

A HISTORY OF HAWTHORN ROWING CLUB



Introduction

Over the years since the foundation of the club in September 1877 a number of historical summaries have been produced which serve as source material for the present work.

In the annual report of 1927 celebrating fifty years, the then president Frank Pyke presented a picture of the first fifty years. Later in the early 1960's, Bill Ellis produced an account up to 1961. Further historic material was kindly provided by the family of the late Geoff Code which included an historical summary he had prepared for the then Hawthorn City Council to be included in a time capsule buried in St James Park to be opened in 2088. Geoff had also preserved a detailed personal account of HRC in the 1930's written by Jack Coghlan. Jack was a very successful competitor who was forced to transfer to Mercantile when the HRC club was demolished by the 1934 flood. He returned to HRC years later as a respected coach.

A further very valuable source of information is held in the local history section at the Hawthorn Library. This material was deposited at the library in the 1980's for safe keeping but is now regarded by the library as part of its local history collection. Of particular value are minute books which are continuous from 1877 to 1895. Unfortunately there is a gap between 1895 and 1913 but from that time the records of committee deliberations are preserved to 1985. Annual reports give a very good account of club activities and with some foresight, a bound volume of reports from 1908 to 1931 has survived. There is no accurate record of activities between about 1896 and 1908 as all records have been lost.

Background information has been gleaned from other sources including a remarkable book by John Lang entitled "The Victorian Oarsman". This tome records all known regatta results from the 1860's up to 1919. Alan Jacobsen's "Australia in World Rowing" published in 1984 provides a comprehensive account of the development of the sport. The history of rowing website developed by Andrew Guerin is an excellent source of information about representative rowing and also presents the history of a number of Australian clubs.

Invaluable information relating to the club covering a period of seventy years has been provided in conversations with long standing members. Many interesting anecdotes were recounted by our late members Geoff Code and David Deeble.

Neil Cash and Rupe Horsburgh in their personal recollections gave valuable insights into club life in the 1950's and 1960's. Chris de Guingand provided a valuable insight into the relationship of the club with Genazzano College in the 1990's.

John Stewart and Bill Goodwin filled in some gaps in later years.

Hopefully further information will emerge which can be included in the future.

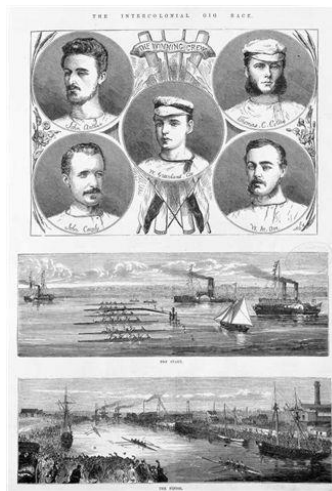
The Beginnings

Hawthorn Rowing Club had its origins at a meeting held at Finn's Terminus Hotel on Wednesday 26th September 1877 at which the Boroondara Rowing Club was formed.



1960's picture of Terminus Hotel building-corner Burwood and Evansdale Roads

At that time rowing was a prominent sport and in June of that year Edward Trickett had successfully defended his world sculling championship on the Paramatta River in Sydney before an estimated crowd of 50,000 .There was a very active rowing community in Victoria ----Melbourne University Boat Club was founded in 1859 with the second club formed in Ballarat in 1862. The first inter-varsity event between Melbourne and Sydney Universities was rowed on the Yarra in 1870. The Melbourne Regatta was established and in 1875 the first eight-oared race in Australia was possible. After much negotiation the initial Intercolonial eight race was rowed on 6th March 1878.



Poster for inter-colonial race 1878

Thus the original meeting at which the club was established was certainly timely and obviously there was considerable interest in rowing as a sport in the general community. The Victorian Rowing Association

was formed in 1867 . Boroondara (Hawthorn) became the twelfth club to join the association and club rowers carried the number 12 for many years until the present bow number system was introduced .

It is worth reflecting on Hawthorn as it was at that time.

The area was almost rural with some farms. The rail line with Hawthorn as terminus was opened in 1861 and extended to Camberwell in 1862. An interesting feature of the area was cultivation of grapes.

“Grape growing also proved a successful enterprise with Boroondara being the third richest grape growing region after Coburg and Bundoora .Hawthorn was home to a strong German community that cultivated a number of small plots with grape vines “

Peel et al .A History of Hawthorn 1993

To the east of the rowing club site is the St James Park Estate which was formerly the Burwood Hill Estate owned by Sir James Palmer and was sub-divided in 1871 some six years prior to foundation of HRC.



Early sketch of Hawthorn 1863 (State Library of Victoria)

Alexander Sutherland in his 1888 account of Melbourne described Hawthorn.

As we follow this main street of Hawthorn called Burwood Road ,which runs exactly two miles down the middle of the municipality ,we have to our left Lower Hawthorn and to our right ,St James Park ,both filled with pleasant villas and mansions.

Much of this Victorian architecture can still be seen in the area to the east of the rowing club.

The records indicate that the original membership of Hawthorn R.C. was twenty seven gentlemen ---over 100 years would elapse until the first female members were introduced. At the original meeting a draft of club rules was presented and office bearers elected ----the first president was Mr J. Paterson.

Land had been purchased in St James Park by two men involved in boating, Messrs Morris and Edwards .It was possible for the fledgling club to hire boats from Mr Edwards.



The original clubhouse leased from Edwards and Morris –two pounds fifty shillings a month—note Gillespie house in background.

Initial membership subscription was two pounds with an option of membership for life at ten pounds.

The first club colours were a purple and white singlet plus a white cap with a purple star.



(Graphic by Gillian Deeble)

.A change to a salmon coloured top with dark blue cap was made in 1880 with a further change to the present uniform in 1885.



(Graphic by Gillian Deeble)

Over the years as far back as the 1920's and more recently in the 1980's there were unsuccessful moves to change to the Hawthorn Football Club colours .In the 1880's there was a Hawthorn Rowing Club

at Princes Bridge which subsequently changed its name to Melbourne City RC before disbanding in the 1890's .

Source material relating to these early years is very limited and it is necessary to rely on the club minute books for most of the information available. Mr Frank Pyke , then president ,endeavoured to encapsulate the first fifty years of the club in the 1927 Annual Report.

The first boats actually purchased were two four-oared "gigs" with sliding seats which had been popularised in the UK by the Australian Stephen Fairbairn. HRC was able to row in the 1878 Melbourne Regatta being represented by a maiden sculler and a maiden four. At the same regatta in 1879 the club had its first win ---the inaugural captain C.F.Taylor had an "easy victory" in the maiden scull. The next victory was C.D. Harrison in the maiden scull at the 1893 Richmond /South Yarra regatta.

Indicative of the social mores at the time are reports of a barrel of beer being donated for the official opening in December 1877 and a fund raising concert for which four hundred tickets were printed. The profit from this event was fifteen pounds which figure should be seen in the context of the price of the first club boats at 25 pounds each. A rather quaint comment refers to the retirement of a Mr Willis because he was leaving the *colony*.

Committee meetings were held in Finn's Terminus Hotel initially but there may have been a falling out as subsequent meetings were held at both Ormond and Langham hotels in Hawthorn. Later in the 1890's after some meetings at The Bridge Hotel, the committee returned to its origins at the Terminus by then known as Kelly's.

The major concerns in the early years related to acquiring boats and raising funds. The committee actually selected the crews entering regattas but at that time there were few regatta events being staged. A very lively and obviously highly contested intra-club competition dominated the 1880's and 1890's. Trophies were offered by members of the committee and other benefactors.

Crews competed for the A.G.Cox medals ,Dr Molloy Cup , Willis Medal ,Dean Oars ,Slater and Morris trophies ,Smith and Wallen Claret Jugs, Yorkshire Brewery trophy and the Taylor and Embling Cups.



Arthur J. G. Cox medal from Hawthorn Rowing Club, Melbourne, 1907

A.G.Cox medal presented in 1907 later becoming part of a necklace

The club has been fortunate to have acquired a trophy from that time.



*HRC Trial Fours
Presented by
A.B. Templeman Esq.
Won by
F. Stevens
28th September 1895*

Mr Templeman is recorded as President of Hawthorn RC during the 1895 season.

As early as March 1879 there is a record of the then VRA attempting to levy monies from the club----refused at that time and again in 1881. By late 1882 the situation had changed as the VRA invited Hawthorn to put forward rowers for selection in the Intercolonial event which was rowed annually usually either in Sydney or in Melbourne. The club probably begrudgingly, paid over ten pounds to VRA but had further conflict in 1884 over a dispute re tickets for five guineas not received. Relations

obviously continued to be strained as the minutes of the committee meeting in 1889 record opposition to a doubling of the VRA levy.

The 1885 AGM must have been somewhat contentious as a resolution to remain with the VRA was carried whereas a motion to change name to Hawthorn was defeated narrowly. Later in that year the change to the present uniform of blue and white hoops was made.

The intra-club races in these years included students from Kew High School and from Hawthorn Grammar School.

The principals of these schools Professor Irving of Hawthorn Grammar and Mr J.H. Thompson of Kew H.S., were real rowing enthusiasts and annual races between the schools were staged in the 1880's.



A sub-committee was appointed at the 1886 AGM to investigate the possibility of the club building a boatshed. The decision was made in early 1887 to spend up to two hundred pounds in building a shed. Progress was very rapid as the shed was opened later that year on a site north of Bridge Road. The recorded cost was 113 pounds so well under budget.



HRC clubhouse built in 1887 north of Bridge Rd—damaged by fire in 1923

Fund raising was obviously vital with the building of the clubhouse. An unusual event held in November 1887 was a fancy dress skating carnival at the Hawthorn Skating Rink. Four hundred tickets were ordered and the cost of entry was two shillings and sixpence. Interesting to note that in the following year the proprietor of the skating rink , perhaps envious of the club's profit, applied a much increased fee for the use of the rink. There is no mention of the Hawthorn rink in any documentation on skating in Australia but it is believed to have been situated in St James Park on Burwood Road. Another popular event mentioned frequently over these years was the annual "Smoke Social".

Contentious issues in the early 1890's again involved VRA . To fund the Intercolonial event which could be seen as the forerunner of the King's Cup, it was proposed that all rowers in Victoria be levied two shillings and sixpence. A meeting of rowers was called to be held at Young and Jackson's Hotel. The HRC committee exhorted members to attend but the advice re voting is not on record.

Local problems caused some concern. A letter to both Hawthorn and Richmond Councils in August 1892 complained about the state of the Yarra and asked for some remedial action. Another missive to Hawthorn Council in January 1893 pointed out the inequity of local bowls and cricket clubs not paying rates whereas the rowing club was required to pay.

A number of special general meetings were actually held at the boathouse rather than in a local hotel as had been the custom. An extraordinary meeting in March 1894 saw a successful censure motion passed outlining the incompetence of the committee. The mass resignation of the captain, vice-captain, treasurer and committee members was accepted. Later in the meeting the captain, treasurer and committee were re-elected. There is no detail available as to the reasons behind the censure but it seems strange that the delinquent committee was re-elected.

1895 marked the change of the club's name from Booroondara to Hawthorn as by then the Hawthorn club at Princes Bridge had become the Melbourne City Rowing Club. The change was achieved with little fanfare as the notes available on crews entered at regattas simply move from one name to the other with no comment.

Regatta success followed in the early 1900's with a notable win by the Maiden Eight at the first Henley in 1904. The "Victorian Oarsman" by John Lang records a win in the Junior Fours by HRC at an October Henley Regatta in 1904.

The race categories at this time were Senior, Junior, Maiden and Novice. This remained the norm until the 1990's. It is worth noting that in those early days the elite rowers competed in club regattas and state representative crews were chosen based on regatta results. Thus a rough comparison to 21st century categories would see Elite as Senior, "A" and "B" as junior and "C" as maiden.



Henley on the Yarra in the early 1900's



HENLEY ON YARRA 1904

The annual Henley was a major social occasion in Melbourne from 1904 until the 1940's. The regatta was normally held in November and attracted huge crowds –all decked out in their finery. The trophies known to rowers as “Henley pots “ were keenly sought after and much prized even to the 21st century.



Finish of eight race at early Henley.



Actual Australian Henley trophies won by A.H.Holzer in the Maiden 8 at the Henley March regatta 1904 and the Junior 4 at the Henley October that year. The trophies came to light at an antique auction and were secured by the shrewd bidding of our late treasurer Jim Boston.

The following year HRC won the Stewards Cup for Senior Fours at the 1905 Henley.

Club records are not available for the early 1900's but Lang's "Victorian Oarsman " credit Hawthorn with some significant performances in the annual championship events. HRC was second in champion eights and third in fours in 1905. The long discontinued Seymour regatta saw HRC winning a junior pair in 1904 with a further win at 1905 Upper Yarra.

Although there was not much success in rowing from 1906 for a few years, the club provided many social events. Gala occasions with 500 attendees were staged for opening day etc. Club races were reported in 1908/09 Annual Report as attracting a crowd of 300 spectators. Xavier College students rowed from HRC from 1908 -1911.

