Clews (28 wickets at 14.8).

The Northern District Poidevin-Gray team was almost entirely new with most **players young enough to play for another two or three years. The team's batting** was strong, with three players, Warwick Murray (101 not out), Lynn Marks (104 not out), and Don Allum (110) all scoring centuries, the latter two putting on an opening stand of 203 in the first match of the season against Balmain. All three batsmen finished with 40+ averages. Unfortunately the bowling was nowhere near the same quality and they had difficulty bowling the opposition teams out, failing to reach the semi-finals.

The Green Shield team could win only one of its six matches, losing its captain David Davidson after two matches. His replacement, in his first season with Northern District was a young strokemaking batsman named Mark Hope, another with a fine cricketing career ahead of him. Hope and all-rounder, John Phillips, were the dominant players, Hope scoring 289 runs at 41.3 and Phillips topping both batting and bowling averages with 216 runs at 43.2 and 15 wickets at 9.4. In the City and Suburban Association matches both Northern District teams performed well, the A team winning 19 of its 28 matches, narrowly missing a third successive claim on the Fairland Cup, and the B team 15 from 26. The A team was composed predominantly of teenagers mixed with a number of experienced players. Being ungraded anyone could play in the City and Suburban matches and Jim Burke, John Kershaw and Neil Marks played the occasional game, generally when they were unavailable for either day of a two-day grade match.



Mark Hope.

Alan Warwick led the batting with 507 runs at 33.8, with a top score of 116 not out – one of three centuries scored by the A team, Alan Taylor and Alan Mason being the others. Phil Boyle (43 wickets at 12.2), Ian Thew (32 at 12.9) and 17-year-old leg spinner, Mark Alexander (26 at 8.1) were the best of the bowlers.

In the B team Brian Sexton won both the batting and bowling averages with 300 runs at 27.6 and 23 wickets at 7.6, while Peter Johnston (394 runs) and Bill Jones (38 wickets) topped the aggregates.

The successes of the 1959/60 season were dampened somewhat by the deaths **in 1959 of two of Northern District's finest players, both of whom were also among the club's greatest captains. George Williams**, who led the first grade team for all or part of 12 seasons between 1929/30 and 1941/42, passed away at the age of 59. A consistent batsman, he scored a total of 3991 runs in first grade at an average of 20.9, scoring in excess of 300 runs in a season on six occasions. An Australian representative baseballer, Williams was the most brilliant cricket fieldsman of his era, throwing himself around the field in a manner which is familiar in modern cricket but which was rarely seen in the 1930s and 40s. His tactical knowledge of the game, together with his personal leadership qualities made him one of the most astute captains in the Sydney grade competition and one of the most respected.

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Williams and Alec Marks were great rivals during the 1930s when they were captains of the Northern District and Randwick first grade teams and several stories **about the two have survived through the writings of Alec's son, Neil Marks**. Going out to the centre to toss at the beginning of one match Williams produced a special coin with which he suggested they toss. The coin had the normal engraving of the king on one side but had the rear view of a pig on the other. **"I'll take the pig's backside", said Marks as Williams spun the coin. It landed with the pig's rear facing up and Marks decided to bat on a perfect Waitara Oval batting strip.**

"Hang on Alec", said Williams, "I was only joking, we can't toss with that. We need to use a proper coin and toss again".

"Pig's arse, George!", came the reply from the Randwick captain as he headed back to the dressing room.

Off the field, Williams was a leading Sydney solicitor and a close friend of future politician and Chief Justice, Sir Garfield Barwick, indeed Barwick Garfield was **the godfather of Williams' son, John. Williams was also a valuable member of the NDCC committee for 17 years and was awarded life membership at the 1942 Annual General Meeting.** His cricketing career, and indeed eventually his life, was cut short with a combination of arthritis and asthma in the early 1940s, which left him physically disabled for the remainder of his life. Despite being in considerable pain he was a regular spectator at Northern District matches and took an active interest in the club, indeed Tim Caldwell, captain of the 1948/49 premiership-winning team acknowledged his assistance and advice, often using a custom-made board and a set of model players on which Williams would suggest alternative field placings.

