**Early Canterbury Cricket Clubs.**

**The Christchurch club was formed in September 21 1864.**

President W Wilson esq

Vice President WL Hawkins esq

Secretary FM Ollivier

Treasurer NM Simpson

Committee A Cuff, CM Ollivier, AT Gwattice, E Packerson, T Moore, TW Balfour

W Wilson was the first mayor of Christchurch and said to be the richest man in the city. He was a nurseryman and known locally as Cabbage Wilson. He lost favour with the public when it became known that he beat his wife and had swindled an estate of which he was trustee. He had seven sons and seven daughters.

At the following meeting on 27 September 1864 the committee moved that the club should negotiate with Mr Kohler over the use of his ground for a cricket oval. This land would have been at “Nancy’s Corner” at the start of Riccarton Rd.

At the next meeting on 6 October 1864 it was reported that their application for the use of the Canterbury cricket ground had been refused. AJ Cotterill was elected a member at that meeting and AE Tennant a member at the next meeting on 15 October 1864.

By June 1865 the club had decided to move to another area on Hagley Park (now the present Hagley Oval) and that meeting was called to discuss the advisability of getting immediate possession of the ground and laying it down for the next season. They decided to pay the present holder of the park for the purchase of his interest in the 10 acres no more than 50 pounds and no more than 25 pounds to be paid in the first year.

In September 29 1865 it was reported that damage and been done to the fence and ground by cattle belonging to a neighbour, Mr Holley. He refused to contribute more than 5 pounds towards the damage and club authorised the secretary to place the dispute with a solicitor and if necessary take it to the Supreme Court.

A month later the President W Wilson offered to place one of his gardeners at the disposal of the club in order to repair the ground and to also provide seed.

The club may have had some financial problems as at the meeting on 22 February 1866 it was combined with the Canterbury club and a motion was agreed to amalgamate the two clubs under the name United. Present were15 people amongst whom were JH Bennett, AJ Cotterill, CD Fearon, T Moore, AL Powys, EJC Stevens, and JW Stevens. The Superintendent of the Province was appointed President “for the time being’ and W Wilson Vice President. FM Ollivier was appointed secretary and Harley, Powys, CM Ollivier, Blakiston, Bennett and EJC Stevens were elected to the committee.

At the meeting a week later with EJC Stevens in the chair it was determined that the pavilion should be removed to the new ground and that this ground should be mown and extended.

At the March 3 1866 meeting the subscription was set at one guinea. Colours of the club were to be white flannels and shirt and a dark blue cap. They agreed to set aside a sum of no more than 15 pounds to pay any debts of the two previous clubs. Mr Holley was given permission to graze his sheep on the ground in order to keep the grass down.

A week later the committee had a letter from Mr Slee offering to lay down one acre of the ground for 100 pounds and to level the outfield for another 90 pounds. However they also had an offer from Mr Stewart, a gardener, to lay down and level the ground for 90 pounds, the club to provide some of the seed.

On March 24 1866 the committee had an item of expenditure of 45 pounds to move the pavilion to the new ground but they decided to wait some months and enable the cost to be part of the following season’s accounts.

At the first AGM on September 22 1866 the club was pleased to announce that the new club was free of debt and the ground formerly occupied by the Christchurch club had been fenced, sown with English grass and was in good condition.

The tender by Mr Geo Blockley for moving the pavilion was accepted at 20 pound in October 1866. At a later meeting the committee appointed AL Powys captain for the 1866-67 season and he was also appointed selector for the inter provincial match with the power to consult with one or more bowlers.

In January 1867 the committee proposed that: in future the captain of each side be requested to collect sufficient money to pay the incidental expenses.

At the next meeting on 21 January 1867 a letter was received from the Albion club suggesting that their members join the United club and that in turn they would offer their material and cash in hand once all debts had been finalised.