Lang's book provides the results of Victorian regattas up to 1919. Of interest is the great number of rowing events which included Seymour, Paynesville, South Yarra and Hobson's Bay regattas.

Further evidence of the great interest in rowing is the large number of clubs formed over these years although many did not survive or were absorbed by larger institutions.

Henry Lawson penned a poem in 1907 dedicated to the Bairnsdale Rowing Club. A great victory by the Laird brothers in a pair race is described .The Bairnsdale crew defeated South Melbourne and Hawthorn who had *“giants for their crews “*



The 1909/10 report records a positive credit balance for the year of 95 pounds. Club races continued to be a feature with a crowd of 500 attending in 1910 .

Obviously the Yarra was a central point for events in Melbourne at this time. In March 1910 the world famous escape artist Harry Houdini jumped from Queens Bridge chained and handcuffed only to escape to the plaudits of a huge crowd along the banks of the river.



*Maiden Pair –VRA regatta 1911
D.W.Barrie ,J.E.Allen (Str)Jack Monteath (Cox)*

Hawthorn scored a notable win at the 1912 Henley Regatta in the Maiden Eight event. Stroke of the crew was L.C Guy who was later tragically killed in World War One.



Henley Trophy from 1912 maiden eight victory presented to Hawthorn RC by the family of S.L.Massina in 1988



*Maiden Eight ---Henley Regatta 1912
(Bow) C.P.Shugg, T.A.Nelson ,D.W.Barrie, H.B.Kirsch,J.Koklman
,A.W.Massina,S.L.Massina,L.C.Guy (Str) J. Monteath (Cox)*



Hawthorn Rowing Club north of Bridge Road



Early Hawthorn Regatta –photo courtesy of Mercantile R.C.



WINNERS MAIDEN PAIR, V.R.A. REGATTA.



WINNERS MAIDEN PAIR, BAIRNSDALE REGATTA.

*From the Annual Report of 1911/1912
Bairnsdale winning pair---T.A Nelson (Bow) H.B.Kirsch (Str) J.
Monteath (Cox) VRA winning pair ---D.Barrie (Bow) J.Allen (Str)*



Boat naming ceremony in 1911/12 season

Better times came soon with a Junior Premiership in the 1913/14 season. Victories were recorded at Henley with wins in both Maiden Four and the Elswick Cup for Junior Fours .



Winners Elswick Challenge for Junior Fours at Henley 1913

*C.P.Shugg (Bow) , T.A.Nelson , D.W.Barrie , L.C.Guy(str)
H.Unverhan (cox)*

Other winning crews in that season were Maiden and Junior Pairs at Seymour, Maiden Pair and Four at Nagambie and Junior Pair at Upper Yarra Regatta. Worth noting was the Maiden Pair of C .Boxall and W. Bunnig who won the Bairnsdale/Sale double as the first of a number of successes.



*Maiden Four winners at Nagambie Regatta 1913
W.Ryan ,H Smith, C Boxall ,W Brown G Arnold (Cox)*

An extract from the local paper “The Leader” from 22nd September 1913 resonates even into the 21st century.

“Hawthorn is one of those clubs which has been unfortunate in losing members who transfer to larger city clubs with the idea of getting into a better crew and securing more wins. But if these men were to stick to their club , there is not the slightest reason why it should not be at the top as the ability of the club’s coaches is shown by wins “

The sentiments expressed are even more relevant with the development of state and national sporting institutes which cherry pick possible elite rowers to the detriment of club rowing. The rich heritage of the many smaller rowing clubs needs to be supported by more attention including funding –this approach was highlighted in the federally commissioned Jackson Report in 2010.



Membership in 1911/12 –some 46 with 14 actually in rowing gear .



The 1914 /15 season had Hawthorn as winners in a Maiden Eight at Henley and Senior Pair at the Bairnsdale/Sale double.



*Maiden Eight Henley 1914
E.Smith,W.Ryan, A.Sorby,H.P.Fletcher,A.Dwyer,C.Tennent,
C.Boxall,W.Day (Str) H.Unerhau (Cox)*

As with most clubs, many members enlisted in the armed forces in WW1---nine members are listed as volunteering in 1914.In all forty two members of HRC went to the great war ---eight made the supreme sacrifice. This number is really significant given that HRC was a relatively small club and should be seen in the context that all Australians in WW1 were volunteers. The family of Flying Officer Guy who had stroked the victorious HRC crew in the 1913 Elswick Cup but was sadly killed on war service erected a monument to honour those from HRC who had fallen. Their names are inscribed on the obelisk and subsequently those lost in WW2 have been added. Each year the club conducts an ANZAC service at the monument.

HRC has been fortunate to have had among our members the late Geoff Code who served in WW2 and Vietnam veteran Jim Dewar who conducted the annual service over recent years.



ANZAC service April 2011

HRC members who made the supreme sacrifice in World War One

Pte. K. Jones

Cpl. T. Davies

Cpl. S. Little

Cpl. W. O'Shea

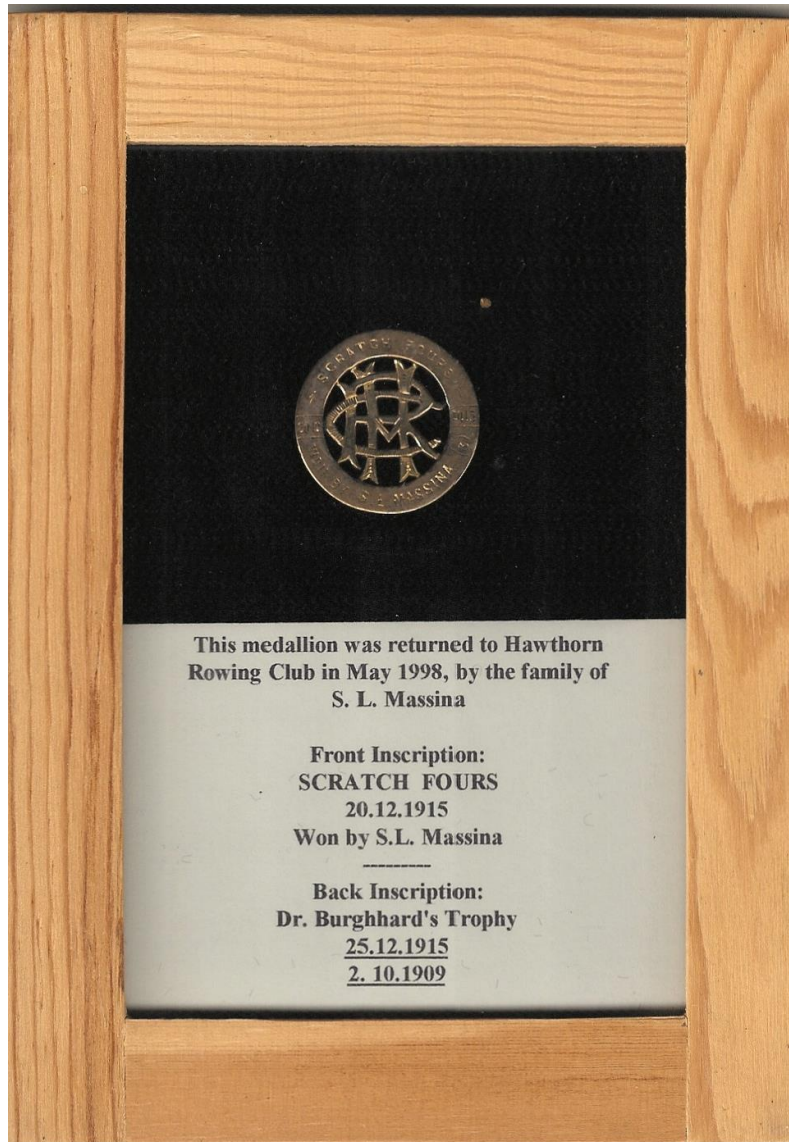
Pte. R. Berryman

Lt. L. Guy

Lt. A. Sorby

Lt. L. Paterson

Most official regattas were suspended during WW1 but clubs organised occasional races.



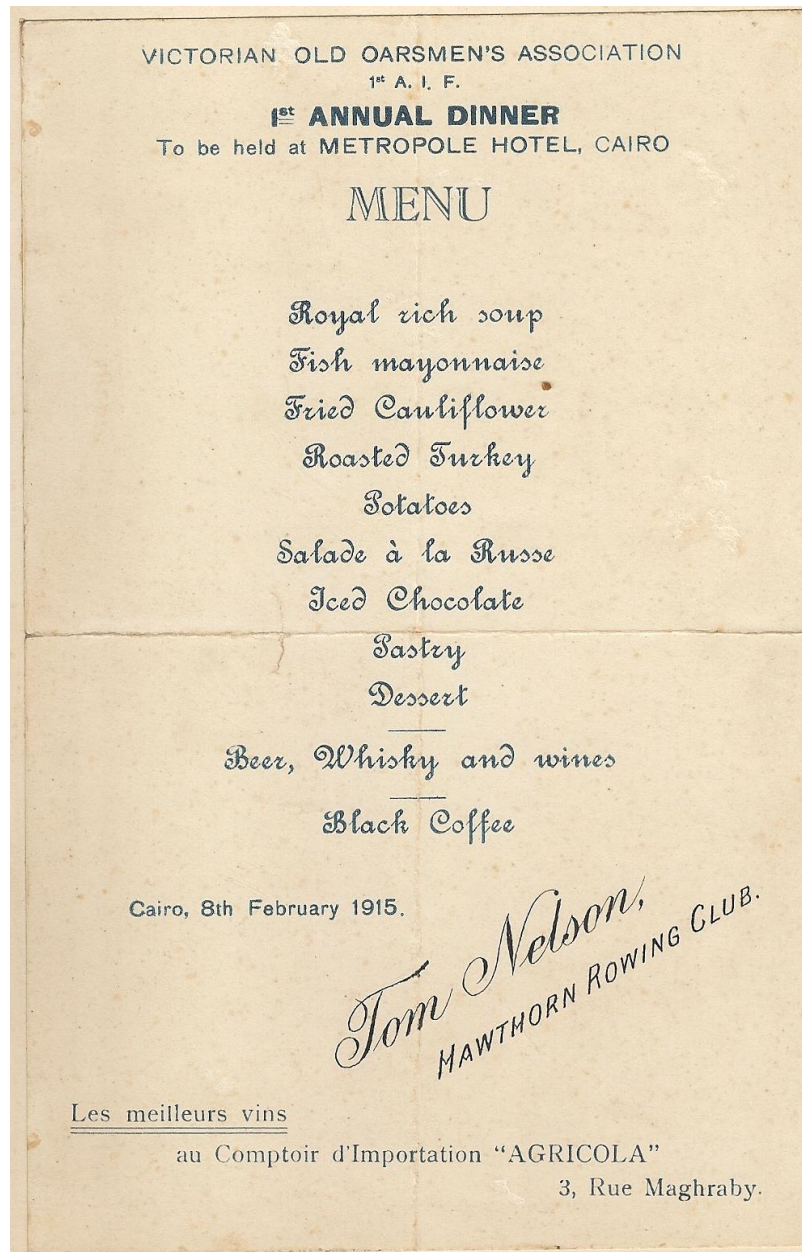
Trophy for HRC intra-club races 1915

The Massina family had a strong connection with the club. The victorious Maiden Eight at Henley in 1912 had both S.L. and A.W.Massina as members. S.L Massina later served on the committee of the club.

Apart from the formal regatta program , there were events known as combination fours or eights held variously at Mercantile ,Essendon and Richmond . Scratch crews were drawn from those in attendance

The annual reports of that time make sombre reading with HRC member Mr R Berryman a casualty in 1914.The 1915 report records the loss of L.G.Patterson ,K.Jones and S.H.Little.

Surviving from 1915 is a menu presented by Tom Nelson who had been a successful competitor for HRC in the seasons before WW1. A meeting of old Victorian oarsmen in Cairo during WW1 is surely something to marvel at.



“ Another year gone and still Europe’s blaze continues to obscure smaller issues”

This sentence opens the 1916 report. Again there was no formal regatta but the club remained active and contact was maintained with those serving in Europe . Quoting from the 1916 /17 report

“ News has come to hand from the front that our old ex-captain and esteemed comrade Mr L.F. Read, ably supported by Messrs F .Griffiths and A .Sorby ,presided over an impromptu meeting held in the trenches at which members and supporters of the club were present. They passed a resolution which was unanimously carried that the members remaining at home who were unable to join in the more glorious fight for home and freedom ,should look after their interests in the club and stick together and keep the good old HRC flag flying until their return,”

Sad to relate that Mr A. Sorby was later killed in action---his passing as with Messrs W.O'Shea and Claude Guy is recorded in the 1917 club report.

