



The **Burnley Ground** of 1959, as it is in 2012. Looking from sou-sou East to nor-nor West

There is perhaps one advantage of having next to no material for some seasons, and it is that the years can be dealt with fairly quickly. (Though we have baulked at **Garth Manton's** suggestion that "if you haven't got anything much, then just make something up.")

Unfortunately the correspondence books do not seem to have survived - there are only the minutes of a few Committee Meetings, some miscellaneous notes, and that is about it.

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"After a disappointing start to the season (*they lost the first four*), the club managed to avoid relegation by the narrowest of margins. This was the worst year in the history of the club, and the reason for this cannot be borne by the committee or supporters, but by the players themselves. The season started on a bad note with an almost complete lack of recruits and some injuries, but the saying that a team is as good as its reserves is very true, and this was the reason for our downfall."

"We were let down by the players and nobody else, even if the Committee is not perfect."

The Club won five matches, and lost 13, finishing eighth, a game less percentage ahead of the ninth side.

**B Section:** Finished 8th

President: **Evan Macgregor**

Secretary: **Michael Pointer** (Assistant Secretary: **Bill Black**)

Treasurer: **Bruce Rowe**

Vice-Presidents: **Noel Rundle, Bill Morrison**

Committee: **Tony Mollard, Bill Irvine, Baz Seymour, Ian Baillieu, Neville Ashkanasy, Deryk Stephens, Nugget Stephens, John Stephen, Bill Mollard (?)**

Captain Firsts: **David Lee** Coach Firsts: **David Lee**

Delegate to VAFA: **J. Stephen, N. Ashkanazy**

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## **The Ground**

The situation in relation to a **new ground** had still not been resolved early in 1959, with the following slightly contradictory notes appearing in the minutes of the Annual Meeting and two Committee Meetings:

**The minutes of a Committee Meeting held early in February** contained the following items:

“Ground: Vernon Ransford has been arranged.” (*Presumably the Ransford Oval in Carlton/West Brunswick.*)

“**Evan Macgregor** to see if Fullarton (*Secretary of the VAFA*) has any other ground available.”

“**Bill Mollard** to check with St. Kevin’s to see if old ground still available for training.”

At the **Annual General Meeting held on 24 February**:

“It was moved that the President and Coach be appointed as a sub-committee to investigate, choose, negotiate and sign a contract for a ground for 1959.”

**The minutes of a Committee Meeting held in March** recorded the following:

“Ground: The President, Coach and K.F. (Bill) Mollard had looked at an oval near Bullen’s Circus (*in Burnley/ Richmond*). It was satisfactory as there are lights, trees and it is a large ground.



“The A.T. Carter oval opposite Scotch rowing sheds has a long cricket pitch, no transport close to the ground, no lights, and no showers and so is unsatisfactory.

“Applied to Richmond City Council and we will find out Wednesday morning if granted. The President was against the Carlton Oval.”

It appears that the application to Richmond City Council was successful because the Club played at the Burnley ground in 1959.

However, it also seems that parking, or more specifically a lack thereof, near the ground was an issue that led to a drop-off in the number of supporters attending matches during the season. In

addition the changing rooms were apparently dreadful, having been described as “primeval” and “pre-War” (*whether Korean, Second, First, or Boer is not noted*). By July strong thoughts being given to trying to find another ground, at least for the following year. Another player described the facility as two small brick rooms with cold-water showers – “a load of crap”.



*Definitely not the 1959 model: a new pavilion was opened in 2010.*

*(We have no idea how many if any other newer ones were there in the intervening period.)*

*And we note that there is now a fairly large car parking area out the back.*



The Club could not train at the Burnley Ground, but continued to train at the old St. Kevin’s ground. (The numbers at training, it seems, were not good on occasions as the season progressed – see later note.)

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### **Other matters from 1959**

\* At the **AGM on 24 February**

Financial: There was a credit balance of 101 pounds, 2 shillings and 11 pence.

\* At the **Committee Meeting of 5 March:**

# There was discussion on entering a team in the gradually expanding Second 18/Reserve competition: decided it was “a good idea but impracticable at the moment because of duplication of equipment and organisation.”

# it was decided training would start on Tuesday 17 March.

\* The minutes of a **Committee Meeting in July** included discussion on various matters, some of them weighty:

# the loss of two nine-gallon kegs of beer. It appears that they had been taken to the **Rats of Tobruk Hall** (*44 Victoria Avenue in Albert Park: it is still there*) for a social function and could not now be located or accounted for.

# “Nothing more than the usual to be done to entertain the Geelong Amateur Football Club after the coming game.”

# “Fullerton (*Secretary of the VAFA*) had rung the President and complained about several things.”  
(*Maybe including the ground markings?*)

# “Arrange for the ground to be marked and a sub-Committee to be formed to investigate the possibility of finding another ground.”

# The possibility of chartering a plane for an end-of-season trip to Launceston and match against Old Launcestonians was discussed.



(It apparently did take place, as did another the following year. On one of these two occasions, the match against the Old Launcestonians is reported to have taken place in some of the worst weather and conditions recorded for the entire Tasmanian winter.)

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The 1959 team was coached by **David Lee** (here seen in the middle in a photograph taken at a Presentation Night in 1993 – on the left is **Nugget Stephens**, on the right **Garth Manton**).

(The formal format was discontinued after only a couple of years, the cost proving to be prohibitive for student members.)

(*We have no idea who took the photo, but she or he clearly ignored the rules about the use of flash photography in the vicinity of mirrors!*)

In relation to the 1959 season, it was recorded at the AGM of 1960:

“N. Rundle mentioned fitness and stated how we seemed to be in front at half time and lose the match. **The coach had never missed a training night, even if only two or three had attended.**”  
(*My bolding. – Ed.*)

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**Social**

On the **social** front there was the annual barbeque at Mrs. Morrison’s (Eltham) and the aforesaid function at the Rats of Tobruk Hall – “very successful” (*apart, presumably, from the loss of the kegs*).

The Annual Dinner was held at the Federal Hotel, but was “not very well attended – proving nothing succeeds like success.”

**Financially** “quite a good season”. (*Perhaps the kegs had been found.*)

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**Trophies for the Year** were awarded as follows:



\* Turnbull Trophy for Best & Fairest: **John Laird** (who had also won it the previous year). “He was the only player to play every game for the year and was never beaten.”

\* D.C. Moore Trophy for Best First Year Player: **Murray Ingpen**

\* D.M. Bennett Trophy for Most Consistent: **John Stephen** “Although not a tall player, John was called upon to ruck for a major part of the season, and his hard hitting and dashing play was an inspiration to the team.

\* Most Improved: (first time awarded): **David Grisbrooke.**

**John Laird, 1983**

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As always, these Year publications are a work in progress. If any readers familiar with that period have anything to add or correct, please contact Peter Lemon on [peter@peregrineadventures.com](mailto:peter@peregrineadventures.com)