

Parks and Gardens in Lower Hutt: A Thematic Overview of Recreation Facilities at the Hutt Recorded in the Documents of a Recently Archived File Series

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In the autumn of 2013 I was contracted to cull non-essential documents from a recently closed record series of Lower Hutt's Parks and Gardens files. This is the PL12-3 Parks and Gardens file series. The time period covered by the records is 1980 to 2010, with about one-third (consisting of thirty parks and eighty-two volumes) being processed and subsequently archived at Hutt City Council Archives. Culling the files was my job, but it quickly became apparent that the material that did comply with the Local Government Schedule consisted of a gold mine of information that would be of interest to a number of people, including students of local history, local and regional government and engineering. Most of us normally associate parks and gardens primarily with sport. Sporting events and clubs are of course one of the major themes found in the files which I reviewed. However as the files document the management of Hutt City Parks and Gardens, the historical material found in them covers a number of other themes which are not necessarily connected with sport at all. It is these other themes which I talk about in this article.

Of the thirty parks that I reviewed, the Hutt Recreation Ground was one of the most interesting, not least because it is one of Lower Hutt's oldest sports fields. The northern part of it was established in 1904 and the ground was officially opened in 1905. A pavilion and a band rotunda were erected in 1907 and a grandstand in 1934. The "Hutt Rec.", as it is commonly called, had floodlights installed in 1939 which were regarded at the time as the most efficient in the Southern Hemisphere. Although the PL series Hutt Recreation Ground files do not go back beyond 1980, the material in them relates directly to earlier historical records of the Park, and introduces two themes which are applicable to other parks – the theme of memorials and the theme of fire and its destructive potential.

Although it is one of the best known of the recreation grounds in Lower Hutt because of its age, it is probably fair to say that while most people know that the Hutt Recreation Ground is a memorial park not many people,



Figure 1: The avenue of commemorative oaks (Photo by author).

apart from local historians, know that the memorial status refers to a number of commemorative oak trees which can be found in the park today. Originally there were nineteen trees which were planted seventy-seven years ago in 1937, on the day of the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth (the Queen Mother) on May 12th 1937. All the trees are oaks of the same variety, *Quercus palustris*.²

Ten of the trees which are in the park today form a commemorative avenue located south of the Grandstand beside a path which extends along the western side of the Recreation Ground from the Myrtle Street entrance in the north, to the Woburn Road entrance in the south. The trees have a commemorative status partly because they were planted on Coronation Day 1937 by the past Mayors of Lower Hutt.³ At the time of the plantings bronze plaques were placed on plinths at the base of each tree. These trees showed the date of the coronation, but also, of local historical interest, the name of the Mayor, or his representative who planted the tree, the dates of his mayoralty, and the population of Lower Hutt.⁴ Although there are ten trees there today, the files state that in 1937 eleven trees were planted in this location with a reference to additional trees, making up a total of nineteen, being planted by representatives of local organisations along the Woburn Road frontage of the park.⁵ The plaques for the additional trees are missing, stolen apparently in 2009.⁶

The missing eleventh tree in the commemorative avenue was located at the Woburn Road end of the avenue, and appears to have been removed by council contractors sometime before 2010. The tree was originally planted by Mayor J. W. Andrews, who was in office from 1933 to 1947. Although the files show that it once had a plaque, the position of the tree today is marked by a stone boulder for reasons which I will now explain.⁷

The story behind the boulder marking the position of the missing mayoral tree came about because by 2007 it was clear that the original mayoral plaques, set on low plinths, had become overgrown by the increasing girth of the trees with the wording becoming gradually obscured by the roots.⁷ It was at this stage that the Sports Ground Assets Manager for the Hutt City Council came up with a brilliant and highly innovative solution that will be of great interest to anyone interested in the cultural aspect of parks management; he decided to replace all of the original eleven bronze plaques with thirteen stone boulders. The boulders would be engraved with the same historical details that appeared on the bronze plaques. Because two of the Mayors, E.P. Bunny and W.T. Strand, had served two terms each, two additional boulders would record the separate dates of their mayoralty whereas originally the dates were recorded on single plaques. The plan was that each boulder would be anchored to a concrete base and then placed beside each tree. This was a practical, economical, and aesthetic solution. Being stone and not metal, the boulders were also unlikely to attract thieves. The boulder stones, appropriately enough, were to come from the Hutt River.

Early in 2009 Downer Works Facilities Maintenance was contracted to do the job.⁹ The old plaques were carefully cut out from the base of each tree, although on two of the trees this was obviously going to be fatal so that two original bronze plaques for Mayors W.G. Foster, 1898-1900, and E.P. Rishworth, 1918-1921, are still in place today.¹⁰ The remaining bronze plaques that were removed from the trees went into storage but in the ten months after they were removed they went missing! Downer Facilities said that one of their temporary labourers must have thrown the plaques out of the shed where they were stored.¹¹ One may speculate on this as non-ferrous metals are worth quite a lot of money. Be that as it may, an excellent and very professional stone engraving job was carried out by Glover Memorials in Naenae, who also handpicked the replacement boulder stones.¹²

Clearly this was a case where the historical details needed for this work could not have been obtained from the original plaques. The



Figure 2: Tree planted by Mayor W.T. Strand (photo by author).



Figure 3 Bronze plaque for Mayor Foster (photo by author).

Hutt City Council Archives confirm that thankfully the information was located, after considerable research, in the original Lower Hutt Borough Council Town Clerk's correspondence files. The project was completed by the end of April 2010.

Because of its partial timber construction the original Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand posed a potential fire risk, a theme which, as we shall see, has always been present in the minds of Hutt City parks managers. In the case of the grandstand, opened in 1934,¹³ the fire risk proved to be fatal to the old building.

An engineer's report in 1991 noted that "The Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand is a well-built structure of approximately sixty years of age. It is essentially a timber framed structure with a number of concrete walls at ground floor level."¹⁴ Disaster struck on the afternoon of 30th September 1998 when the upper two timber stories of the structure were completely destroyed by fire, leaving the concrete ground floor as the sole survivor. Ironically this proved to be a fortuitous outcome as the architects of the new replacement grandstand, Peddle Thorpe and Montgomery, were able to replicate the old building using the original ground floor and foundations as the footprint for the new building. An extract from the minutes of a special council meeting dated 19th November 1998, show that the decision to replicate was a popular choice arrived at by consultation with Cricket New Zealand and the Hutt District Cricket Club.¹⁵

The minutes state that the cause of the fire was an electrical fault but there are no further details. Perhaps the most interesting documents attached to the minutes are copies of the plans and elevations by the architects. These show that although the grandstand was reconstructed in the same style as the original 1930s design, it was built with modernised facilities inside.¹⁶

A full set of the plans can be viewed in the Hutt Recreation Ground



Figure 4: The smoking ruins of the old grandstand (Hutt City Council Archives, Parks and Gardens file PL12-3-HR-1/4).

Grandstand contract documents.¹⁷ Equally interesting are the spectacular minute by minute photographs of the fire found in the files.¹⁸ They show just how devastating it was with people looking on helplessly as the fire tenders tried to put the fire out.