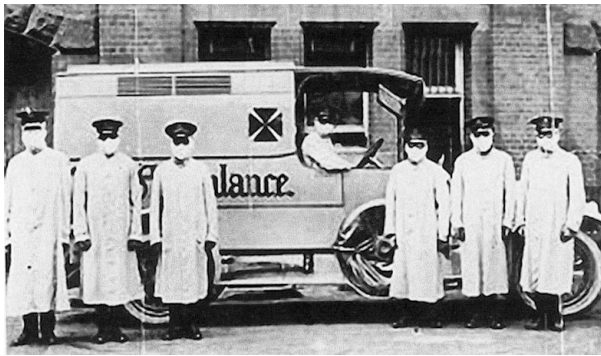
With peace declared in November 1918 , active rowing resumed soon after. The VRA organised regattas and HRC was successful in the February 1919 event with a win in Junior Pair and at the April 1919 regatta great success with victories in senior four and pair. The bow and two man from the four also won the pair.



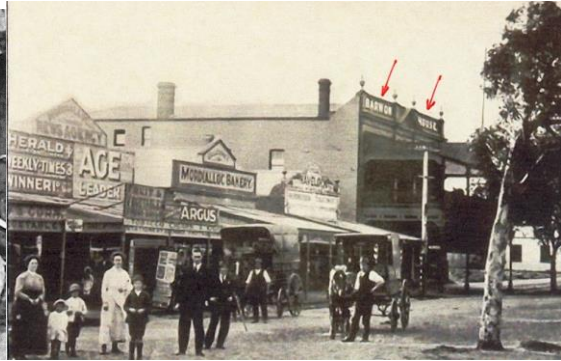
Senior Four Melbourne Regatta 1919

D.W.Barrie ,C.Boxall, H.J.Green ,H.B.Kirsch (Str) F.Mann (Cox)

1919 also saw the outbreak of Spanish Influenza in Melbourne . Although there was widespread alarm and many precautions taken, the only mention in HRC archives relates to the cancellation of a social function at the Kew Recreational Hall as it had been converted to a temporary hospital.



Ambulance at the ready for victims of the influenza epidemic



Improvised hospital in Mordialloc

The Turbulent Twenties

The 1920's proved very eventful for HRC .The club's second Junior Premiership was won in the 1920/21 season. Successful crews were boated --Maiden Eight at VRA regatta , Maiden Four at Upper Yarra and Junior Four double at Ballarat/Barwon .The stroke of all these winning crews was W.A.Holtham.



Maiden Eight VRA Regatta 1920

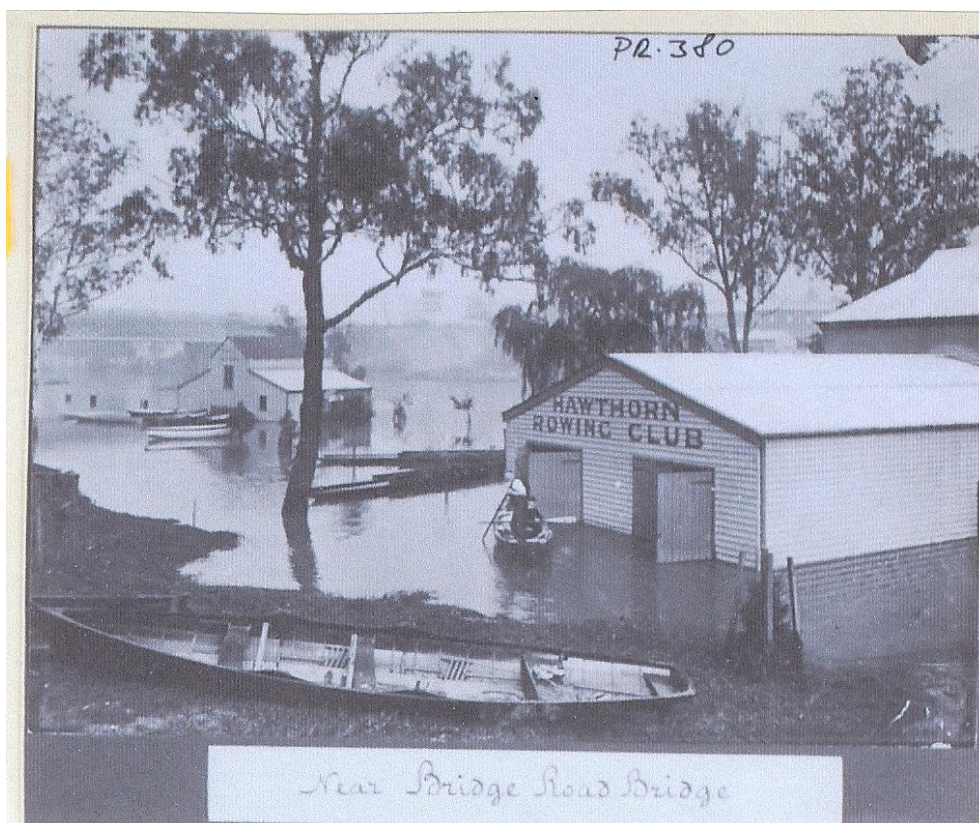
*(Bow) H.E.Ellis ,W.Day ,H.A.la Roche ,W.Davey , E.J.Davey ,C.Tennant,
N.A.Casson, W.A.Holtham ,(stroke) F.W.Mason(cox)*

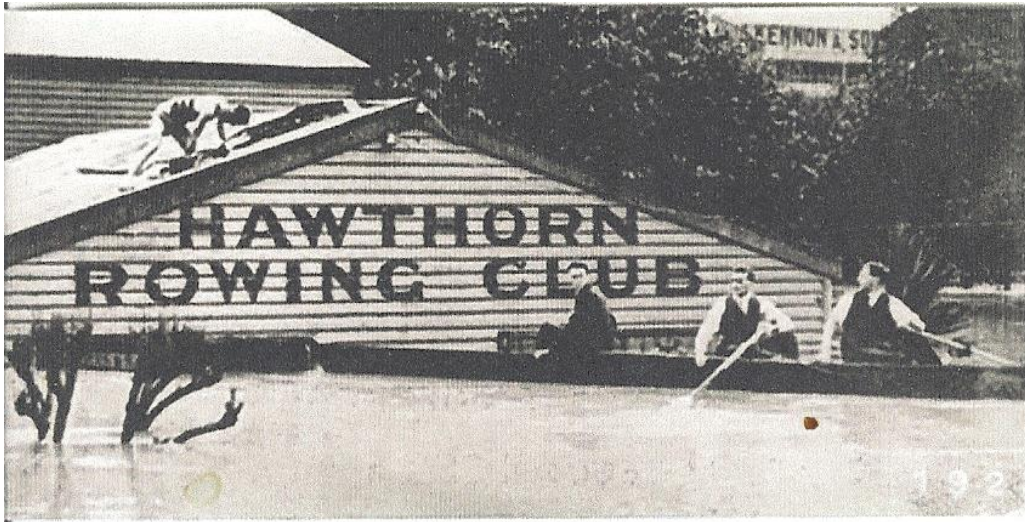
A feature of club life in these years was the annual riverside carnival. This usually included a regatta and other entertainment. There were no female members but there was an active ladies support group who were heavily involved in organising these events which were a significant source of revenue for the club.

In the 1922/23 season HRC boated a Senior Eight which performed creditably without scoring any victories. Wins were recorded at the Melbourne Regatta in Junior Pair and Maiden eight races. The club at this stage was boating a competitive senior eight which included Holtham , Charles Boxall and Harry La Roche who was later a key figure in the 1930's building of a new clubhouse. The now regular annual carnival was a great success with 300 people attending.

The club experienced a huge flood in 1923 which as seen in contemporary photos virtually submerged the club. It was considered

necessary to carry out repairs and some timely renovations. The cost of the work came in at 902 pounds---829 pounds had been raised at the carnivals which left a shortfall of 83 pounds .A loan was secured from E S and A Bank at interest of 7%. In the midst of all this the HRC Maiden Eight won at Albert Park.





Again major events occurring in Melbourne seem not to have impacted on HRC as there is no mention in the club records of the Police Strike of 1923. This took place on the eve of the Melbourne Spring Racing Carnival. About half of the force went on strike over an issue of work place “spying”. There was an outbreak of looting which required the authorities to bring in temporary law enforcers. Happily this did not seem to have any effect on HRC.



Refurbished clubhouse 1923---later washed away in 1934 flood. This picture was featured on the 1925/26 annual report replacing the previous building.

In 1924/25 season the club had great success with wins recorded at Henley in the Junior Eight and Nagambie ,Albert Park and Upper Yarra in Junior Four. The latter win was really meritorious as the crew suffered a mishap early in the race and fell back many lengths. Fortunately they recovered to win the heat and went on win well in the final. The crew was E.Eddison , E .Davey ,A. Duncan and W. Holtham stroke. A further win for this crew was achieved in the Maribyrnong Challenge Fours.



Maiden Eight Albert Park Regatta 1924

E.Eddison ,A.Langton, W.Charlton ,A.Henry ,R.R.Sullivan ,V.Barker-Hays A.Duncan ,J.Duncan (Str) R.Brearley (Cox)

The club continued its successful progress in the 1925/26 season despite a disastrous start to the season. Fire at Edward's boatshed destroyed an eight, three fours and oars stored there by HRC. Using borrowed equipment the club amassed enough wins to be in touch with the Junior Premiership . Winning crews are recorded as Maiden Four at Ballarat with the HRC crew at Bairnsdale winning both Junior and Senior Four as well as a Senior Pair. Henley on the Maribyrnong in February 1926 saw the club win challenge four and pair. At the Upper Yarra regatta success was seen in a Lightweight Four and a Junior Pair. A further notable win at this regatta was the Junior Scull won by W.A. Holtham.



Junior Four Ballarat 1926

E.Eddison ,E.Buckley ,G.Coleman ,R.Sullivan (Str) A.Lloyd (Cox)

HRC was only two points behind the leader prior to the final regatta weekend at Bairnsdale /Sale .A special train was organised but unfortunately there was no success at the regattas leaving the club second in the premiership .

From the records it would seem that HRC was developing a strong squad who were rowing their way through the system. The club was competing at senior level which as previously stated translates to present day elite standard.

A footnote to the fire early in the season is the praise heaped on the then treasurer John Shaw who had organised increased insurance before the blaze enabling the club to collect 220 pounds which ensured replacement of the lost equipment. Such prudence would be viewed suspiciously in the highly litigious 21st century.

W.A. (Billy)Holtham had been the stroke of most of the winning HRC crews during the 1920,s and had served on the committee and as vice-captain. He was selected in the 1926 Victorian Eight but sadly was killed whilst on duty as an RAAF flying instructor only months after the interstate regatta.

Men's Interstate Eight-Oared Championship—The King's Cup

1st TAS - Bow: Edward Elrick, 2: D Haywood, 3: W Hull, 4: G Richardson, 5: J A Inglis, 6: A Filbee, 7: L R Smith, Str: J L Hallam, Cox: A Griggs, Cch & Mgr: Cecil L McVilly, Emerg: H Wilkinson

2nd SA - Bow: A Pilmore, 2: J Guerin, 3: H W Doecke, 4: A V Scott, 5: D Marshall, 6: L Stone, 7: A Loxton, Str: Walter H Pfeiffer, Cox: R A Cummings, Cch: E Higgs, Emerg: C F Kretschmer, Mgr: J P Marcus

3rd VIC - Bow: W A Holtham, 2: G J Adam, 3: L A J Scully, 4: F C Borrmann, 5: W L Pincott, 6: E J Farrell, 7: R (Bob) V Gregg, Str: H A Schlichting, Cox: B E Coombes, Emerg: Jack L Mounsey, Cchs & selectors: Charles Donald & Edward Kenny, Mgr: J P Rorke

4th QLD - Bow: H G Poole, 2: E G Cook, 3: R Shaw, 4: R Couzens, 5: H Blackman, 6: J J Poole, 7: S McFarlane, Str: M Raffin, Cox: J Hughes, Cch: J Copp, Emerg: D Castles

NSW did not finish - Bow: George S Wallis, 2: J T Vindin, 3: Phillip G Dowling, 4: Gilbert E Phillips, 5: J Lowrey, 6: William (Bill) C H Ridley, 7: Charles (Chic) W Hurley, Str: William E Livingston, Emerg: Oswald (Ossie) R Dowling, Cox: R J Daly, Cch: Stuart S Amess, Mgr: E J Buckley

The Queensland crew put a good fight and were in the lead after a mile. However the strength of the Tasmanian, South Australian and Victorian crews showed through in the second half of the race. NSW ceased rowing before completing the race. On a sad note, **the Victorian bow man died in the months following the race.**

(Courtesy "History of Australian Rowing" by Andrew Guerin)



Holtham had been by far the most successful HRC competitor over these years having been stroke of most of the club's crews with two Henley junior eight wins as well as many junior fours.

A moving tribute was penned for the 1926/27 Annual Report

It is with deep regret that we record the death under tragic circumstances of your popular fellow member Flying Officer W.A.Holtham.

