



A HISTORY OF FOOTSCRAY LACROSSE CLUB

1914-1915

"A proposal is on foot to establish a lacrosse club in Footscray and a meeting of those favourable to the idea is to be held at the Mechanic's Institute next Wednesday evening" (Footscray Advertiser 7 February 1914). No further news of what came of the meeting. At a meeting of the Victorian Lacrosse Association on 30 March 1914 it was resolved to accept an application for admission to the association by the Footscray Lacrosse Club, which entered a team in C section that year. The newly formed Footscray team tasted the sweets of victory with a 5-2 victory over Coburg in its first game. Footscray completed the year with 5 wins from 16 games and finished a credible 7th out of 9 teams.

LACROSSE

The newly-formed Footscray Lacrosse Club suffered the first defeat on Saturday last, at Carlton. The team consisted of Shepherd (c.), Burton, Critchley, Miller, Scott, Pitt, Drew, Mason, Davis, Leonard, Stewart, and Booth. From the commencement of the game it was seen that the Carlton forwards were more than holding their own against Footscray's back line. At half-time the scores were—Carlton, 9 goals; Footscray, 1 goal. After the interval Footscray's skipper made several changes in the field, and from that time onward the play improved considerably, Carlton only scoring 1 goal in the latter half of the game. The final scores were:—Carlton, 10 goals; Footscray, 1 goal. The local team, although beaten, were by no means discouraged in their venture. This afternoon Footscray play their first home match against Brighton, on the east side of the river, between the Hopetoun and swing bridges, when a good game is anticipated.

"The annual meeting of the club was held on 10 March 2015 at the club room in "Maribyrnong Street". The Secretary, Mr T. Pitt provided a very satisfactory report and balance sheet, showing the club to be in a very good position for the first year of its existence. Several of last year's players are with the Australian Expeditionary Forces in Egypt, but several promising colts will be available for selection and the club anticipates a very successful year. Training is going on very seriously every Tuesday and Thursday nights, and Footscrayites may expect to see some classy games in this skilful winter pastime." (Footscray Advertiser). Footscray won the C grade premiership in only its second year, winning 11 out of 12 games. The reporter noted that given the association had lost up to 50% of its players to war the game was in remarkable shape.



The club celebrated its victorious year with an end of season trip to Kyneton, "near Trentham Falls", with a photo appearing in the local newspaper.

Footscray was unable to field a team during 1916, probably due to players enlisting for WW1, and there were only 4 teams in C section in that year. Footscray won the premiership in the prior year in that grade. There were no further reports of the club until 1925, like many clubs during WW1, they folded due to insufficient senior players, as the expectation of that day was, if you are fit enough to play lacrosse, you are fit enough to enlist and support the empire.

The Sporting Globe reported on 29 April 1925 that the team numbers in Victoria had increased to record playing numbers, with 9 new teams and 135 new players, and with Footscray re-entering the competition with a team in C Grade. While it is unclear as to whether Footscray fielded a team during or after 1925 with the Victorian Association, there is reference in the Prahran Telegraph to what appears to be a school match between Prahran and Footscray held on Wednesday 12 June, which Footscray won 7-4.

1935-1939

The Footscray Lacrosse Club was re-formed in 1935 and played until 1939. Originally called Footscray Technical School Old Boys Lacrosse Club (FTSOBLC) the Club played its home games at a vacant block on the corner of Sunshine Road & Graingers Road, West Footscray.

The club entered a team in E grade in 1935 and again in 1936, where it finished 11th on the ladder with 4 wins. There are no records of events of 1937 but in 1938 the E grade team finished second on the ladder to Power House and the F grade team and the F grade team finished 7th. In 1939 the E grade team finished second on the ladder to Wattle Park (Which also entered the competition in 1935).