Towards the end of the season the club was notified of the death of Wally Rothwell, who passed away at Forster on 1 March 1960, at the age of 74. Rothwell had **been one of Northern District's most remarkable personalities, certainly its most durable.** Formerly a first grade batsman with the Western Suburbs and Central Cumberland clubs, he had been one of the leading figures in the drive to form the club in 1924 and 1925. At an age (40) when most players would have either retired or have **been seriously contemplating retirement Wally Rothwell's cricket career hadn't even reached its halfway mark.** He captained **the club's second grade team in its first match** scoring an unbeaten 102 against Balmain at Birchgrove Oval. Apart from two short breaks (in 1928/29 he had a season with Cheltenham-Becroft club in the Hornsby DCA competition, scoring 806 runs at 67.2) he was to play right through until the end **of the 1946/47 season when he moved to the North Coast ... and continued to play** cricket until he was in his seventies. In the early 1920s he had been one of **Cumberland's delegates to the NSW Cricket Association and in 1925/26 he became one of Northern District's two delegates. With the Association he served for three years on the Grade Committee and two years on the Country Committee and in 1941 was made a life member of the NSWCA.**

A member of a keen sporting family, **Wally's younger brother, Ellis, also played for Cumberland and Northern District,** while another brother, William Rothwell, was mayor of Concord during the 1920s and 30s, and gave his name to a fine cricket oval, Rothwell Park, in that suburb. Both of **Wally's sons, Ellis and Harold,** played for Northern District, while his grandson, Barry Rothwell, was just beginning an illustrious career which would see him captain New South Wales during the late 1960s.

At the 1960 Annual General Meeting, held on 12 July 1960, four new life members were elected: Ron Ewington, Ken Griffith, Tim Caldwell and Greg Lynch.

1960/61

During the 1959/60 season it had become increasingly apparent that Neil Marks had a serious medical problem and after playing one first grade and several City and Suburban matches at the start of the 1960/61 season he was forced to step down. The ailment was eventually diagnosed as **what was then known as a 'hole-in-the-heart'**. **He had been born with the condition, and his parents having been told that** he had little chance of surviving much past the age of 20, had decided not to tell him to allow him to live as normal a life as possible. However by 1961 advances in medical techniques offered him renewed hope, although at the time the operation to correct the problem could only be done in the United States. To raise funds to enable Neil to go there, the Pennant Hills Golf Club, where Alec Marks was secretary/manager, launched the Neil Marks Fund and with generous contributions from many people and organisations, including the NDCC and NSWCA the necessary money was raised.

In a twelve month period Marks underwent three major heart operations, two in Australia and one, on his 23rd birthday, in the United States and was one of the first people in the world to receive a triple heart by-pass. The operation was a complete success but although Marks was eventually able to return to first grade cricket, unfortunately his promising first class career was over.

Despite the absence of Marks, the Northern District first grade team had one of its strongest ever batting line-ups with **Neil's 18-year-old younger brother, Lynn**, making his first grade debut alongside players such as Burke, Kershaw, Southwell and Mathers. After his disappointing 1959/60 season, Burke re-established himself as **Sydney grade cricket's premier batsman, scoring 621 runs at 77.6 to win the district averages for the second time**. His total included unbeaten centuries against Randwick (144 not out) at Coogee Oval and Manly (105 not out) at Waitara Oval. In the Randwick match Burke combined with Warwick Murray (127 not out) to add 252 runs for the fourth wicket – **the second highest partnership in the club's history at that time**, behind the unbeaten 310 put on by Hugh Chilvers and Dick Taylor back in 1936/37.

Although Lynn Marks scored only 186 runs at 20.6 he played a number of crucial short innings in difficult situations, showing he was certainly up to first grade standard. Other batting highlights included a powerful innings of 68 by Don Stephen against Glebe at Jubilee Oval during which he hit Test bowler Frank Misson for five successive boundaries. With the ball, the two spinners, Burke (34 wickets at 17.1) and Ken Clarke (**38 at 14.3**) **stood out, Clarke's performance winning him the Sydney grade bowling averages**.