During his seven years association with the club “Billy” was its most consistent performer in regatta and club races and his cheery personality endeared him to all. He acted as vice-captain in 1921/22 , 1924/25 and committee and selector 1923/1924.His death while instructing a cadet near Werribee came as a cruel shock to the whole rowing community. His popularity among all rowing men was evidenced by the large numbers who followed his remains to their last resting place in the Box Hill Cemetery . Fully one hundred oarsmen followed the cortege and this number was added to at the graveside.

Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his widow and children in their great trial and we trust that the knowledge that he died as he lived “a very gallant gentleman “ will help to sustain them and his relatives in their grief. He lives in our hearts.

As a tribute to Holtham a club shield was set up for competition between members. The club’s top racing eight was also named the “W.A.Holtham”

There was no carnival in early 1927 but HRC staged an event for combination fours which attracted an entry of forty crews . Club races in that year saw twelve fours compete .

Two members T .Wicks and J Duncan were selected in the King’s Cup squad but were unable to row because of work commitments.

The growing strength of the club during these years is seen in the membership figures.

1923/24 --60 on membership roll / 1924/25—77 and by 1925/26 HRC boasted a membership of 100

Participation in regattas was strong with the club entry at the major VRA regattas in 1928 recorded as 46 competitors entering in seven crews.



Maiden Four Ballarat 1927

W.Charlton, H.Gargett ,D.Wilson ,W.Lloyd (Str) A.Lloyd (Cox)

HRC finished second to Melbourne and Mercantile in the Senior Premiership in 1927/28 season.

A great win was achieved in the Victorian Champion Fours .



Victorian Championship Four

J.Murphy , V.Barker-Hays , ,G.Coleman , T.Wicks (Str) R.Alexander (Cox) George Anderson (Coach)

The club finished second in the Champion Eight. The Senior Pair of T.Wicks and J.Duncan won at the VRA Regatta and again at Footscray. Maiden eight crews were successful at Upper Yarra and VRA.



Junior Eight Barwon 1927

*J.Eddison , E.Buckley , W.Charlton , H.Gargett , G.Coleman , W.Lloyd ,
D.Wilson, R Sullivan (Str) K.Gambling (Cox)*

Sadly a HRC cox , Leo Owen was drowned at the club in a canoeing mishap.

A new club was formed further upstream from HRC and seven members elected to join the South Hawthorn RC which established itself along Fairview Park and organised the Eastern Suburbs Regatta. The club did not prosper and quickly disbanded.



*Footscray Regatta November 1928 Lightweight Maiden Eight
J.Fitzsimmons ,L. Morgan ,J.D.Pammenter ,R.Peel ,J.McLeod ,R
Alexander ,M.Joyce ,L.A Bonn (Str) H.Hopper (Cox)*

Perhaps the club's greatest moment came in 1929 with victory in the Grand Challenge Cup for eights at the Henley Regatta. The stroke of the eight was Vernon Barker-Hays who was a reserve for the Victorian Kings cup crew in 1929 . This is the only occasion HRC has had such success and was actually the first time the club had won a Senior Eight. In recognition of this great win the Hawthorn City Council bestowed the privilege of incorporating the city crest in the HRC emblem. The crew was seated as J.Murphy (Bow) , W.Lloyd , G.Brooke , H.James, G .Coleman, T.Wicks, A Duncan , V.Barker-Hays (Str), C.Brennan (Cox). The coach was George Anderson who went on to become a state selector and the crew rowed in the club's top eight "W.A.Holtham"

The crew also won the Senior Eight at the VRA regatta.

At the Nagambie regatta the HRC No 1 crew beat home the HRC No.2 crew in the Lightweight Maiden Four event.

HRC member W.Lloyd was selected to row in King's cup but was unable to take his place in the crew because of work commitments.

The carnival was re-introduced with modest success financially.

The 1930's



Steam train on railway bridge 1930

Despite the heady days of 1929 the following year saw HRC had little success--E.McDougall won the Herald Shield for scullers and an eight had a win at the novice regatta in June 1931.

It is of interest to note that the club's best boats –eight (Holtham) and four (Guy) were both named after members tragically killed in plane accidents whilst serving in RAAF. A further tragic loss was that reported in 1929/30 annual report of member R .Brearily killed in an attempt on the Melbourne to Sydney road record. In the early days of Australian motoring there were many attempts to lower the existing record .These have been highlighted in an ABC documentary.

Prominent citizens acted as patron of HRC during the early years of the 20th century including local parliamentarians Hon.George Swinburne and later Sir William McPherson. Records indicate that these gentleman and others were generous benefactors of the club and assisted in advancing the interests of HRC with government bodies. McPherson is recorded as the sole donor of an eight.

In the early 1930's club members who became prominent in later years commenced their rowing careers ---Alan Bamford (later president) ,Laurie Malkin (club auditor for many years) and Jack Coghlan (coach of HRC crews).



Hawthorn straight in 1930

Great success came to the club in 1932/33 season with third placing in both senior and junior premierships .Two maiden eights were boated with the No.1 crew winning at Upper Yarra regatta and No.2 crew winning at Footscray –a really remarkable achievement. Senior eight wins were recorded at the Ballarat /Barwon double with G.Brooke , C.Brennan, V.Barker-Hays and coach George Anderson from the great 1929 crew. HRC Junior Four had wins at Nagambie and Barwon. The pennant for Champion Eights 1932/33 is still preserved at the clubhouse.

George Anderson, who had coached successfully including the great 1929 crew, became president in 1933 . At that time he was also a state selector.

Hawthorn rowers were well represented in interstate rowing with George Anderson coaching the 1932 King's Cup crew which included Dudley Wilson and Stewart Elder from HRC. This trio with Cliff Brennan as cox were also in the 1933 crew. In all Stewart Elder rowed in six Kings Cup crews and won gold in the four at the 1938 Commonwealth Games.

Another Hawthorn stalwart Harry La Roche also coached the Victorian King's Cup eight in 1936.

Henley continued to be a major event in Melbourne and in 1934 Hawthorn had great representation.



Melbourne Henley program for 1934

The club entered crews in Maiden Four , Maiden Eight , Elswick Cup for Junior Fours and the Grand Challenge Cup for eights .Two of the victorious crew from 1929 were still competing G.A Brooke and V.Barker-Hays ----HRC was drawn against a crew from London. The results from the regatta are not recorded .

In November 1934 following torrential rain the Yarra flooded causing great damage to residential areas . The Xavier College boatshed which was upstream of HRC , was carried down the river where it collided with the Hawthorn shed destroying the building and equipment. With no facilities available many members joined city clubs to continue rowing.

The loss of the shed impacted on the senior rowing at the club as many successful oarsmen including Stewart Elder and Jack Coghlan were forced to transfer to continue their rowing careers.

Despite the obvious difficulties a stalwart group of members maintained the existence of HRC. A committee meeting in December 1934 held at Yarra Yarra Rowing Club wrote to the Hawthorn City Council asking for support to re-build the boatshed.

Committee meetings of HRC were held regularly at Yarra Yarra from December 1934 .Approval was sought from the council to set up a temporary shed but this was not permitted. Finally in February 1936 the council offered a site south of Bridge Road .Subsequently at the AGM held at Banks R.C. on 24th August Mr Harry La Roche was commissioned to build a new clubhouse.

An interesting side-light is that most major events at HRC from the 1920s through until the early 1950's finished with what is described in the records a "Smoke Night" and this is duly recorded for the 1936 AGM.

Later in September that year Frank Dennis joined the club. Frank was on the committee for many years and served as president from 1954 to 1983.

November 1936 saw the club approach the council seeking a loan. This was finalised as a debenture for 500 pounds in June 1937.

The work was largely completed such that the club took possession on 25th August 1937.The prime mover in building the clubhouse was Mr H La Roche who was honoured with life membership in September 1937.The consensus was that building south of Bridge Road gave some protection against flooding particularly with the retaining wall at the eastern end of the shed. A stone in the retaining wall is suitably inscribed HRC-1937 .Finally an official opening day was held on 19th January 1938.

Social activities resumed quickly with a dance held in May 1938 charging three shillings admittance with a further two shillings and sixpence for drinks. A later dance in August that year yielded a profit of eleven pounds nine shillings.

Two people who would become prominent in the club joined in June 1938--- Bill Craven who was a long time treasurer and Stan Neal who later became a successful coach and a hard working captain.

Long time captain Vernon Barker-Hays retired after ten years –he returned some years later as president after the sudden death of Dr Mawson who had been president for two years.

The club competed during the 1930's and some wins were achieved as seen from the photos preserved from that time.



Maiden Four Ballarat 1932

D.Cosgriff ,W.Keetley ,F.Smith , J Coghlan (Str) E.Elder (Cox) ,J Elder (Coach)



Junior Four Barwon 1933

A.Bamford ,F.Hiscock ,F.Smith ,J.Coghlan (Str)K.Mitchell (Cox) J.Elder (Coach)

Significant newcomers in late 1939 were Geoff Code and Bill Feldt. Geoff served in WW2 and returned to the club serving as captain , secretary and president----Bill was also in WW2 and became club secretary.



*Maiden Pair Upper Yarra Regatta 1939
L.Dunn ,W.Craven (Str) H.Amey (Cox) ,Stan Neal (Coach)*



*Winner Maiden Pair Barwon Regatta February 1940
Geoff Code (Bow) Ralph Chipper (Str) R.Goulding (Cox)*

The 1940.s

As with most sporting bodies the war had a real impact. A number of HRC members joined the armed forces and it was only the drive and energy of Stan Neal , the captain over this time, which kept the club doors open. Often members on leave would turn up on weekends to row. The committee meetings during the war years refer to members submitting an apology because of military duties.

Even as far back as 1940 the club was approached to accommodate canoes but then as now there was no available space.

Regular dances were staged with proceeds sent to assist members serving overseas. A piano was purchased in August 1941 for twelve pounds to be paid off at two pounds a month. Members were urged to wear evening dress at these club functions .Sadly a loss was recorded at a dance in September 1941 which was attributed to petrol rationing.

With a low membership a real problem the club decided to approach Scotch and Xavier Colleges to boost numbers but there was no real response.

Alan Bamford who had been prominent in organising the rebuilding in the 1930's returned from active service and was honoured with life membership in July 1944.

Sadly the minutes of June 1945 report the death of Jack Cleary killed in action. In his memory a perpetual shield was later established to be awarded annually to the club's most successful rower.

HRC members who made the supreme sacrifice in WW2

- *Jack Cleary*
- *N.L.Cheshire*
- *R.D.Tregonning*

In all twenty seven members of HRC served in WW2.

A new member in 1945 was Ken Rooney who was club treasurer for many years and who helped organise the older leisure rowers who have been turning up on Tuesday and Thursday mornings for decades. Stan Jeffery became a

member in early 1946 .He went on to row at senior level and was at various times Captain, Secretary and President.

With hostilities at an end the club was back in the social whirl holding regular dances. It was stipulated that the ladies were expected to attend in evening dress .Mention is made of a four piece orchestra costing the club the sum of six pounds ten shillings.

Figures from 1946 provide some indication of costs at that time. The average weekly wage at the time was about 6 pounds. Full club membership at HRC was set at the AGM as two pounds fifteen shillings. Later in that year the cash balance at E.S &A. Bank was 110 pounds .The comparison to 2011 is with an average earnings of \$1360 which is equivalent to 680 pounds .If we extrapolate this further the figure is over 100 times the average in 1946 and equivalent to about twice the current annual membership fee. It would seem that there is some consistency in the annual subscription being half the weekly average wage.



Henley 1945 –note the crowded river bank

An interesting donation is mentioned ---a flagpole supposedly from a WW1 ship the Canberra was presented by Mr S. Goulding. It remains uncertain whether this is the pole replaced in the 2012 renovations.



*Maiden Pair Upper Yarra 1946
F.O'Donnell ,K.Gill (Str) A.Cox (Cox)*

The major problem for HRC in the immediate post war years related to the VRA decision to allow so called “streak” boats to compete in same races as traditionally built clinker craft. This put considerable pressure on Hawthorn who needed to fully upgrade the fleet to be competitive. The club rose to the challenge and resolved to purchase two fours and two pairs over the next two years at a cost of 400 pounds.

The staging was a problem and in March 1947 plans were sent for approval to both Hawthorn Council and Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works.

Quotes were sought for boats to replace the ageing fleet and it is worth noting that the captain considered the price of 100 pounds for a practice pair as exorbitant.

At the 1947 AGM captain Stan Neal was re-elected and Alan Bamford assumed the presidency. Subscriptions were increased to three guineas (Three pounds three shillings----an increase of nearly 15%). Concern was expressed concerning membership and the apathy of the existing membership. Further reports by the captain spoke of poor co-operation at training.

The Holtham shield was re-established to be competed for in pairs challenge races from Victoria Bridge to HRC.

Unfortunately the plans for staging failed to meet MMBW requirements. Better news was a quote for two practice pairs at sixty pounds each and the decision to seek a racing eight. Overtures were made to Swinburne Technical College but it was not possible to arrive at mutually satisfactory arrangements.