FOOTSCRAY LACROSSE TEAM 1938

Back row: Charles Wagland (Wing), Holt Pettit (Point), Lindsay Alexander (Spare), Cab Smith (Cover point), Geoff Mewett (Receiver), Jock Delaland (Receiver)
Front row: Nat Carr (Wing), Jackson Nesbitt (Forward), Walter Ring (Forward & Captain), Bill Glasson (Goal) & Bruce Winzar (Forward)

With the commencement of World War 2 (1939-1945) most sports ceased competition, with 7 of the above players enlisting and heading off to battle, three did not return. Lindsay Alexander, Cab Smith and Jack Nesbitt were killed in action, Walter Ring was wounded, with Charles Wagland, Jock Delaland and Bruce Winzar also returning.

Holt Pettit tried to enlist but was exempted as he was an industrial chemistry student. The eleven players in the above photo were the entirety of the club at that time. Walter Ring, who was unable to play following the war due to injury, was the main organiser of the team. Due to a shortage of players the club was unable to continue after 1939.

Reformed 1961

The reformation of the club came about mainly from players of the first Footscray Technical School team in 1959. The 1960 Footscray Tech team played on Wednesdays in the technical schools competition and again on Saturdays at Williamstown in the Mal Taylor U14 competition, with Mr Mick Titter coaching the team in both competitions. Several players from the 1960 Footscray Tech team (Pictured below) played in 1961 in the first Footscray senior team in the VALA competition.



LACROSSE

Back Row: B. Richardson, G. Barlow, I. Strutners, G. Lane, P. Clarke, B. Milan, R. Tomlinson.
Front Row: B. Featherstone, R. Greatorrex, D. Majul, Mr. Morgan, T. Smith, G. Borchers, M. Ryan.

The photo above is of the 1959 school team and is an extract from the Footscray Technical School "Blue & Gold" Year Book.

Back row: Wayne Solley, Ken Moore, Emilio Moreno, Brian Way, Neil Sampson, E. McClurkin. Front row: James Rolfe, Russell Brown, Mr F. Morgan, Robin Lourensz & Robert Dixon.

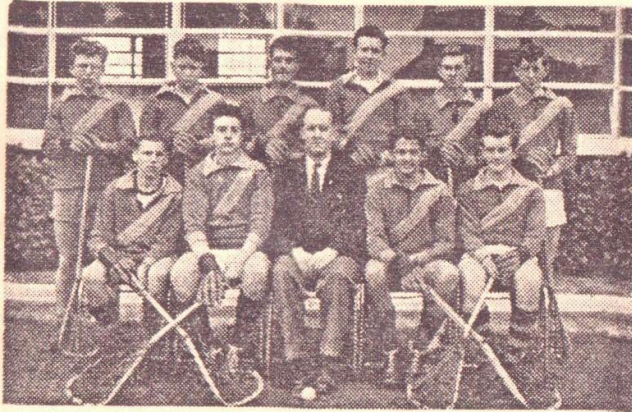
In 1960 Bob Southall, Robin Lourensz, Russell Brown and Fred Jurgelait, as well as some of their mates from Footscray High School, Bob Starford and Ian Collins, commenced playing with an M.C.C. senior in the VALA competition. They were influenced by Warren Collins (Ian's older brother) and utilized the MCG's rooms and the MCG itself for training (Yes, they trained on the MCG!), with matches being played on ovals near the Albert Park Lake.

As Bob Southall recalls "Mal Taylor was keen to restart a club at Footscray, and travel to MCG was a pain, thus Russell Brown & myself met at Mal's house in Williamstown and the decision was made to give it a go and "reform" the Footscray club. We started with little but received significant help from Mal and the Williamstown Lacrosse Club. We used their training facilities at Fearon Reserve, and played our home game matches at the Hatt Reserve on the sea front – usually bloody cold and wet. Given we did not have any support from parents we had to take the train to most grounds as most players didn't have a licence let alone a car! Bob Starford's butcher workmates in Tom Mackley (Formerly played with Malvern) & Keith Richards quickly joined and being a little older he did have a licence and a

Holden car which did help significantly with transport. In later years, Reg Wilson, Peter's father, was a keen follower and provided invaluable assistance."