The new Hutt Recreation Ground grandstand was officially opened by Mayor John Terris on 12th December 1999.¹⁹ Anyone looking at the Grandstand from the outside today who didn't know there had been a devastating fire in 1998, would think they were looking at the original building. According to the groundsman, people returning to the Hutt after an absence of many years have thought the same thing.²⁰ It is a credit to the architects that the rebuild was done so sensitively and so well.

The near total loss of the Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand by fire was not forgotten by Parks and Gardens managers when, two years later in April 2000, it was discovered that a club leasing the hall in the Petone Recreation Ground Grandstand had been using fire for one of its indoor game activities. The HCC Divisional Manager of Leisure Services sought legal advice because of his concern that if the activity got out of hand the Council would have a repeat of the Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand fire on its hands. The advice he received was that Council could not be held liable for any accident because there was no clause in



Figure 5: The Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand fire, shortly after the peak of the fire on the afternoon of 30 September, 1998. The date shown by the camera is incorrect. (Hutt City Archives, Parks and Gardens file PL12-3-HR-1/4).



Figure 6: The new Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand. Photo probably taken before the official opening on 12 December 1999. (Hutt City Archives, Parks and Gardens file PL12-3-HR-1/4).

the lease that prohibited the club from using the grandstand hall for its activities. The only solution was to obtain an indemnity from the club as a form of insurance against accidents occurring.

The Parks and Gardens files show that there were many knotty legal issues like this concerning leasehold arrangements with sporting clubs. Some of the issues lasted for years but it is worth noting that recreation grounds in the Hutt were also places of advanced scientific engineering in playing field technology.

In this regard the Petone Recreation Ground appears to have been the first sports facility in the Hutt Valley to install a scientifically engineered playing surface ready for the Shell Series cricket match between Wellington and Otago in January 1992.²¹

In his press release about the new playing surface, Mayor Glen Evans described the surface as a “revolutionary” wicket block. The block, he said, was constructed at Petone, and was “based on a system commonly used for golf greens in North America, whereby the golf green, or in this case the wicket strip is entirely isolated by a plastic membrane from the surrounding earth. The Petone wicket block contains six such wickets, each filled with specially prepared materials, with underground watering systems and drainage as well as overhead watering. The new wicket was designed by Keith McAuliffe of the New Zealand Turf Culture Institute and Alex Benton of the Recreation Division of Council.”²² For engineers who are interested in the subject the specifications for the new turf are on file, and the design was called the “Pickering” system. It set off a turf improvement development in the Hutt Valley which had long term benefits for other parks.

Six months later, in the winter of 1992 for instance, the hockey players at Fraser Park came forward with a proposal to install an artificial playing field surface along with a hockey stadium to replace their old club house at the park.²³ An artificial hockey field surface, according to the specifications on file drawn up by consulting engineers Ian Macallan & Co Ltd, would consist of a high performance “top of the line” sand filled synthetic turf known as Astrograss.²⁴ From a planning point of view the proposal would cost Council \$556,000 which the Council was able to budget for in the Annual Plan. However the proposal became a political rather than a technical issue, the problem being that two cricket blocks would have to be relocated to the western side of the Hutt River stop bank in order to accommodate the new hockey field proposal. This was land subject to flooding from the river. Feelings ran high with the Taita District Cricket Club being split in half, some supporting the Hockey

proposal and some against. After two years of intense meetings between Parks managers and the Cricket Club, enlivened by people walking out of meetings in a huff, a solution was arrived at with the Hockey Club being relocated to the south-western end of Fraser Park on a piece of ground adjacent to the Avalon TV studios, well away from the cricket pitches at the north western end. The artificial Hockey surface was approved when council publicly notified its intention in November 1994, to "lease the TV Ground for a synthetic hockey field."²⁵

Returning to our previous theme of fire risk, it is clear from the Parks and Gardens files that it relates directly to another theme which emerges quite strongly in the files – the risk of fire and other forms of damage caused by vandals. Anyone interested in the management of vandalism in public parks will be interested in the techniques used by parks managers in the Hutt to deal with the problem. There is no doubt that vandalism is an expensive problem for local authorities, since it involves damage done to sports changing sheds, club houses, toilets, showers and the actual playing fields themselves. However it is also apparent that where there is accidental damage to park facilities the consequences and the solutions are somewhat different.

Looking at the theme of vandalism first, the Parks and Gardens files show that it basically takes several forms. A common form is (or was) driving vehicles after hours, usually at night, over turf that has been carefully and lovingly maintained by council contractors for sports club use. Another form is the common one of spray painting surfaces with graffiti, as happened to the toilets of the new grandstand at the Hutt Recreation Ground in February 2007. Trashing a building is also another activity and yet another form, the most dangerous and certainly the most expensive, is setting fire to it. An example of this was the William Jones Park toilets in Wainuiomata which were set on fire in the early hours of 25 September 2002. The toilets adjoined the Wainuiomata Squash Club. The fire destroyed the toilets and damaged the squash club changing rooms, upstairs seating area, and electrical wiring. The cost of repairing the damage and replacing the toilets was estimated to be \$35,000.²⁶

Many of the files contain both reports and photographs of vandalism. One file in particular illustrates the shocking damage done to the changing shed and toilets at Strand Park on the eastern bank of the Hutt River. The photographs, shown here, were taken by Council staff in 2007. Fortunately for Council the financial cost of repairing the facility at Strand Park was a non-issue as the changing shed was demolished when the Hutt River stop banks were realigned by the Greater Wellington



Figure 7: Changing Shed, Strand Park, 2007 (H.C. Archives).



Figure 8: Interior of the shed (H.C. Archives, PL12-3-ST-1, PL12-3-ST-1).

Regional Council in 2008.²⁷

Other parks were not so fortunate, requiring ratepayer money to be spent on security chain fences and steel gates, with locks, to stop individuals getting in after hours and causing damage in vehicles. In 2003 the maintenance contractors at Leonard Wood Park in Wainuiomata, reported that hoons had cut the padlock off the gate. This must have required the use of bolt-cutters. The contractors didn't know about it until they came to mow the lawns ten days later.²⁸

It is apparent from the files that the vandals at Leonard Wood Park had a long standing interest in committing a particular form of vandalism by driving off-road motor bikes over the park after hours. In 1997 the HCC Parks Technical Officer adopted the tactic of sending out a circular letter to residents living next to the park, asking them to write down the registration number of offending vehicles and to contact the Police if they saw people riding trail bikes.

The Parks and Gardens files also show that motorbikes were not the only problem. Four wheel drive vehicles were also a problem. In 2006 a resident living next to Trafalgar Park at Waiwhetu wrote to council that one driver of a four wheel drive vehicle regularly turned up at midnight to perform "donuts" in the park. What is interesting about this resident's correspondence is that after noting down the vehicle registration number (which could not have been easy in the dark) and reporting the matter to the Police, he went back to the park grounds on Sunday morning and took photographs of the damage which he attached to his letter, and which we can see on file.