Northern District finished in fourth place after 12 rounds of the competition and met minor premiers Mosman at Mosman Oval in a semi-final. Prior to the match **the team selectors sprung a major surprise by promoting the club's promising 16-year-old pace bowler John Phillips from fourth grade**. In a tense, low scoring match, Mosman did well to score 147 with Ken Clarke often unplayable taking five wickets. The target proved beyond Northern District who were dismissed for 102 against a hostile Mosman attack, led by Australian fast bowler Gordon Rorke. Northern District was then defeated by Bankstown-Canterbury in the play-off match to finish in fourth place.

The club's second grade team, although unable to defend their title, again played consistently, losing just two matches out of 14 played with a 12th round loss to University at University Oval denying them a semi-final place. The team was again captained by John Jagoe and batted strongly throughout the season being all out on only three occasions and then only twice for less than 200. Much of this was due to

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the consistency of the opening batting pair of Warren Trotman and Roy Matthews who scored 370 and 273 runs respectively including a club second grade record opening stand of 153 against St George at Waitara Oval. Later in the season, and at the other end of the innings, Ian Fraser and Bill Wright set a new tenth wicket record partnership of 113.

Ken Longley, in his second season with the club, won both the batting aggregate and averages with 452 runs at 45.2, and was third in the Sydney grade batting averages. His 113 against Petersham-Marrickville at Waitara Oval was the **team's only century. For the fifth consecutive season**, and the seventh in the last eight, Jim Sullivan was the leading second grade wicket taker, with 38 wickets at 25.0, while Geoff Weir, with 27 at 16.6 had the lowest average.

The third grade team, captained initially by Lionel Fowler and later by Austen Hughes, had a poor first half of the competition winning just two of their first ten matches but recovered to win their last four games and eventually finish in ninth place. Two young batsmen, Michael Strong and Alan Taylor showed potential, Taylor winning the batting averages with 200 runs at 33.3 and Strong the aggregate with 339 runs at 28.2. Austen Hughes (103 against Randwick at Kensington Oval) and Alan Patterson (104 against Cumberland at Merrylands Oval) scored the only two centuries of the year. Although he only played seven matches, Ken Tulk topped both the bowling aggregate and averages with 26 wickets at 12.8.

Under the captaincy of Harry Griffin, the Northern District fourth grade team had a season of two distinct halves. Prior to Christmas they had just two wins from eight matches but then strung together four straight wins, two of them outright, to win a semi-final place. Their semi-final clash against Cumberland was a thriller. Batting first ND was dismissed for 120, Cumberland replying with 208 all out, a substantial first innings lead of 88. Needing to win outright Griffin declared the ND second innings at 8-171, leaving Cumberland a target of 84 for an outright win. With wickets falling steadily the miracle looked like happening but Cumberland eventually held on to be 9-57 at the end of the game, taking a first innings win and a spot in the **final, won by Western Suburbs. Best individual performances were Harry Griffin's 52 wickets and 215 runs, Mike McCarthy's 248 runs at 27.6. The other bowler to impress** was David McGilvray, a nephew of leading Australian cricket commentator, Alan McGilvray, who picked up 24 wickets from just 56 wickets at an average of just 6.7.

The performances of the four grade teams saw Northern District finish in fifth place in the Club Championship.

Neither of the club's age teams performed near expectations with the Poidevin-Gray team winning one game from five and the Green Shield two from six. Mark Hope with 122 runs at 40.6 did best for the P-G team while Rex Ward impressed both with the bat (185 runs at 46.3) and with the wicket-keeping gloves.

Once again the club's two City and Suburban teams were led by Rae Richmond and Max Lloyd, with the A team winning the Fairland Cup for the third time in five seasons. The win was the most memorable of the three because the team had lost four of their first eight matches before coming home with 15 wins from their last 16, including two outright – no easy task in a match played between 1.30 and 6.00pm on one afternoon! In one of the outright wins Northern District dismissed Lane Cove for 53 in the first innings and 12 in the second with Phil Boyle having the remarkable match figures of 16-20 from 13.4 overs (8-14 in the first innings, 8-6 in the second) including a hat trick. Boyle and Bill Jones each took in excess of 50 wickets for the season, Boyle finishing with 53 at 6.3 (despite playing for only half of the season) and Bill Jones 54 at 10.3. Best of the batsmen were promising 16-year-old, Bob Baldwin who scored 333 runs at 27.8; John Beattie, who Baldwin beat by one run for both the batting aggregate and averages; and Peter Johnson who batted consistently to score 318 at 24.5. Ken Griffith, despite having announced his retirement at the end of the

previous season, filled in on a number occasions as he was to do for another five seasons before finally hanging up his boots at the end of the 1965/66 season.