By December 1947 a decision was made to accept the George Towns quote for a racing eight . The committee resolved to sell older boats despite an impassioned plea from Vernon Barker-Hays , past captain and president to retain them.

At a moving ceremony in February 1948 ,the two new pairs were named by Mrs Bamford wife of president Alan . The boats were the “Jack Cleary” and the “Ron Tregonning” ---both were HRC members killed in WW2.Relatives of the two late members were present. Later in the year the brother of Jack Cleary donated ten guineas which was used to inaugurate the Cleary Shield.

Progress on the new staging was stalled as MMBW was not prepared to sanction plans.

Neil Cash who served on committee and as captain joined the club in March 1948---Neil was later given life membership and in 2008 was able to celebrate 60 years of membership. Another long standing member Geoff Code was very involved on the committees of the immediate post war years. Interestingly his role was described as Supervisor presumably of club equipment.

A continuing source of income over this time was the regular club dances. Even in difficult time a supply of necessary liquid refreshment for these events was maintained by Frank Dennis. Again in the matter of dress the committee directed ladies to wear evening dress at the club dances. No photos survive but 1948 was the year of the “New Look” with skirt length much lengthened even in street wear. There is no comment on this fashion trend in the club archives.

Finally the new racing eight arrived and was named the “G.S.Anderson” to honour a very successful coach and president. The bow of this boat was mounted on a backboard and is still at the club.

Hawthorn had a great win at Henley in November 1948 in the maiden eight.



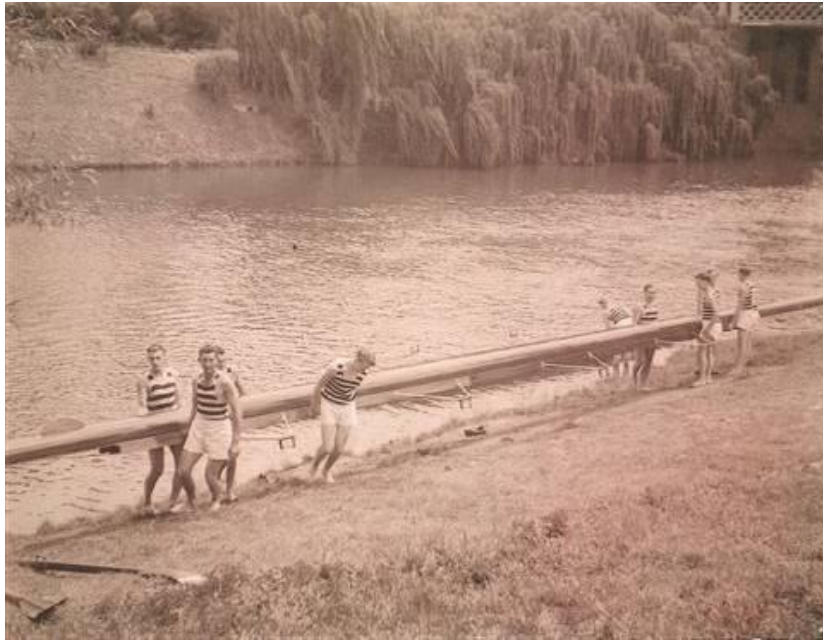
Maiden Eight Henley 1948

*Bruce Gough (Str), Peter Dwyer ,Bruce Davey, Rex Rae ,Warren Adams,
Frank O'Donnell, Peter McLennan ,Geoff Code (Cox) D.Grieg*

In early 1949 the two new fours were named as the " F.R Hiscock " and the "S.T. Goulding" . The AGM in July recognised the contribution of Stan Neal by conferring life membership. Presentation of the initial winner of the Cleary Shield was made to K.P.McLennan .

Significant improvement in HRC rowing came as a consequence of modification of rigging which Stan Neal had seen at a presentation at Melbourne Grammar School.

In 1951 Stan Neal retired as captain to be succeeded by Geoff Code. Over the years following WW2, the major figures at the club, Alan Bamford as president, Stan Neal as captain, secretary Pat O'Connor and treasurer Bill Craven had been able to replace all the obsolete boats with an up to date competitive fleet.



Hawthorn eight prior to new staging

With the co-operation of Hawthorn Council , a new staging was put in place. The planning was carried out by Alan Robertson and the building by Ken Limbrick who returned to the club in the 1980's as a veteran competitor.



Landing under construction in early 1950's. Xavier was not on site until 1957

There was some success in these years with the most notable win in the Elswick Cup for Junior Fours at the 1952 Henley Regatta



Elswick Cup Henley 1952

D.Goode(Cox),B.Gough (str)K.Limbrick(3),N.Cash(2),S Jeffery (Bow)

The club was certainly moving forwards in fleet acquisition .Of interest is the mention of boats for sale at the Echuca Rowing Club which was disbanding.

The new racing four had cost 235 pounds and an order was made for a new pair at a cost of 175 pounds.

At the half-yearly meeting in January 1953 , advance planning was set in train for a Ladies Day in September at which new boats would be named and the staging officially opened. It was resolved that the then Governor of Victoria would be invited to this major occasion.

At this stage all HRC boats were equipped with swivels which necessitated the purchase of appropriate oars.

Again indicative of the mood of the times, a suggestion was made to install a fan to deal with smokers at the club. The adverse publicity concerning smoking had not really got under way so it was not uncommon for athletes in all disciplines to smoke. It is worth noting that the first definitive medical research linking cigarettes and lung cancer was published only three years previously in 1949.

Treasurer reports at the AGM in July 1953 indicated that the club had outlaid 1600 pounds on the fleet since 1946. The main driver of fund raising over these years was Bill Craven who resigned after 14 years as treasurer. It was decided at a subsequent committee meeting to name the new pair “W.A.Craven.”

Two older boats “Zetland” and “Claude Guy “ were passed on to the Longerong Agricultural College. It was planned to acquire a new racing four for the 1954/55 season.

Severe flooding in late 1953 forced the HRC crews to train at city clubs. However members were urged to come back to Hawthorn after training to ensure that club morale was maintained.



Yarra in flood at Hawthorn in 1953

In an attempt to attract members HRC had an advertisement at Glenferrie station and appealed in the local press for potential coxswains.

Social activities included the annual picnic to McRae as well as a club dinner at the boatshed. The accompanying photo shows an all male gathering with members in jacket and tie in accordance with the customs of the time.



Hawthorn RC Annual Dinner 1953

The VRA rules of that time required that the winning Elswick Cup crew from 1952 change 50% of personnel. Accordingly HRC entered the Henley event in 1954 with Gordon Cowie and Ian Thompson joining Neil Cash and Stan Jeffery from 1952 and had a memorable win.



*Winners Elswick Cup for Junior Fours –Henley 1954
N.Cash (Str) ,G.Cowie,I.Thompson ,S.Jeffery*

Great success was achieved at the popular 1954 Christmas treble of Nagambie, Rutherglen and Yarrowonga with the maiden eight winning at all regattas. A junior pair won at Albert Park .

Stan Jeffery was appointed manager of the Victorian Kings Cup squad and an interesting junior newcomer was Jim Boston who returned in later years to serve as both secretary and treasurer.

President Frank Dennis expressed concern at the 1955 AGM lamenting the lack of support from the membership for club functions. On a positive note he reported on twenty new members over the year of whom twelve had competed. Public risk insurance was mentioned with a cost of three pounds for a five thousand pounds cover. David Deeble won the most successful coxswain award.

Later in 1955 the club boated 24 rowers at the VRA regatta with three wins and a further victory in a maiden pair at Upper Yarra. The Christmas treble yielded five wins and an Open Pair won at Yea in early 1956.

A significant announcement at the 1956 AGM related to the first Head of the Yarra which was strongly promoted by Stan Jeffery. Geoff Code was honoured with life membership and the rules were changed with new fees introduced.

Active Senior Member-- Five pounds (\$10.00)

Active Junior Member --Two pounds,ten shillings (\$5.00)

Schoolboy Four shillings -- (Fifty cents)

Associate -- Two pounds ,ten shillings (\$5.00)

There was great interest in the Olympic Games scheduled for later in 1956.HRC member Gordon Cowey was selected to row in the coxed four. An offer of accommodation was made to allow Merv Woods and Jack Goulding to bunk down at HRC during the games.

Yet again the club experienced flooding in October 1956 .

An interesting off-season activity in the 1950's was a basketball team which actually competed in a grade competition.

The long discontinued Yea regatta produced winning crews in both Junior Pair and Four.

Hot issues in 1957 were related to club finances. Real concern was the short fall in both subscriptions and entry fees. A letter was sent to defaulting members with an ultimatum threatening suspension of privileges. Fortunately the Head of the Yarra returned a profit of fourteen pounds. The Henley regatta organisers offered to run an alternate event finishing in the city –the committee rejected the offer out of hand. Hawthorn Lady Mayoress crowned a Miss Hawthorn at the HOY celebrations.

A perennial issue was the necessity for crews to train in the city. Further stress arose in providing support for the Camberwell High School students .It proved difficult to enlist coaches and the relatively inexperienced lads caused quite a deal of damage to boats.

The Head of the Yarra was staged in March 1958 but only after reaching a negotiated arrangement with the organisers of Moomba to avoid a clash of events.

Later that year at the AGM, the membership complained that communication from the committee was inadequate but even more interesting was a speaker who claimed that the consumption of beer at the club was excessive. There was no action taken as a result of these comments .1958 saw the club flooded yet again necessitating crews to train at city clubs. The only win recorded for the season was a maiden pair at the Upper Yarra Regatta.

By 1959 it was recognised that the fleet needed an upgrade and it was decided at the half yearly meeting to try to raise funds to renew the boats. Dances were scheduled for March , May and August even though it had been recognised that with the advent of TV ,such events were no longer as popular.

The Head of the Yarra continued to grow with 29 crews competing in March 1959.

At a special meeting convened to consider club finances , the actual position of the club was outlined .On a positive note there was 120 pounds in the bank account with a further 100 pounds in a boat fund but the Hawthorn City Council was owed sixty pounds. The active membership stood at 45 with 35 schoolboys on the books ---largely from Camberwell H.S. and St Kevin's. The support for club functions had improved with the resulting increase in revenue.

Future sociological researchers will debate the significance of the August committee meeting which rejected the proposed increase in price of a six ounce beer from ten pence to one shilling but accepted that the price of a glass of lemonade would rise from threepence to sixpence.

A successful dance in late 1959 made a profit of 34 pounds with additional profit of 100 pounds from a raffle.

Great wins were recorded ---maiden four at VRA and Upper Yarra regattas, maiden eight at Barwon and a treble at the Christmas regattas . The HRC junior four won at Rutherglen and the novice four won at Yarrowonga and Rutherglen. Later at the Ballarat /Barwon double the club won the junior eight.

Further victories followed with a junior eight in Founder's Challenge Cup at Henley ,novice four at Scotch-Mercs and the HRC crew in its section of Head of Yarra. A very successful 59/60 season saw the club take off the Junior Premiership for the third time in its history. A celebration of the great victory attracted an attendance of over 130.

It was a very upbeat AGM in June 1960 reporting on the premiership ,a very successful Head of the Yarra and well supported social events. A recurring theme over these years was the issue of schoolboys at the club .It was proving difficult to provide coaching and there were real problems with both behaviour of the boys and damage to equipment. This came to a head in October 1960 at which time the committee decided to sever ties with Camberwell High School.

Successful social activities continued with a club ball in September 1960 attended by 290 people and generating a profit of over 130 pounds. The new eight "City of Hawthorn " was officially named by the Lady Mayoress at ladies day .

Hawthorn had great success at the 1960/61 Christmas treble. The maiden eight and the lightweight pair won at all three regattas.

1961 saw a lightweight four win at the Easter double—Mildura /Wentworth. As was the custom at the time crews were selected by a selection committee to train through the winter for the spring regattas.

The AGM in July 1961 reported a boat fund of 210 pounds with a bank balance of 16 pounds. Planning was underway for an honour board which was initially costed at about 15 pounds. Subscriptions were set at 6 pounds for seniors and 3 pounds for juniors.

Crews were selected to compete in spring regattas and for the first time in many years the club boated a senior eight coached by Geoff Code. The crew tried hard but was not competitive with the more experienced city club crews. At a lesser level the junior pair won at VRA and Upper Yarra. Twelve crews were selected for the Christmas treble with the novice pair winning at all three and the lightweight four and junior eight successful at Yarrowonga.

Later in January the lightweight pair of Bob Gladman and Rod Smith won the first of their three titles at the Victorian Championships. The lightweight squad of those years was quite competitive winning many races including the eight at Henley. Rod Smith was selected in the Victorian lightweight four.



*Rod Smith ,Bob Gladman (Str) Peter Cosgrove (Cox)
Victorian Champion Lightweight Pair 1960/61, 1961/62, 1962/63*

The Head of the Yarra in March 1962 attracted an entry of 36 crews and showed a profit of 25 pounds.

