

## Waverley Oval and Pavilion

The history of the Pavilion in Waverley Oval, Waverley Park is interwoven with the history of the Waverley Cricket Club and the Oval itself.



*Waverley Pavilion, unknown date*

### Waverley Park 1880-1929

Waverley Park came under the jurisdiction of Waverley Council on 18 June, 1880, when it was used for flower shows and cattle grazing, but primarily for sport, particularly cricket. In 1886 the Secretary of the Waverley Cricket Club (later the Waverley Cricket Association, then the Waverley Electorate Cricket Club) requested that the Council to approve that part of the park where cricket was played be used solely for that purpose. Four years later, in 1890 this was finally granted and Waverley Oval came into being. The was the part of the park which had formerly been occupied by Chinese market gardens.

At the 1892-1893 Annual General Meeting of the Waverley Cricket Association the Hon. Secretary stated that because it had laid and maintained the centre wicket there, and had built a small Pavilion for the players, (spending about 90 pounds to do so) the Association could now be seen to have "taken over" Waverley Oval from Waverley Council.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* of 12 November 1894 reported: "The Waverley Club have brought the ground into first class condition. They have recently erected a pavilion and other conveniences and excellent turf match and practice wickets have been laid."

By 8 July 1896 plans were announced to increase the size of Waverley Oval. Waverley Council agreed to co-operate with the Waverley Electorate Cricket Club (WECC) "to considerably enlarge the oval, and otherwise improve its surroundings." That year considerable work was done, including new steps built near the existing wooden Pavilion on the western side..."

The wooden Pavilion, built by the Club sometime in the early 1890s (exact date unknown, but by 1893), was now too small for the purposes of district grade cricket. Although it has been lovingly maintained by club members and refurbished as recently as 1907 the Committee of the Club decided to press for a new Pavilion.

This was discussed at the WECC Annual General Meeting 1907-1908. Members were told this was a necessity "owing to the limited capacity of the present pavilion it was found impossible to provide the necessary dressing accommodation for the large number of players now using the various grounds under the control of the Club."

Waverley Council agreed to build a new wooden Pavilion and also to provide for extra seating for spectators. The Council were ensured of "a satisfactory return...on their outlay." The Waverley District Cricket Club (WDCC) guaranteed to pay as a rental, 5% per annum on the cost of construction, which was about 500 pounds. By 1909 the WDCC had entered into its first 5-year lease with Waverley Council and the Minister of Lands for the use of the new Pavilion and the enclosed section of Waverley Oval, a total of about 3.5 acres. This lease was continuously renewed by Council to the Trustees of the WDCC, thereby providing them with security of tenure.

The new Pavilion, large enough to accommodate both players and about 150 spectators, was formally opened on 5 December, 1908, during the progress of the Waverley -v- Balmain cricket match. This structure served the WDCC until 1939.

### **Waverley Park 1929-1939**

Reconstruction of Waverley Oval was carried out over the years and in 1929 there was a laying down of wickets and enlarging of the oval and the Pavilion. In 1934 it was proposed to make substantial improvement to the oval including a new Pavilion, but it was some time before this was carried out. The financial constraints of the Great Depression made the estimated cost of the new Pavilion, at 11,4000 pounds far too expensive.

In 1939 a real move for a new Pavilion was made when a tender of 5,992 pounds (5,408 than the original quote) was submitted by A. P. Pringle for the "erection of a new Pavilion at the cricket oval on Waverley Park", this was accepted by the Council. G. S. Carson was Waverley Council's architect for the project. The new Pavilion was designed to cover an area of 117 feet long by about 65 feet wide, constructed of reinforced concrete with selected face brickwork on all exposed wall surfaces. The roof was metal.

The ground floor provided for three large dressing rooms, a first aid room, an office, refreshment room and recreation room about 42 feet by 20 feet. Provision was made for a common room 20 feet by 14 feet with facilities for afternoon teas. The main covered seating deck for 700 persons was constructed over the dressing accommodation. An open seating deck was provided in front of the main stand to seat about 300 people.

The foundation stone of the Pavilion was laid by the Hon. Alexander Mair, Premier of NSW on October 7, 1939. Alderman H. Samuel was then the Mayor and Alderman Thomas Hogan the Deputy Mayor. A plaque commemorating the naming of the Pavilion was attached to the building and inscribed: "This plaque commemorates the naming of this pavilion in honour of T.H. Howard, Esq., in appreciation of his outstanding service to cricket and the Waverley District. 13 October, 1951." This Pavilion was on the same side of the Oval as the original Pavilion, but about 50 yards further south.



*Waverley Oval, Waverley Park, 1950s*

The Local Studies collection, Waverley Library, contains many memoirs and reminiscences of local people. One of these memoirs, by local resident Frank Walsh, contains a reference to the social history of the Pavilion. He remembers:

"[The] old wooden Pavilion, built for sporting bodies use, but was also used during the Second World War to conduct medical examinations on men called up for military duty. A new brick Pavilion was built alongside the old wooden one towards the end of WW11 and the old building became the home of the Waverley Ex-Wardens Club.

During the blackout periods, which were quite common in those times, the members used to play cards and the two 'fruit machines' [the earlier name for poker machines] in light provided by kerosene lamps.

Another memory is that of the [military] canon that was mounted on a cement pad on the grass area between Bondi Road and the fence around the oval. There was one loose section which could be swung backward and forward hitting part of the main frame and made an awful racket much to the annoyance of the people that lived in the houses opposite."

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