The meeting of February 4 1867 had a request from captain Powys that he be relieved of his duties and as a consequent the committee immediately selected by ballot the team to play Otago. EJC Stevens said that as a result of the ballot he was placed in an awkward position as he asked Mr Odell to play and he now wished to withdraw from the team. The committee did not agree with this course of action and the secretary was asked to write to Mr Odell to that effect.

AL Powys was granted 6 months leave of absence at the 11 February 1867 meeting.

The meeting of March 23 1867 called to discuss the merger with the Albion club only attracted 4 members and so nothing was decided.

By May 1867 the club was in debt to the extent of 50 pounds and a special meeting was called to discuss how to recover the outstanding subscriptions. It was moved that the new subscription would be two guineas and a later motion was approved asking for payment in advance. Stevens also moved that in future the club should not be involved in selecting inter provincial teams but that it would support a committee appointed at a public meeting to carry out that responsibility.

At the AGM in September it was reported that only 20 pounds had been received in advanced subscriptions. There had been considerable expenditure on the ground and in moving the pavilion and total costs were 181 pounds with income at 177 pounds. This would have been considerably less but for the advance subscriptions and a donation from EJC Stevens of 20 pound. Mr R Mainwaring was appointed treasurer. The meeting also noted that when the lease of the park by the present occupier falls due the club will occupy the ground by virtue of a resolution passed by the Provincial Council in 1864.

In September the committee agreed that the club would not offer the Albion club any terms by which that club could occupy part of the park. However they would be prepared to consider any proposal to allow them to play matches on the ground.

At the November 4 meeting the secretary FM Ollivier reported that he had bought a horse for the sum of 5 pounds. There were very meetings but in August 1868 the committee recommended that the sheep should be removed from the ground as soon as possible.

The AGM on September 12 1868 showed that the club had 23 senior and 6 junior members and that the debt to the club was now approaching 80 pound. It was also noted that the 30 acres the club had at the corner of Hagley Park opposite the Hospital was not needed and 10 acres of it it was leased to Mr Simpson for 2 years. A portion of the ground was also leased to the Albion club at a rental of 25 pound. Mainwaring was elected chairman and Stevens vice president.

By October the committee had passed a bylaw that any member proposing a new member was responsible for his subscription.

At the October 9 1868 meeting the Albion club wrote asking for the sum to use the ground be reduced from 20 pounds to 15 pounds. The committee replied saying that they were unable to agree and that the sum would have to remain at 20 pounds.

Over the next nine months the business at most meetings was how to reduce liabilities and obtain subscriptions form late payers. By the time of the AGM on September 4 1869 liabilities had been reduced by 10 pounds.

In October 21 an interesting offer from TR Moore to sell to the club 2 bats, 1 pair of pads and 1 pair of gloves for 2 pound 5 shillings was not accepted. A counter offer of one pound 10 shillings was made. No record exists of the result.

During the year Mr A Stewart took charge of the ground for the sum of 60 pounds and the club was very satisfied with the state of the ground.

At the AGM in 1870 the club still had liabilities of 40 pounds and from receipts of 58 pounds for active members it would indicate that the club had around 29 members.

On the 20 September 1870 a letter was received form ES Harley (a former member) on behalf of a new club asking for the use of a portion of the ground at a rental of 20 pound. The request was granted and United also allowed the new club a room at the southern end of the pavilion except on the occasion of an interprovincial match. The name of the club was Christchurch, a name which had been used before.

At the meeting on September 27 1870 the vice president (EJS Stevens), secretary (AJ Cotterill) and treasurer (HW Beauford ) were asked to wait upon the Superintendent of the Province with a view to securing a better tenure of the ground.

In November the club agreed to employ W Pierce as a bowler for the club for 8 weeks at a cost of one guinea per week. This arrangement finished in January 1871.

The last committee meeting recorded was in March 1871 and the only item of business was a request from the Mayor of the city for the use of the ground for an athletic meeting during the following week. The request was granted at a cost of 3 guineas.