From 1960/61 onwards the second Northern District City and Suburban team **was known as the Vets, although with seven players aged around 16 it's difficult to know why they were so named!** They won nine of their 25 matches, drawing three and losing the remainder. The star all-rounder was Brian Sexton who topped all four of the performance criteria: batting aggregate (430 runs), batting average (23.9), bowling aggregate (37 wickets) and bowling average (11.4). Unfortunately Sexton was lost to the club towards the end of the season when he was transferred to Broken Hill. Leg spinner, Tony Stair, also did well to pick up 33 wickets at 11.6

1961/62

By 1961/62 the Northern District first grade team had emerged as one of the strongest in the Sydney grade competition, certainly in terms of batting. While Neil Marks **didn't play at all during the season (although his return from the successful operation in the United States raised the club's spirits) his 19-year-old brother, Lynn,** stepped up to establish himself as a genuine first grade batsman, scoring 671 runs – winning not only the club but also the Sydney grade batting aggregate. The latter capped a remarkable achievement for the Marks family, father Alec Marks having won in 1934/35, while playing for Randwick, and brother Neil having won it in 1958/59.

Marks and Graham Southwell (352 runs at 25.1) combined to give the team its most reliable opening pair in many years, their partnerships including starts of 99, 61, 48, 37, 73, 132, 72, 23 and 26. Both also played together, although with limited success, for both the NSW and Metropolitan Colts teams.

With the ever-reliable Jim Burke (532 runs at 59.1) and the talented Warwick Murray 386 at 32.3) the batting was so strong that the team was dismissed only twice in the first 11 **rounds and only once for under 250. Burke once again topped the team's** bowling averages, taking 26 wickets at 16.2, the same aggregate as vice-captain John Dower (26 at 21.2) while the leading wicket-taker was new right-arm fast medium bowler, Ross Taylor, who took 31 at 25.5.

Originally from Tamworth, the 23-year-old Taylor had joined Northern District after four seasons with the Manly Cricket Club where he had captured 132 wickets at just 14.3 each including match figures of 16-71 (7-31 and 9-40) against Glebe in his last match. Renowned for the accuracy of his bowling Taylor had played one match for New South Wales against Victoria in 1960, but took just 1-91 and was immediately dropped. His move to the Hornsby area and consequently to ND was brought about because he suffered from asthma and needed to move away from the coast.

The spin attack was shared between leg-spinners John Phillips and John Blazey, the latter returning to the club after studying and playing for Sydney University.

Another newcomer was an 18-year-old right-hand batsman named Tony Steele who won a place in first grade after scoring 254 runs from seven innings in second grade. Although he only played five matches in first grade he showed enough in an innings of 77 against Manly to mark him as a player of potential. It was to be **Steele's only season with Northern District, the remainder of his grade career being** with the Balmain club. He exploded onto the first class arena during the 1969/70 season scoring three centuries for NSW on his way to topping the Shield batting averages with 677 runs at 67.7. When John Benaud was sacked at NSW captain over

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the much-publicised ripple-soled shoe affair, Steele took over for three matches and later won a place in a second-string Australian team which toured New Zealand under Sam Trimble. Unfortunately for Steele he was unable to maintain that form and he lost his place in the NSW team in 1970/71, although he continued to score consistently for Balmain in the Sydney grade competition.

Despite a 12th round loss to Mosman in a low scoring match on a sticky Waitara Oval wicket the team reached the semi-finals for the second consecutive season. Unfortunately they were again beaten, dismissed for just 122 by Petersham-Marrickville who replied with 221 in the match at Marrickville Oval. A further loss to Manly in the play-off again left them in fourth place – a disappointing end to the season but invaluable experience for such a young team.

