

JACK CHURCH – HICKORY ERA CHAMPION

Jack Church was born in Adelaide in 1927 and started playing lacrosse for Sturt in 1942 during the war years.

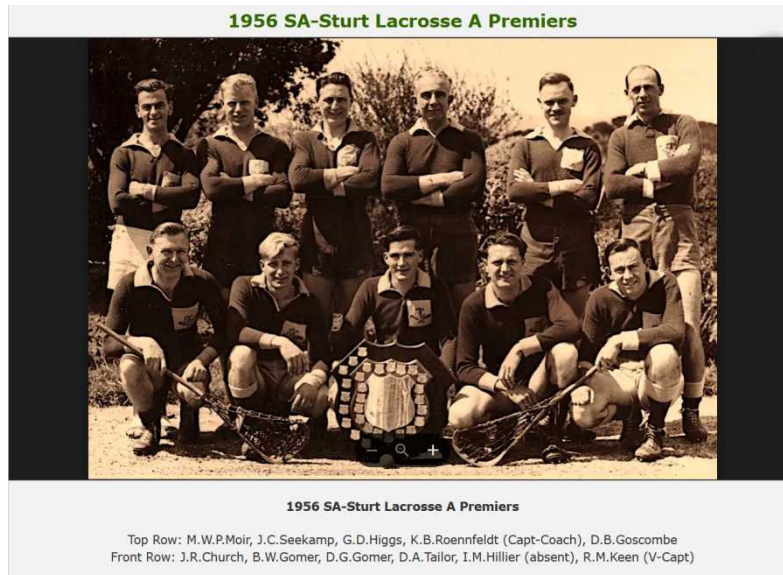
Jack trained as an industrial chemist in Adelaide, and spent his early career working in power stations, notably working at the Battersea Power station in England, one of the largest in the U.K., during the early 1950's.

During his time in England Jack played lacrosse, we don't know which club as yet, but he was selected in the South of England team in 1953 to play the North of England team at Lords.



The 1953 South of England team at Lords
(Jack Church is far right front row)

Jack Church returned to Adelaide from England circa 1955 and at age 29 played in the S.A. senior team in 1956 and thereafter relocated for business purposes to Melbourne circa 1958 where he played for both Caulfield and Victoria that year. We are not sure of how it came about but Alan Picton (Back row third from right above) moved to Australia in the late 50's and also played in the 1958 Caulfield premiership team with Jack Church.



It is understandable why Sturt won the flag in 1956 when you see that they had 6 players and the coach in the state team that year, which included 3 players, the coach and manager of the 1959 Australian team.



Jack played with Caulfield, which was the reciprocal club of Sturt, when Caulfield was enjoying its golden era, and played with the likes of Allan Gandy (who had also moved from Adelaide), Brian Griffin (Who had moved from Perth), along with other legends of the game at that time including Denis Trainor, Don Miller, Phil Humphreys, John Flood and many more.

Jack played in the Caulfield premiership teams of 1960, 61, 62 and 1966, along with the grand final teams of 1958 & 1959, and we assume he played in the Caulfield A grade team from 1958 until 1966, after which he retired at the age of 39.

Jack was selected in the 1958, 59, 60 and 61 Victorian senior teams, but clearly because of his career overseas he missed his best years of lacrosse in Australia.

Jack transferred to Melbourne and worked initially at the Reserve Bank Note Printing Branch in Fitzroy from 1958, which relocated to Craigieburn on the outskirts of Melbourne in 1981, and he was heavily involved in the development of the polymer

bank notes, including advocating for Sir Douglas Mawson to appear on the \$100 note (He had lectured Jack at Adelaide University).

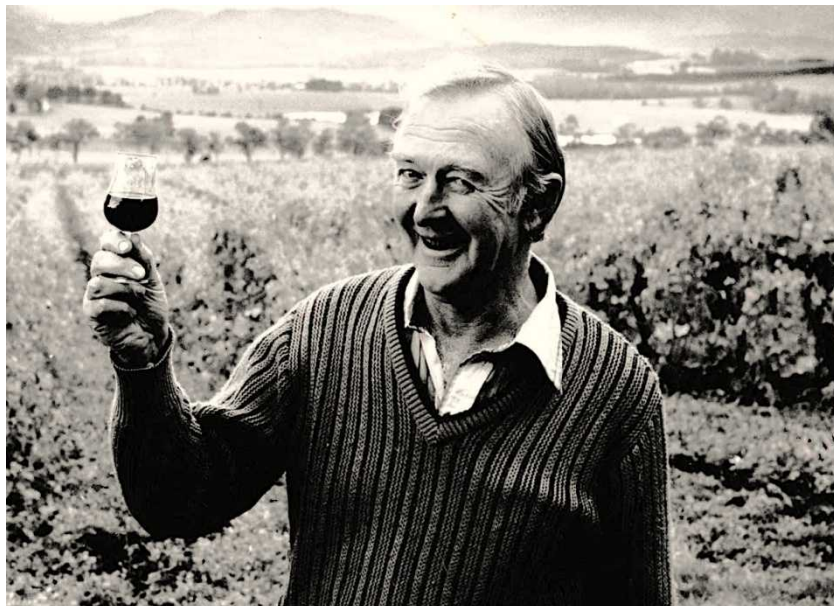
Caulfield was the obvious place for Jack to play lacrosse as it was the reciprocal club to Sturt, and Jack Hodges, who was a senior banker, was always on the lookout for top quality players to come to Caulfield, including Allan Gandy, Brian Griffin and Jack Church.

In 1967 Jack went on the Sturt/Caulfield end of season trip to Adelaide, a photo of which is in the Lambton Mount photo gallery in the S.A. club section.

According to Caulfield team mate Alan Thurley he was an outstanding attack player, and had a great pass, "Gandy just had to put his stick out and Jack would put the ball in it every time".

Hall of Famer Roy Sloggett described him as "Certainly a very good forward, fast with very good stick work which I remember well. He was in the 1961 Victorian team as vice captain (I was captain). Brian Griffin was also in that Victorian team. We played S.A. at the Malvern Cricket Ground and beat them, which was something Victoria did not do very often during my years. Caulfield won A grade premierships in 1960, 1961, 1962 and 1966 and Jack played for Caulfield in all of these games - they were all against Malvern!"

Jack purchased land in Gruyere in the Yarra Valley in 1969 and planted vines in 1970 and 1971. The first wines from Warramate were produced in 1976, and he continued to perform most of the viticultural tasks along with his wife June, and the winemaking tasks with sons Ian and David.



Jack retired in 1984 to concentrate on his winery, where he remained until he passed in 2005. The wines gained a reputation for their medium bodied yet intense flavour, the result of being dry-grown. The winery was acquired by Yarra Yering in 2011.

Alan Thurley built Jack's winery in Gruyere in the Yarra Valley in 1975, along with several extensions in the 1980's.