Accidental damage to park facilities however, invited different solutions. At Sladden Park, located on Gear Island opposite Strand Park on the Western side of the Hutt River, vehicle barriers with bollards had to be erected in 2007 to prevent spectators at the park from tearing up the grass by parking their cars on the turf and turning it into a quagmire.²⁹

Perhaps the most extraordinary case of accidental damage to be found in the files is the story of a mother and her four children who, in November 1996, was trapped in the Hutt Recreation Ground female toilets which had a faulty lock. Her husband spent over an hour trying to get help and finally tried to kick down the door in a desperate attempt to rescue his family. The door finally succumbed with the assistance of the recreation ground security guard who arrived late, but who also put his boot into the door along with the husband. In a lengthy letter to the Mayor, John Terris, the husband explained what happened and asked for an apology, which he duly received along with the information that the toilet locks had been changed to Cabin Locks to ensure that small children could not close toilet doors accidentally – which is what had actually happened.³⁰

Stories of vandalism of one form or another can be depressing reading but there is at least a humorous side to the theme as well. A member of the Hutt Multisport Club emailed the HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager in March 2007 supporting the council policy of opening the gates to Sladden Park at 6am so that kayakers could gain access to the river in the morning. He went on to say “Paddlers feel we assist Hutt City by intervening when we see vandalism occurring. One young gentleman of about 8-9 years who was writing over the playfort in wide tipped ink pen told me, after I asked him to stop, that he would trash my car when I was out of sight and then get his dad to bash me!”³¹

Being bashed by a little boy’s father was an unlikely thing to happen to anyone legitimately using Lower Hutt’s parks and gardens in daylight. But the risk of being mugged, or worse raped, after hours was obviously a legitimate fear (as it must always be) in the minds of responsible citizens. The subject of assault, or the risk of it, is referred to only once in the Parks and Gardens files. It concerned an incident at the Hutt Recreation Ground which turned out to be a management issue, not without its humour, and fortunately not an actual case of assault. It is worth relating as it revealed that managers sometimes needed to have the patience of a saint in exercising their judgement before things got out of hand.

In this particular incident, the HCC Divisional Manager of Leisure Services was on duty during the Christmas/New Year break of 1995-1996. In a lengthy handwritten file note, obviously written in real-time when all the other staff were on leave, he wrote that the Bellevue Hotel, located adjacent to the Hutt Recreation Ground on Woburn Road, was staging a huge new year’s party and that the organiser of the New Year’s

party, a person identified as “Steve”, wanted the recreation ground floodlights left on between midnight and 2pm, “so patrons leaving the party will not be assaulted or raped by anyone lurking in the shadows.”³³ The HCC Leisure Services Manager, aware that residents living next to the Recreation Ground complained if the lights were left on after 10pm, was abused and threatened when he declined the request from the New Year’s party organiser. The following day it was discovered that under the new district scheme one tower light could be left on between midnight and 1am. The Police, who had offered to increase their presence if the floodlights were not turned on, were advised and said they thought midnight to 1pm was a good compromise.³³ The hotel party organiser for his part did not offer any apology but instead offered free tickets to the party. The offer of course was declined.

If the Parks and Gardens files sometimes demonstrate that exercising the patience of a saint is a skill not uncommon among council officers, a related theme is that under certain circumstances local government may be seen to be exercising the Wisdom of Solomon. Local government in action figures prominently in the Parks and Gardens files and there are several outstanding stories which illustrate this theme and constitute the remainder of this essay. One of them, the regional stadium debate was, and still is, quite significant, but it is worth noting how the local government process works at the Hutt. Briefly, local government in the Hutt works through various boards and committees. In the case of Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata, because these were originally Borough Councils before amalgamation with Lower Hutt in 1989, representation is through elected Community Boards. Other wards in the Hutt maintain Community Committees with appointed membership. Boards and committees consider local issues, and if they have city-wide implications may refer their recommendations to full council through various council sub-committees.³⁴ An interesting example of this process at work may be found in the files of the H.W. Shortt Recreation Ground, otherwise known as Shortt Park, in Eastbourne. Here the Hutt City Leisure Services Division demonstrated the kind of leadership role council business units have in processing the decisions of community groups and organisations through to council committee level.

The Shortt Recreation Ground is relatively old, being previously known as the Eastbourne Recreation Ground when it was established in the days of the old Eastbourne Borough Council in the early 1900s.³⁵ Unfortunately for the sports clubs that use the ground, particularly cricket, the area is relatively short of flat land. In 2001 the Eastbourne

Cricket Club proposed to council to extend Shortt Park onto the beach in order to increase the playing area for senior grade cricket.³⁶ There are a number of pohutukawa trees on the site which were, and are, a great favourite with the residents of Eastbourne but unfortunately they were at risk because they mark the boundary between the western edge of the park and the top of the beach at Days Bay.

At the time the proposal was made, Hutt City Council Leisure Services Division recommended that before it could give approval to the proposal, the club would have to undertake extensive consultation with local residents in the community before the matter could be considered by the council. Leisure Services recommended consultation with the East Harbour Environmental Association, the Department of Conservation, The Wellington Regional Council and the Wellington Tenth Trust.³⁷

For the next four years consultation was carried out with particular attention being paid to the environmental impact of the proposal. As mentioned, the western boundary of Shortt Park extends along the top of the beach at Days Bay with Pohutukawa trees marking the boundary. Beyond the boundary the beach contains unique sand dunes that are regularly maintained through weeding and planting by a community Trees and Dunes Protection Group. As part of its proposal the cricket club had employed engineers, Truebridge Callender Beach, to prepare a development proposal, a copy of which is on file. The proposal involved felling the pohutukawa trees, creating an extension of the cricket ground by twenty five metres over the dunes, filling in the area over the dunes and creating a rock wall to mark the new seaward boundary. The area reclaimed would cover 1900 square metres of which 600 square metres had native dune cover.³⁸ By September 2003, after meetings with the Council, the East Harbour Association, and the Dunes group, the latter organisation publicly stated that they “were totally opposed to the ground expansion on principle,” and were not prepared to work with the Cricket Club to make its proposal a reality.³⁹

With matters at a stalemate, another two years of discussions and reports flowed backwards and forwards between the affected groups. Finally, on 9 May 2005, Leisure Services Division recommended to the Council Operations and Compliance Committee that the Committee “declines the Eastbourne Cricket Club’s request for approval to expand HW Shortt Recreation Reserve on the basis that the benefits generated by expanding the ground are outweighed by the likely adverse effects on informal coastal recreation opportunities, the coastal environment, natural character and visual amenity values of HW Shortt and its adjoining

coastline.”⁴⁰ The final outcome of this recommendation is recorded in the minutes of the Operations and Compliance Committee which met to consider the issue on 19 July 2005. The committee noted that although the proposal had been fully assessed by consultants, “two coastal experts have considered the proposal and one considers that the proposed extension will further degrade coastal values in this area, while the other believes that it is premature to determine whether the accretion along this piece of coastline is a long-term trend.”⁴¹ The committee therefore resolved to decline the Eastbourne Cricket Club’s request for approval to extend HW Shortt Park. The decision of the Council Operations and Compliance Committee appears to have been final as there is no record of any further decision regarding the Eastbourne Cricket Club proposal in the full Council minutes for the period August-September 2005.

The Shortt Park saga illustrates how amalgamation in the Hutt brought with it new management responsibilities for Parks and Gardens managers since, with amalgamation, they inherited the parks previously managed by the borough councils. In the case of Memorial Park, Petone, amalgamation presented Hutt City with an unexpected problem concerning lease arrears.