Despite a reasonable 5:3 win/loss ratio, the second grade team could only finish in tenth place due primarily to having six drawn matches, in four of which the **team didn't get to bat due to wet weather**. With such a stop-start season no batsman was able to score more than 250 runs, Roy Matthews (242 runs at 22.0) topping the aggregate and captain, John Jagoe (204 at 29.1) the averages. Although still in his mid-teens, Mark Hope, by scoring 158 runs in his three innings in second grade



Ross Taylor (left) and Bill Jocelyn formed one of Northern District's fastest opening bowling combinations.

showed enough ability and maturity to earn promotion to first grade for the semi-final against Petersham (where he scored 13) and the play-off against Manly (43). After struggling to find form in the top grade, John Kershaw found himself in second grade for the first time since the 1942/43 season. A masterful innings in a low scoring match against Cumberland on a spiteful Merrylands Oval pitch showed that he was still an outstanding batsman and he was subsequently promoted to

first grade. With the ball, Jim Sullivan once again won both awards, taking 37 wickets at 21.0, narrowly winning the averages from new fast bowler, Bill Jocelyn, whose total of 13 wickets was one short of the minimum requirement.

A former lower grader with the Bankstown-Canterbury and Central Cumberland clubs, the 24-year-old Jocelyn started his first season with ND in fourth grade but was quickly promoted to the third grade team, captained by Austen Hughes. In his first match there he bowled with extreme pace but sprayed the ball wide of the stumps on either side of the wicket. Midway through a particularly wayward over Hughes came from behind the stumps to consult with his erratic paceman.

“We have a little problem here pal”, said Hughes.

“Yes, I know”, said Jocelyn, “I think I need a change in the field”.

“OK”, replied Hughes, a little puzzled but impressed enough with his new charge's potential to listen, “I'll give you whatever you want.”

“Good”, said Jocelyn, “I want one man on the edge of the pitch at silly mid-on and one on the other edge at silly mid-off. I'll try and aim between them!”³⁸

The third grade team had a mixed season, winning three of their first four matches before a long wet spell stopped their momentum. In the fifth round, Northern District was 2-123 chasing Mosman's 146 when rain ended the game, and in

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two other matches had probable outright wins denied with the opposition 9-down in **their second innings. Poor fielding, together with the captain's capacity to lose the** toss on all but two occasions, were other contributing factors. Best performed players were Kevin Butler (369 runs at 33.6), Alan Taylor (333 runs at 37.0), Ken Tulk (42 wickets at 13.1) and Harry Griffin (24 at 16.3). Young Mark Hope, on his way through to first grade, scored 131 in just two innings.

Led by Ian Black, the Northern District fourth grade team missed a place in the semi-finals by the narrowest of margins, losing their 12th round match against Gordon at Chatswood Oval by just one run, and finishing in fifth place. After 14 matches the team had two outright wins, six first innings wins, three washed out draws, two first innings loss and one outright loss (the Gordon match when they were chasing an outright win). While no batsman stood out, Allan May with 47 wickets at 7.4 and Don Carr (31 at 15.6) were the dominant bowlers.

The Poidevin-Gray team, captained by Lynn Marks, won two and lost two of the four matches played (another was washed out). Marks (221 runs at 55.2) and Mark Hope (202 at 50.5) were the leading batsman while John Phillips (15 wickets at 14.2) did the bulk of the bowling, switching between his medium pacers and leg breaks.

In the course of his recuperation Neil Marks managed the Northern District AW Green Shield team. The team did well to finish in the top three of the competition. Terry Hargraves (220 runs at 44.0 and 13 wickets at 8.7) was the **team's leading all-rounder** and captain, while Terry Booth (129 runs at 21.5) and Paul Fisher (22 wickets at 6.3) also performed well.

After five consecutive seasons in the unofficial top two positions the City and Suburban A team slipped somewhat, losing seven of their 22 matches. Three batsmen scored 300 runs or more for the season: Bill Dixon, whose 367 at 45.9 including the **team's only century** - 100 not out against Lane Cove; John Blow (318 at 18.7) and former first grade batsman, Frank Collins (300 at 17.6). Bill Jones, won both the bowling aggregate and averages, his 49 wickets at 9.9 including returns of 7-16 against Hawkesbury, 6-26 against Cumberland and 6-50 against Yaralla.