LACROSSE TEAM FORMED

In the Inter-Technical competition, Footscray were unsuccessful, losing every match. The newly-formed team showed a lack of skill in the game, whereas the competitors were all skilful and had previous experience



LACROSSE TEAM

Back: W. Solley, K. Moore, E. Moreno, B. Way, N. Sampson, E. McClurkin.
Front: J. Rolfe, N. Brown, Mr. F. T. Morgan, R. Lourensz, R. Dixon.

with the game. As the year progressed, the team improved. The first game, Footscray lost 23 goals to nil, but in the last game Footscray lost 3 goals to 4 goals.

Best players throughout the season were Russell Brown and Robin Lorenz. Credit should be given to the goallie, Ken Moore, who did a very good job defending goals in the latter part of the season. On this year's experience, a stronger team has been built up for next season.

Brian Way 4F.

Mal Taylor was appointed president of the Club when it was reformed in 1961 and the foundation senior members were Russell Brown, Ian Collins, Fred Jurgelait, Robin Lourensz, Tom Mackley, Dave Morrison, Keith Richards, Bob Southall, Bob Starford and Brian Way. The foundation junior members were Howard Atkins, Gary Barlow, Syd Cunningham, Brian Featherston, Alan Lane, Charlie Mamo, Dave Mayne, Bohdan Milan, John Miles, Peter O'Conner, Max Ryan, Terry Smith & Robin Traeger.

Footscray Lacrosse Club re-commenced in the 1961 Victorian Amateur Lacrosse Association (VALA) competition with two teams entered, one senior (C Grade) and one junior (E Grade) with some coaching provided from 1930's player, Jock Delaland. The senior team had a great start making the grand final in the first year, unfortunately going down in a close match by Williamstown.

For many years a player/coach was the norm. In one early year (1963 or 1964) Keith West was recruited from Williamstown as senior coach with some help from Keith Preston and Bert Orr, who also coached for a couple of years. Don Orr, also from Williamstown, coached in the late 1960s.'

The 1961 Footscray Tech team continued to play in the Wednesday Secondary School competition, with several players joining the Footscray club to play in the U16 Saturday competition. The feeding ground for the club's juniors was generally Footscray Tech and Tottenham Tech.

Bob Southall further adds "Given that we were so young overall as a club (Predominantly 17/18 year olds), we still made progress with ground changes and club room improvements, equipment , training facilities and social gatherings, including rock & roll dances at the Footscray Football Club and the Paisley St Hall to raise funds. Once there were a few of us with driving licences, travel was much easier including our annual presentation picnics at Hanging Rock, including the "Hanging Rock Gift", which was one lap of the racetrack, with players, friends and partners involved.

As resources were very limited, the club adopted blue T shirts as match jumpers for seniors & juniors. Bob Southall subsequently designed and had made the green and white version of the jumper which is still in use today.



A bit of play acting at practice circa 1964 – T shirts not jumpers!



At the starting line for the "Gift" at Hanging Rock!



Senior men's team 1966 (Photo taken 30 July)

Back row: Don Harris, Robin Lourensz, Fred Jurgelait, Howard Atkins, John Coad, Neville Balfour, Bob Southall.

Front row: Danny Nolan, Neil Clark, Rodger Smith, Dave Mayne, Charlie Mamo

The club could not field a junior team for 1965 and 1966 and the remaining juniors had to play senior lacrosse. Pictured below is the 1967 team ready to play Williamstown at the Hatt Reserve. Players were Robin Lourensz (4), John Coad (14), Graham Brown (5), Neil Clark (23), Danny Nolan (10), Fred Jurgelait (3), Ian Brown (no number showing, track suit top), Russell Brown (1), Peter Allison (16), David Mayne (18), Bohdan Milan (Side on), Howard Atkins (20), Neville Balfour (21). Due to a knee injury Bob Southall was out for the year and was coach and photographer for the year.