Memorial Park, which includes Sladden Park, is situated on Gear Island at the mouth of the Hutt River. Gear Island is so named because it was originally the site of a Gear Meat Works facility.⁴² The lease for Memorial Park was an issue which apparently no one in the Hutt City Council had thought about until 1995, when it was discovered that the Council was six years in arrears for its rates payments to the owners of the land, the Wellington Regional Council.⁴³ The Petone Borough Council had had a prior lease arrangement for Memorial Park going back to the days when the Hutt River Board owned the park. The Borough Council also had a sub-lease arrangement with the Petone Football Club who, since 1960, claimed Memorial Park as their home and who, since 1976, wanted to make substantial improvements to the park including new changing rooms and a new grandstand.⁴⁴

Since it had managed Memorial Park for six years the Hutt City Council needed to update its rent payments for the park before it could advance any development proposals. Accordingly the first step had been to ask the Regional Council for a renewal of the lease in 1995.⁴⁵ The Regional Council for its part however, apparently forgot about the request for several years. This was an untypical response but it was probably due to the fact that there was a long-term issue about stop bank management which had traditionally been divided up between the Hutt River Board,

which had ceased to exist in 1973, the Petone Borough Council, and Lower Hutt.⁴⁶ The Hutt City Council's property advisers wrote to Council in February 1998 that "The Wellington Regional Council has not yet made any decision as to the future of its land holding at Memorial Park ... the Regional Council is commencing a review ... we suspect that the process could take a long time ..."⁴⁷ Eventually the Regional Council did renew the lease, but only for four years.⁴⁸

In 2005 Memorial Park was gazetted by Land Information New Zealand as vested in the Hutt City Council.⁴⁹ The change of ownership enabled the council to settle the outstanding sub-lease issue with the Petone Football Club; it also allowed council to deal directly with the recommendations of the Petone Community Board with regard to a new proposal from Capital Soccer which, on behalf of the Petone Soccer Club, wished to upgrade the Memorial Park grandstand.⁵⁰

Memorial Park is a recreation ground that has a direct reference in its title to being an actual memorial. Of interest to social historians is the fact that the memorial status refers to a preference adopted by New Zealand communities after the Second World War to create memorials to the war that had a community use, rather than create more stone memorials of the type that were preferred after World War One. The Petone Borough Council settled for a Memorial Park on Gear Island, and as part of that created a Garden of Remembrance in one corner of the park which was opened in 1960.⁵¹ The files show that the Garden of Remembrance had become run down by 1994 and that there was no memorial plaque to Petone servicemen who had served in World War Two. It was left to a former mayor of Petone, Hutt City Councillor Ted Woolf, to see to it that a bronze memorial plaque was mounted in the garden in 1999.⁵² There is a lot of detailed research on file into the names of the servicemen which are recorded on the plaque. The plaque itself was made by a local Taita man (unnamed) who paid for it himself.⁵³ As part of the Garden of Remembrance upgrade in 1995 a new sundial cast in gun metal and mounted on Kairuru marble, was erected in the middle of the garden to replace one destroyed by vandals; around its base is inscribed a poem, *The Soldier*, by Rupert Brooke. The original hand-drawn plans for the sundial are included in the file.⁵⁴

Although the story of Memorial Park is an illustration of the theme of local government in action at both the local and regional level, the theme is perhaps best illustrated in the Parks and Gardens files with regard to the famous Regional Stadium debate. This took place between 1990 and 1994 and was a debate in which Lower Hutt became heavily

involved. During this time Fraser Park at Taita was a serious contender for the Wellington Regional Stadium.

This development came about partly through the Hockey Foundation proposal for an artificial playing field at Fraser Park which, as we have seen, took over two years to resolve during the same period. It was a proposed development that prompted Mayor Glen Evans to say, after listening to the Taita Cricket Club concerns over the hockey proposal, that a conflict between hockey and cricket illustrated the need for having a "proper development plan for Fraser Park generally."⁵⁵ In this uncertain situation the main impetus for a development plan catering for a multi-use stadium, was to come from a much bigger player.

The Parks and Gardens files tell the story of how Downer Developments Ltd was the first organization to approach the Hutt Development Board late in 1990 with a proposal to build a multi-sport stadium at Fraser Park. Downers had the support of the Wellington Rugby Union, the Wellington Rugby League, the Hutt Valley Softball Association, the Wellington Cricket Association and the Avalon Sports Association.⁵⁶ The proposal came as no surprise since the Wellington Rugby Union had publicly stated that it had experienced difficulty in negotiating an acceptable rental for Athletic Park, which needed upgrading, in order to host international test matches for the Winfield Cup.⁵⁷

As a result of Downer's proposal, the Hutt Development Board had received a report in December 1990 from the acting chairman of the Board in which he outlined a three stage feasibility study for the redevelopment of Fraser Park. Stage One identified a requirement for a more up-to-date outdoor sports venue in the Wellington Region. About 400,000 spectators a year would be needed to support the venture. Stage Two would involve a detailed stadium design and site assessment for Fraser Park. Stage Three would assess the financial viability of the stadium proposal and recommend financial options.⁵⁸

The Development Board immediately commissioned an organisation called the International Facility Corporation Pty Ltd, to produce a "Feasibility Study for Fraser Park as a Regional Stadium". The study, dated 31 May 1991, can be read on file.⁵⁹ It consists of a detailed market assessment based on the proposal to include rugby league at Fraser Park specifically for Winfield Cup matches. On the basis of this market study, the executive summary recommended a multi-purpose stadium be developed with a seating capacity between 30,000 and 35,000 to accommodate international events and, "to be the home for a Winfield Cup rugby league franchise." The cost of the proposal was estimated to

be in the order of fifty million dollars.⁶⁰

In September 1991 events took a new turn with the appearance at a special meeting of the Hutt City Council of John Morrison, part owner at the time of the Wellington Dolphins Rugby League Limited. Morrison stated that the Dolphins had the support of the rugby league parent body in Australia (the New South Wales Rugby League) to enter the Winfield Cup Rugby League competition.⁶¹ At a meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee in April 1992 he again appeared, and stated that the Dolphins were desirous of using Fraser Park as their home venue but that the park would have to be up to the Winfield Cup standard.⁶²

To achieve their objective the Dolphins had come up with their own development proposal which was to build a multi-use stadium at the cost of five million dollars. This would be a stadium not just for Rugby League but for most other sports users of Fraser Park. On 13 March 1992 the Dolphins made a formal proposal to the Hutt City Council in which the club proposed to borrow five million dollars from the National Bank with Council acting as guarantor for the loan.⁶³ This could be done, so the proposal went, by creating a joint Venture company to be called "Newco", 'joint' meaning the Dolphins and Hutt City Council acting in partnership but with the Dolphins having pre-emptive rights for twenty years over the use of a major part of Fraser Park.⁶⁴ This was a tricky proposal. It would effectively remove control of Field Number One, the principal field in the park, from the Council. Council for its part would contract not Downer Developments, but Fletcher Construction Ltd to develop and upgrade the park. The Hutt City Council would guarantee the loan by taking the revenue from gate sales and paying that money back into the joint venture company to repay the bank loan.