The City and Suburban Vets team won 13 of their 23 matches. Again the team was comprised largely of players aged in their late teens. John Beattie, with 256 runs at 21.3 had the best batting average, his season highlight being in a match at Waitara Oval where he hit three successive sixes, all of which landed on the road outside the ground. The best of the bowlers were leg spinner Tony Stair (39 wickets at 11.9), medium pacer John Brauer (37 at 9.4), Max Lloyd (32 at 10.0) and Graham Doherty (20 at 6.1).

1962/63

After being defeated in the semi-finals in each of the two previous seasons the Northern District first grade team needed little motivation for the 1962/63 season. Using only 13 players in 14 matches the team was virtually unchanged throughout the **season, and was arguably the best ever to take the field in Northern District's history.** The batting line-up was the undoubtedly the strongest in the competition with the top five batsmen all passing 350 runs for the season.

Remarkably, within a year of undergoing open-heart surgery, Neil Marks was **not only playing cricket again but, after 'testing' himself** out with a couple of matches in fourth grade, he was back in the Northern District first grade team and topping the batting averages with 466 runs at 61.8 (including a top score of 144 not out). Lynn

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Marks' effort in scoring 644 runs at 42.9 (including two centuries) won him the club aggregate, the Sydney grade aggregate and a spot in the NSW Sheffield Shield team. He became only the third batsman to top the district averages in successive seasons (Jim Mackay had done it in 1904/05 and 1905/06 and Austin Punch in 1919/20 and 1920/21). A naturally aggressive left-hand batsman, Lynn Marks "*believed there was never any merit in any ball he ever faced and he worked on the premise that an opening batsman's job was to wear the shine of the ball and the best way to achieve this aim was to bounce it off the asphalt on the road that ran past the oval.*"³⁹

Marks began his path to the Shield team with a failure in the annual Colts match between NSW and Queensland at the SCG, the highlight of which was a brilliant 140 not out by a 17-year-old from Dungog named Doug Walters.

Captain, Jim Burke had another sensational season, scoring 530 runs at 48.2 (also including a century) and taking 29 wickets at 16.5, but more importantly, every player contributed consistently throughout the season. Always eager for an attack with genuine pace, Burke called up the fast but erratic Bill Jocelyn to share the new ball with Ross Taylor. The move met with immediate success, the pair forming what many consider to be the fastest attack in the club's history and taking 46 wickets between them. In a match against Western Suburbs, an assault on Test opener, Bob Simpson, by Jocelyn earned him the first of two nicknames with a newspaper journalist who was covering the match naming him "Wild Bill".

Jocelyn's alternate nickname was given him by Burke when, after taking two wickets in successive balls, the umpire at the bowler's end pulled him up and told him to remove whatever coins he had in his pocket in case the noise distracted the batsmen. Henceforth he became know as "Jingles"!

Jocelyn and Taylor were well supported by the versatile John Phillips who



The Northern District first grade team which won the 1962/63 premiership when the final against Petersham-Marrickville was washed out. Rear (l to r): Lynn Marks, Mark Hope, Bill Jocelyn, Ross Taylor and John Phillips. Front (l to r): John Blazey, Jim Mathers, Jim Burke (C), Neil Marks and Graham Southwell.

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took 34 wickets with his combination of medium pace and leg spin.

Of the other batsman, Warwick Murray scored 394 at 26.3 and Graham Southwell 352 at 23.5, these two also being brilliant in the field.

After starting the season with a loss to Sydney University, the Northern District team were unbeaten for the next 11 rounds of the competition comfortably winning a place in the semi-finals. Their play-off match, against Cumberland at Merrylands Oval, was a classic. Batting first Northern District was dismissed for 176 and when Cumberland took a first innings lead of 33 it looked a third successive semi-final exit was likely. Despite a brilliant cameo innings from Lynn Marks **ND's second** innings had only reached 9-135 when, with time running out, Burke declared, leaving Cumberland the option of either scoring 103 for an outright win or batting out time for a first innings win. However a brilliant bowling spell from Ross Taylor had them under pressure right from the start and, with Cumberland choosing to try and bat out time, wickets began to fall. In an 11-over spell Taylor captured 6-10 and with the last Cumberland wicket falling in the final over of the match, Northern District had pulled **off one of the finest victories in the club's history.**

The win took on added significance a week later when the final against Petersham-Marrickville, scheduled to be played at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Saturday March 23 and 30, was washed out without a ball being bowled. As the higher finishing of the two teams, Northern District took out the Belvidere Cup for the second time. While it was a disappointing way in which to win the premiership there was little doubt that the team which had been carefully developed over the preceding three or four seasons deserved the title.