Danny Nolan, who was selected in the 1966 Under 16 Victorian team, won the Mal Taylor award during that interstate competition, and also won the Garnet Peagram Medal, for the best & fairest Under 16 player in Victoria. What was most interesting was that Footscray could not field a junior team in 1965 or 1966 and Danny, like several other juniors, had to play in the senior team, and was awarded the VALA best & fairest medal for Under 16 based on his votes received in the senior team.



The club was now established and well organised; the 1967 team headed to Warburton for its first end of season trip (Pictured below).



Back row: Bob Southall, John Coad, Dave Mayne, Peter Allison, Graham Brown, Howard Atkins, Fred Jurgelait & Neville Balfour

Front row: Robin Lourensz, Bohdan Milan, Bob Starford, Danny Nolan, Reg Wilson, John Nolan, Neil Clark & Don Harris.

The Technical Schools Competition held on Wednesday afternoons continued to grow, with the addition of Tottenham Technical School circa 1966. The school team also played on Wednesdays and then again on Saturdays at Williamstown in the Mal Taylor U14 competition. This took place from about 1966 to 1970. From 1971, Tottenham Tech players joined Footscray to play in the U16 Saturday competition. Enter the Mollisons!

Several players from the 1970 Tottenham Tech team, continued with Footscray.

In the mid 1970's Sunshine Technical School entered a team in the Technical Schools Competition and in the late 1970's a team was also entered from Niddrie Technical School. During the 60's and 70's school lacrosse was also played at Footscray Technical College as well at Tottenham Technical School and Sunshine Technical School. While most of the boys of the club came from and played for Footscray Tech. in the early days there were many who played for Tottenham Tech. (Neil Clark, Greg & Paul Mollison and Gary Smithwick), Niddrie Tech. (Dean & Glenn Mollison, and Andrew Ellis) and Sunshine Tech.

HOME GROUNDS DURING THE 1960's

For the first season of 1961 home games were played at Williamstown Club's Hutt Reserve, opposite the Fearon. The 1962-63 seasons were played at Myers Flat and then moved across Farnsworth Avenue to Footscray Park, sharing with the Footscray Rugby Club for seasons 1964-65, mainly due to the Myers Flat grounds being regularly flooded, with the ground under water in parts up to 2 feet. The home ground then moved to Shepherds Oval (East side of the lily pond) for seasons 1966 and 1967, where the clubrooms were the curator's shed, which had no facilities and was merely used to store goals and change.

Following a request to the Council for better amenities, in 1968 the club temporarily moved its home ground to the Hansen Reserve, in Roberts Street, Kingsville while the new clubrooms were being constructed next to Shepherds Oval.

In 1969 the Club returned to Shepherds Oval, (West of the Pioneer Hotel). The Pioneer Hotel was a good supporter of the club at the time and regularly provided free beer or discounted barrels for functions.

Due to the Shepherd Oval new ground re-construction work the 1970 games were played at both Shepherds Oval and McIvor Reserve, behind Footscray High School (Located near the Footscray Hockey Club's first synthetic turf field). It was not uncommon for the ground at Shepherds Oval to flood. As well as the new better brick clubrooms with cold showers, players would recall the water line being some 5' above ground level due to the rising Maribyrnong River, which was only 20 metres away, and a massive crack in the concrete floor!

FOOTSCRAY WOMEN'S LACROSSE CLUB FORMED 1961

The FWLC was formed in 1961 as a completely separate club to the men's Lacrosse club. There were people with close connections to the Footscray Hockey Club (located at Essex St, West Footscray) and the same uniforms were used. Mrs. Pearson was the first President and Mrs Rodgers was the Secretary. The Footscray club got off to a fledgling start with unofficial games played in 1961. The Victoria Women's Amateur Lacrosse Association (VWALA) was formed in 1962 and the first official season was played with teams from Footscray, Malvern and two teams from Williamstown. Footscray won the inaugural Premiership for the 1962 season.