According to the minutes of the Community Services Group, the Hutt City Council supported the Dolphin's proposal in principle but there was a flaw regarding the pre-emptive rights issue. No sports club can act as a developer on public reserve land. In later years this was to become an issue with other parks. As we have seen Capital Soccer faced this problem at Memorial Park in 2005, and the Eastbourne Cricket Club had also faced the same potential problem by proposing to extend Shortt Park in 2001.⁶⁵

The interesting thing about the March 1992 Newco proposal is that it proposed an attractive development for Fraser Park that was forty-five million dollars less than the cost estimated by the Facilities Development Corporation study of nearly a year before. There is nothing on file that explains this huge difference in cost, unless it was assumed by the parties

concerned that additional development costs would be met by regional ratepayers, the lotteries, or Winfield, or all of these. Even so Hutt City Council Community Services had doubts about servicing the five million dollar loan in spite of the apparent advantages of the proposal. They thought that although the stadium debt could be repaid well before the proposed lease term with the Dolphins of 20 years expired, this might not happen if gate sales went down for any reason, or if the Dolphins folded up, leaving the Hutt City Council liable for five million dollars.⁶⁶ A month later, in an internal memo, Mayor Glen Evans wrote "We need to sight the documents detailing the nature of the arrangements with the New South Wales Rugby League, to ensure that there is confirmation of a long-term commitment ... What guarantees or assurances are available to the venture company from the Dolphins and its promoters?"⁶⁷

By 1994 the Fraser Park files show that some council officers had obviously become aware that the Dolphins proposal, apart from causing dislocation to other sports users of the park by having pre-emptive rights over Field Number One, would cost a lot more than five million dollars. The Divisional Manager of Recreation and Leisure Services wrote to the Hutt Development Board in May 1994 that although the 1991 Facility Development Corporation Feasibility Study for an international stadium at Fraser Park recommended the park as the best site in the region, a critical issue was whether a stadium seating 35,000 people was needed at all. From a financial point of view he asked, how was a stadium to be paid for? The proposal, he thought, would cost up to sixty million dollars requiring three million dollars a year for over twenty years to service the loan.⁶⁸ In a report written the same year for the Community Services Group on the Astrograss artificial hockey field surface, he again reiterated his concern: "In 1991 Facility Development Corporation carried out a feasibility study on a major multiuse stadium seating 35,000 spectators on Fraser Park. This would dislocate at least 50% of all existing use on the park. In the officers' opinion this project is both unviable and undesirable!"⁶⁹

Not all of the planning officers at council supported this view. Some maintained that there was a general agreement on re-siting other park users to accommodate a multi-use stadium.⁷⁰ Nevertheless the comments of the HCC Divisional Manager of Recreation and Leisure Services came during a period when the other competitors for a regional stadium, Wellington and Porirua, were coming forward with their proposals and felt the need for an arbitrator to settle the issue. Initially this was to be the Wellington Regional Council. In a letter from the Regional Council,

dated 6th September 1993, addressed to the HCC Group Manager City Environment, the Regional Council's Planning and Environment Manager stated that the Regional Council intended to undertake an in-house study of five stadium options, Athletic Park, Aotea Stadium, the Basin Reserve, Fraser Park, and the Railyards site at Thorndon. The study would be, quote, a "quick and dirty stadium study," with the objective of providing, "an objective regional assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the options."⁷¹

The Hutt City Council understood from this that the Wellington City Council was considering *all* the options as was the Regional Council. The HCC Divisional Manager of Special Projects reported to the Hutt Policy and Finance Committee on 30th March 1994, that the Wellington City Council had considered a "feasibility study on a multi-purpose stadium in Wellington."⁷² The study, he said, considered Athletic Park, the Basin Reserve, and the Railyard site. He went on to say that two other options had been "mentioned" these being Fraser Park, Lower Hutt, and the Aotea Centre, Porirua.⁷³ This may have been a reference to other discussions being held in Wellington at the time, but neither of these two latter stadium options is actually mentioned in the copies of two Wellington City Council reports on file.

To clarify this point, two documents are attached to the Special Projects Manager's report which are copies of a "Feasibility study on a multi-purpose stadium in Wellington" and a "Report on a multi-purpose Stadium in Wellington presented to Wellington City Councillors at a special meeting of the WCC Culture and Recreation Committee on Friday 4 February 1994."⁷⁴ The Feasibility study is obviously the one referred to in the HCC Project Manager's report. It was written by Ernst & Young and was commissioned by the Wellington City Council in 1993, but it is a disappointing document as far as consideration of regional options were concerned in that it considers only the Basin Reserve site option; the study estimated that a stadium built there would cost fifty-one million dollars. The second document, a report written by the Wellington City Council General Manager Culture & Recreation, refers to the Ernst & Young study and, not surprisingly, considers only several options - development of Athletic Park, the Basin Reserve, and the Railyards site. Fraser Park and the proposed Aotea Centre are not in fact mentioned at all in this second document.⁷⁵

In fairness to the Wellington City Council, an obvious determination to have a stadium located in Wellington City was in itself a legitimate ambition although from another perspective the situation had become

something of a Catch 22 scenario. The HCC Special Projects Manager states in his report that the Regional Council had no power under the Local Government Act to assist with the development of a regional stadium; "However," he went on to say "it has been reported that the mayor of Wellington has had discussions with the Prime Minister on this issue. The content and outcome of those discussions is unknown at present."⁷⁶

The Wellington City Council may also have been aware that notwithstanding media hype about "jealousy" existing between Lower Hutt and Wellington over the stadium issue, and that the local authorities were at "loggerheads" over the three different site options,⁷⁷ Lower Hutt was in fact prepared to accede to public opinion if a Wellington venue is what people wanted.⁷⁸ Two letters to the Chief Executive Officer of the Hillary Commission written by the Manager of Hutt City Environment, on 28th July and 1st August 1994, show that Hutt City was anything but at "loggerheads" with Wellington regarding the stadium debate.⁷⁹ It was simply a case where the rules of the game appeared to be going against Lower Hutt and that Lower Hutt accepted the situation although, perhaps, reluctantly and with some regret.

Essentially, according to the City Environment Manager, the Hutt City Council's position was that if a Wellington site, the Railyard site, or the Aotea Centre site located in Porirua City, was not selected, Fraser Park merited consideration as "an excellent sporting facility with sufficient development room to realise its enormous potential."⁸⁰ This potential, he went on to say, "Is however seen as a second level facility if a main stadium is located outside of Lower Hutt City."⁸¹ The Hutt City Council had been contemplating a 35,000 seat stadium which would cater for the Winfield Cup, but that "its recent thinking had been influenced by promotions by the Wellington City Council and the Porirua City Council to provide a stadium within those cities."⁸² Consequently proposals for Fraser Park in connection with the Winfield Cup had not been resolved.⁸³

The Hutt City Environment Manager's letters to the Hillary Commission show that by the second half of 1994, after a year of intense media attention in the Dominion and Hutt News newspapers – all which can be read in the clippings on file – the politics of the situation had now shifted from the Regional Council to the Hillary Commission to act as arbitrator in the stadium debate.⁸⁴ At the request of a meeting of stakeholders in June 1994, Sir Wilson Whineray, Chairman of the Hillary Commission, was asked to prepare a report for Wyatt Creech, Deputy Minister of Finance, investigating the proposed sites for the regional stadium.⁸⁵

