

**This was my talk at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Havelock North Squash Rackets Club held at the Community Centre, Havelock North on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2014.**

**I first wondered as to the viability of building a squash court in Hastings or Havelock North in the early 60's as a number of local people were members of the HB Squash Club in Napier and were traveling in some cases for about six years, and after canvassing locals we decided to look for a suitable site.**

**A meeting was held at the Hastings High School Old Boys Rugby club, on Karamu Road on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 1960.**

**At that meeting the Hastings Squash Club was formed and thus started the hunt for a site to build courts.**

**Thirty nine people attended that meeting. Many sites were looked at, ie: Mayfair Hotel, Showgrounds, section in McLeod St, Hastings Tennis club and others, but zoning and other complications were faced on virtually anywhere we looked at.**

**The personnel at that first meeting were: Mr A. Kirkpatrick (deputy mayor) who conveyed apologies from the mayor.(Mr.....) The driving committee consisted of Colin Blackmore, Peter Gifford, George Mills, John Kingsford, Ian Mason, John McFarland (Leopard Breweries) Richard Jones, Callum Kirkpatrick**

**(accountant) and EJD.**

**On the financial side our treasurer on the 16<sup>th</sup> March 1961 stated "that our balance at The National Bank of NZ was # \$8 .1. 5 pence. Outstanding accounts for payment were # 9. 7 shillings and 9 pence, Outstanding subscriptions were # \$28.0.0 It was agreed that those outstanding be put on a notice board and displayed.**

**All paid up in ten days . (#Pounds.)**

**With encouragement from councils of the day and through a chance meeting with the Havelock mayor, Mr Ron Nilsson we were offered the Anderson Park site, that was Havelocks rubbish disposable site, and with the backing of the Havelock North Borough Councillors and prominent business personnel, planning got underway.**

**Within six weeks, with stock drives and debentures we were financially able to start.**

**The Hastings Squash Rackets Club was put into recess and Havelock North Squash Club was established.**

**Because we were in the middle of a housing subdivision we were at pains to keep section purchasers informed of our proposed activities, and S.E.Morgan and Sons (Builders) commenced work on a plan submitted by Mr Paul Marks (Watties architect) to build two courts, toilets, changing rooms (men and women) an upstairs**

**area with kitchen and lockers for drinks to comply with regulations of the day.**

**The late Graham Wall and Pat Hinton (plumbers & plasterers) acted as foremen and used members as voluntary labour to dig trenches for the sewage and power.**

**NO "OSH" to deal with then.**

**At one of our meetings prior to building one of our older perspective member's "asked:**

**"Are we having a bar. (In a real English voice)  
Yes was the reply-as well as a shower"**

**"I couldn't give a damn about the washing of the outer part, I am only interested in lubricating the inner part" was the reply.**

**Our courts were officially opened in 1964 by the mayor Mr Ron Nilsson of Havelock North Borough.**

**Mr Charlie Waugh of Palmerston North and Mr Ivan Easton of Hamilton played an exhibition match after the opening ceremony.**

**Mr Charlie Waugh is with us this evening and ,unfortunately Mr Ivan Easton died last year.**

**The formation of this club 50 years ago raised real enthusiasm for a relatively unknown sport in Hawke's Bay.**

**We along with HB (Napier)club with courts built in the old water reservoir, known as the "GROTTO"**

**We were nurtured in our early days by Napier and Palmerston North, the latter being strongly represented**

by such players as Don Burmeister 1967-69-70 and Trevor Johnstone 1966-68-75 and from Napier by Don Mochan (NZ Champion) 1953-5-7 who also coached a number of our new members.

We also ran the “Watties” Open tournament initially with 36 players, the nucleus from Palmerston and Henderson.

The relationship with Henderson (Auckland) lasted for many years, and after our playing days were over we played each other annually at golf in Rotorua, Taupo and Bridge Pa.

The “Watties” Open became a premier event in the North Island. We were balloting out up to 50% of entries received and also using Hastings new complex (three courts) as well to cope.

This tournament was well known for its hospitality, especially with a Hangi and dance band at Mick Smalls woolshed on the other side of the peak.

One night that comes to mind, was very wet later in the evening, cars being towed out of paddocks, all getting soaked running from woolshed to cars and the cry” where did I put my car” and then having to give a push, and from slipping over in the holding pens when water gets onto what sheep have left behind it becomes very slippery and with a drink or two there were some great sights and stories next day.

I remember well one man that helped us a great deal from Palmerston, known as “Mr Squash” and that was Roy Haddon who guided us well in the formation of our

club and it with great pleasure to have here his son Gerald, a wonderful supporter over our early years. Gerald, came to one of our "Wattie" tournaments, and in those days because of the liquor laws, we did not or could not have a licence to sell ales wines and spirits, so to get around this we sold tickets ("to buy your drinks"). Gerald being an up and coming young accountant got home with a pocket full of tickets. He wrote to the club requesting us to refund twelve shillings. After long deliberation by the committee, as this was most unusual, but being a bright young man and supporter we sent him a refund.

In October 1970 the HB-PB Centre was established so ensuring our attachment to Central District Assoc.. This became necessary for the tremendous upsurge in facilities: Gisborne added courts to their tennis complex, HB (Napier) rebuilt in Niven Street, Hastings Tennis Club built courts, then Waipukurau and Takapau followed by Napier Lawn Tennis.

Havelock had added to a third court, and by 1980 built a fourth-- the first glass back in HB.

Through the early years we hosted a number of high profile players including Aftab Jawaid (Pakistan) World Champion Geoff Hunt (Australia) and the Egyptian "Dadir" who became NZ's first national coach. Local junior. Stu Davenport who rose to NZ representative ranks, and Jenny Grieve who transferred to Hastings and represented NZ.

**The Gordon's Gin tournament in the 60's is memorable for more than one reason.**

**Kevin O'Neill the sponsors rep and a connoisseur of the product was present and invited in recognition of his company's sponsorship, to find that the only gin's on the top shelf were Gilbeys and Tanquerays (This was in the same stable) but it took some explaining and we made sure this never happened again.**

**We had some notable members in our day and no doubt you have them today, I must tell you about one of our "Early settlers". Here this evening.?**

**He was of "Shadrucks" fame (a band).**

**1<sup>st</sup> lower grade entrant—beaten 1<sup>st</sup> round and the Plate arrived each day thereafter to socialize, ran his gear under the shower, to prove his participation, and bought a present for himself, to show his wife how well he had done. (Bill Prentice).**

**Our Christmas parties were memorable. Father Christmas could arrive to the delight of our children in anything from a helicopter or pony drawn cart.**

**The pensioner flats were built around us and when we were established we invited the occupants on an annual basis to enjoy our hospitality in the lounge.**

**We had our moments financially losing 50% of our members overnight when Hasting built—understandable, and we thankfully received full support of the Havelock North Borough Council who voluntarily stood as our guarantors.**

**50 years on from an idea—to reality,I believe we can be proud of our achievements.**

**I hope this reminder of the Clubs early history has been worthwhile.**

**Those of us older participants involved in this celebration join me in congratulating the present administration and those that have preceded them on the progress made in the sport of Squash Rackets and the maintenance of the facility.**

**Jim Newbiggin**

**Foundation Member**

**1<sup>st</sup> President 1964 and 1967**

**Club Champion 1964 and 1966**

**Life Member**