In an attempt to attract members negotiations were initiated with the then Swinburne Technical College but it was not possible to arrive at mutually

acceptable conditions. More productive was an approach from Camberwell Grammar School which was ratified by an agreement in September 1962.

Social activities continued and with the guidance and support of David Deeble a ladies committee was established .The committee demanded autonomy which included having its own bank account. Success both socially and financially was achieved at the September Ladies Day which showed a profit of 11 pounds. On a comparative scale this represented nearly double a year's membership fees so obviously well worthwhile. Later in 1962 a cabaret showed a profit of 32 pounds and a raffle raised 43 pounds.

An indication of the fashions of the decades after WW2 is the frequent requests to the committee for permission to wear the club crest on a blazer pocket. The criteria for this privilege are not laid down but the rowing history of applicants is recorded as part of the deliberations.

Following a donation of material the floor of the shed was concreted. At that time the bar refrigerator was downstairs in the northern bay.



*Ray Rutherford (Bow),John Chegwidde, Bill Sanger, Ken Fraser ,Jim Dixon
Rupe Horsburgh, Ian Stewart ,David Deeble (Str) Peter Cosgrove (Cox)*

Advertising the 1962 club ball , the crew rowed into the city and the accompanying photo appeared in morning daily “The Sun”.

Regatta successes over the 1962/63 season include a maiden four at Dimboola, lightweight and junior pairs at the VRA 2000m ,maiden four at Yarrawonga ,junior and senior pairs at Mildura. For the first time in over thirty years the club won senior fours at Colac and Mildura.



*Senior Four Winners Colac ,Scotch-Mercs,Mildura 1962/63
R.Smith,R Gladman ,I.Stewart ,B.Craven (Str) ,P.Cosgrove (Cox)
Stan Neal (Coach)*

The committee discussed extensions to the club but there was uncertainty regarding the legal status of the land south of HRC. Boat purchases were contemplated with quotes for a racing four at 450 pounds. Again the comparison is approximately 80 memberships which virtually equates to 21st century costs.

June 1963 has another AGM at which member apathy and failure to pay subscriptions on time were key issues. The ladies committee however was commended for its highly successful fund raising activities. A new committee was elected and at its first meeting comment was made on the questionable modesty of the shorts worn by some members. An almost “wowser” attitude is evident as comment is recorded on the excessive drinking at the club.

Despite these restraints there was considerable activity on the water with five competitive crews in training. The lightweight squad was again to the fore with wins in the pair at VRA and Upper Yarra and a victory for the four in the Victorian Sprint Championship. The lightweight pair went on to success at the traditional Christmas treble.

An order was put in with Geo.Towns for two training tub fours and a set of oars with particular specifications---length of 12 feet (366 cms which is shorter than 2012 oars). The oars were not acceptable and a further set was ordered from Aylings .The tub fours were subsequently named the “G.L Code” and the “L.Malkin”. These two boats saw long service with the older non-competing club veterans.

Accommodating the schoolboy rowers presented problems with both behaviour and damage to equipment .St Kevins stayed on until completion of their shed at Heyington but Camberwell Grammar School left HRC early in 1964.

Regatta success in the 63/64 season included wins at Ballarat in senior pair and four, at both Barwon and Colac with senior and lightweight pairs and the senior pair of Brian Craven and Ian Stewart won again at Henley. The pair went on to compete at the national titles in Canberra .

Later in 1964 at the AGM the membership fee was increased to seven pounds. Finances took an upward turn with an annual ball attended by 300 people showing a profit of 211 pounds. This in a year in which the average salary was just over 3000 pounds. A comparable profit in 2011 would be of the order of \$4000 !!.Fund raising at that time included a bottle drive which involved collecting empties ----this raised 30 pounds equivalent to \$600 in 2011.

There was obviously much greater inter-club activity in the 60's as a raffle was organised jointly by Banks ,Yarra Yarra and Hawthorn. This netted the club 241 pounds.

The ladies committee continued its activities even considering the possibility of a separate constitution. The committee's bank balance held separately from club funds stood at 218 pounds ----three times the average weekly salary !

Over the 64/65 summer the senior pair of Brian Craven and Ian Stewart won the Victorian championship. Coaching the crew in tandem were Geoff Code and Rupe Horsburgh. The senior squad continued their success at Henley, Barwon and Scotch-Mercantile regattas.

An extra-ordinary meeting of the committee in April 1965 looked at three main issues

- * Purpose of the club
- * Review of club rules
- * Finance—at that time the expenditure to manage the club was three times the income from subscriptions.

Despite these concerns the AGM in July 1965 deferred any rule change and did not raise the subscription rate. Club singlets were available at one pound. Social activities were well supported with the annual ball attracting 268 attendees and making a profit of one hundred and sixty five pounds. A car trial ending at the Menzies Creek property of the Craven family raised a further 45 pounds.

Political activity by the committee included a letter to local members of parliament requesting that purchase of rowing equipment be exempt from sales tax .In what can only be described as optimistic a copy of the letter was sent to the then prime minister Mr Menzies. At a local level the committee initially refused yet another request from VRA for money but later conceded and paid up.

The club had wins at senior four level at both VRA and Footscray regattas. The Christmas events had a novice four win at Rutherglen and Nagambie.

Thirty two members attended the half-yearly meeting in February 1966 to hear that HRC was overdrawn to the tune of 528 pounds. It is not recorded the procedure for securing an overdraft ---possibly a group of members acted as guarantors. The conversion to decimal currency was put in place at this time but no mention in the minutes simply a change to dollars.

There was great consternation at the committee meeting of May 1966 as Rupe Horsburgh had been charged with four different offences relating to driving the club's motor boat .Although not mentioned in official club documents

Rupe recalled in 2012 that when the matter came to court ,our late president Frank Dennis took the magistrate for a drink at his nearby hostelry and there the matter ended.

A consistent feature of meetings during 1950's and 1960's was the reporting of the boat supervisor separate from the captain. Whereas in the 1990's and thereafter the captain has been responsible for boat maintenance, this was the task of the supervisor. Certainly the boats in earlier days were mainly timber and therefore requiring constant attention but this division of responsibility must have made life much easier for the captain.

At the AGM in July 1966 the dire financial situation of the club was stressed. The perennial issue of non payment of subscriptions was again to the forefront and the poor support for fund raising functions was lamented. In a breakdown of actual figures from 82 members , 26 regularly attended –20 occasionally and the remaining 36 not at all. There was discussion as to the merits of boating a competitive four as against an eight which put more people on the water. Club ties were available either in silk or terylene.

Later in 1966 yet another attempt was made to assist Camberwell G.S. with ten students attending regularly.

The half yearly meeting in February 1967 hailed an improved financial situation with a then liability of \$727. An interesting report was submitted by Bill Craven who had travelled overseas as manager for Australian crews. He made mention of the need for Australian rowing generally and HRC in particular to learn from the trends in Europe at that time. It was noted that there were real differences in actual rowing style and training methods.

A tentative order had been placed for a new racing eight at a cost of \$2300 but this had to be deferred because of the shortage of funds. The president Frank Dennis in addressing the financial problems proposed a Benefactors Committee which would comprise both former members and hopefully local business interests. To provide some short term security a special meeting determined to seek an overdraft of \$2000 to be repaid over three years .On a comparative basis the average annual wage in Australia was approximately \$4000 as against \$65,000 in 2010 which puts the undertaking in a realistic

perspective .By March 1968 the club was “in the red” to the tune of \$3800.The prevailing interest rate at the then E,S and A Bank was 7%.

Fortunately in the midst of all this financial gloom HRC had some significant victories particularly with a lightweight eight which won at Barwon, Colac and Wentworth.

Forty members attended the 1968 AGM at which planning for the Annual ball was initiated at a cost of \$11.00 a double. The honour board was installed thanks to a generous donation by past president Alan Bamford.

By early 1969 the overdraft had been reduced to \$1300 but it was recognised that subscriptions were not providing a sufficient income. Accordingly at the AGM an increase was voted in bringing the annual fee to \$20 from \$15. This represents an increase of 33% which must have been quite an impost for members. Fortunately the annual ball in August that year produced a profit of \$580.

The rowing highlight of 1969 was the Junior Pair Championship of Victoria won by Tony Gibson and Michael Phillipson with Brian McLoghlin as cox. The Head of the Yarra was not staged as construction of the new freeway closed the river. There was a total membership of 80 of whom 31 competed in regattas. HRC was in the vanguard as regards the feminist movement as the club voted against the VRA plan to exclude women rowers from VRA regattas. Topically the club sponsored Red Cross parcels to members serving in Vietnam.

Early in 1970 an arrangement was put in place to have boys from Richmond High School learn to row at HRC. St Kevins College moved to their new shed and HRC provided limited accommodation to Latrobe University RC. A fire at Richmond RC destroyed the club eight “City Of Hawthorn” .Fortunately the club’s insurance policy paid out \$500---a later payout for the “City of Boroondara” in 2010 provided the club with a windfall of \$7000.

The half-yearly meeting in February 1970 noted that the club was still paying off a loan by Hawthorn Council and the E ,S and A overdraft .Concern was again expressed at the outstanding subscriptions owed by members. A decision was made to consolidate club accounts thereby eliminating the overdraft from the current account. Later in the year at the AGM particular mention was made of

unaccustomed success in senior rowing with the pair of Mike Phillipson and Tony Gibson winning at Mildura and Wentworth.

A feature of the AGM was the attendance by the Mayor of Hawthorn. A very well attended annual ball in September 1970 showed a profit of \$240.

The Head of the Yarra was staged in 1971 following completion of the freeway works. The event attracted forty crews . Unfortunately the club suffered a loss in staging the race attributed to the low entry fee of sixty cents per competitor. On the following day the new racing pair was named “Melbourne Owen” in honour of the then 90 year old whose support for the club went back over many decades. The HRC maiden eight won a great treble at Footscray ,University and Albert Park Regattas .

August 1971 saw an attendance of 43 at the AGM. The ladies committee was still active and commended for both their fund raising and the provision of sandwiches for Sunday morning rowers. Although as earlier, recorded HRC had supported women’s rowing at VRA level, the full impact of the feminist movement had obviously not yet reached the club.

Currently there is no record of the 1971/72 season available but the annual report of 1972/73 commenting on a poor season , mentions the 26 victories in that season.

A quaint entry in minutes of the March meeting of the committee refers to an offer of a 9 gallon barrel of beer by an unnamed hotelier in exchange for an old boat .

As mentioned previously the 1972/73 season was a disappointment and the annual report laments the loss of members from the previous season who transferred because of lack of coaching at a more senior level.

On a more positive note the club actually officially secured a liquor licence in March 1973. Possibly in the post licence euphoria a decision was made to bid for an eight used by the Victorian crew. After some haggling the deal was finalised and the eight was officially named the “Feldt” in honour of the long serving secretary Bill Feldt. A further purchase was an “S and B “ racing pair at a cost of \$1350----the boat was named the “W.A.Sanger” .Bill Sanger had been

a long time member and committee man who had raised significant funds by the simple mode of sausage sizzles.

Club finances were causing quite some concern with a recorded loss of \$96 reported at the July 1974 AGM. Sad to recount there was \$500 owing in subscriptions. A possible alternative to the traditional club with annual subscriptions was considered in which HRC would become a company with shareholders. This was investigated over several months but found to be not a really practical proposition. Latrobe University had been renting boat storage and some negotiations were carried out with a view to some form of collaboration but this also was not feasible. By the time of the half yearly meeting in February 1975 the overdraft had blown out to \$3000. The AGM of that year authorised the committee to seek a bank loan of \$5000 at 9% to extend over ten years. Annual subscription was set at \$27.50.

Notable among new members at this time was Bob Fraser who became a legend of the club especially remembered for his "ways and means" committee which was able to secure many deals advantageous to the club.

Harry La Roche died at the age of 81 in January 1975. He had been a life member at both Hawthorn and Essendon. Harry's involvement at HRC went back as far as the 1920's. He is pictured in the victorious junior eight at the 1921 Henley Regatta. Later in the 1930's Harry as a builder was the driving force in the construction of the 1937 clubhouse.

Regatta success was limited but there were wins in junior fours at two regattas. Tony Feldt had a very good season as a sculler winning among other events the Herald Shield. In the following season Tony went on to win the Victorian Lightweight Sculling Championship.

Throughout the annual reports as far back as the 1920's newly married members are congratulated on entering the "Benedicts". There is no explanation as to the origin of this term and enquiries among older members have not provided any answer.

Prominent in coaching at HRC during the 1970's was Keith Bilney who had coached the Australian Coxless Four at the Tokyo Olympics in 1964. Keith

introduced contemporary training techniques with emphasis on rigging and gearing appropriate to particular crews.

Possibly as a consequence of the experience with an expert coach such as Keith Bilney , the captain Tony Gibson outlined his “wish list” which included the appointment of a full time coach , a PT supervisor and a streamlined and efficient line of communication to club administration. A special meeting of the committee was convened to consider these issues.