In this context Wilson Whineray's report to Wyatt Creech, dated 2nd August 1994, just one day after the HCC Environment Manager's last letter to the Hillary Commission, is significant for an understanding of the stadium debate and its final outcome. A copy of Whineray's report can be read on file and amounts to ten pages,⁸⁶ but in fact only one page, page one, has a summary of the Hutt's position which is not referred to again. Whineray wrote, "Although at the outset it was thought that there were three proposals for review, advice from the Hutt City Council re. Fraser Park has been that only if a decision was made to move out of Wellington City would they want Fraser Park considered as a serious alternative to Aotea. In order to proceed to a decision I decided to consider the Aotea and Railyards proposals first, and depending on the outcome review Fraser Park if necessary."⁸⁷

Wyatt Creech wrote to Mayor Glen Evans two days later on 4th August, attaching Whineray's report. Creech wrote "As you can see his Report recommends that the stadium proceed on the railyard site."⁸⁸ A month before he had received Whineray's report Mayor Glen Evans, with some prescience, was quoted in the Hutt News as saying "It is clear at the moment that the major sporting codes and corporates prefer the proposed Wellington railway site. This is a fact of life."⁸⁹

In an extraordinary turn of events, at the time of writing this article the Wellington Phoenix Football Club made a surprise announcement that they had asked one of Hutt City's council controlled organisations, the Hutt City Community Facilities Trust, to back a proposal to build a supplementary regional stadium at the south end of the Petone Recreation Ground because, it is claimed, the current venue for football A-League matches, the Westpac Stadium, is not ideal.⁹⁰ Who says that history doesn't repeat itself?

Bibliography

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- McGill, David: *Lower Hutt. The First Garden City*. The Lower Hutt City Council, 1991.
- Butterworth, Susan: *Petone: A History*. Petone Borough Council, 1988.
- Beaglehole, Ann with Carew, Alison: *Eastbourne: A History of the Eastern Bays of Wellington Harbour*. The Historical Society of Eastbourne Inc., 2001.
- Kaye, George: *Bygone Days in Lower Hutt*. Lower Hutt City Council, 1987.
- Lower Hutt Borough Council: *Lower Hutt Past and Present: A Centennial and Jubilee Publication Published by the Lower Hutt Borough Council to Commemorate the Jubilee of the Foundation of the Borough on the 1st February, 1891, and its Elevation to City Status on the 1st February, 1941*. Hutt News Printing & Publishing Company Ltd, 1941.

Hutt City Council Archives

Primary Sources

NOTE: The following list includes Council registered and unregistered files.

PL12-3. Hutt City Council-Property and Land Management-Leisure Facilities/Park & Recreation Grounds-Sports Parks.

AD16-2768. Hutt City Council-Administration-Contract files. Peddle Thorp Montgomery contract and drawings.

[No File Reference] (HCC Archives Ref: ARCH71209). Lower Hutt City Council-Miscellaneous Records [Lower Hutt]. Fraser Park (Taita Reserve), 1948-1980.

41-3-1 to 41-3-5. (HCC Archives Ref: ARCH17851-17854, 17856). Petone Borough Council-Central Filing System [Petone]-Parks and Reserves. Memorial Park.

CM80-12-4-DOC/11/84464. Hutt City Council-Corporate Management-Information Management-Archives Management-Public Access. Governance in The Wellington Region.

CM80-12-4-DOC/10/21541. Hutt City Council-Corporate Management-Information Management-Archives Management-Public Access. Lower Hutt Mayors & Hutt City Council 1891-2010.

CPP70-13-DOC/11/13827. Hutt City Council-Policy and Planning-Council Performance-Community Boards and Community Committees. Functions and Delegations: Terms of Reference, November 2010.

CM80-12-4-DOC/12/525. Hutt City Council-Corporate Management-Information Management-Archives Management-Public Access. The Origins of the Wellington Regional Council.

15775. (HCC Archives Ref: ARCH28711). Lower Hutt City Council-Town Clerk's Department Correspondence. Coronation Celebrations Commemorative Oak Trees and Plaques, 1937-1941.

319-20-1, Vol. 1. (HCC Archives Ref: ARCH54776). Lower Hutt City Council-Town Clerk Chief Executive's Filing System. Hutt Recreation Ground-General, 1952-1965.

[No File Reference] (HCC Archives Ref: ARCH71209). Lower Hutt City Council-Miscellaneous Records [Lower Hutt]. Hutt Recreation Ground, 1950-1980.

[No File Reference] Hutt City Council Historic Aerials. Hutt Recreation Ground-1941, 2013.

CM80-12-4 ENQ 2009-497. Hutt City Council-Corporate Management-Information Management-Archives Management-Public Access. The Dominion Post, 24/2/2010, A13 News. "Inscriptions from old Hutt plaques to be set in stone."

Anyone who is interested in seeing the Parks and Gardens files described in the above article should contact Hutt City Council Archives, 487 Hutt Road Lower Hutt, Tel. 04 589-0460, and/or Hutt City Council website at www.huttcity.govt.nz. An historical and pictorial survey by the author of the commemorative oak trees at the Hutt Recreation Ground, is also available for reference on compact disc.