Back Row: Anne Rowe, Neilma McPherson, Margaret Cleggett (Capt), Lyn McPherson, Rhonda Richards, Judy Mohr
Front Row: Cathy McLeod, Judy Rodgers, Maureen Preston, Kendrea Pearson, Diane Harwood. (Photo taken at Myers Flat after Grand Final)

For the second season of 1963, Footscray won its second premiership, played at Myers Flat, defeating Malvern 18 –1. In 1964, the club was forced by the VWALA to split into two even teams and still won a third consecutive premiership, defeating Williamstown 9-4.



The above photo is of the 1964 team, which travelled to SA, and the Brighton Kinkajous team, with Footscray players in club uniforms (3 colours).
 Back row: Meg Pertzelt, Pauline Langford, Lyn McPherson, Barbara Kohler, Kendrea Pearson, Jenny Jones.
 Third row: Judy Jefferies, Pat McClland, Margaret Ennis, Cathy McLeod, Anne Fleeson, Dot Ford.
 Second row: Julie Heppell, Glynice Jones, Anne Rowe, Janice Kohler, Margaret Cleggett, Avril Jones, Maureen Preston, Christine Penglase.
 Front row: Judy Mohr, Jan Jones, Diane Harwood, Libby Armstrong, Neilma McPherson, Tina Bennett.



The Pearson family, early 1960's - Alan, Kendrea, Arthur & Phil.



Footscray Members of 1964 Victorian team - Diane Harwood, Anne Rowe, Neilma McPherson, Kendrea Pearson, Lyn McPherson and Footscray Coach Keith Preston.

Footscray Players featured prominently in senior Victorian teams throughout the late 1960's and early 1970's.



Footscray Women's team 1965 A Grade runners up, defeated by Williamstown

Back Row: Vivienne (English girl), Pat McCelland, Lyn McPherson, Arthur Pearson (Coach), Kendrea Pearson, Judy Rodgers, Lyn Bedson
 Middle row: Alan Preston (mascot), Tricia Carney, Cathy McLeod, Goalkeeper (?), Diane Harwood (Injured), Helen Wetherall, Mark Preston (Mascot)
 Front row: Dianne Gibbs

The photo above was taken before the 1965 Grand Final at the Malvern ground. Unfortunately Diane Harwood had broken her leg and was unable to play. Footscray was defeated by Williamstown in the 1965 Grand Final. Footscray had two teams in 1965 and 1966 and then one team from 1967 to 1974. From 1965 to 1973 Footscray were runners up in 8 grand finals and had a preliminary final loss to Coburg.

With a loss of players to motherhood, travel and work commitments, there were not enough players to field a team for the 1974 season and the club went into recession.

After 13 years of absence from women's lacrosse, Footscray reformed in 1987 with a new and totally inexperienced team.

50 Year Anniversary 1961 – 2011

The 50 year anniversary and celebration day was an outstanding success with many past players attending the luncheon and games. We were blessed with a bright sunny day and delighted to have the Mayor of Maribyrnong, Cr. Sarah Carter formally open the day, with our local councillor, Cr. Michael Clarke adding his enthusiasm and compliments of our club's status within the community over many years. We were also joined by the new Maribyrnong Council CEO, Mr. Vince Haining for the luncheon in the pleasant surroundings of the clubrooms.

There were several notable foundation members from 1961 - Robin Lourensz, Bob Southall, Fred Jurgelait, Dave Mayne, Bob Starford, John Coad, Brian Featherston, John Evans, Keith Richards and Don Harris. As well, Merv Davies from the early 70's and members of the Footscray women's 1961, 62, and 63 premierships teams, notably Kendrea Kendall (Nee Pearson), Diane Snowball (Nee Harwood), Judy O'Sullivan (Nee Rogers), Rhonda Berryman (Nee Richards) and June Riddell.

An estimated 100 people watched our SL women defeat Williamstown before lunch and over 300 people watched our SL men defeat Malvern in the afternoon.

The 50th anniversary postcard was produced by FLC SL player and renowned artist Michael McInerney.



Players from 1961 – 50 Year Anniversary Day – 2011

L to R: John Evans, Keith Richards, Robert Starford, Fred Jurgelait, Robin Lourensz, Dave Mayne, Robert Southall, Don Harris & John Coad