The AGM held on 16th July 1976 attracted an attendance of 31 members with representation from Hawthorn Council and other rowing clubs. Planning was set up for the centenary year of the club to be celebrated in 1977.

Tentative moves to introduce female membership were made at the half yearly meeting in February 1977. The motion to establish an “associate” membership was withdrawn after discussion. Further discussion at the March committee meeting referred to associate non rowing membership. A motion was drafted to allow female membership and put to the AGM in July 1977 but failed by one vote to achieve the necessary 2/3 majority required to change the constitution. The first mention of female members is recorded in the annual report of 1981/82 in which President Frank Dennis reflects on the question of the founders of the club anticipating that it would be necessary to address the club attendees as “Ladies and Gentleman.” Interesting to note that in their first season the ladies had wins at several regattas.

Life membership was conferred at the 1977 AGM on Jack Coghlan , Ken Rooney ,Bill Feldt ,Lloyd Cosgrove and Pat O’Connor . All had been great contributors particularly in the administration of the club.

Centenary celebrations during 1977 began with a regatta over the Henley course on January 29th which attracted an entry of 350 oarsmen. The Head of the Yarra was staged on February 26th . A formal dinner was held in August with representation from Hawthorn Council ,VRA and many other rowing clubs. Guest speaker was Hon Justice Frederico who gave an interesting account of the trip to the world championships in Amsterdam .During the year HRC memorabilia was displayed in the foyer of the Hawthorn library.

When finally the Centenary Ball was staged ,it was a great success as regards numbers but financially a disaster. A strike affecting electricity supply forced the organisers to hire a generator ---the cost of hiring significantly affected the expected profit.

Competitive rowing was reasonably successful with wins in senior events and an open eight at the Wentworth Easter Regatta.



Open Eight Wentworth Easter 1978

*W.Jeppeson, T.Russell, J,Stewart ,M.O'Brien ,R.McPhail ,N.Hartcher
B.Nihill,G,Sullings ,(Cox)J.Platt*

The committee decided in April 1978 to explore the possibility of acquiring the land to the south of HRC .Local opinion was sought as a preliminary to approaching Hawthorn Council.

Financially the club was facing a very uncertain future. It was anticipated by the treasurer that the cost of maintaining the club and ensuring that equipment was adequate would reach approximately \$8000 per annum. To cover this expenditure it would be necessary to raise subscriptions to \$35 assuming that other income from bar ,social functions and special efforts brought in \$4500. Despite the dire warnings the club purchased a racing pair for \$2370 ---the boat was named the “Tony Gibson “ to honour the hard working captain of the previous five years.

Moving ever closer to broadening the membership ,at the half yearly meeting of 1979 the constitution was altered to read persons instead of gentleman.

The Head of the Yarra was staged in early 1979 but incurred a loss of \$227 which contrasts with the income derived for the club in the 21st century.

Continuing what seems to be a constant theme over the club's history the committee determined to oppose a proposed VRA levy of \$2 on all members to fund a state coach.

An interesting comparison is between entry fees for regattas in 1980 such as the \$1.70 for Scotch-Mercantile and the current fees in 2012. The average wage has increased by a factor of five and the entry fees have run virtually parallel to this.

There have been many reports at both VRA and Rowing Australia level lamenting that a very small percentage of school rowers continue in the sport. Many theories have been advanced to explain this but it is almost certainly multi-factorial. Optimistically the HRC committee in 1980 wrote to all senior rowers at Xavier ,Scotch ,St Kevins and Wesley offering a year's free membership as an attraction – response was as ever disappointing.

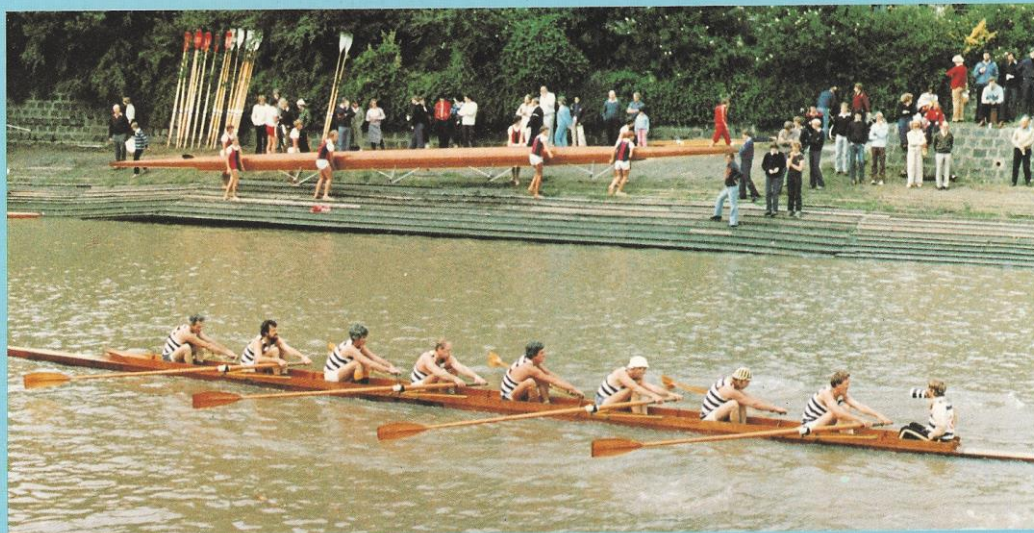
The club mourned the passing of Melbourne Owen who had been associated with HRC since the 1920's as president and auditor. His contribution had been recognised by life membership and the naming of a racing pair.

Finally the two first female members were admitted in early 1981 namely Kim Maasdijk and Debbie Code----both daughters of long standing members. Later that year the first female HRC crew raced at the Essendon Regatta. The annual report of 1981/82 proudly reports the first victory for HRC women by a novice pair –Kristen Zito and Catherine Brown coxed by Helen Brown. Catherine was awarded the Frank Hiscock trophy for most improved rower in that season.

For the first time the club secured sponsorship for the Head of the Yarra from a software company Verbatim introduced by captain Bob Maasdijk The event was launched at a cocktail party in the Hawthorn Mayoral chambers with representatives from Verbatim ,Hawthorn council and VRA. Another first was the introduction of female competitors with two crews actually starting. Overall entry was 52 crews which was the highest entry to that time.

HEAD OF THE YARRA 1982

PRESENTED BY HAWTHORN ROWING CLUB



Sponsored by Verbatim Australia Pty. Ltd.

Program for 1982 Head of Yarra

Subscriptions were set at \$60 the 1982 AGM and yet again a motion to change the club colours to match Hawthorn football club was defeated. A significant purchase was what was the first “plastic “ boat –a Sykes racing four .The boat was named “Joseph” in memory of a young rower tragically killed in a motor accident.

1983 saw the club enter three eights in the Head of the Yarra- Intermediate, Veteran and Ladies crews. A very busy season 1982/83 had the club entered at twenty regattas with 127 crews scoring ten wins .Interesting to note that the ten wins comprised five in women’s events and five in male.

Financial issues dominated the AGM of 1983 with a loss of \$5800 reported . A loan was obtained from Hawthorn City Council and an overdraft of \$3000 at ANZ bank guaranteed by members.

Schoolgirl rowing became prominent with initially students from Sacre Coeur College joining the club and subsequently Genazzano College girls became involved. The girls rowed for their school at selected events but primarily were competing as club members. Their efforts were rewarded with a win in Female Junior Premiership in the 1983/84 season.

Social activities were a significant source of income during the 1980’s. The 1984/85 annual report mentions a dinner dance ,annual dinner ,Melbourne Cup function, woolshed dance ,overnight trip to Launceston and a further “Blue and White” dinner dance at HRC.

Victories in the 84/85 season came largely from the schoolgirl members from Sacre Coeur and Canterbury H.S. Veteran rowing was becoming more popular and HRC members Neil Cash ,Ken Limbrick ,Bob Maasdijk with Geoff Code as coach travelled to Toronto ,Canada for a world masters event.

Without sponsorship the Head of the Yarra recorded a loss to the club of \$650. Entries were down as a result of a clash with selection trials.

The following year saw sponsorship for the event provided by Carlton and United Breweries which included the donation of the “Fosters Cup” as a perpetual trophy for the fastest crew in the race. Thanks to David Deeble race results were computerised.

The annual meeting in July 1986 accepted the recommendation of the committee to become an incorporated association.

Schoolgirl participation continued to bring success in the 86/87 season with students from Genazzano and Canterbury H.S. competing in Hawthorn colours. The club was approached by a Scotch College coach and a crew from the school won nine races at Nagambie ,Mildura and Wentworth regattas rowing as Hawthorn. Veterans continued to record wins usually in composite crews.

With support from members and parents of schoolgirl members the club was able to purchase three second hand racing fours from Carey College as well as a new Regulation four from Sykes boat builders.

As a result of the success of the schoolgirls rowing in women's events , HRC was second to South Melbourne in the VRA junior premiership.

HRC veterans competed regularly often in composite crews. For the first time in the veteran competition a crew largely from HRC defeated Banks at the annual Wentworth veteran regatta.

The older non-competitive veterans continued to row regularly on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Unfortunately on one of their outings a collision with the rock wall upstream of HRC sank the very ancient eight "Stan Neal". All the crew survived the sinking and it was possible to salvage the bow of the boat to mount in the club house. By a fortunate coincidence the club had purchased an eight from Carey G.S. and had acquired a boat from Trinity College.

Bob Stewart Men's Wear began a long association as a sponsor for the Head of the Yarra. Seventy five crews started in the event.

During 1988 the then local council at Hawthorn buried a time capsule in St James Park to be opened in 2088. A contribution on behalf of HRC was organised by Geoff Code which included such memorabilia as a club uniform, Head of Yarra program and a summary of the club's history.

Regatta success was limited in the 88/89 season. Lloyd Cosgrove continued his great work with schoolgirls and his crew from Sienna College did very well in

Under 16 events ---one of their number Justine Joyce later represented Australia at world championship level.

By far the most successful competitor during the season was Ken Limbrick in veteran events held near and far---he actually won ten events over the season.

Hawthorn had great success in the 1989/90 season with sixteen wins in women's events largely through the crews from various schools --Sienna College , Canterbury H.S. and Genazzano College .Their efforts saw the club at third position in the Ladies Junior Premiership. By the end of the season the novice four girls from Sienna College had progressed and won an intermediate event at the Scotch/Mercantile regatta .None of this would have been possible without the great input of the "little leprechaun" Lloyd Cosgrove. It is worth noting that a crew of schoolgirls from HRC recorded the fastest time in the schoolgirl section of the Head of the Yarra but because it was a club crew combining girls from two non-rowing schools ,officialdom declared them as not eligible for the trophy. Sixty five crews entered the Head of the Yarra which again returned a profit due to the continuing sponsorship of Bob Stewart Menswear. A minor success was the Female Winter Series Premiership in 1991.The men repeated the win in the 1991 and 1993 Winter Series.

The Head of the Yarra attracted 92 entries and a profit of \$3500 was a welcome boost to club funds.

HRC veterans Ken Limbrick , Neil Cash ,Eric Handley and Denis Bourke returned from the Australian Masters Championships in Adelaide with an assortment of medals.

A great boost to male rowing came in the 1991/92 season with the involvement of students from Swinburne University. The men's eight competed for HRC and under the coaching of Chris de Guingand were quite competitive at the Inter-varsity Regatta in Perth.

For the first time entries in the Head of the Yarra in February 1993 exceeded 100.Again Bob Stewart Menswear provided sponsorship with further support coming from Carlton and United Breweries. A profit from the event of \$5800 was most gratifying.

Fund raising events over the 1992/93 season realised \$2150 which represents approximately 6% of the club's income.

The annual report of 1993/94 records a doubling in membership over the previous five years. With the increased demands on resources it was decided to require Genazzano to vacate HRC by June 1996.

The Swinburne connection proved very successful with the club and the university combining to purchase a very competitive eight subsequently named the "Greg van Prooyen". At the intervarsity event the women's crew from Swinburne won a bronze medal. The HRC women's senior four won the Victorian state championship.

At the World Masters the HRC women's "C" four had a great win.



Fay Philp (str) ,Joan Harris , Jill Stansfield ,Gabby Hare-Brown (Bow)

Sadly Lloyd Cosgrove passed away. He had been very active over many years in coaching particularly at schoolgirl level. Many senior rowers were introduced to the sport by Lloyd whose rowing career started as a cox in Shepparton in the 1930's. The club instituted a Cosgrove Memorial Trophy for schoolgirl crews in the Head of the Yarra.

Club functions were a highlight with a new event organised by Chris de Guingand –the Riverview Sprint which was well supported by other clubs. Other events included a Calcutta sweep on Cup Eve , trivia nights, Falls Creek weekend, garage sale and an annual dinner.