Endnotes

1. *Lower Hutt Past and Present*, p.91. Cf. File PL12-3-HR-1/4, Mayor John Terris, *Speech Notes on the Opening of the New Grandstand*, 12 Dec. 1999.
2. 15775-ARCH28711. Correspondence, Town Clerk to Minister of Internal Affairs, 11/3/1938. Cf. Town Clerk to the Superintendent of Reserves, Cornwall Park, Hastings, NZ, 27/2/1940. Cf. *Order of Service Borough of Lower Hutt, Coronation of Their Majesties King George VI, and Queen Elizabeth. Citizens' Service, Recreation Ground, Lower Hutt*, 12 May 1937. Cf. *Internal Affairs correspondence*, 7/2/1938, 11/3/1938, 8/6/1939.
3. The term "commemorative avenue" is first used, as far as I can tell, by David Millar in his 1972 history *Once Upon a Village*, where he says, p.152, "Then all living ex-Mayors, the current mayor, J.W. Andrews, descendants of deceased mayors and representatives of Lower Hutt organizations planted an avenue of scarlet oaks from the grandstand to the Woburn Road entrance of the Recreation ground, each tree being marked with a bronze plaque." Cf. file 15775-ARCH28711, *Order of Service, Ibid.*
4. 15775-ARCH28711. The file contains, on undated foolscap sheets, type-written mock-ups of each of the eleven plaques showing all the historical details as they appeared on the original bronze plaques, and as they appear today on stone boulders.
5. 15775-ARCH28711. Correspondence, *Ibid*, Town Clerk to Minister of Internal Affairs, 11/3/1938. Cf. Town Clerk to former Mayor, W.T. Strand, 26/4/1937. The full list of 11 Mayors and 8 organizations who planted trees is printed in the *Order of Service*. The Mayors, some of whom were represented by relatives, cover a period in the history of the Borough of Lower Hutt from the first Mayor of 1891 (W.A Fitzherbert) to the eleventh Mayor (J.W. Andrews) in office from 1933 to 1947. Lower Hutt became a city on 1st February, 1941.
6. CM80-12-4 ENQ2009-497. *The Dominion Post*, 24/2/2010, A13 News. "Inscriptions from old Hutt plaques to be set in stone." With regard to the Woburn Road oak trees, as can be seen today the concrete plinths for the plaques stand out well forward of the tree trunks which, evidentially, was not the case with the commemorative avenue trees.
7. 15775-ARCH28711. Type-written mock-up of the original bronze plaque, *Ibid*, and present day stone boulder.
8. File PL12-3-HR-1/7. Correspondence, Dr. M. Rudge to T. Stallinger, CEO HCC, 13/9/2007, and Stallinger to Rudge, 20/9/2007.
9. File PL12-3-HR-1/8. Correspondence, HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager and Downer Works Facilities Maintenance, 19/3/2009-13/4/2010.
10. PL12-3-HR-1/8. Downer Maintenance advised on 19th March 2009 about the technique they had used to carefully cut the "old plaques" out from the roots of the trees, as they were afraid that vandals "would wrench the plaques out causing damage to the tree roots."
11. File PL12-3-HR-1/8. *Ibid*, Correspondence, Area Operations Manager for Downer Works Facilities Maintenance, to HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager, 8/12/2009.
12. CM80-12-4 ENQ2009-497. *The Dominion Post*, 24/2/2010, A13 News, *Ibid*.
13. George Kaye, *Bygone Days in Lower Hutt*. Ch.11, p.51. Cf. File PL12-3-HR-1/4. Mayor John Terris, *Speech Notes on the Opening of the New Grandstand*, 12 Dec. 1999.
14. File PL12-3-HR-1/1. Survey report, Ian Macallan & Co, 31/7/1991.
15. File PL12-3-HR-1/3. HCC City Services Group, Extract from the minutes of the special Council meeting on 19th November 1998, and attached report from the HCC City Development Group, 15 November 1998, *Hutt Recreation Ground Grandstand, Report No. C98/11/4(2)*.
16. File PL12-3-HR-1/3. *Ibid*.
17. File AD16-2768. Peddle Thorp Montgomery contract and drawings.
18. File PL12-3-HR-1/4. The fire started at 12.40 pm. The digital camera photos of the fire are incorrect insofar as they show a date of 1st October 1998. The City Development Group minutes of 15/11/1998 state the fire took place on 30 September 1998. (Refer endnote 15). Mayor Terris' speech notes on the opening of the grandstand also state the fire took place on 30 September, *Ibid*, PL12-3-HR1/4. The photo sequence includes the rebuilding of the new grandstand which took fifteen months.
19. File PL12-3-HR-1/4. *Ibid*. Mayor John Terris, *Speech Notes on the Opening of the New Grandstand*, 12 Dec. 1999.
20. File PL12-3-HR-1/6. News clipping on file, *Hutt News, Sport page*, 1/6/2004. Comments by groundsman Dave Black on his retirement after 34 years at the Hutt Rec. Dave described the day of the fire in 1998 as the worst day of his career.
21. File PL12-3-PR-1/1. Mayoral press release, January 1992: *Revolutionary Wicket Block, on the occasion of the Wellington versus Otago Shell Series Cricket Match at Petone Recreation Ground*.
22. File PL12-3-PR-1/1. Mayoral press release, *Ibid*.
23. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. Correspondence, HCC Divisional Manager Recreation and the Hockey Foundation Artificial Hockey Surface Steering Committee, 11/5/1992-1/11/1993.
24. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. *Ibid*. The consulting engineers Ian Macallan & Co Ltd provided budget estimates for locating an artificial hockey surface to three different locations at Fraser Park.
25. File PL12-3-FR-1/5. Administration Officer for Chief Executive, HCC, to the Chairman of the National Hockey Stadium Trust, 4/11/1994.
26. File PL12-3-WJ-1/2. HCC Operations and Compliance Committee report: Fire Damaged toilets - William Jones Park, 25 September 2002.
27. File PL12-3-ST-1. Correspondence between the HCC and the Greater Wellington Regional Council, 1998-2004; correspondence, HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager and GWRC, 19/3/2007-30/9/2008.
28. File PL12-3-LW-1. Correspondence, Excell Contractors to HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager, 30/9/2003.
29. File PL12-3-SL-1. Correspondence, HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager to a retired gentleman from Upper Hutt.
30. File PL12-3-HR-1/3. Correspondence with Mayor

- John Terris, 5/11/1996; Ground Maintenance Services to Divisional Manager Leisure Services, 15/11/1996; and John Terris's reply to the husband of the woman, 20/11/1996.
31. File PL12-3-SL-1. Correspondence, Kayaker to HCC Sports Ground Assets Manager, 21/3/2007.
 32. File PL12-3-HR-1/2. Handwritten initialled file note, closely written on two sides of a sheet of paper dated Wednesday 28/12/1995.
 33. File PL12-3-HR-1/2. *Ibid.*
 34. File CPP70-13 DOC/11/13827. *Community Boards and Community Committees, Functions and Delegations.*
 35. Beaglehole, A. and Carew, A. *Eastbourne. A History of the Eastern bays of Wellington Harbour.* Pp.87, 92,275.
 36. File PL12-3-HW-1/3. Correspondence, 2001, Eastbourne Cricket Club and HCC Leisure Services Division.
 37. File PL12-3-HW-1/3. *Ibid.*
 38. File PL12-3-HW-1/3. *Ibid.*
 39. File PL12-3-HW-1/3. Quoted in the *Eastbourne Herald*, 26/9/2003, news clipping on file.
 40. File PL12-3-HW-1/3. Report, HCC Leisure Services Division; Recommendation to HCC Operations and Compliance Committee, 9/5/2005.
 41. File PL12-3-HW-1/5. Extract from the minutes of the HCC Operations and Compliance Committee, 19/7/2005. The "accretion" that the committee referred to, was an assumption of the advocates of the extension proposal that the beach would recover from an extension by new dunes being formed over time.
 42. Butterworth, S. *Petone. A History.* Pp.81-82, 128, 170-71, 201, 219.
 43. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. Correspondence; Hutt City Council, Council property consultants O'Brien Property Consultancy Limited, and the Wellington Regional Council, 1995-2000. The previous owner of Memorial Park up until 1980 was the Hutt River Board. When the Wellington Regional Council was established in 1980 it took over the assets of the River Board.
 44. File PL12-03-MP, *Memorial Park Miscellaneous Papers*, 26/4/1958-12/3/1980. This file contains historical records from the old Petone Borough Council going back to 1960. See, "Petone Borough Council Reserves Committee Report on use of Gear Island Playing Fields," April, 1960. Cf. correspondence, Wellington Football Association to the Petone Borough Council, 15/6/1960, and correspondence, 1976-78, regarding the development and upgrading of the Memorial Park grandstand changing rooms used by the Petone Association Football Club.
 45. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. Correspondence, *ibid*, HCC, O'Brien Property Consultants and WRC, 1995-2000.
 46. File CM80-12-4 DOC/12/525. *The Origins of the Wellington Regional Council.* The Hutt River Board was established in 1899 and became part of the Wellington Regional Water Board in 1973. Seven years later, in 1980, the Regional Water Board was taken over by the Wellington Regional Council.
 47. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. Correspondence, *ibid*, O'Brien Property Consultants to the HCC Administration Officer, 17/2/1998.
 48. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. *Ibid.* The WRC leased Memorial Park to the HCC for four years from 1st July 2000. The lease expired on 30 June 2004. Cf. correspondence on File PL12-3-MP-1/3, between the HCC Administration Officer, and O'Brien Property Consultants.
 49. File PL12-3-MP-1/3. The New Zealand Gazette, No.161, 22 September 2005, copy on file.
 50. File PL12-3-MP-1/3. Petone Community Board minutes, Report, 7/10/2005 and Memo from Phillips Fox to HCC, 4/11/2005. The Petone Community Board recommended that as part of the new lease arrangement, office space above the changing rooms would take priority over a new grandstand and that Capital Soccer would need to pay for the development. From a legal point of view this was a problem as a public reserve did not entitle a sports club to be a developer, only a lease-hold tenant. The PL12 files do not say what happened about this issue.
 51. Butterworth, S. *Petone. A History.* P.219. David Millar, *ibid*. P.177, states that the Hutt Valley RSA wanted the Lower Hutt and Petone councils to lay out a joint memorial park on Gear Island. The Mayor of Lower Hutt, Percy Dowse, (1950-70) decided instead to make the Lower Hutt Library (opened 1956) a War Memorial.
 52. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. Correspondence on file, 1994-1999. A complete list of servicemen had been compiled and a plaque made ready for mounting by 4th March 1999.
 53. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. *Ibid.* Correspondence, 12th April 1995.
 54. File PL12-3-MP-1/2. *Ibid.* Correspondence, HCC Parks Assets Manager, to Sundials, Auckland, 15/6/1995, and Sundials to Parks Assets Manager, 13/7/1995.
 55. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. Mayor Glen Evans, internal memo, 18/8/1992.
 56. File PL12-3-FR-1/1. *Minutes of the HCC Community Development Committee, Public Excluded Business*, 23/10/1990: *Development Proposal for Fraser Park.* Downer's proposal was contained in a copy of the Hutt Development Board minutes which were being considered by the Community Development Committee. The Committee minutes make it clear that Downer Developments approached the Hutt Development Board in the first instance with a stadium proposal.
 57. File PL12-3-FR-1/1. *Ibid.* Winfield was a cigarette manufacturer which sponsored the New South Wales Rugby league Premiership Grand Final match from 1982 to 1994. The Winfield Cup Trophy was retired in 1995 following the prohibition of tobacco advertising in sport by the Australian Federal Government in 1992.
 58. File PL12-3-FR-1/1. *Ibid.* *Hutt Development Board Meeting*, 19/12/1990; copy of Minutes and Report from Acting Board Chairman on file. In March 1991 the HCC Policy and Finance Committee rejected a proposal from Downer Developments Ltd that Downer would have preferred position as project managers for the redevelopment of Fraser Park.
 59. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. *Feasibility Study for a New Fraser Park Sports Stadium*, by International Facility Corporation Pty Ltd, 31/5/1991.
 60. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. *Ibid.*
 61. File PL12-3-FR-1/2. *Minutes of a Special Meeting*