The 1962/63 season also saw the NSWCA Grade Committee give its approval for the use of pitch covers in Sydney grade matches. Northern District was one of only two clubs to secure covers, to be used principally at Waitara Oval, with Western Suburbs (at Pratten Park) being the other.

The first grade team's success did not flow down through the grades with both second and third grade teams finishing in the bottom third of their respective competitions. With former first grade players John Kershaw (who scored 426 runs at 30.4), Alf Hodges (42 wickets at 13.2, including match figures of 14-54 against Balmain at the SCG No 2) and Ken Clarke (26 wickets at 14.0) in the second grade team for most of the season a higher finish would have been expected. However, apart from these three players, the others were disappointing and the second grade team finished in 12th place with four wins, eight losses and two draws from 14 matches.

The third grade team fared only marginally better, finishing in 11th place with four wins from 14 games. No batsman passed 300 runs and no bowler reached 30 wickets with captain, Austen Hughes, topping the batting aggregate with 283 runs at 17.7 and Geoff Weir being the leading wicket taker with 26 wickets at 16.6.

After an early loss to Gordon, the Northern District fourth grade team strung together six straight wins and losing just one more match (against Cumberland in round nine) on their way to a semi-final berth. One particular match deserves special mention. Playing Balmain at Birchgrove Oval No 2, the home team scored 133 in their first innings before bowling Northern District out for just 89. Then with less than two hours of play remaining, pace bowlers Geoff Schuberg and Allan May ripped through the Balmain second innings to have them all out for just 13, Schuberg taking 5-5 and May 4-5. It remains the lowest score ever by an opposition team in a match in any grade. Northern District went on to win the game outright by seven wickets with just seven minutes to spare. In a typically wet March weekend Northern District met St George in a fourth grade semi-final at Tonkin Park. St George (192) defeated ND (133) before going on to take the premiership.

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Once again the Poidevin-Gray and Green Shield teams were disappointing. The Under 21 team, although it had three first grade players in Lynn Marks, John Phillips and Mark Hope, was otherwise inexperienced and relied almost entirely on these three. The bowling depended almost entirely on Phillips who bowled virtually unchanged, pace and then spin, in each match – taking 25 of the 37 wickets which fell to bowlers. Ron Alexander, another promising young spinner, also bowled well. With the bat, Hope (235 runs at 47.0) and Marks (218 at 43.6) **likewise dominated, Hope's brilliant 113 not out against Manly** in just 80 minutes being the highlight of the season. The Green Shield season was ruined by rain with three of the seven matches being washed out. Of the remaining four games, one was won, one drawn and two lost.



John Phillips.

Both of the Northern District City and Suburban teams began the season poorly, the A team losing five of its first nine matches, the Vets team losing all of its first six. However both them found form with the As winning 16 of their last 17 and the Vets winning 14 of their last 19. The presence of ex-first grade captain, John Dower, made a big difference to the A team – he scored 533 runs at an average of 28.1, his consistency shown by the fact that his highest score for the season was just 57. As was frequently the case, a number of first graders made the occasional appearance in City and Suburban matches with Bill Jocelyn taking 7-5 in one match for the As and Jim Burke scoring 171 in his two innings with the Vets.

The 1963 NDCC AGM saw the retirement of president Sid Storey after almost 40 years as a member of the club executive.

1963/64

The 1963/64 season was another good one for Northern District with the club running sixth in the club championship, the first grade team reaching the semi-finals for the fourth consecutive season and both second and third grades improving on their disappointing 1962/63 seasons.

Although Jim Burke was again appointed first grade captain at the start of the season he stepped down midway through the season when the ABC offered him a position with their radio commentary team covering Sheffield Shield and Test matches. His slightly diffident on-air manner combined with his astute cricketing judgement would make him a popular and respected commentator right through until his tragic and untimely death in 1979.