When the time came for Genazzano to vacate HRC in 1996 , the school claimed that there was no other accommodation available anywhere along the river. The committee took the decision to allow the school to remain at the club and some negotiation took place regarding a possible combined renovation or extension of HRC. Agreement could not be reached at this time.

A highlight of the 1995/96 season was a victory at the Victorian Championships by the women’s intermediate eight.

Thanks to a bequest from the late Bobby Fraser the upper floor at the club was vastly improved by the installation of large windows opening the club to the river.

Hawthorn had its most successful National Championships for many years in the 1999/2000 season. The club won silver medals in Female Senior “B” pair and four and in Under 23 Lightweight pair. Again the Head of the Yarra was a major source of income with a surplus of nearly \$12,000 achieved for the year. Progress had been made in replacing the staging –HRC was able to secure a \$50,000 grant from Department of Youth Sport and recreation .With some contribution from Xavier and Genazzano Colleges , HRC contributed \$20,000 which enabled the staging project to be completed.

Planning for extensions was again activated with an approach to the council.

A Five Year Plan was drawn up in 2002 setting out a template for future development which included renovation and extension of the club house, fleet upgrade and an increased membership. At the time of drafting the plan Genazzano College was still a tenant at HRC. The text of the plan however expresses the hope that the school would find alternative accommodation.

The competitive rowers had quite some success in the 2002/2003 season with wins at open and intermediate events. HRC masters ventured to the Riverside RC regatta in Adelaide and returned with a variety of medals. At the World Masters held at Ballarat the women’s “D “ category four won silver.

In what was the first year of the Five Year Plan the club showed an operating profit of \$35,000 --this represented a 250% increase on the previous year. The Head of the Yarra yielded a profit of nearly \$20,000 .An outstanding contribution was the \$7000 raised by social activities during the year.

As a necessary factor in securing Boroondara City Council approval for club extensions , a formal lease was drawn up. Essentially the club secured a ten year lease to June 30th 2013 with two subsequent five year options. The council granted the lease on the condition that HRC allowed a sub-lease to Genazzano until June 30th 2006. With the security of the lease ,the club presented plans and specifications to the council hoping to commence work by June 2005.

Again the Head of the Yarra proved the main source of income. The entry of 132 crews was a record for the event which was growing in popularity with local and interstate crews.

The operating surplus after depreciation was nearly \$40,000. Again the committee resolved to continue to accumulate funds with a view to funding club renovations as its major priority.

Competitive rowing was a feature of the 2004/2005 season with 53 members competing in the various regattas .On average the club scored a win more than once in every four races. The club travelled to country regattas at Bendigo ,Dimboola ,Rutherglen, Geelong and Wentworth . Again the Head of the Yarra which attracted 143 entries ,was the major source of income with the club achieving a surplus of \$40K + over the financial year. Social events raised \$2000.

Boroondara City Council decided to undertake a review of rowing and river usage in 2005 .This required major stakeholders HRC and Xavier to become involved in regular meetings which included Genazzano College even though the school's only presence was as a tenant at HRC. Discussion centred on the possibility of a major development involving the schools ,HRC and the council. This caused HRC to put on hold the planned re-development and the club was virtually forced to allow Genazzano a further year of tenancy. The proviso was that a viable and fully funded proposal be in place by December 31st 2006 ---if this was not achieved HRC would continue its independent renovation and require Genazzano to vacate the club by 30th June 2007.The review group put

forward a number of options including the replacement of the existing Xavier and HRC sheds by a large facility housing the schools and HRC as well as providing some community opportunities for canoes etc. Significantly there was no direct funding to come from the Boroondara Council

Financially the club again did very well with the Head of the Yarra entry reaching 177 .

The competing rowers had many victories particularly at the country regattas. Notable victories were Maryanne Moore and the Men's "D" Four of Chris Scarff , Josh Cannane ,Matt Brown and Marcus Presser at the Victorian titles.

An intrepid group of masters ventured to Glasgow for the World Championships in September 2005 ---our only medallist was Derek Fern rowing in a composite crew with his former colleagues from W.A.

As the review process did not achieve the outcome required by December 2006 , HRC determined that it would proceed independently and require Genazzano to vacate the club as agreed by June 30th 2007 .

The 2006/2007 season saw the club embark on an ambitious Junior Program which had not been possible while Genazzano occupied valuable storage space. This was initiated with ex-Olympian Simon Spriggs as co-ordinator. The emphasis was on approaching schools not previously involved in rowing such as local high schools .

A successful competitive season saw over sixty club members competing in twenty regattas. Victories were recorded at both the state championships and the Victorian Masters Titles.

A further increase in entries saw the Head of the Yarra again provide much needed capital for the club coffers. The competing crews included 6 from overseas and 43 interstate entries.

Genazzano College finally vacated the club on June 30th 2007. Boroondara Council allowed the school to erect a "cage" in the Burwood Park Reserve in an area previously available for parking . Following their exit from Hawthorn the school applied to the council for a permit to erect a caged enclosure in Burwood Park . A group of local residents with support from HRC lodged an

objection to the planned cage which was rejected by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Finally the council adopted the recommendations of the rowing review working group. This involved a shared facility housing HRC ,Xavier and Genazzano. Monthly meetings ensued with the major stakeholders attending. By May 2008 it became apparent that it was not possible to arrive at a solution satisfactory to all parties. HRC had significant reservations concerning the proposal particularly regarding the ongoing management of the proposed facility and the real concern about loss of autonomy for the club. Negotiations continued but with no resolution and in May 2009 at a special meeting the club resolved to reject council plans and to proceed with independent development and renovation of the clubhouse.

Hawthorn Rowing Club / Genazzano College

Genazzano commenced rowing at HRC in 1983/84 season ---at that time the girls were all club members using HRC equipment and coached by HRC members.

With HRC support the students competed in school events in their school colours as well as representing the club at regattas.

As their numbers increased and with parent support they began to purchase boats which were racked at HRC .In the early days there was a real spirit of co-operation between the school and the rowing club with many of the school parents actually contributing to a boat fund which enabled the club to buy three ex-Carey Grammar racing boats.

The club participation in rowing at regattas and membership generally slipped significantly during the eighties so that at one stage there were less than 80 active members. The student participation increased so that they outgrew HRC membership. Their growth was such that the Genazzano fleet could not be accommodated in the shed so the area between HRC and Xavier was used for some of the school boats. Some Genazzano parents arranged to cover it with shade cloth and build security gates. Quite obviously the school participation which was supposed to be kept below 80 students, increased to the point where it was too large for the accommodation which the club could provide.

Considerable discussion was commenced on the rebuilding of the club. Many options were considered including selling the boatshed to Genazzano and buying new premises. All of these options were impractical. It was seen that the only option for rebuilding at that time was in cooperation with Genazzano. Also at this time the condition of the staging was such that a total renovation was required. A grant was applied for and obtained after two years of effort, but it had to be arranged through the Boroondara council. The cost was over \$120,000 and the grant was for \$50,000 thus the council required contributions of over \$23,000 each from the clubs and schools, both Genazzano and the Hawthorn RC provided \$23,000 each however Xavier reneged and would only provide \$10,000 the balance being supplied by the council.

Generating funds for the club rebuild was not easy. The Head of the Yarra whilst a great success story was not generating much profit at the time and entries only passed 100 during the mid 90's. In fact we also passed \$10,000 profit about this time. The club revenue at this time was actually about 30% membership, 30% Head of the Yarra and 30% Genazzano contribution.

At a rowing club AGM in the early 1990's a motion was proposed to give Genazzano two years notice to vacate HRC. The school was asked to find a new home by the then committee, after a period of about a year they advised that they had been unable to find a place to which to move. They asked to be allowed to stay as they

had no other prospect of accommodation .The committee saw that if they could get some real commitment from the school to fund a rebuild it might be one way to get a new shed. Thus under the presidency of Chris de Guingand there was exploration of a possible combined development. Bill Goodwin, as club architect, came up with designs and Genezzano contributed to the cost of the design work. Although there was much consultation between the club and Genazzano, it was not possible to arrive at any realistic agreement satisfactory to both parties so the idea was dropped. This was partly because the school would not make an upfront commitment and the club was still desperately short of funds. The school continued its rowing program as a tenant at HRC paying a negotiated rental which was critical to the club financial survival.

At a rowing club AGM in the early 1990's a motion was proposed to give Genazzano two years notice to vacate HRC. The school was asked to find a new home by the then committee, after a period of about a year they advised that they had been unable to find a place to which to move. They asked to be allowed to stay as they had no other prospect of accommodation .The committee saw that if they could get some real commitment from the school to fund a rebuild it might be one way to get a new shed. Thus under the presidency of Chris de Guingand there was exploration of a possible combined development. Bill Goodwin, as club architect, came up with designs and Genezzano contributed to the cost of the design work. Although there was much consultation between the club and Genazzano, it was not possible to arrive at any realistic agreement satisfactory to both parties so the idea was dropped. This was partly because the school would not make an upfront commitment and the club was still desperately short of funds. The school continued its rowing program as a tenant at HRC paying a negotiated rental which was critical to the club financial survival.

Discussion about some combined development came up again during David Deeble's term as president but the club view at the time was to remain independent of any school and a Five Year Plan was developed aiming to have an extended clubhouse for HRC alone. In the planning process the Boroondara Council was approached to formalise a lease.

The relations with the council were part of the ongoing problems of planning for the club future. As council officers changed so did council ideas on the place of rowing on the riverbanks under council control. There were two external reports generated on how rowing should be operated on the river for the council and it is fair to say that the council was influenced by the need to accommodate school rowing in the Boroondara.

In 2003 HRC was granted a ten year lease by Boroondara City Council with options of "five and five" ----a condition of the lease was to establish a sub-tenancy for the school over three years to expire on 30th June 2006 .The council at the time

indicated that they would do their utmost to assist GEN in finding a home during the three years.

In 2004 the then president of HRC ,Denis Bourke was approached informally by the principal of GEN and had a number of one on one meetings. It was made clear that the school would provide funds to rebuild HRC in a ratio of four times the club's contribution .Although seen as an attractive proposition in some ways, the club was very concerned that such an arrangement would jeopardise autonomy. Thus the position was re-stated that the school would vacate HRC on June 30th 2006.

In late 2005 the council approached HRC and Xavier as they wanted a rowing review in their area. This decision by the council was undoubtedly influenced by the Genazzano lobby which had direct contact with the council both through council staff and the mayor at the time whose children attended the school. From Hawthorn's viewpoint although there was no overt influence exerted in decision making, there was an undoubted conflict of interest.

A working party was formed and met regularly with representatives from BCC, Xavier ,GEN and various other interested parties.

During the early discussions HRC was asked to extend the sub-lease .It was agreed to allow an extension until June 30th 2007 with the expectation that a submission from the working party would go to council by 31st Dec 2006 .In so doing HRC deferred the commencement of its own development which was to commence in Jul 2006.

At the finalisation of the rowing review a proposition was put forward from BCC council which involved the demolition of the Hawthorn and Xavier sheds to be replaced by a council controlled building across the site which would accommodate the existing clubs and Genazzano.

- Boroondara CC would not be putting up any money
- Funds would come from grants from Federal or State Governments
- The schools would need to provide funds
- HRC was expected to contribute.
- Cost estimated at \$4 .5 million
- Time lines 5-10 years.

The HRC position as determined at a special general meeting was to maintain independence and to proceed with the previously planned development. As a result the council decided that any major development was not feasible and in effect postponed any further consideration until the expiry of the HRC lease in 2023.

Genazzano was required to vacate HRC by 30th June 2007 .The school was able to secure permission from the council to erect a "cage" in the Burwood Park Reserve utilising an area previously used for parking cars.

HRC and a number of local residents objected and the case went before the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The decision was to allow the boat storage structure.

Hawthorn RC learned some hard lessons over the twenty four years of occupancy by Genazzano .The obvious key point was that a club within a club developed and HRC had no real control over its own destiny whilst accommodating a large number of school students. Negotiation with the council over the years was very much influenced by the significant lobby group of parents and friends of the school .The school was never really pro-active in its efforts to find permanent accommodation rather seeming to simply rely almost on an adverse possession principle.

At the time of Genazzano's departure HRC received adverse publicity both in the press and in rowing administration circles –the club was painted as the villain whereas in reality it was only the support of HRC which allowed the school to develop a rowing program.

It is worth reflection that in 2011 after twenty years of reviewing ways to redevelop Hawthorn RC was able to self fund major renovations. This in main was thanks to the success of the Head of the Yarra which had increasingly contributed significant funds to the club exchequer and thus enabling the accumulation of significant capital over a number of years. Significant thanks are due to a succession of committees and presidents who managed the club's affairs so that these funds could be accumulated.

Also since that time the club had set up a junior rowing program involving non rowing schools and enabling the recruitment of new club members. Nevertheless the most significant numbers of rowers in the club are still masters and recreational rowers. This is more a rowing wide problem in that it is difficult to build a competitive group of elite rowers to represent the club. Those with any real talent end up being recruited by national and state Institutes of Sport.