- of the Hutt City Council, 16/8/1991. *Development of Fraser Park.*
62. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. HCC Policy and Finance Committee Minutes, 6/4/1992.
 63. File PL12-3-FR-1/2. See formal proposal, with conditions, to the Hutt City Council by the Dolphins Rugby League limited dated 13 March 1992. Cf. file PL12-3-FR-1/3. HCC Community Services Group Report, 26 March 1992.
 64. File PL12-3-FR-1/2. *Ibid.*
 65. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. The Community Services Group Report of 26 March 1992 made a crucial observation as far as the development proposal was concerned; the Dolphins were, in effect, "unable to own the site as it is vested as a reserve with the council".
 66. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. *Ibid.*
 67. File PL12-3-FR-1/3. Mayor Glen Evans in an internal memo to the HCC General Manager, 7/4/1992.
 68. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. HCC Divisional Manager Recreation correspondence, 25/5/1994.
 69. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. Community Services Group Report prepared by HCC Divisional Manager Recreation, 22/4/1994.
 70. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. Documents of a Resource Management Act Hearing, November 1991, regarding an application by the Softball Stadium Trust to erect a stadium at Fraser Park. Other projects were discussed in the evidence, including the Dolphins Stadium proposal. The views on relocation expressed at that time were made by the HCC Divisional Manager Recreation, and the Senior Planner.
 71. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. Correspondence, Wellington Regional Council Planning and Environment Manager to HCC Group Manager City Environment, 6/9/1993.
 72. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. A report dated 28/3/1994, written by the HCC Divisional Manager Special Projects to the HCC Policy and Finance Committee, for its meeting held on 30/3/1994, "Regional Multi-purpose Stadium Proposals Current Situation."
 73. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. *Ibid.*
 74. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. *Ibid.* A second copy of the HCC Divisional Manager Special Projects report and attached documents is also found on PL12-3-FR-20/02; the Ernst and Young study is attached only to this second copy of the report.
 75. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. *Ibid.*
 76. File PL12-3-FR-20/01. *Ibid.* A *Dominion* article on file dated 23/3/1994, also states that in February 1994 Wellington Mayor Fran Wilde, on behalf of the Wellington City Council, had called for Regional Council support to get a stadium developed at the Wellington rail yard.
 77. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. Many news clippings dealing with the jealousy issue can be found on this file, e.g. the *Evening Post*, 16/5/1994, and the *Dominion*, 27/6/1994. See also article by journalist Nicolas Boyack in the *Hutt News*, 16/8/1994. Boyack claimed that Hutt ratepayers were not keen on funding a project they would get little benefit from, a point of view that was supported by the Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce in a *Hutt News* article published on ANZAC Day, 1995 (file PL12-3-FR-20/02).
 78. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. Two letters to the CEO of the Hillary Commission, Wilson Whineray, dated 28/7/1994 and 1/8/1994, by the HCC Manager City Environment, set out the position of the HCC regarding the "Regional Stadium consideration."
 79. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. *Ibid.*
 80. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. *Ibid.*
 81. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. *Ibid.*
 82. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. *Ibid.*
 83. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. *Ibid.*
 84. File PL12-3-FR-20/02. The bulk of the comments by the media at this time are found in the copies of news clippings on this file. Cf. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. *Dominion*, 27/6/1994.
 85. File PL12-3-FR-20/02. The appointment of Wilson Whineray as Arbitrator was on 27/6/1994. See letter on file from Wyatt Creech to Mayor Glen Evans, 4th August 1994, enclosing an embargoed copy of Whineray's report.
 86. File PL12-3-FR-20/02. Ten page report to the Minister of Finance, Hon. Wyatt Creech M.P., from Wilson Whineray, C/o Hillary Commission, 2nd August 1994, *Wellington Stadium Proposals*. The report is attached to Wyatt Creech's letter to Mayor Glen Evans of 4th August 1994.
 87. File PL12-3-FR-20/02. *Ibid.*
 88. File PL12-3-FR-20/02. *Ibid.* Wyatt Creech to Mayor Glen Evans, 4th August 1994.
 89. File PL12-3-FR-1/4. Mayor Glen Evans quoted in *Hutt News*, 12/7/1994. Five months earlier Mayor Evans had issued a media statement, 15/2/1994, in which he said that the 1991 International Facility study claimed Fraser Park was the best regional choice. As far as he was concerned it was still the cheapest option and would service the regional population, "at least as well as or somewhat better than the Aotea Stadium."
 90. Hutt City Community Facilities Trust circular distributed to the residents of Hutt City, February 2014.