The composition of the Northern District first grade team was largely unchanged from the 1962/63 premiership-winning side, although they did lose Warwick Murray, who moved to Gordon, and Graham Southwell, who missed the second half of the season on an overseas trip. While the batting of both these players was missed, in the field they were irreplaceable and the consequent decline in the overall standard of fielding of the team was one of the major reasons for their inability to defend the premiership.

Despite his absences, Burke, in what was to be his last season with Northern District, was still able to top both first grade batting aggregate and averages with 463 runs at 46.3, although his bowling was less effective, finishing with just 12 wickets at

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29.3. Graham Southwell, in just six innings, batted superbly to score 270 runs at 45.0, including his third first grade century, and his departure for America may well have cost him a place in the NSW Sheffield Shield team. Lynn Marks again batted well, scoring 448 runs at 40.8 and retaining his place in the NSW side, while Mark Hope with 326 runs at 29.6 and John Phillips (237 runs and 36 wickets) showed that representative cricket was well within their grasp as well. Neil Marks, who took over the captaincy from Burke, had an uncharacteristically poor season scoring just 256 runs at 21.3.

In his final season with ND, Ross Taylor again bowled impressively, taking 21 wickets at 20.9. He returned to Tamworth where he remained actively involved in cricket both as a player and as an administrator, eventually serving as president of the Tamworth District Cricket Association. Taylor died quite suddenly in December 1996 at the age of only 58.

The competition had been changed slightly in 1963/64 with the semi-final split coming after the 13th round rather than the 12th as had been the case previously. In their 13 matches first grade had seven first innings wins, four draws and first innings losses to Waverley and Sydney University. Unfortunately they met St George, in a semi-final which they had to win, on a perfect Hurstville Oval batting strip where the home team amassed 7-441 declared before dismissing Northern District for 278.

Ian Fraser captained a young but talented second grade team which began the season poorly but came home strongly to finish in tenth place. Four batsmen topped 300 runs: Ken Longley (390 runs at 35.4, including a brilliant unbeaten 103 against Manly at Waitara Oval; Bill Dixon (374 at 26.7), Phil Blazey (357 at 39.6) and Kevin Butler (300 at 25.0). Of the bowlers, 17-year-old leg spinner, Ron Alexander took 39 wickets in his first season of grade cricket, while accurate off-spinner John Cumming (35 at 19.0) and Alf Hodges (22 at 19.9) also contributed.

The third grade team, again captained by Austen Hughes, improved from 12th to a strong-finishing sixth place. Much of the reason for the late season improvement was the return from Brisbane after a five-year absence, of former first grade captain, Colin Millard. Although he took some time to find his feet, Millard eventually topped both batting aggregate and averages with 408 runs at 37.1 including back-to-back centuries against Cumberland (107 not out) at Pennant Hills Oval and Bankstown (124) at Belmore Oval, the first score being made from an innings total of just 147. The other impressive performer was an Under 21 newcomer named Ashleigh Byron (**know universally as 'Toot'**), who scored **162 runs** in just five innings and picked up 12 wickets with his leg spin bowling.

For the second time in three seasons the fourth grade team missed a semi-final spot by the narrowest of margins, finishing in fifth place, one point behind the fourth team. It continued a remarkably consistent but unlucky run for the club in that grade, having finished 7th in 1957/58, 3rd in 1958/59, 3rd in 1959/60, 4th in 1960/61, 5th in 1961/62 and 3rd in 1962/63. On three occasions they had reached the semi-finals but were beaten on each occasion. John Jagoe, with 318 runs at 39.8, won both batting awards, while captain, Harold Griffin, dominated the bowlers, taking 57 wickets - a new record club fourth grade aggregate, beating his own previous mark of 52, set in 1960/61.

Once again Northern District had a disappointing Poidevin-Gray season, winning just one of its four P-G matches, despite having five players with first grade experience. For a club which had been at the forefront of the development of young cricketers and which had recently won a first grade premiership with a team predominantly made up of local juniors, its lack of success in the competition was puzzling – the only win having been 30 years earlier in 1933/34.

The Green Shield team performed better but were unlucky in having one game washed out with an outright win imminent and then having their match against the